

WINTER 2026

Millersville

UNIVERSITY REVIEW



Telling Stories
Through Cars and PR

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Millersville

UNIVERSITY **REVIEW**

Winter 2026



DEAR MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY FRIENDS AND FAMILY,

January at Millersville brings a special kind of energy to campus. The quiet stillness of winter mornings, the return of students for a new semester and the sense of renewal that comes with a fresh calendar year all remind us of the purpose and promise that define our University community. It is in this spirit of reflection and anticipation that I am pleased to share the Winter 2026 edition of the Review.

In this issue, you will meet members of our community whose stories embody the curiosity, resilience and innovation that make Millersville exceptional. You'll read about alumnus Peter Taraborelli '10, whose winding career path – from journalism to firefighting to automotive restoration – demonstrates the power of storytelling and the unexpected places a Millersville education can lead. You'll also learn how our Integrated Studies program continues to bring our EPPIC value of inclusion to life, offering students with intellectual disabilities a fully immersive college experience supported by dedicated staff, faculty and peer mentors.

We highlight the remarkable achievements of Samantha Reynolds '25, who, alongside an international team of scientists, became one of the first people ever to witness an underwater volcanic eruption in real time – an extraordinary milestone in oceanographic research. And we share the work of alumnus Adam Zurn '01, whose passion for local history has inspired thousands to explore Lancaster County through his creative "Uncharted Lancaster" adventures.

These stories reflect the heart of Millersville: a place where learning extends far beyond the classroom, where students and alumni pursue bold ideas, and where our community continues to shape a more informed, compassionate and connected world.

As we begin a new year together, I hope this issue inspires you as much as it has inspired me. Thank you for your continued support of Millersville University and for being part of our shared journey.

Daniel A. Wubah

Daniel A. Wubah, Ph.D.
President, Millersville University

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FROM PR TO CARS

By Kelsey Madas

You could say that Peter Taraborelli '10 is a jack-of-many-trades, and even that title might not cover all the careers he's tested out. From radio to journalism to firefighting, and now running a car restoration business, his skills are wide-ranging.

A first generation college student, Taraborelli started out at Millersville as a physics major but switched to communications after a revealing conversation with now-retired communications professor Dr. Bill Dorman. "I talked with all the department heads to ask why I should join their programs. When I talked with Dr. Dorman and asked him to pitch me on why I should join the communication and theatre department, he said, 'You're interviewing me like a journalist. That's why you should join.'"

Dorman was on to something. Taraborelli's inquisitive nature lent itself nicely to journalism and all things communication. He took a job with the communications and marketing department under Janet Kacskos, emerita director of communications, who helped him hone his nose for news by writing newsletters and press releases on behalf of the University.

Following graduation, Taraborelli landed a job as a board operator and promotions assistant at WLAN and WROZ, AM and FM radio stations in Lancaster. That job led him to work on TV as a reporter at Blue Ridge 11, covering both inspiring and difficult stories. Reporters often arrive at the scene of an accident alongside first responders.

One day on the job, while running to the scene of a fatal accident, he said to himself, "That's someone's family member ... maybe this job isn't for me. It's a tough gig. So, I started thinking about what was next. It's one of the reasons I also became a volunteer firefighter. I was the one holding the mic, bugging the guys while they were trying to help. I finally wanted to be on the other side, helping."

Taraborelli recalled a contact he'd made at the North Museum of Nature and Science in Lancaster while working on a news story and reached out to her. He found out she'd switched jobs, and she let him know that her new gig at

Stoner Inc., a manufacturer based in Quarryville, had an opening in the industrial and automotive division for a public relations professional – a job that Taraborelli landed. In his role as the communications manager for the company's industrial and automotive brands, he learned a lot about cars. A lot. "I wasn't even interested in cars until I started working at Stoner," he says.

Taraborelli used his multimedia skills to stage photo and video shoots of the products for promotion at Stoner. While searching for content and places to shoot, he learned that the company's owner, Robert Ecklin Jr., also owns Horsepower Enterprises, an automotive restoration business in Lancaster city that features a Buick showroom that hasn't been changed since 1946 and dozens of classic cars – and tons of content opportunities. "The work I did in broadcasting taught me the art of storytelling," he says. "The work that I do now allows me to complete those stories and helps them to come full circle."

Taraborelli used the shop for content for five years, establishing a relationship with the employees and car owners. Then, the general manager position opened at the shop in 2020. "The employees encouraged me to apply, and the owner loved my vision for where the business could go, so I was given the chance to move over there!"

These days, he splits his time between his office at Stoner Inc. in Quarryville and the vintage showroom in downtown Lancaster city. Thanks to his line of work, Taraborelli's interest in cars now extends to restoration. "I'm even working on my own partial restoration now," he shares. "I'm working on saving my grandfather's 1991 Cadillac."

In his dual roles, Taraborelli shares that both jobs have something in common with all of the other jobs he's had: There are stories to tell. "The biggest thing for me is being able to save and restore these cars and the stories with them," he shares. "I've gotten the chance to talk to a lot of different customers, from high-end car collectors to guys who have to save and can only do so much a month to fix up their old Camaro. I'm here to promote and save this hobby that makes things last."

Taraborelli says that some of his favorite pieces and cars have unique stories behind them. "We had a Vietnam-era soldier who restored his original Camaro," he shares. "He'd lost his wife from illness but still wanted to honor all the time spent together in that car – the car they drove on their honeymoon and brought their daughter home from the hospital in – and the memories they had in it together, so we restored it. We've also restored a 1966 Lotus for the son of a fighter pilot. His father, who purchased the car in England, survived World War II, the Vietnam War and the Korean War."

Central to all his experiences, Taraborelli says, was the education he received from Millersville University. "I never knew about all the areas where I could go with my degree from Millersville," he shares. "There are some days that I miss the hustle and bustle of the newsroom, but then I remember that the things I get to work on today still get to be here for years to come. In broadcasting, with the exception of a series piece, everything is usually done after it airs, and the next day you start all over. I went from broadcasting to PR and marketing, to being in charge of this car shop with all of these guys. Each experience built on itself."

A father of one now, Taraborelli was asked if he's trying to get his daughter involved in the car restoration process. "I'm more concerned with her becoming a Marauder someday," he quips.

Want to see some of Taraborelli's work? Check out his video on the Vietnam soldier and his Camaro [here](#) and the 1966 Lotus that was restored for the son of a fighter pilot [here](#). ♦



Integrated Studies graduate Andrew Macbeth '25 at his I.T. internship

INTEGRATED STUDIES PROGRAM BRINGS ALIVE EPPIIC VALUE OF INCLUSION

By Mary Dolheimer



Evelyn Morales '24, '25M, director of Integrated Studies

When Evelyn Morales '24, '25M took on the director of integrated studies role in September 2025, she brought with her years of personal experience advocating for those with disabilities and a strong connection to Millersville University.

Evelyn's first daughter, Arianna, was born with holoprosencephaly, a condition in which her brain did

not properly grow and divide when she was a fetus. As her caretaker, Evelyn learned a lot about the systems that impact the life of someone with disabilities. "Caring for Arianna taught me that our responsibility is to live with purpose, lead with compassion and use what we've learned to help others," she says.

Arianna passed away on Nov. 23, 2015, at the age of 5, and her organs were donated to four other children.

Around the same time, Evelyn's husband, Luis '19, also had serious health issues that required the couple to again navigate the health system. When it was discovered that he had congestive heart failure at age 23, he was forced to search for a profession that did not require heavy lifting – he previously delivered car parts – and enrolled in the social work program at Millersville. Luis completed his degree in 2019 and works for the Lancaster County Office of Aging. His health is currently stable.



Four pillars of the Integrated Studies program

After her husband earned his diploma, it was Evelyn's turn. She went to Harrisburg Area Community College and earned an associate degree in social science, graduating in 2021. She then transferred to Millersville University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in social work in 2024. She took graduate courses in social work as an undergraduate and earned a master's degree in social work in 2025.

Taking the position as director of integrated studies was "bringing all the pieces together," according to Evelyn. "It combined my love for Millersville with my love for helping those with disabilities," she says.

The Program

Part of University College, Integrated Studies at Millersville is an inclusive educational opportunity for young adults ages 18-26 with an intellectual disability. Students in the program often arrive after transferring, taking a gap year, or graduating from high school. "Each student has their own unique story," says Evelyn.

There are currently 15 students in the program, and they can choose a two-year or four-year option. They are enrolled as full-time, non-degree-seeking students. Most audit classes, which allows them to attend and participate in class without receiving a grade or earning credit. Evelyn says that some take a limited number of courses for credit, and a few students have matriculated into degree-seeking programs.

Dr. Ojoma Edeh Herr serves as faculty advisor for Integrated Studies. In addition, students have individual faculty advisors who help them choose courses, meet academic requirements and set their curricular goals, which include choosing a core or major. "We have an advisory assembly that meets regularly to keep our

faculty advisors updated on the programs," Evelyn adds.

Students also access needed accommodations like note-taking services, oral versus written exams and extra time on tests through Learning Services. "Integrated Studies students have the same access to services and support as other students," Evelyn says.

That includes career exploration and preparation through the Career Center, where students search for and secure internships – three are required for Integrated Studies – as well as on-campus employment. "Internships are very much based on students' interests," Evelyn says, "and our students have completed some great internships. One student who was interested in brewing worked for a brewing company."

Unlike similar programs at other colleges, Millersville's Integrated Studies program is fully immersive. "Other programs only have students participating in classes," Evelyn says. "Here, students are fully integrated into the residence halls," with roommates from outside the program. "That makes us somewhat unique."

Help From Others

Integrated Studies staff help students create an individualized, student-centered path that considers their dreams and aspirations, according to Evelyn. It outlines their future career and independent living goals, interests and strengths. "Students can invite whoever they'd like, including family members, to participate in this conversation, too," says Evelyn. "Our goal is to meet them where they are and build on what they can do and what they want to do. For example, we have a student enrolled in a sports course that will conclude with studying in Puerto Rico. Learning to be independent is one of the goals of our program. We start off providing

lots of support, then we begin to back off as students progress toward independence."

That support comes from a number of places, starting with Integrated Studies staff. Students have a success coach who meets with them weekly. They have access to a graduate assistant, three Master of Social Work interns and an undergraduate intern, all put in place to help these students achieve their goals and provide additional support.

Other Millersville students play an integral role in helping these students succeed. Peer coaches attend class with the students, help them with homework and go with them to student club meetings and other activities. They work when they have availability, typically a few hours each week.

These coaches are not simply friends, Evelyn points out, as they provide support to the students in the four pillars of the program: academic, social, independent living and employment. "Coaches build organic relationships with the students," Evelyn says. "They are a big part of creating an accepting environment for them here on campus."

There are about 30 coaches with varying majors. "This experience is wonderful for students entering helping professions," Evelyn says. "They can have up to four years of working with documentation, diverse populations and teaching before they graduate."

Devin Sparwasser '25, who graduated in December, served as an Integrated Studies support coach for three semesters. A psychology major with a criminology minor, she plans to begin Millersville's Master of Science program in clinical psychology in Spring 2026. She acknowledges the rewards and challenges of the position.

"Challenges do arise in this position, whether they stem from difficulties in agreeing on tasks and goals, time management or establishing a healthy work-life balance as a college student, especially when working with students who have just come into the program," she says. "I have learned that many of these issues can be resolved simply by clarifying what a student wants to work toward to facilitate mutual understanding between myself as the coach and the student I am working with. Building a strong relationship takes time, but it remains fundamentally important to demonstrate empathy, patience and acceptance toward all students in the program."

"Being able to witness the academic, social and independent development of the students I have worked with has been incredibly inspiring, and I am so grateful to have had this opportunity," she continues.

"These students are capable of such amazing things, and it truly shows when they have a strong support network of individuals actively working with them and providing encouragement with an inclusive attitude on the Millersville campus."

Learn more about Integrated Studies [here](#). ◆



Meg's Story

Meghan Duffy transferred to Millersville from a community college. Although this is her first year on campus, she has already established herself as a leader among the students in Integrated Studies. "She is always looking out for the others," Evelyn says.

Duffy loves being at Millersville, where she's joined Best Buddies, is working on starting a Bocce Club and looks forward to fun weekend activities. She is also enjoying the many relationships she has forged in class and in her residence hall.

"Millersville is everything," she says. "It's a wonderful journey."

"What's most rewarding is watching our students thrive," says Evelyn, "engaging fully in campus life, developing as leaders, and gaining valuable life experiences that prepare them for both meaningful careers and fulfilling lives after graduation."

ALUM AMONG FIRST TO WITNESS HISTORIC EVENT

“Water is so important in our everyday lives.”

By Kelsey Madas

Here's something you might not know: There are volcanoes underwater. And they do erupt. A Millersville oceanography student and newly minted alumna was on a research cruise 1,300 miles off the coast of Costa Rica when exactly that happened.

Samantha Reynolds '25, along with a team of scientists and researchers, traveled on a monthlong research cruise to that area for the express purpose of studying hydrothermal vents, which are connected to underwater volcanoes.



Samantha Reynolds '25

It was a historic moment: the first time scientists witnessed a volcanic eruption in the deep mid-ocean ridge, meaning they had captured both chemical and physical data in real time. Only a handful of other eruptions have been witnessed in real time, making this significant in many ways. The New York Times even wrote a piece about this scientifically significant moment, [published in May 2025](#).

“Comparing the footage from the day before to how it looks now is shocking,” shares Reynolds. “Instead of the extensive ecosystem full of tube worms, eelpout fish and deep-sea lobsters, it is now covered in brand-new, shiny basalt (dark-colored, fine-grained volcanic rock).”





With the findings from the cruise, researchers aim to better understand what Reynolds calls “a real mystery in the hydrology world. There’s a presence of something called black carbon in the ocean.” The substance is often found after underwater volcanic eruptions. Reynolds says, “We already ruled out some places black carbon doesn’t come from. We now know it doesn’t come from rivers through the process of radiocarbon dating. Now, we want to know if it comes from hydrothermal vents, like the Tica vent we studied.”

Now, the wait begins. The only way to see black carbon is to test it using radiocarbon dating, which, in simplified terms, requires a very expensive, powerful machine and a lot of time. “Samples need to go through a ton of filtration and handling. We won’t have the results for a few years.”

The significance of this event to the scientific community lies in the data and its implications. “It’s particularly important to a team of researchers from the Republic of Türkiye, including Dr. Mustafa Yücel, who was a part of the research cruise where two other eruptions were recorded. Yücel was a principal investigator on the project,” says Reynolds. “They studied the aftermath of an underwater volcanic eruption from 20 years ago, and they observed the entire hydrothermal ecosystem rebuild itself over time – similar to a forest fire.” The cycle of destruction and rebirth holds valuable information for scientists.

How did Reynolds end up in the middle of the ocean and a historic event? “I always wanted to study ocean science,” she shares. When you think about the study of oceans, Lancaster County probably doesn’t come to mind. And yet, in landlocked Pennsylvania, Millersville University offers a bachelor’s degree in oceanography that has been rated as one of the best in the country.

Reynolds says that one of the reasons she chose Millersville is because of the University’s affiliation with the Chincoteague Bay Field Station, located on the coast of Virginia. The field station is owned and operated by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, giving students direct access to multidisciplinary, educational and research opportunities. “I took a summer course at the field station that cemented my interest in MU’s program,” explains Reynolds. “I really wanted to go to a small college and have more access to research opportunities that would be harder at a bigger school. And, if a landlocked school keeps an ocean program, it must be pretty good.”

Reynolds took advantage of many opportunities that came her way as a Marauder, including undergraduate research. She was named a McNairy Library Research Fellow at Millersville, which supports undergraduate students who carry out independent research projects with a stipend and guidance. Through the program,

students participate in a community of practice with other research fellows and present their findings at conferences. "There are often faculty members on campus who are looking for students to join their research labs who come to the McNairy Fellows. I connected with Dr. Ajoy Kumar, who knew I was interested in research, and completed three research projects with him."

Through working with Kumar as a McNairy Fellow, Reynolds was connected with a Research Experiences for Undergraduates internship at the University of Delaware, where she traveled to study salt marshes and how they influence methane production.

That experience led to Reynolds working with a University of Delaware professor who liked her work and asked if she wanted to attend the research cruise. "I and some other undergraduate students worked on social media and research projects on the ship," she shares. "My main duty was to disassemble, clean and reassemble major samples after they were returned from each day's Deep Submergence Vehicle Alvin dive. I had to take a pause from classes in the spring semester because of the timing of the cruise, but my professors were wonderful and helped me make arrangements for my coursework and finals."

Following her May 2025 graduation, Reynolds started graduate school at Temple University, where she's working with a professor to study per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS or "forever chemicals," in urban gardens. She hopes to go on and earn a doctorate as well. "Along with my passion for oceanography, pollutants are a huge area of interest for me," she says. "I want to go on to study water pollutants."

Reynolds' time on the cruise reaffirmed her future plans. "My personal takeaway is that this type of research is for me. Water is so important in our everyday lives," she shares. "It was so incredible to be on the bow of the ship, sunning or stargazing. As a young person, this was a significant experience. I know my future is in oceanography."

Want to learn more about Millersville's environmental earth and ocean sciences program? Visit millersville.edu/esci/environmental-earth-and-ocean-sciences. ◆



Adam Zurn '01 at Trout Run

MILLERSVILLE ALUM HELPS OTHERS DISCOVER HISTORY THROUGH ADVENTURE

By Mary Dolheimer



Adam Zurn '01 spent more than 1,000 hours creating each of the 15 treasure hunts that are featured on his website *Uncharted Lancaster*. Lime Kiln Adventure, for instance, takes explorers on a half-mile hike to learn about Lancaster County's lime kilns at Silver Mine Park in Conestoga. The reward for completing the journey is a treasure cache Zurn creates through 3D printing.

"It's the 'National Treasure meets local history' of geocaching, only better," Zurn says. "All adventures hold the promise of finding hidden treasure at the end."

Zurn also offers guided tours, hikes and educational presentations on Lancaster County history. His goal is to take people off the beaten path to discover history through adventure. "There are two sides," he says. "There's the local history side and then there's the adventure side, which gives you an incentive to go and visit a place. Taking kids for a walk can be a tough sell, but they'll walk four miles to get a plastic coin out of a hidden gold box."

From 'The Goonies' to the Classroom

Zurn grew up in the '80s watching movies like "Indiana Jones," "The Goonies" and "National Treasure." He also spent a good deal of time exploring outdoors near his home in Susquehanna County, which he shared with his parents who were both teachers.

"We spent a lot of summers traveling all over the country learning," Zurn says. "When you're young, you don't really appreciate that. It feels like punishment." It took years before he realized that those trips instilled in him an appreciation and love for local history.

Zurn came to Lancaster County in 1997 to attend Millersville University. Having toured several other colleges, he decided on Millersville because of his passion for technology. "What sold me was that every residence room had internet access," he says.

An undecided major, he initially had no interest in being a teacher like his parents. Then he stumbled upon the University's technology education major. "I ended up taking the classes and enjoyed it," he says. He earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in technology education, as well as a master's degree in leadership and learning from Millersville.

Zurn is now in his 24th year of teaching technology at Lampeter-Strasburg High School, where he serves as department head. His wife, Maribeth, also a Millersville graduate, teaches first grade at Conestoga Elementary in Penn Manor School District, where his son is a student.

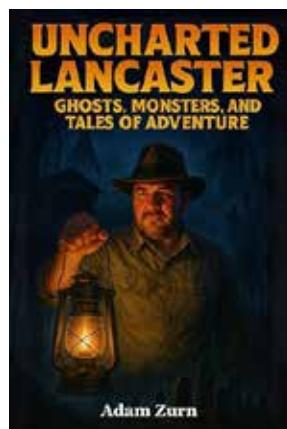
A Good Side Hustle

As a transplant to Lancaster County – "I came in 1997 and never really left" – Zurn spent a good deal of time researching the area and its history. When a neighbor asked if he had seen the cemetery near Shanks Ferry, which is by his home, he set out on a quest. "I looked it up on the internet then decided to physically find this graveyard," he says. "I eventually found it, and I learned a lot along the way. I thought others might enjoy that same kind of experience."

That's how Zurn began creating adventures that teach explorers a little bit of local history. "I'd start by asking, 'Why is this road called this? Why is this building called what it is?' Researching something always brought up two more questions and more things to look into," he says.

Zurn calls his work "a good side hustle. I give tours in the summer and take groups out on kayak trips and history hikes. It's a great hobby to fill my time." And he raises money – he estimates \$15,000 so far – for the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County through an annual treasure hunt he hosts.

Last summer, he published a book, ["Ghosts, Monsters and Tales of Adventure,"](#) that is a compilation of the 64 tales about Lancaster County he has written and published on his website. And he's working on another book that includes 50 of Lancaster County's strange stories and hidden places. Much of the heavy work for the books is already done, Zurn says,



Golden Osprey Treasure Hunt

because the stories were written for his website. "Now, it's just about editing them to work," he says.

Writing and editing come somewhat easy to Zurn; he credits that to his experience with The Snapper as a Millersville student.

"I joined The Snapper on day one," he says. "It was a huge investment of my time over the years. I wrote all the time for the paper – columns and news reports – and did research and interviews. I really enjoyed meeting people. I also did the website for a year or two and learned a lot doing that."

As a technology education teacher, Zurn works to keep up with the rapid pace of innovation. "Technology is so different than it was when I started," he says. "Many of the things I've learned didn't exist years ago. I have to constantly learn new things to stay current and modern. So much of what I did at Millersville as a tech ed major prepared me for this."

It's his 16-year-old son who keeps him "a bit modern or hip" when it comes to the lingo the students he teaches use now. "When he goes to college," Zurn says, "I'll be in trouble."

Listen to Adam Zurn's interview on WITF's The Spark:

- [Haunted History Comes to Life](#)
- [The Truth Behind Lancaster County's Most Haunted Stories](#)





DR. NANETTE MARCUM-DIETRICH'S PROLIFIC GRANT HISTORY

Dr. Marcum-Dietrich observing students conducting an experiment.

Dr. Nanette Marcum-Dietrich, professor of educational foundations, came to Millersville University in 2005 as an assistant professor. Nearly each year since then, she and various partners have garnered significant grants to support work in environmental education. "I love pursuing new ideas – curriculum development, cutting-edge research," she says. "That's what brings me joy."

Marcum-Dietrich was a high school science teacher for nearly 10 years and an adjunct instructor at the University of Delaware before she joined the Millersville faculty. Four years later, she was awarded her first grant – the first of 11 and counting – from the U.S. National Science Foundation. Below is a sampling of the grants she and her partners have received.

Model My Watershed: 2009-2012

Dr. John Wallace, professor of biology, introduced Marcum-Dietrich to the Stroud Water Research Center in Avondale, Pennsylvania, which was looking for an educator with whom to partner. "Stroud had a new director whose idea was to give every student in the country access to GIS (Geographic Information System)," she says, "and develop an application that would allow them to map their own land and see what's really going on beneath the surface."



Drs. Marcum-Dietrich and John Wallace, co-founders of Millersville's Watershed Education Training Institute



Associate Professor of Mathematics Dr. Cynthia Taylor, Noyce grant recipient Trevor Winter '27 and Dr. Marcum-Dietrich

"The National Science Foundation program office said, 'I don't think you can do this, but it would be really cool,'" Marcum-Dietrich says. "I love that the NSF funds grants that might fail."

Marcum-Dietrich and her partner from Stroud, Dr. Susan Gill, were fortunate to get funded in the first round of grants, and their work created Model My Watershed, a GIS-based online application that students use to simulate the way water moves through their watershed and how various conservation practices and land cover changes can affect this.

The NSF has invested heavily in bringing technology into the K-12 classroom, according to Marcum-Dietrich, by funding an array of cyberlearning applications to investigate how they can transform student learning. "Model My Watershed is one of those experimental platforms that integrate online learning with an understanding of the physical world within an interdisciplinary framework," she says.

Precipitating Change: 2016-2019

"Not a single grant I've submitted doesn't have a partner connected with it," Marcum-Dietrich says. She paired up with the University of Illinois Chicago and Argonne National Laboratory in Lemont, Illinois, for the Precipitating Change grant funded by the NSF.

The project designed and tested instructional materials and technologies to promote middle school students' ability to apply computational thinking practices to weather prediction. Computational thinking allows people to take a complex problem, understand what it



Dr. Marcum-Dietrich in Alaska during a grant-funded trip

is, break it down into manageable steps and develop possible solutions in a form that a computer, a human or both can understand and process.

Teachers from urban, suburban and rural classrooms in the United States were given instructional materials, including a teacher guide with detailed implementation instructions for the four-week weather curriculum. After they taught it, they were interviewed to determine if they implemented the curriculum the way it was designed, with intentional learning environments and experiences throughout. The students' computational thinking skills and weather content understanding were assessed before and after the unit was taught to measure any changes.

The results? Teachers were able to use the curriculum to embed computational thinking practices into the classroom. Students, in turn, had the opportunity to practice using these skills in class discussion.

One of the four locations chosen for the study was the North Slope Borough School District in rural Alaska. "During my visit, I had the pleasure of meeting their middle school science teacher, Kevin Neyhard '05," says Marcum-Dietrich. "MU grads span the globe, and I found a proud Marauder in the northernmost town in North America."

PA Environmental Literacy: 2017-2020

In addition to the NSF, Marcum-Dietrich and her partners have been the recipients of multiple grants from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

She and Wallace serve as codirectors of the Watershed Education Training Institute, created in 2016 on Millersville's Creek Lodge property next to the Conestoga River and east of Pucillo Gymnasium. The Institute partners with several local organizations to create and conduct watershed educational programs and student training.

In 2017, Millersville was among the recipients of a grant to improve and expand environmental literacy and watershed education and stewardship among Pennsylvania K-12 students and educators. That grant established a cooperative agreement between the Stroud Water Research Center and the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office that created the Pennsylvania Watershed Education Task Force. Millersville was named a member of the leadership team of the task force, which brought together about 20 collaborators across the state.

"These environmental literacy grants connected all the players in environmental education with a focus on water across the Commonwealth," says Marcum-Dietrich. "This was the beginning of the best grants, because they forged connections with conservation districts, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and others. They brought everybody working in the same area together."

Shared Waters: 2021-2024

Marcum-Dietrich is a member of Pennsylvania's committee for science standards. The Commonwealth's standards, like those of many other states, are built upon New Generation Science Standards, a set of K-12 science education standards developed by states to improve science education in the United States.

However, Pennsylvania's standards are unique, she says, because they include a fifth content domain – environmental literacy and sustainability – that many other states' standards don't. "I'm really proud of that," she shares.

That said, Pennsylvania's standards are 13 years behind the rest of the country. "One of the benefits of being late to the game is that we have lots to learn about curriculum from other states," says Marcum-Dietrich, "and we can integrate literacy and sustainability throughout the other domains, which has not occurred at the level it should."

One of her biggest concerns is that Pennsylvania has environmental literacy and sustainability as an element of its standards, "but if we don't provide teachers with resources, what will they do?" asks Marcum-Dietrich.

Millersville's Shared Waters program, which designed an elementary curriculum that has spread across the state, was created to address that issue. It began as an NOAA grant involving Millersville, Virginia Wesleyan University, Penn Manor School District and Norfolk Collegiate School, a private day school in Norfolk, Virginia.

Shared Waters offers a comprehensive 10-lesson curriculum specifically designed for elementary students in grades 3-6, aligned with New Generation Science Standards and multiple state standards, with an emphasis on environmental literacy and sustainability.

Through the NOAA funding, Millersville and its partners created a three-year collaborative that focused on the shared responsibility of protecting the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The project brought together schools in central Pennsylvania – upstream – and coastal Virginia – downstream – to learn about local watershed issues and how local actions impact the overall health of the watershed.

According to the program's website, "The health and future of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed depend on this generation of students cultivating a connection to local waters, gaining an understanding of how their choices impact the larger watershed, and learning how to be good watershed neighbors."

In addition to bringing Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience – a learner-centered framework

that focuses on investigations into local environmental issues and leads to informed action – to the classroom, the program also provided professional development for teachers and embedded MWEE instruction into undergraduate teacher education programs at Millersville and Virginia Wesleyan.

"This ensures the sustainability of the project and its ability to institutionalize MWEEs at both the K-12 and university levels," says Marcum-Dietrich.

ENVISION: 2025-2029

Shared Waters provided the foundation for Marcum-Dietrich's latest grant with the NSF. Working with Stroud Water Research Center and West Virginia University Institute of Technology, which also received a grant, Millersville will bring cutting-edge water science into schools across West Virginia and Delaware over the next four years.

"We've developed things that keep building on each other," says Marcum-Dietrich. "The ENVISION project is built on the curriculum that was designed with the NOAA grant."

ENVISION will integrate new technologies and hands-on learning tools – such as augmented reality, virtual reality, mixed reality and artificial intelligence – to help students explore water quality, freshwater ecosystems and environmental stewardship. Teachers and students alike will have access to innovative classroom resources to engage with real-world water science.

Totaling more than \$1 million, the project will also examine elementary school students' understanding of local watershed ecosystems and aim to spark interest in



Dr. Marcum-Dietrich works with K-12 students through Millersville's Watershed Education Training Institute.

environmental STEM careers.

"We hope that students who participate in this project will develop a deeper interest in STEM and E-STEM fields," says Dr. Tamara Floyd Smith, vice president of academic affairs and project lead for WVU Tech and Shared Waters. "ENVISION will provide resources to train teachers, provide

classroom supplies and fund field trips to make learning science fun for West Virginia and Delaware elementary students."

In addition to classroom instruction, the project will evaluate how these technologies impact student learning outcomes, engagement and long-term interest in E-STEM careers.

"This collaborative grant has been in development for over a year," says Marcum-Dietrich.

"Our goal is to connect students to science in their own backyards. By combining watershed education with spatial computing, we're creating experiences that are both hands-on and high-tech," says Marcum-Dietrich. "As someone who grew up in southern West Virginia, this project is deeply personal to me. ENVISION is a chance to give back to my childhood home, to the people and the land that shaped who I am."

For a full list of grants that have been received through the work of Marcum-Dietrich, visit her [faculty page](#) on the Millersville website. ♦

50 YEARS AT MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY: RITA MILLER'S STORY

By Mary Dolheimer



Rita Miller '73 speaking at the Fall 2024 Graduating Students of Color Ceremony

Academic success coach Rita Miller '73 has worked at Millersville University for 50 years, since 1975. To provide some context, that's the year the Vietnam War ended, Queen released "Bohemian Rhapsody," Microsoft was founded, TV shows "Saturday Night Live" and "Wheel of Fortune" launched, and "Jaws" and "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" debuted in movie theaters.

Miller's journey was not a straight line by any stretch of the imagination. Her tenure has been full of twists and turns, mostly because of who she is: a multitasker, a team player, a lifelong learner and someone who sees a need and addresses it.

Throughout the years and the various titles and offices, one thing about Miller has remained constant: She is and always has been here for the students.

How She Arrived

Miller and her family lived in Philadelphia. Her parents moved there from a more rural part of the country for the economic advantages of a big city, but they never truly adjusted to city life. Miller, too, was not a fan of the noise, crowds and bustle of the city. In fact, her "mission in life was not to be a part of a big city," she says.

She spent a year studying at Temple but left because she was disturbed by how the University's growth

was displacing vulnerable indigent populations in the adjacent neighborhoods. She witnessed a similar disturbing trend of neighborhood disruption by the City of Philadelphia while working as a buyer's assistant at Strawbridge & Clothier department store, where a local neighborhood of immigrants brought their homemade goods to barter for items off the back docks of the store. When these people were forced to move west to make room for city business and commerce expansion, she documented how the move affected them. "I followed 60 of them and watched their health and energy demise," she says. "I wrote a paper about it for one of my classes, and it was not received well by the University or the city government."

So, Miller came to Millersville to finish her studies. She earned a bachelor's degree in secondary education social studies-sociology in 1973 and went on to earn a M.Ed. in guidance counseling.



1974

As a graduate student, Miller and her two roommates took a first aid course through West End Ambulance Association in Millersville. She then went on to volunteer for the organization, which was the first volunteer ambulance service to be in quarters 24 hours a day. Miller, however, was left with questions. "I wanted to see the bigger picture," she says. "What happens to the folks we treat? Are they recovering? Am I making a difference?"

Her desire to know more led her to enroll in the pilot paramedic program at the former St. Joseph Hospital in Lancaster. Miller "made it through" the six-week, intensive, physician-directed training program. She challenged and passed the state certification exam and went on to volunteer in the hospital's emergency room, which was short on staff. "I became the triage person in the emergency room resuscitation and trauma



areas and then the prehospital area mobile intensive care unit," Miller explains. "The hospital was seeking certification as the first American Medical Association-certified trauma unit in Lancaster County." That volunteer position evolved into a paid one doing weekend electrocardiograms to cover another tech who needed time off and then as a regular MICU paramedic.

Miller also served as a counselor/teacher for the paramedic programs, proctored students and taught for the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association and the Emergency Health Services Federation in South Central Pennsylvania. It was during these experiences that she began using a phrase that stuck with her throughout her career, telling those she was teaching and proctoring to work toward excellence until she could "see smoke coming off your sneakers!"

Residence Hall Director and Adviser to Many

Miller says her first career goal was running a halfway house and "helping socially maladjusted and emotionally disturbed teens deal with the traumas of their existence." Her placement in Residence Life as a graduate assistant got her close to that goal, she says, as the students she was working with were "the right age, striving toward a goal, and many brought emotional trauma history with them to school."

Miller remained in Residence Life after earning her master's degree and began working for the University as a residence hall director. Her desire to learn – "I've always been that type of person" – pushed her to take on responsibilities outside of the Residence Life office. "I needed to know how what I was doing fit with other pieces of the University to help students," she says. Residence Life became the tether as "I branched out and looked at different things that affected the global population of students."

Miller answered a call for help after the undeclared major program was created. "There was a need for advisers who weren't married to an academic program," she explains. "I realized I was already doing this – counseling students – as a residence hall director."

Next, she responded to a request from the Adult Continuing Education program, where an extended vacancy left students without an adviser. "Many students in the program were trying to decide whether to re-enroll or start from scratch," Miller says. "I jumped at the opportunity to become an academic adviser for them."

International students were another group who enjoyed the benefits of Miller's advising. As a residence hall director, she developed a job description and training program for student security guards, which yielded a lot of interest from international students. She developed an appreciation for the sacrifices they made through her interaction with them. "That morphed into my becoming the international student adviser after the retirement of an associate vice president for student affairs," Miller says.

Miller refers to her work with international students as one of the greatest highlights of her career. "It was a unique opportunity to get a view of another culture and country without having to travel there," she says. "I learned amazing things about other places and cultures listening to these students share their experiences and life stories."

9/11 led to significant changes in the requirements for international study, according to Miller. "It ushered in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System and a more formal process for Millersville to accept international students," she explains. "It was much more cumbersome for students who were coming to Millersville for their degree as well as our students who wanted to study abroad."

Alongside her work counseling international students, which lasted for 16 years, Miller also offered help to students with physical and emotional disabilities for more than five years. With her background as a paramedic, she believed she could assist these students with their needs. She arranged classroom and campus accommodations to facilitate adjustment and provided counseling and guidance.

Throughout her various positions and responsibilities, Miller continued to work for Residence Life. "I had an office in Lyle Hall for advising international students and students with disabilities, and an office in Harbold Hall for the resident student population." She advanced from residence hall director to assistant director and finally associate director of housing and residential programs. "Working in the central office rather than in a residence hall allowed me to begin paying attention to Millersville as an entire entity," she says. "I began to understand how changes impact our students, the ultimate consumers of our services."

Academic Success Coach

Miller has served as an academic success coach since 2020, thanks, in part, to the COVID pandemic. "Operations budget cuts in the housing and residential programs area were made to cover partial refunds to students for the spring semester after we closed the physical campus due to COVID," she explains, "and three people, including me, were placed in other positions. The academic success position, which had been frozen, was opened to accommodate me and my 30+ years of academic advising experience."

As an academic success coach, Miller works with students to "improve habits and create strategies for success." The position is holistic, she says, and looks at all aspects that contribute to students reaching their goals and milestones. "School, work and life balance issues are considered," Miller says, "including financial, personal and family circumstances."

Faculty raise red flags in Starfish – the University's student success platform – or refer students to Miller, who ultimately encourages and assists them to keep working toward their goals. She cherishes the opportunity to see students come, grow and evolve, and go out into the world to make a good difference in the communities where they work and live. "That's why we're



President Daniel A. Wubah, Dr. Judith Wubah and Miller, 2024

here," she says, "to make a difference in students' lives by adding value. That is our central function, and there's nothing that's more gratifying."

Seeds of Change

Miller believes in planting the seeds of change – whether in students or in the University – in a subtle manner. Throughout her career at Millersville, her institutional knowledge led to her participating on search committees for four presidential searches. Her role, she says, was to ask questions to determine if the candidate was aware of critical issues that existed and find out what they would do or what they would bring to the University. "I would subtly say, 'What about this or that?' to see what they knew about the University and if they were prepared to make positive changes."

Miller sees herself as a change agent, but one who works behind the scenes. She's an observer of society and culture, someone who appreciates community. She doesn't believe in change for change's sake or doing the "splash and dash, heading out the door before you see if your impact on a place is positive or negative."

How long will she stay at Millersville? That's not a question she's prepared to answer yet. "Millersville University is an excellent place to work," she offers. "I think that I bring more value to my work the longer I stay. I'm still healthy, still having fun and still informing change. Many years ago, I chose Millersville as the place where I could make a difference. I'm still able to do that."



MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OFFER EXPERTISE IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Mary Dolheimer



Dr. Jennifer Burke

Dr. Jennifer Burke, associate professor in the Department of Early, Middle and Exceptional Education, gave the keynote address for an August professional development program offered by the Republic of the Philippines Department of Education to more than 3,000 teachers. Her online presentation "Fostering Belonging: Connective Social and Emotional Learning and Diversity in the Classroom" addressed bullying and offered strategies to combat the issue.

"Part of my expertise is creating classroom culture that is inviting and welcoming to everyone and respectful of diversity," says Burke. "I talked about how all those aspects of diversity need to be welcomed and accepted into the classroom. Why? Kids' brains can't learn while they are stressed. Given that, what can we do about it? I offered really concrete, small things that can start on day one."

Millersville and Thames International Business School



Dr. Dan Kulmala

Burke's presentation exemplifies one of the benefits of the partnership between Millersville University and Thames International Business School, a small, private college in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines. Established and nurtured by Dr. Dan Kulmala, assistant vice president for international programs and global engagement at Millersville, the connection has

led to several opportunities for faculty to share their knowledge and expertise internationally.

Kulmala has been working with contacts in the Philippines since his arrival at Millersville two years ago. Through the team at Thames, he established a connection with the Republic of the Philippines Department of Education and began exploring learning initiatives. Millersville president Daniel Wubah and a delegation from the University visited Thames in October 2024 to establish a strategic partnership to advance education in the Philippines.



Leah Macatangay

In this partnership, Thames provides the organization and management of the project, as well as the contextualization of the training programs and the provision of local resource trainers, according to Leah Macatangay, learning director at Thames International Business School.

"Millersville brings in valuable knowledge and expertise in key areas that it has excelled in through the years, such as education, and earth sciences related to disaster risk reduction and management, and climate change," says Macatangay. "The Philippine citizens, teachers and students are helped by the Millersville areas of expertise in informing teachers about social and emotional learning; that will impact how they deal with their students. This is particularly relevant with the rise of bullying in schools."

The shared expertise is also useful in the creation of training programs for teachers who are first responders during disasters, says Macatangay, "especially since the Philippines is in the Pacific Ring of Fire and in the Pacific Typhoon Belt and is ranked at the top of the most prone to disasters by the World Risk Forum. Likewise, the knowledge that can be shared by the University

will serve teachers in integrating the theme of climate change in the various elementary and secondary school curricula."

"They want to be certain that their population is prepared, so Dr. Sepi Yalda designed a program on emergency management," says Kulmala. "And they would like something taught across the curriculum so that all students learn what to do in terms of disaster risk and climate change. Dr. Jason Petula addressed that request by developing a program."

Preventing Bullying in the Philippines

There was lots of excitement about Burke's presentation, Kulmala says. According to the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment, 43% of girls and 53% of boys in the Philippines experienced bullying several times per month.

Thames International provided context on what was happening, Burke says. "I quickly learned about some of the challenges they confront in the classroom – very diverse populations, a large native community that faces discrimination and a very transient population as well. There are different dialects and languages; English is the one language that unites them."

Burke's message was very similar to what she would share here in the United States. "We talked about how all those aspects of diversity need to be welcomed and accepted into the classroom."

She shared 10 strategies to implement cultural competence and responsiveness – respecting, valuing and incorporating students' diverse cultural backgrounds into instruction and classroom life. They included pronouncing names correctly; teaching with multilingual resources, like books that feature characters from different backgrounds, abilities and experiences; validating students' lived experiences with language like "tell me more;" and apologizing for mistakes.

"Social emotional learning is about the role of empathy in the classroom," Burke explains. "How do you build empathy? One way is by reading stories and thinking about other perspectives. This is not just literature, this is life."

They covered a lot in an hour, Burke says, and there were many questions. She provided her contact information to the teachers. The event, hosted by the Republic of the Philippines Department of Education, was shared more broadly through their official platform, making the content available to educators across the entire country.

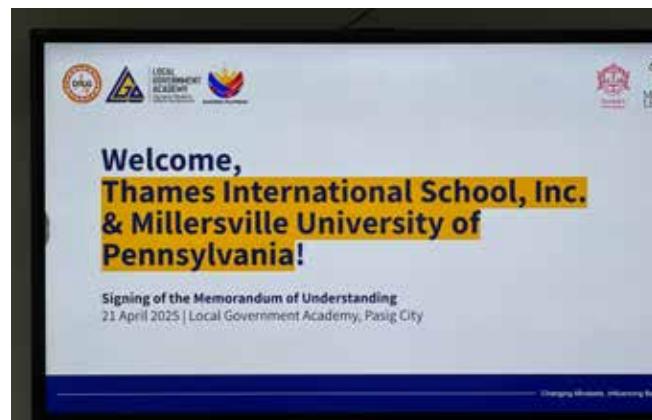
"This is a meaningful opportunity to showcase Millersville's impact on international teacher education and to highlight our commitment to equity, social emotional learning, and culturally responsive practice," says Burke. "The presentation focused on practical strategies for integrating social emotional learning with diversity and inclusion efforts – topics that resonate deeply both locally and globally."

"What we did was not only academic but was also marketing," Kulmala says. "It is remarkable to have Millersville programs promoted to over 800,000 teachers. We hope that some will sign up for one of our Master of Education programs."

Millersville and International Education

There is a good chance that this type of relationship will extend to Thailand as well, according to Kulmala. Through his connections there, he is talking with representatives from a network of 38 campuses supported by the Thai monarchy that service more than 600,000 students.

"These relationships broaden perspectives, and the work to problem solve together is just beautiful," says Kulmala. "Millersville is taking its place in international education." ◆



President Wubah and Millersville delegation visited Thames in 2024 for the MOU signing



Zoe Patterson, Astrid Miranda-Cosme, Nemari Morales and Aryanna Raeford

Creating a Pipeline of Future Teachers

By Mary Dolheimer

Millersville University and the School District of Lancaster have created a pipeline program, the [Future Educator Pathway](#), to address both the national teacher shortage and the underrepresentation of teachers of color. The program, coordinated by Dr. Miriam Witmer, associate professor of educational foundations, also supports current Millersville students of color who are education majors by providing them with leadership opportunities, professional experiences, a support group network and a faculty mentor who works with them through the certification process. Those students are then trained by Witmer to serve as mentors to middle school and high school students of color who are interested in pursuing a career in education.

Genesis Zayas-Garcia '26, who participated as a student at McCaskey High School and is currently a leader in the program, explains the mission of the Future Educator Pathway this way: "... a teacher shortage currently exists, particularly among teachers of color, despite the demographics of students [in the area around Millersville] being predominantly students of color," she says. "The Future Educator Pathway program is a means to combat this shortage and support and empower students of color who wish to pursue a career in education."

Four Phases

The Future Educator Pathway program starts in middle school and continues past college graduation.

Students are encouraged to participate in all four phases:

1. Mentoring Educators for Tomorrow (formerly Color of Teaching Mentoring Program), which pairs area seventh through 12th graders with Millersville student mentors from a variety of majors.
2. Side by Side, which takes college students, typically education and social work majors, into area high schools to encourage them to consider a career in education or social work.
3. Future Educator Academy, a residential experience at Millersville focused on college readiness and exploring careers in education.

4. Dual Enrollment, during which local high school students attend Millersville classes and can earn up to 12 college credits before graduating from high school.

When participants graduate with a teaching certificate, they are guaranteed an interview for any open positions at the School District of Lancaster, which completes the pipeline.

Starting at Millersville

Zoe Patterson, a first-year elementary education major at Millersville University, heard about the Future Educator Pathway program at McCaskey High School, where many of her teachers were Millersville graduates. She has participated in all four phases of the program and arrived on campus in a strong position to succeed.

"As someone who has experienced the Future Educator Pathway through and through, I would 10/10 recommend it every step of the way," she says, "from spending the week on campus to taking college classes through dual enrollment to actively engaging in the club Color of Teaching to lastly getting amazing networking opportunities from college conferences. This has not only helped ease my way through my education process but has allowed me to explore my future firsthand."

Patterson is living on campus with three other McCaskey graduates and first-year students who are participating in the Future Educator Pathway program: Aryanna Raeford - middle education major; Nemari Morales - secondary education major; and Lismarie "Astrid" Miranda-Cosme - early education major.

Graduating and Prepared to Teach

Alexa DiMaggio '25, an educational studies major, graduated in December. She began participating in the Future Educator Pathway as a junior at Millersville, when she became involved with the Color of Teaching mentoring program, now known as Mentoring Educators for Tomorrow. "The Future Educator Pathway program provides invaluable early exposure to the field of education," she says. "It allows high school students to explore teaching as a career while developing practical skills, building confidence and making professional connections. The program bridges the gap between academic learning and real-world classroom experience, which is incredibly helpful when making career decisions. It also offers mentorship opportunities, resources and a supportive community for aspiring educators.

"As an aspiring teacher, I've been able to immerse myself in the classroom environment – assisting with lessons, working one-on-one with students, and observing different teaching styles. These experiences have given me valuable insights into both the rewards and challenges of education. The mentorship I've received has encouraged me to continue pursuing teaching with even more dedication, and the skills I've gained will stay with me throughout my career."

"The Future Educator Pathway is more than a program – it's a commitment to equity, excellence and community," says Dr. Lara Wilcox, dean of the College of Education and Human Services. "By cultivating leadership and mentorship among students of color from middle school through college, we are not only addressing the teacher shortage but also transforming the educational landscape to better reflect and serve our diverse communities. This initiative exemplifies our university's mission to prepare educators who are reflective, resilient and ready to lead." ♦

FACULTY, STAFF *and* ALUM NEWS

Millersville Grad Earns National Award for Best Article by An Undergraduate Student

By Mary Dolheimer

An article by a Millersville University graduate was chosen as the winner of the 2025 Raymond J. Cunningham Prize by the [American Historical Association](#). The national honor, which recognizes the best article published in a journal written by an undergraduate student, was presented to **Claire DeVinney**, a May 2024 graduate who is currently a student in the history doctoral program at the University of Rochester.

DeVinney's senior thesis, "This Popular & Malcontent Temper: Pennsylvania Currency and Transatlantic Commerce, 1720–1723," appeared in the Spring 2025 issue of *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, published by The Pennsylvania Historical Association.

DeVinney's project analyzes Pennsylvania's political controversies during an economic depression in the early 1720s. Pennsylvanians proposed various conflicting solutions, including devaluing metal currency, issuing paper currency, and taxing or prohibiting imports. "Past historical works have tended to present these political debates in terms of class: rich vs. poor and merchants vs. farmers," says DeVinney. "I argue that Pennsylvanians' relationships to transatlantic trade, rather than their wealth, most significantly shaped their stances on commercial and monetary policy."

"It's a significant, national honor for Claire," says Dr. Tanya Kevorkian, professor of history and DeVinney's



Claire DeVinney '24

thesis advisor, who wrote a letter nominating DeVinney for the award. Dr. Robyn Davis, associate professor of history and department chair, and Dr. Clarence Maxwell, assistant professor of history, were active members of DeVinney's thesis committee, according to Kevorkian.

"To have her undergraduate thesis recognized as the best article published in a journal by an undergraduate student is truly impressive and a reflection of Claire's hard work and scholarly ability," says Millersville President Daniel A. Wubah. "This is also a proud moment for Millersville. The guidance provided by Dr. Davis, Dr. Maxwell and Dr. Kevorkian demonstrates the kind of mentorship and support that helps our students achieve at the highest levels. I am grateful for their dedication to fostering such excellence. Claire's success is a point of pride for all of us and a fine example of the strength of our academic programs."

"I am happy to see my scholarship reflect well on Millersville University," says DeVinney. "Drs. Kevorkian, Davis and Maxwell are dedicated and caring professors who represent the University excellently to their students; I hope that my work is a credit to their instruction and mentorship and to the education I received at Millersville."



Millersville Hosts Visiting Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence

By Kelsey Madas



Dr. Alessandra Landini

Millersville University was selected in September to host a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence from Italy to teach undergraduate and graduate courses, and to collaborate with students, faculty, staff and the Lancaster community during the 2025-2026 academic year.

Dr. Alessandra Landini is an expert in inclusive and innovative didactic teaching methods. Her work is influenced by her community and the Reggio Emilia Approach®, a flexible educational philosophy where children are encouraged to express themselves and their interests while developing their personalities through a self-guided curriculum. She serves as headmaster of the Istituto Comprensivo A. Manzoni in Reggio Emilia, Italy, which is comprised of five separate buildings and schools, including a childhood center, three primary schools and a middle school. Additionally, she is an affiliate faculty member of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, where she contributes to global research and teacher preparation initiatives.

The Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program brings visiting scholars from abroad to colleges and universities in the United States, offering discipline-specific expertise to benefit their students, faculty, staff and communities. Landini is one of 25 Fulbright Scholars-in-Residence who will teach and develop innovative courses in the United States during the 2025-2026 academic year. She arrived at Millersville University in August and concluded her time with the program in December.

The Fulbright S-I-R Program is part of the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program that addresses the curriculum and teaching needs of U.S. institutions of higher education. Through the program, U.S. institutions can apply to host a scholar for a semester or full academic year to teach courses, assist in curriculum development, help develop study abroad or exchange partnerships, and participate in speaking engagements and activities that positively engage the local community. S-I-Rs work across departments to enhance, expand and create programs and courses.

Dr. Beth Powers, professor in the Department of Early, Middle and Elementary Education, had previously met and collaborated with Landini through her work as a noted educator and leader. Powers and Landini were introduced via a mutual friend while Powers was traveling in Italy for work, and their meeting led to an early exchange of ideas and teaching methods. Previously, Landini also hosted several Millersville faculty members and students in her home country. Given the success of their working relationship, Powers submitted a 30-page proposal to the highly competitive Fulbright program to help bring Landini on board as Millersville's scholar-in-residence.

For her part, Landini brought her expertise to the University's doctoral studies program on educational leadership. In addition to co-teaching courses with Millersville faculty members and working with the College

of Education and Human Services, Landini presented at numerous organizations throughout the state, worked with local school districts on workshops and STEAM curriculum, and shared her cross-cultural perspectives on education.

"The most enriching aspect has been the feeling of being part of a community that shares my values and inclusive spirit, with a faculty deeply committed to educational vocation and teaching," shares Landini. "I believe that the valuable collaboration with the professors I shared my studies and courses with – Dr. Beth Powers, Dr. Ann Gaudino and Dr. Tiffany Wright – has been the professional and personal experience that has most significantly impacted my human and professional well-being. I truly owe them my gratitude for the enthusiasm with which they have supported this important chapter of my cultural and professional life."

She also adds thanks to her colleagues at Millersville, saying, "I would like to express how much I had appreciated the welcoming presence of the dean, Dr. Lara Willox, and the words of Millersville University's president, Dr. Daniel A. Wubah. The guiding EPPIIC values he strongly promotes are creating a respectful and ethical community where students are inspired to grow intellectually and personally. This commitment is something that, in my opinion, characterized in a particular way this university."

"Hosting Alessandra Landini as a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence gave our students and faculty a transformative opportunity to learn firsthand from one of the world's most respected educational communities," says Powers. "Her remarkable work enriches our curriculum, strengthens global collaborations and sparks innovation in classrooms on our campus and throughout our region."



From Millersville to 30 Rock: Georgea Hall's Next Chapter

By Marissa Farmer '24



Millersville alumna Georgea Hall '24 has been selected for the prestigious NBC Page Program, a 12-to-16-month, full-time role for early career talent with a passion for media. The East Coast program is based in New York City at the NBC headquarters, NBCUniversal. Pages work across NBCUniversal businesses in three (four-month-long) assignments and serve as ambassadors of NBCU. Hall, originally from Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, has taken strides to make her dreams come true in Brooklyn, New York. Career opportunities often come from being a page for NBC; one notable former page is Aubrey Plaza, who went on to star in the NBC sitcom "Parks and Recreation."

What are some of your main responsibilities as a page?

As an East Coast NBCU page, I have numerous responsibilities each week. It's a rotational program, so throughout my year, I will have three different rotations, each lasting approximately four months. I'm currently in my first rotation, working with the production and editorial operations team for NBC Select, which is a commerce news extension of NBC News Digital featuring product reviews, expert recommendations and deals to help consumers when they're making purchasing decisions. I support their day-to-day operations Monday through Friday.

Beyond my rotation, ambassadorship is a major part of the page program. I lead behind-the-scenes tours of NBC Studios, and I also support the audience services teams, helping bring in audiences, checking them in and getting them seated for our live shows, including "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon," "Late Night with Seth Meyers," "Saturday Night Live" and "The Kelly Clarkson Show."

It is not your typical desk job; I spend time on audience services and leading NBC Studios tours. Pages help with major company events like the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree Lighting broadcasts.





You have interned with CNN and now work with NBC. How have those experiences built on each other?

My internship at CNN was my first real introduction to what the media industry looks like on a corporate scale. Being part of a company as large and complex as Warner Bros. really showed me how many moving pieces go into running a media organization. Since it was an internship, my time at CNN was relatively brief, and I was really only beginning to scratch the surface. The page program has built on that by allowing me to step into multiple roles and departments, giving me a fuller understanding of how versatile this industry is while allowing me to see how another major media company operates. Together, both roles have helped me understand this industry from multiple angles.

How did your media production coursework at Millersville prepare you for the industry?

A lot of what I did at Millersville shows up in my day-to-day life as a page. I was a part of the CREW (the student admissions team) for about two-and-a-half years, serving as an ambassador for the University. This experience directly translates to my role as a page, where, in many ways, I am an ambassador for NBC. While I lead NBC Studios tours and interact with guests, I'm honing the same skills in communication, professionalism and guest-experience that I developed at Millersville.

I was also deeply involved in MUTV, Millersville's student television station, which helped me understand the basic fundamentals of live television and the elements that surround it, like social media, writing scripts and coordinating content. All of it has really helped me understand the bigger picture of how this industry works.



While my classes gave me the technical skills I needed for this industry, it was the support and guidance of my professors at Millersville that truly helped shape my path. They saw potential in me I didn't always see in myself and always encouraged me to take on challenges I never thought I could handle. Even when I brought them ideas that might have seemed ambitious, or even a little crazy, they never said no. Their belief in me gave me the courage to pursue opportunities like the page program and inspired me to keep learning, growing and always giving my very best. They continue to be my biggest fans today, and I'm so grateful for their mentorship and the lasting impact they've had not just on my career, but on who I am as a person.

What advice would you offer to current students hoping to break into media production?

My biggest piece of advice is to take advantage of everything around you. College is a unique time to explore different interests and try new things, and you never know which skills might end up being useful or even lead to a full-time career. Being open to anything (even things that may not fit your plans) can teach you new skills, connect you with amazing people and help you grow in ways you didn't expect. Most times, the projects you pursue just for fun become the ones that end up making you truly stand out.

What is one thing you've learned about the industry since becoming a page?

One thing I've learned about the industry is that it's constantly changing. Being part of an environment where ideas move fast and opportunities shift has pushed me to be more open-minded, more flexible and more confident

stepping into the unknown. It's incredibly important to stay curious and adaptable because the people who thrive here are the ones who can grow and evolve right along with it.

What has been the most rewarding part of your journey so far?

For me, the most rewarding part of this journey is the feeling of growing into the spaces I used to only dream about. I've always looked up to NBC, so getting to walk into the building each day and actually be part of the work happening here still feels surreal. Beyond that, it's been incredibly meaningful to feel myself gaining clarity. I'm starting to really figure out what excites me, what I'm good at and where I want to go next. There's something extremely fulfilling about realizing that I'm not just imagining a future in this industry anymore; I'm actively building it. And to have the chance to do that in an environment that actually encourages exploration and trusts me to learn has been the most rewarding part by far.

What has been the most exciting part of joining this program?

This will sound cliché, but everything about this job is the most exciting part. NBC has been my dream company for as long as I can remember, and there are still moments when I walk into the building and pinch myself because I can't believe I work here. It's rare to be in a place that encourages you to explore different roles and figure out what path you want to take. There aren't a lot of other programs that offer something like this right out of college, and I truly could not ask for a better place to kick-start my career.

What do you hope to do in the entertainment industry?

I'm hoping to continue my career at NBC. I'm aiming to work in live entertainment, and the "Tonight Show/Late Night" franchise has always been a favorite of mine. Being part of that team would be a dream. However, I am open to wherever the right opportunity takes me. Right now, I'm really trying to focus on staying present and absorbing the opportunities that are around me. I want to make the most of this stage in my career so I'm ready when the right door opens. ♦

Millersville Alum Hits a High Note

By: Ari Anderson '26



April O'Brien '04, a Millersville University alumna, has built a career that bridges her love of music, education and community. Today, she serves as director of annual giving for The Philadelphia Orchestra, one of the nation's leading performing arts institutions.

O'Brien's connection to Millersville began with her studies in both music education and German. Those disciplines, she says, shaped her creation of meaningful connections: "I received incredible support from the history, German and music departments at Millersville University, where I was encouraged to pursue my passions, explore how my majors intersected, and continue researching my areas of interest. At the heart of it all is connection – something those early studies helped me discover."

After graduating in 2004, O'Brien moved to Washington, D.C., where she interned at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum alongside the museum's musicologist. The experience proved to be rewarding, a combination of her academic interests in music and history. She says, "I received support from mentors in both departments to explore music of the Holocaust, culminating in a recital that opened the annual Millersville University Conference of the Holocaust." Post internship, O'Brien taught high school German, transitioned to Philadelphia nonprofit and museum sectors to focus on development and fundraising, and ambitiously earned a master's degree in arts administration from Drexel University.

Even as her professional focus shifted toward administration, music remained a defining part of her life. O'Brien performed with the Philadelphia Singers Chorale, sharing the stage with The Philadelphia Orchestra. She also helps to secure the funding for The Philadelphia Orchestra that keeps the ensemble's signature "Philadelphia Sound" thriving. As director of annual giving, she oversees donor engagement and connects with supporters.

Dr. Micheal Houlahan, professor and chair of the Tell School of Music at Millersville, recently reconnected with O'Brien at the Orchestra's opening night. "April's career reflects the depth of Millersville's music program and how its graduates continue to impact the arts on a global scale," Houlahan says.

O'Brien recognizes Millersville as laying the foundation for her success, particularly through the University's rigorous music theory and solfège courses. She says, "Their rigorous and immersive curriculum based on the Kodály method was transformative for me; by the time I graduated from college, I was a well-trained and confident sight-singer, theorist and ear trainer."

She remains grateful to faculty mentors such as Dr. Houlahan and Dr. Philip Tacka, professor of music, for shaping her musical and professional path. She says, "Dr. Houlahan and Dr. Tacka are two of the most influential and impactful teachers I have ever had. I credit Drs. Houlahan and Tacka with teaching their students the definition of perseverance and immersion. I cannot recommend this program enough for students who are eager to pursue a music career that will be life-changing and eye-opening."

From her days as a student in the Tell School of Music to her role within one of the world's most celebrated orchestras, O'Brien's journey exemplifies the lasting impact of a Millersville education and the many ways alumni continue to bring art and community together. She summarizes her experience: "My time at Millersville stands out as a special moment in my life that continues to inspire me today." ♦



Education Professor Wins PASSHE Keepers of the Flame Award

By Kelsey Madas

Dr. Miriam Marguerita Gomez Witmer, associate professor in the [Department of Educational Foundations](#), received a Keepers of the Flame Award from [Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education](#) in October at the PASSHE Summit.

The award recognizes an individual from each of the 14 PASSHE university campuses for contributions to creating and promoting diverse, equitable and inclusive environments that cultivate a sense of belonging. Award recipients may be students, staff, faculty, administrators or community members.

Witmer coordinates Millersville University's [Future Educator Pathway](#), a pipeline program to address both the national teacher shortage and the underrepresentation of teachers of color. The program also supports current Millersville students of color who are education majors by providing them with leadership opportunities, professional experiences, a support group network and a faculty mentor who works with them through the certification process.

Witmer was instrumental in creating a summer Future Educator Academy for high school students. Exclusive to Millersville's campus, the program serves students from school districts across the state by connecting them with faculty, college student mentors and a campus residential experience. In addition, she is actively involved in mentoring local middle school and high school students through her Side-by-Side program, which provides them with college mentors throughout the school year.

Additionally, she is an Equity and Inclusion Faculty Fellow and Trainer, past chair of MU's President's Commission on Cultural Diversity and Inclusion

and a member of the Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium. She is a board member of the International Mentoring Association, where she shares her expertise in culturally relevant mentoring.

"I am deeply honored to receive the Keepers of the Flame award," explains Witmer. "This recognition is a celebration of the collective efforts of all those who strive to foster a culture of diversity, equity and belonging on our campus. It is my great privilege to serve our students in numerous capacities, but most importantly as a mentor and advocate. I am grateful for the colleagues and students who have walked this journey with me. Your passion and dedication inspire me every day. Let us continue to light the way forward, ensuring that everyone feels valued and heard, and no one walks this path alone."

Dr. Lara Willox, dean of the College of Education and Human Services, says that Witmer works tirelessly for her students. "Miriam Witmer exemplifies what it means to put students first. Her unwavering dedication to listening to, valuing and elevating student voices influences every decision she makes. Miriam's commitment ensures that education at Millersville University isn't just about learning – it's about creating a sense of belonging."

"The Keepers of the Flame Award honors individuals whose leadership, dedication and impact have strengthened the PASSHE community," said Christa Cobb, assistant vice chancellor and chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer. "These recipients exemplify how a commitment to student success, inclusive excellence and academic achievement can transform lives, open doors and inspire others across our campuses." ♦

CAMPUS NEWS

Celebrating Commencement



Tim Mayza '18 with President Wubah

President Wubah with Marjorie 'Marge' Trout

More than 350 graduates crossed the stage to receive their diplomas this fall, and former Philadelphia Phillies pitcher Tim Mayza, a 2018 graduate of Millersville University, offered the address to the new alumni during [commencement](#) exercises on Dec. 13.

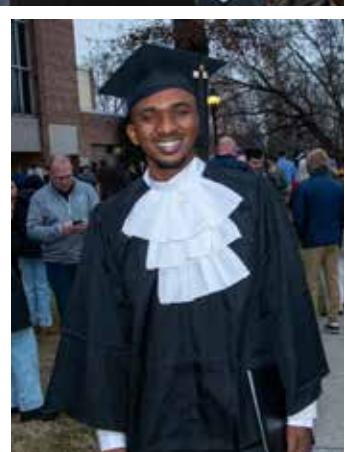
Mayza earned a bachelor's degree in multidisciplinary studies with a concentration in sport business from Millersville and a Professional Master of Sports Administration from Ohio University, putting him among the approximately 3.9% of Major League Baseball players with a bachelor's degree. He lives in Harleysville, Pa., with wife Darian and their three children. He is an active alumnus, attending Millersville University baseball games and fundraising events.

At the ceremony, Mayza shared the following with the graduates: "As you prepare to leave today – diploma in hand – remember that you received a top-notch education that you will carry forever," he said. "Millersville provided you with so much more than

what you learned in the classroom. It has instilled the value of hard work, the power of teamwork, and that learning does not stop when [you leave] the classroom; it is continuous, in order for you to be truly great at your craft."

Marjorie 'Marge' Trout was also recognized at the ceremony when she received the President's Medallion. This honor is given to those who have demonstrated outstanding service to the University. She served as a coach, educator and administrator at Millersville for 37 years. She was the MU's inaugural director of women's athletics and added six varsity athletic teams to the University's offerings during her tenure.

To see the entire ceremony, [click here](#) and to read the profiles of some of the members of the Class of 2025, [click here](#). ♦





CONFERENCE ON THE HOLOCAUST & GENOCIDE



Zuzanna Ginczanka

Translating Zuzanna Ginczanka

The conference's first event, "Translating Zuzanna Ginczanka," is a panel discussion and poetry reading at 7 p.m., March 3, in Myers Auditorium, McComsey Hall. Sponsored in part by the Jewish Community Alliance of Lancaster, the event will feature the poetry of Zuzanna Ginczanka, a Polish-Jewish poet who was executed by the Nazis at the age of 27 in 1944.

Translators Dr. Joanna Trzeciak Huss, Dr. Mira Rosenthal and Alex Braslavsky will share English versions of her poems and discuss the challenges of bringing this unique voice to American audiences.

Ginczanka was born Zuzanna Polina Gincburg in Kiev in 1917. She and her family fled shortly after the Russian Revolution to the border town of Równe in Volhynia (present day Rivne, Ukraine). She adopted the name Ginczanka, and though Russian was her native tongue, chose Polish as her language of poetic expression.

Ginczanka later moved to Warsaw, where she was celebrated in literary circles and published her only collection of poetry, "On Centaurs." At the outset of the war, she was living in Lwów, which the Soviets occupied until the Nazi invasion in 1941. The relentless pursuit and extermination of Jews eventually sent her into hiding.

Millersville University's annual Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide celebrates its 41st year with two free March events centered on the theme "Translating Trauma into Literature and Performing Arts."

"She ended up hiding, which was hard to do with her striking looks and dark skin," says Dr. Katarzyna Jakubiak, associate professor of English and world languages, who is moderating the panel discussion and chairing the conference planning committee. "She was eventually turned in to the Nazis by her landlady but bribed her way out of that and moved. She later wrote a poem about her landlady while she was in hiding. It was used after the war as evidence in the trial of the landlady's cooperation with Nazis." There are currently four published or forthcoming English translations of Ginczanka's poetry. "She is a forgotten voice who has been rediscovered," says Jakubiak.

Last spring, Jakubiak led a book club that discussed a recently translated memoir of the Hungarian Holocaust survivor József Debreczeni. She was inspired by Debreczeni's depiction of the Holocaust as an "other worldly experience" in which the usual laws of moral gravity did not apply. "It is incomprehensible to contemporary people who live in relatively peaceful times," says Jakubiak. "The process of making us understand this experience resembles translation from another language."

Jakubiak's scholarly interest in translation and inspiration from the memoir introduction led to the establishment of the theme for this year's Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide.

"It is also worth remembering that the Holocaust happened literally in languages other than English. Our poetry panel directly tackles this specific challenge of conveying Holocaust history to American audiences," says Jakubiak. "Ginczanka, the poet that the panel focuses on, chose Polish as her language, but her background encompasses Yiddish, Russian, Ukrainian and French as well. The growing international interest in her poetry indicates that her work, perhaps partly because of these multilingual influences, has extraordinary vitality that counterbalances her premature death."

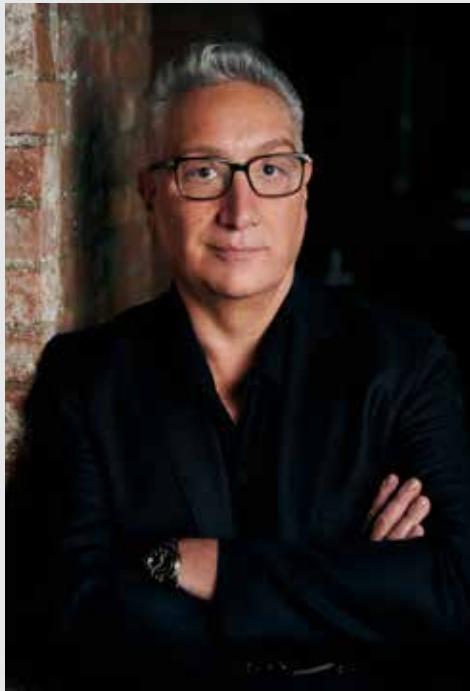
Before the panel, Joanna Trzeciak Huss will lead a teacher's workshop about teaching Holocaust poetry in translation. Trzeciak Huss is an acclaimed scholar and translator, known, among other things, for translating Nobel-prize-winning Wislawa Szymborska's poetry into English.

Here There Are Blueberries

The theme of translation is apparent during the P. Alan and Linda Loss Keynote Lecture at 7 p.m., March 19, in Biemesderfer Concert Hall, Winter Center.

Tony- and Emmy-nominated director and playwright Moisés Kaufman will discuss his award-winning play ["Here There Are Blueberries"](#) as a form of translation of Holocaust history. The event will include dramatic readings excerpted from the play and performed by Millersville University students.

Kaufman is a Venezuelan-Jewish American theater director, playwright, filmmaker, founder of Tectonic Theater Project based in New York City and cofounder of



Moisés Kaufman

Miami New Drama at the Colony Theatre. He was awarded the 2016 National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama, and his work was represented earlier this year at Millersville with its production of "The Laramie Project."

Conceived by Kaufman and cowritten by Amanda Gronich, "Here There Are Blueberries" is a play "inspired by interviews conducted with the real people depicted in it, historical transcripts and other primary sources," according to Kaufman's "A Note About the Text."

"Those real people include researchers at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, family members of Nazi officials and others," says Barry Kornhauser, assistant director of campus and community engagement at the Ware Center for the Arts, who serves on the conference planning committee. "The impetus was the discovery of a lost photo album chronicling the daily lives of those running the Auschwitz concentration camp."

During the keynote presentation – a dialogue with Kaufman – scenes of the play will be enacted by Millersville students to inform the conversation. Those scenes will include the projection of the photographic images – mostly from the album – accompanying the text, according to Kornhauser. Kaufman regards these as "an integral part of the fabric of the story."

"The theme of this conference is 'Translating Trauma into Literature and Performing Arts,'" Kornhauser says. "That is precisely what 'Here There Are Blueberries' does, by portraying a little-known side of the Holocaust's horror through a theatrical telling a profound transformative enhancement of what the researchers depicted in the play set out to do in exploring the photo album's content."

In the play's script, one of the researchers says, "And it is our responsibility to receive these artifacts and make them available to scholars, to artists, to anthropologists, to all of these people whose job it is to translate experience into knowledge."

"It is our committee's belief that Kaufman's keynote event itself will similarly serve to translate experience – a performative experience – into knowledge. Knowledge about the Holocaust certainly, but also about the capacity of ordinary mankind to execute extraordinary evil," Kornhauser says. "It should hold interest to scholars, artists, anthropologists and to all people interested in modern history, theater, philosophy, photography and especially in human nature itself as a unique and compelling 'translation' of what philosopher Hannah Arendt called 'the banality of evil.'" ♦

Robotic WorX Secures First Commercial Sponsor

Robotic WorX – a public-private partnership between Millersville University and Precision Cobotics of Lititz that gives college and high school students opportunities to experience real-world automation challenges – has secured its first major commercial sponsorship with *Advanced Atomization Technologies* of Clyde, N.Y. AA Tech designs, produces and supports fuel nozzles for aircraft engines.

"This sponsorship provides opportunities for students to come up with engineering solutions for an industry that is new to the program," says Dr. Marc Harris, dean of Millersville University's College of Science and Technology. "They'll be working to meet the defined outcome AA Tech is looking for, which is great preparation for a career in manufacturing."

Directed by John Bridgen, president of Precision Cobotics, and Dr. John Haughery, associate professor and coordinator for the automation and robotics engineering technology program at Millersville, Robotic WorX helps students connect STEM skills to real-world engineering

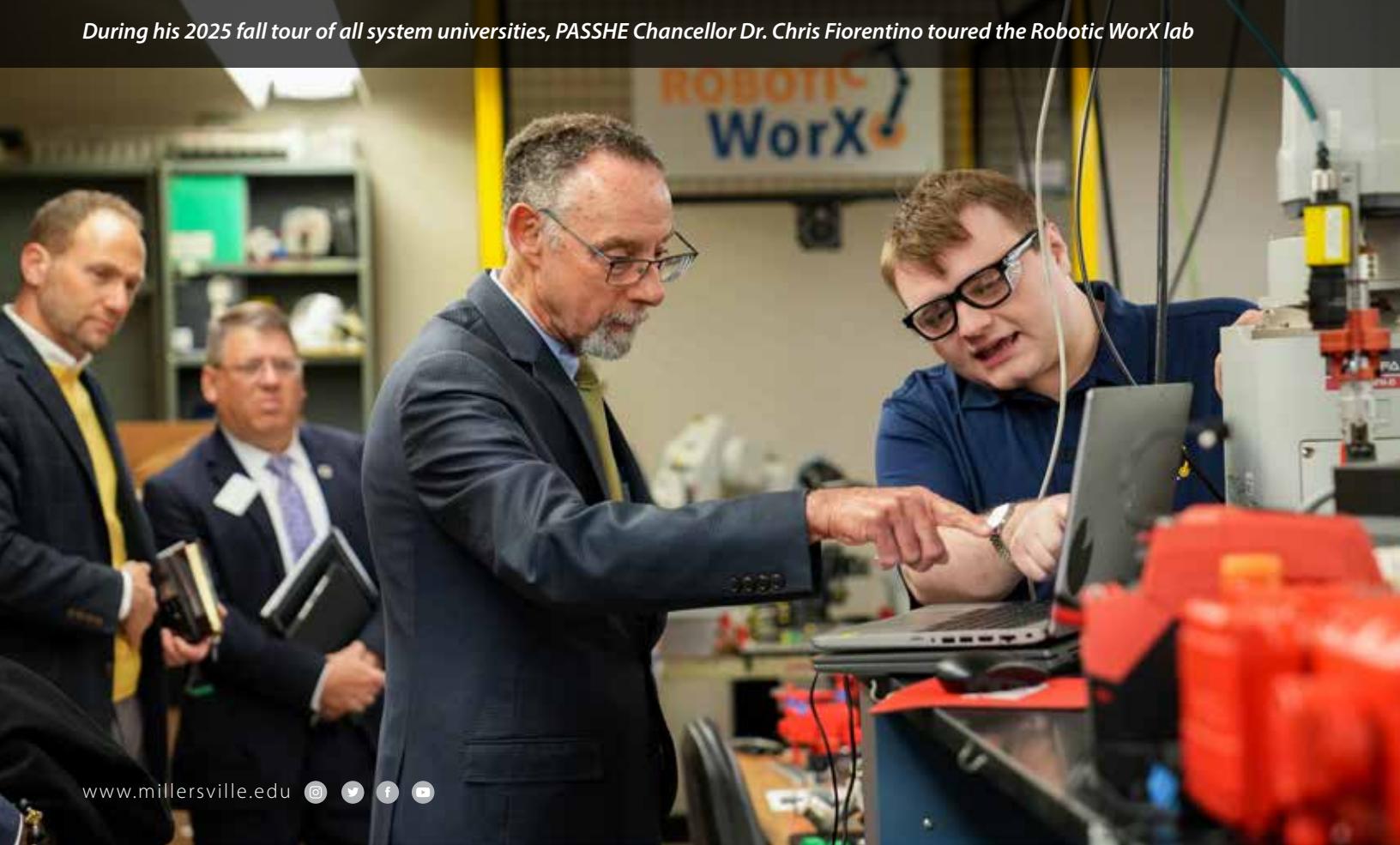
careers and manufacturers tackle labor and production issues through workforce development and innovative processes.

"Seeing young people rise to the challenge of solving current engineering challenges for some of the global leaders in the industry is priceless! Robotic WorX is quickly becoming a serious workforce destination for students and manufacturers alike," says Haughery.

Bob Hildebrand, director of product integrity at AA Tech, believes in the program's impact. "Programs like Robotic WorX are essential for industry growth and for inspiring young minds to enter challenging fields," he says.

"Beyond the incredible educational impact," says Bridgen, "this milestone represents a major step toward long-term sustainability and provides tangible proof to our generous seed investors that the Robotic WorX model delivers real commercial value. We're just getting started. The future of workforce development in automation is bright!" ◆

During his 2025 fall tour of all system universities, PASSHE Chancellor Dr. Chris Fiorentino toured the Robotic WorX lab





Glorious Sounds of the Season Celebrates 20 Years

By Marissa Farmer '26

In its 20th year, the annual Glorious Sounds of the Season event featured more than 30 musical acts from the [Tell School of Music](#).

Three performances of the annual holiday concert were held on Dec. 6 and 7, with ticket sales topping 1,800 and generating just over \$50,000 in revenue. Proceeds from the concert benefit student scholarships and program development at the Tell School.

"To recruit the strongest students to the Tell School of Music, certain sizable scholarships are awarded to talented students," says Dr. Jeffrey Gemmell, assistant professor/producer of choral studies, who is the founding producer of Glorious Sounds of the Season. "At least 20 smaller scholarships are awarded every year to students who maintain a high grade point average, participate fully and provide leadership for Tell School. Students receive these financial gifts to use in whatever way benefits their education the best, including living expenses, textbook costs and more. Funds are set aside for use by the Tell School for recruitment and programming ventures to build the strongest program possible."

This year's concert featured more than 300 students and faculty, including singers, instrumentalists, large ensembles, small ensembles, commercial groups, solo acts and "everything in between," says Gemmell. "Our students perform so beautifully, with such heart, energy, enthusiasm and feeling, that one can't help but catch the holiday spirit. The vast variety of holiday repertoires and performers is quite distinctive – how often do you hear an entire School of Music perform in one concert? – and there's truly never a dull moment!"

The musical event includes audience participation with sing-alongs that have become a beloved tradition. Gemmell mentions that Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" from Messiah is a fan favorite, bringing hundreds of returning audience members to engage with holiday celebrations and witness the brilliance of student performances.

Millersville alumni also hosted a Holiday Maker's Market from 3 to 7 p.m. on Dec. 6, creating a holiday shopping experience filled with unique, handcrafted goods from local artisans, students and community vendors. ♦



Fiery Passion: A Student's Blazing Journey

By Marissa Farmer '24

Savannah Stahl, a third-year art education major, brings the heat to Millersville University – literally. Trained by professional fire-eating and fire-breathing instructor Thomas Santiago, Stahl has mastered the art of fire performance and has even performed with big music acts like Lauryn Hill and Zion Marley. For nine years, Stahl has wowed audiences across the country, but she now has plans to pursue her passion for teaching and her interest in fine metalwork.

Stahl first discovered the art of fire performance as a teenager attending a music festival with her mother. "I was so captivated," she says. "I ended up speaking to the performers after the show, and they told me about websites where you can buy props." She then taught herself tricks through YouTube tutorials. Six months later, at another event with fire performers, she learned about intensive safety procedures and lit her fire staff for the first time in a controlled environment. She said the fire performance community encouraged beginners like her and often let her try new props to explore the range of the art form.

After establishing herself as a performer, Stahl moved across the country to Colorado, where she spent four years teaching skiing. She later returned to Pennsylvania and taught environmental education at two nonprofits in Adams and Franklin counties. Those experiences helped Stahl realize her calling for education.

Her years of fire performance, working as a ski instructor and teaching environmental education inspired her to apply to Millersville University to major in art education. "Building stage presence and engaging with a crowd are skills I hope to carry over to when I am teaching in a classroom," she says. Stahl has always had a passion for art, pursuing various forms such as dance, performance art, metalwork and painting.

"When I was in high school, my art teacher brought us to tour Millersville," Stahl says. "I remember seeing students' work hanging inside the building and thinking, 'I wonder what it would be like to have your work hanging on the wall.' When selecting a college, MU was the only place in my mind I wanted to go."

After graduation, she hopes to teach in a high school and connect students with art, using nature to inspire youth to create and get outside. ◆



Metalwork art by Stahl



Millersville, Garman Builders Partner to Offer 55+ Community with University Amenities

By Mary Dolheimer

[Wynfield at Millersville](#) is like many other 55+ communities being built for people who want to spend less time taking care of their home and more time engaging in life's activities.

"People are right-sizing – less square footage and smaller yards – so they can spend more time living and less time doing chores," says Hope Graby '89, director of marketing for [Garman Builders](#), a family-owned residential home builder in Lititz that's constructing such communities across southcentral Pennsylvania. "They are making decisions earlier when they are still active and healthy, when they can establish new friend groups and when they can connect with the community around them."

Located on Frederick Street, about a quarter mile from campus, Wynfield at Millersville is unique, however, because of the partnership between Millersville University and Garman Builders. Houses there come with an amenity package that cannot be found anywhere else and is free for the first year, with Garman Builders covering the cost.

"Residents can have access to a robust amenities package on the campus of Millerville University," Graby says. "This includes use of the gym, library and pool; access to cultural and entertaining events and athletic events; student mentoring and volunteering opportunities; continuing education through auditing courses; and the availability of meal packages through University Dining and Catering Services."

Elizabeth Tran, executive associate to the vice president of development at Millersville, serves as the University's liaison to Wynfield and administers the Millersville University Resident Affiliate Program. She sends weekly emails to the members and shares information on events and activities that may be of interest to them. "Our aim in the Advancement office is to connect MURAP members with the benefits they are privy to on campus," she says, "including select VIP/invitation-only events we host. And members know they can contact me at their convenience to find answers to any campus-related questions."

Wynfield at Millersville had a grand opening in June 2024. A community of 69 duplex homes, buyers can choose from three floor plans and three different home types.

"Typically, once I receive word from Garman staff that a new property has closed, I reach out to the buyers to welcome them to the community," says Tran. "I also schedule a tour of campus to point out the primary spots of interest, and we spend some time getting to know one another. That's what I appreciate about being a liaison to this group – hearing about where they are coming from and why they chose to make Millersville their new home."

Phase two of construction is now underway and includes 34 duplexes and four single-family homes. "We are launching a community space where residents can come together for events like book clubs, happy hours, or family get-togethers," Graby says. The neighborhood already offers a dog park and walking trails, too.

Those looking for more can travel 10 minutes to downtown Lancaster, where they have "easy access to bigger entertainment and dining districts full of art, restaurants, and venues like the Ware Center and the Fulton Theatre," Graby adds.

"This community is especially great for people who are alumni or staff/faculty, who appreciate everything Millersville University has to offer, the vibrancy of the community around them, and the opportunities to continue to engage with the University," Graby says.

"I have enjoyed using the exercise facilities and indoor track, as well as attending several of the University programs," says Jenny Engle '80. "I look forward to auditing some classes in the spring." ◆



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ATHLETICS NEWS



Dr. Lauren Witmer '01 Named NCAA Silver Anniversary Award Winner



Dr. Lauren Witmer '01 followed a brilliant and record-setting career on the tennis court with a renowned and life-changing profession as a physician and surgeon. Witmer, along with Drew Brees, Tamika Catchings and Nick Ackerman, was a recipient of the prestigious NCAA Silver Anniversary Award. Witmer was recognized at the NCAA Honors

Celebration in Washington, D.C.

The Silver Anniversary Award recognizes individuals on the 25th anniversary of the conclusion of their college athletics career, celebrating the achievements and contributions of former student-athletes who have excelled in their professional lives and continue to exemplify the values of collegiate athletics. First presented in 1973, the award has been given to just 311 individuals, a list that includes star professional athletes, Olympians, statesmen and stateswomen, and others who have excelled in difference-making professions.

Witmer is one of only five graduates of a Division II institution and joins Cheyney's Ed Bradley (1989) as the only PSAC alumni to receive the award. Additionally, Witmer joins astronaut Sally Ride (1998), public servant and businesswoman Lisa Rosenblum (2000), educator and rights advocate Alpha Alexander (2001), and softball coach Diane Baker (2000) as the only former women's tennis players recognized.

As a student-athlete at Millersville, Witmer was a two-time PSAC Athlete of the Year and four-time conference singles and doubles champion. She led her team to four PSAC titles and four NCAA championship appearances, setting a school record with 107 doubles wins. She was inducted into the Millersville University Athletics Hall of Fame in 2010. After earning her medical degree, she became a board-certified urogynecologist and now serves as division chief and managing physician at Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, where she was named a 2024 Physician of the Year. Her commitment to global health is evident in her medical mission work in Guatemala, and her legacy in tennis continues through her induction into the Lancaster County Tennis Hall of Fame and recognition by the U.S. Tennis Association.

"We are honored to see Dr. Lauren Witmer recognized with the Silver Anniversary Award by the NCAA," said Director of Athletics Kate Corcoran. "This award acknowledges the incredible player that Lauren was for Millersville and celebrates the professional achievements in medicine throughout her career. Her dedication and commitment to her community are evident through her medical missionary work and the recognition she has received in the Lancaster community. We look forward to celebrating this recognition at the ceremony in January." ♦

Wrestling Program Remembers and Honors Cody Becker '08



The Pennsylvania State Police Ceremonial Unit stood solemnly at attention on the Cooper Park infield in front of a silent crowd as the low whir of helicopter blades grew louder. The state police helicopter crossed Cooper Park, banked to the left and crossed again before vanishing out of view behind the grandstand.

The helicopter flyover closed an emotional tribute ceremony for former Millersville wrestler Cody Becker '08, who dutifully served his community as a detective sergeant with the Northern York County Regional Police before being killed in the line of duty on Sept. 17, 2025, at the age of 39. The wrestling team's annual outdoor match on Millersville's baseball field was the perfect setting to honor Becker's life and family.

At Millersville, Becker won 84 matches in four seasons, won the NCAA East Region title as a 149-pounder and qualified for the NCAA Championships two times. As a senior, he was named the Theodore H. Rupp Award

winner as the team's most valuable wrestler.

"I relied on Cody to be a team leader," said former Millersville coach Neil Barnes. "He did that without asking for the job. I relied on Cody to be a role

model. But he did that without even knowing it. When Cody won, he came off the mat with such humility that you wouldn't know if he won or lost. I believe Cody was special. He did that by doing amazing things like giving back to his community with coaching and mentoring and saving many lives as a police officer. Cody would have done those same heroic deeds without wearing a badge."

After graduation, Becker began a distinguished career as a police officer. He was recruited by Mark Bentzel, the former chief of police, who joined Barnes, and teammate



Jarrett Hostetter '10 as speakers at the ceremony. After only a short time of service, Becker entered a burning building and helped rescue a family of four. That was the type of selfless act that the speakers noted made Cody a remarkable person.

"I challenge everyone to live as he lived," said Hostetter. "He always served others first, and as I become more mature, I realize that you don't become a leader by lifting yourself up; you do it by building up others. Have the heart of service that Cody had."

Following the ceremony, Millersville gave its fans plenty of reasons to smile by scoring a convincing victory over nationally ranked West Liberty. The team sported shirts emblazoned with a seal in memory of Becker with the words "Ville Strong" written across the back. An online store opened after the match with all proceeds from the special edition merchandise directly supporting Becker's wife and two children.



A scholarship was also established to honor Cody's legacy. Support for the Cody Becker Memorial Scholarship can be made [here](#).

"Through my 20-plus-year career with Lancaster City Police and 15 years as chief at Millersville, I've observed collegiate wrestlers excel at policing, as we learn discipline, teamwork, self-motivation and humility," said Millersville University Chief of Police Pete Anders '85. "I can think of no better way to honor Cody's service and sacrifice to his family and his community than to provide scholarships to educate and train the future Cody Beckers at the 'Ville in the classroom and on the mat. I ask our 'Ville wrestling alumni and Cody's police and wrestling families to support the Becker family so that Cody's name and legacy will live forever at Millersville University." ♦



Men's Soccer Captures PSAC East Title, Widdowson Presented with Sixth Coach of the Year Award

The 2025 season provided even more credence to Steve Widdowson's case as the GOAT of PSAC soccer coaches. He won his record-setting sixth PSAC Coach of the Year Award. His Marauders won their sixth PSAC East title since 2008 and made their 10th PSAC Championship game appearance in the last 17 years.

Widdowson's career winning percentage ranks 27th in NCAA Division II history and third among PSAC coaches with at least 10 seasons. He guided a 2025 roster with just two seniors to an 11-4-4 record, a national ranking and an 8-0-2 run over the final two months of the season before bowing in the title game to Gannon, 2-1.

It was a remarkable season considering the youth of the roster. Seven freshmen were regular starters, including goalkeeper Gavin Massimi, who ranked second in the PSAC in both goals against average and saves. First-year students Brian O'Neill and Juan Ortiz Escobar also received All-PSAC East honors.

"As we prepared for the 2025 fall season, we knew that we were aiming a little more at a two-year project since we were going to be fairly young this year and then have several guys graduating in 2026," Widdowson says. "Therefore, our primary goal as we started this fall was to provide opportunities for growth and development as individuals and as a collective, and to see how all of our new players adapted to the college level."

"As we continued to figure things out and problem-solve, we started to build some good momentum, and most importantly, we grew in confidence. I think that was the biggest growth that we saw in the team; they started to really believe in themselves and each other. Furthermore,

the team really developed a winning mentality, and there were several games that we struggled in but found a way to get over the finish line. This growth in confidence was the difference-maker as it meant the players' mentality approaching games was in a much better place than when we started the season."

Junior Zander Leik led the Marauders with 11 goals, a total that tied for 10th in program history. Fellow junior Roy Parkyn earned his second consecutive All-PSAC East First Team honor, and defender Kehmar Green earned All-PSAC East First Team honors as well.

The Marauders only missed the NCAA Tournament because teams from outside of the Super Region 1 top 10 won the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference and East Coast Conference Tournaments, securing automatic bids and stealing Millersville's at-large bid. But no shine was stolen from the accomplishments of the 2025 season, and the future is bright for Widdowson's Marauders.

"I told the team, we are basically at halftime now," Widdowson says. "Like we always do at halftime in games, we are going to analyze and assess and figure out what adjustments we have to make to be better in the second half. The most important thing is that we cannot stand still. We need to keep evolving the roster and finding areas of improvement, development and growth. We will continue to challenge our players to get better and look to recruit players that will enhance the roster while also providing stability for the long term. We will set ourselves some high goals and then make sure we put in the work to provide us with the best opportunity to achieve as many of those goals as possible." ♦



Millersville Athletics, Baseball Team Make a Wish Come True

Batting practice at Millersville University's Black & Gold World Series quickly turned into a trip to the Major League Baseball World Series and a dream come true for youngster Silas Eberly.

Silas, a 13-year-old Lancaster native with an ongoing heart condition known as cardiomyopathy, came to campus as part of a special Make-A-Wish reveal, granted to Millersville's student-athletes after the Student Athletic Advisory Committee raised \$6,500 for the organization in 2024-25. More than 400 student-athletes joined Silas at Cooper Park for pregame of the Black & Gold World Series, the baseball team's annual intrasquad close to fall practices.

"We are honored and privileged to partner with Make-A-Wish and grant a wish to Silas and his family," said Director of Athletics Kate Corcoran. "The ability for Silas and families like the Eberlys to persevere through challenges is an incredible example for our student-athletes. We are proud of their work, led by SAAC, to be able to be a small part of fulfilling a wish. It was an amazing night for our student-athletes, the athletics department and the Millersville community to witness."

The baseball connection was perfect for the wish reveal. Silas donned a Millersville baseball jersey and participated in warm-ups with the team and took some cuts on the field during batting practice. Millersville's student-athletes then filled the infield and presented gifts to Silas as he rounded the bases. Among the gifts were a custom Phillies jersey and tickets to two 2026

Phillies-Marlins games. After throwing out the first pitch to family friend and Millersville football player Asher Wolfe, Silas pivoted to second base to see Millersville's student-athletes holding signs that read "You're going to the World Series."

Silas and the Eberly family will attend games three and four of the upcoming World Series, which will be played in Los Angeles, Toronto, Seattle or Milwaukee. While the site hasn't been determined, the trip of a lifetime awaits Silas. The tickets were made possible by Fanatics, an official sports partner of Make-A-Wish, helping Silas' dream come true.

"It was a fun experience," said Silas. "It was great to throw the baseball around with the team...It was really nice of (the student-athletes). Getting to go to the World Series will be fun and watching it with my family will be fun."

Silas' wish reveal was the sixth hosted by Millersville Athletics since 2016. The wish reveal events have been hosted in coordination with basketball, softball, football, and track and field events, and now a fall baseball exhibition.

"Give all the credit to the Student Athletic Advisory Committee," said Millersville baseball coach Jon Shehan. "They do a fantastic job raising money for this event. We are really happy (our team) got to provide a great experience for Silas." ♦

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Class of 1975 Makes Gift in Honor of 50th Reunion



The Millersville State College Class of 1975 celebrated its 50th class reunion during Homecoming with a BBQ luncheon. More than 70 alumni and their families returned to campus to renew old friendships and share fond memories of life at the 'Ville.

During the event, class members contributed \$1,180 to the Millersville University Alumni Association Legacy Scholarship.

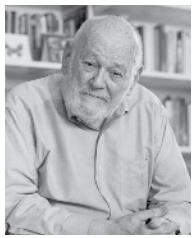
The Alumni Association also sponsors the MU Athletic Scholarship (male and female), Alumni Academic Scholarship and the Hazel-Rork-Schmuck Scholarship.

"A big thank you to the Class of 1975 for their support of Millersville students," says Dan Sidelnick '75, chair of the Alumni Association's scholarship, grants and awards committee. "We encourage alumni, faculty and friends of Millersville University to contribute to any one of the hundreds of scholarships made available for students through the generosity of organizations and donors." ◆



Class Notes | 2026

1960s



► **DR. DONALD KILHEFNER '60**, Los Angeles, CA, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026 academic year. A historian, psychologist and pioneering LGBTQ+ activist, Kilhefner cofounded the Los Angeles LGBT Center and the Radical Faeries movement. A former Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia, he has dedicated his life to education, social justice and community healing through intergenerational dialogue.

1970s

► **DALE THOMAS '70**, Lancaster, retired in May 2025 as a track and field official after 30 years with the NCAA and PIAA. He previously retired from the Bristol Borough School District in 2008 after 38 years of teaching and coaching varsity football and baseball.

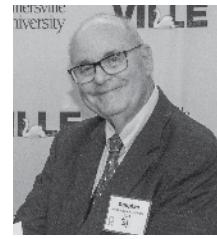


► **DR. RAYMOND JANIFER '71**, Philadelphia, wrote the memoir "Chestnut Hollow Blues," published by Archway Publishing. The book recounts his remarkable journey from a difficult childhood in Norristown, PA, through hardship and loss, to earning a full athletic scholarship and ultimately achieving three graduate degrees, serving as a testament to resilience, perseverance and triumph over adversity.



PANARELLA '72 (left)

► **MIKE PANARELLA '72**, Marlton, NJ, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026 academic year. A lifelong educator and advocate, Panarella has spent more than five decades strengthening the Millersville community by organizing alumni events and reunions for football players and Mu Alpha Kappa brothers. In his hometown, he led the creation of the First Responders Monument and several war memorials at Freedom Park in Medford Township, honoring those who serve.



JOHNSON '74

► **DOUG JOHNSON '74**, Harleysville, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026 academic year. Johnson built a respected legal career serving as a public defender and in private practice before holding three terms as a township supervisor. Now retired, he continues to serve his community through leadership roles with the Indian Valley Public Library, the North Penn Water Authority, the Lower Salford Fire Company and his church.



WENGER '76, '89M

► **DR. JAY WENGER '76, '89M**, Lancaster, was inducted into the Manheim/Manheim Central Hall of Fame for his career



PHILLIPS '72 (right)

► **MARK PHILLIPS '72**, Quarryville, was selected by the Alumni Association as the Outstanding Volunteer Service Award winner for the 2025-2026 academic year. Phillips dedicated 44 years to teaching middle school art in the Solanco School District, inspiring countless students and fostering creativity in the classroom and beyond. Since retirement, he has remained an active volunteer at Millersville, serving on the Alumni Association Board, reunion committees and event planning groups. He also sponsors a scholarship for future educators and contributes his time and artistic talents to the Quarryville Lions Club, the Southern Lancaster County Historical Society and his church.



PERRY-CROSS '79, '90M

► **DR. VALERIE (WILLIAMS) PERRY-CROSS '79, '90M**, Lancaster, earned her Ph.D. in church and ministry leadership from Lancaster Bible College | Capital Seminary & Graduate School in May 2025. After six years of rigorous coursework and independent research, she successfully defended her dissertation, titled

"Examining the Wealth Building Perspectives of African American Adults Through the Lens of Transformative Learning."

► **MARYL (GAZZILLO) HANSEN '79**, Princeton Junction, NJ, retired from the Department of Art & Archaeology at Princeton University after 42 years of service. She was responsible for classroom and faculty operations, audiovisual events, and digital image and data restoration and management.

1980s

► **JENNIFER "JENNY" ENGLE '80**, Millersville, was selected by the Alumni Association as the Distinguished Alumni Award winner for the 2025-2026 academic year. Engle built a lifelong career in communications, rising to national leadership as president of the Association for Women in Communications and later founding her own marketing and communications firm. An award-winning speaker and mentor, she continues to support students and her community through education and outreach.

► **PAMELA REAM '84, '92M**, York, retired in January 2025 from York Hospital after more than 39 years of service. She began her career in the crisis department and concluded it as a social worker in the case management department. On her final day of work, she was honored with the Rose Award, recognizing her excellence in service and dedication to patient care.

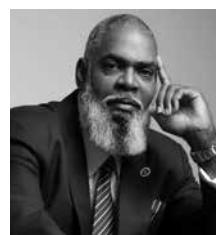


JULIE (MAVROS) IZZO '88, Ewing, NJ, owned the oldest known living retired thoroughbred racehorse, New Year's Eve, until his passing on May 13, 2025, at age 39. At the time of his

death, New Year's Eve was one of the longest-lived thoroughbreds on record.

► **KEN SIMOSKO '89**, Bismarck, ND, retired on April 30, 2025, from the National Weather Service after a distinguished career as a meteorologist. He most recently served with the Bismarck office, concluding decades of dedicated public service in weather forecasting and communication.

1990s



QUARLES '91

► **DR. AL QUARLES '91**, Philadelphia, released his fifth novel, "Beneath the Concrete Crown: The Dark Tapestry of Philadelphia." Set in North Philly, the story follows 14-year-old "Duchess" Amber-Rainne Johnson, daughter of a fallen kingpin, as she navigates a brutal world of crime, betrayal and survival. This high-stakes thriller explores the harsh realities of urban life and the fight for survival both in the streets and the wild.



CLOUSER '91

► **JEFFREY G. CLOUSER '91**, Elizabethtown, began his new role as director of the Memorial Bells at Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren in August 2025. He is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. Clouser's research on pastoral musicianship has appeared in the journal of the United Church of Christ Musicians Association and the American Choral Directors Association's ChorTeach. In addition to leading music ministries in Lancaster and Lebanon, he has served as president of

the Central PA Handbell Festival and sung tenor with the Elizabethtown College Community Choir.

► **ERIC JONES '91**, Tulsa, OK, retired from the Arkansas-Red Basin River Forecast Center after 34 years with the National Weather Service. He served as the office's lead in operations and scientific development, concluding a distinguished career in meteorology and hydrology.



KOONS '98

► **DR. GREGORY KOONS '98**, Mountaintop, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026 academic year. Koons serves as executive director of Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21 and will soon assume the presidency of the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units. A dedicated mentor and advocate for inclusive education, he also cohosts the leadership podcast "Lead On with Greg & Mark," supporting educators across the state.



BROWN II '98

► **JOEL M. BROWN II '98**, Newark, DE, is president-elect of the American Association for Respiratory Care, becoming the first Delawarean to hold the position. The AARC is a national organization representing more than 150,000 respiratory therapists in the U.S. and over 40,000 members worldwide. Brown's term began in December 2025.



HANDEL '99

► **KRISTEN (KOSAKOWSKI) HANDEL '99**, New York, NY, was recognized by Insurance Business America as one of its Elite Women of

2025. Handel serves as executive vice president at Alliant Insurance Services, where she continues to lead and inspire within the insurance and risk management industry.



KAUFMAN '99

► **DR. ALEXANDER L. KAUFMAN '99**, Muncie, IN, the Reed D. Voran Distinguished Professor of Humanities and

professor of English at Ball State University, recently published the scholarly book "Christmastime Texts and the Popularity of the Robin Hood Tradition."

2000s

► **DR. MOLLY (HAAS) COWAN '01**, Mechanicsburg, was honored as the 2025 Pennsylvania Psychological Association Ethics Educator of the Year for her outstanding contributions to ethics education in psychology.



GALLAGHER '01

► **JILLIAN A. GALLAGHER '01**, Philadelphia, was promoted to air quality program manager at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. After 23 years with the agency, she now oversees the air quality permitting, compliance and enforcement sections in the Southeast Regional Office.

► **ANDREW ZVORSKY '01**, Orwigsburg, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026 academic year. Zvorsky serves as a senior manufacturing engineer with the Volvo Group, where his expertise in advanced manufacturing processes supports the company's cabover product. His career has included roles with Dana Incorporated and CarTech, reflecting his technical excellence and leadership in driving innovation.



BAKER '02

► **ERIN (JOHNSON) BAKER '02**, Pittsburgh, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026 academic year. Baker serves as senior vice president and head of stakeholder engagement for PNC's Responsible Business Strategies, where she leads initiatives advancing corporate responsibility, diversity and inclusion. She has been recognized with numerous honors, including Millersville's Young Alumni Achievement Award and Pittsburgh's 40 Under 40.



DANZ '03

► **DR. BRANDON DANZ '03**, Lancaster, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026 academic year. Danz serves as vice president of population health at WellSpan Health, where he develops value-based care models serving more than 200,000 patients across south central Pennsylvania. He also serves on Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education's Board of Governors and Millersville's Council of Trustees and

remains active in the Lancaster community through service on multiple boards.



ELLIKER '03

► **STEVE ELLIKER '03**, Downingtown, launched his own financial planning and investment management firm, Elliker Financial, LLC. Elliker serves as owner and financial adviser, providing personalized financial guidance to clients across Pennsylvania and beyond.



LENNON '06

► **SETH LENNON '06**, Frederick, MD, serves as director of content development and media relations policy for the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association. He was recognized at the 2025 PR Daily Nonprofit Communications Awards, where SMACNews received an honorable mention for best print publication and his video series, "Project Spotlight," earned an honorable mention for top nonprofit video.



SESSOMS '06

► **DR. AMBER SESSOMS '06**, Hummelstown, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026 academic year. A nationally certified school psychologist and leadership consultant, Sessoms is the founder of Natural Inclination LLC, a practice dedicated to building authentic, inclusive communities. She was the first person of color to receive the

Pennsylvania School Psychologist of the Year Award and currently serves as chair of the Programs Committee on Millersville's Council of Trustees.



HEISEY '07

► **JASON HEISEY '07**, Kalispell, MT, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026 academic year. A board-certified art therapist and licensed clinical professional counselor, Heisey provides school-based mental health services and leads cancer support art therapy groups. He has also served as president of the Montana Art Therapy Association, advocating for the profession and the healing power of art in mental health.



RUTLEDGE '08, '18M

Hempfield School District and was recognized for her dedication to inspiring students and fostering excellence in education.

2010s



MIZRAHI '10

► **JARED MIZRAHI '10**, Lititz, is an entrepreneur, real estate developer and owner of PCI Auction Group, the nation's largest online restaurant equipment auction company. After graduating, he taught mathematics at J. P. McCaskey and Manheim Township High Schools while continuing to build his eBay businesses. Mizrahi's

entrepreneurial journey began at age 12 selling golf balls online, and in 2013 he decided to focus on PCI full-time. Under his leadership, the company has expanded nationwide, earned a place on the Inc. 5000 list three times and now handles thousands of restaurant liquidations annually while also helping manufacturers and wholesalers manage brand-new scratch-and-dent equipment. He also owns and manages landmark community properties that include the Lebanon Farmers Market and Place Marie Mall in downtown Lancaster, where he focuses on revitalization, vendor success and community engagement.



LOFTUS '11

► **TIMOTHY LOFTUS '11**, Lancaster, received the award for Outstanding Contribution to the Advance of Applied Meteorology from the American Meteorological Society. The honor recognizes his pioneering work using artificial intelligence to create value-added meteorological datasets that enhance business and operational decision-making. Loftus serves as director of data science at AccuWeather and has worked for the company for nearly nine years.

► **KALEB KOONS '12**, Elizabethtown, earned a degree in economics from Millersville University. He currently serves as chief administrative officer of Spooky Nook Sports, having previously served as corporate director of human resources and human resources manager. He also worked for three years as human resources coordinator at Hershey Entertainment.



YOUNG '13

► **JEREMY YOUNG '13**, Lancaster, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026

academic year. Young serves as vice president of community and economic development at Lancaster City Alliance, where he leads initiatives to attract investment, strengthen small businesses and implement Lancaster's economic development strategy. He also manages the city's City Revitalization & Improvement Zone and serves on the Redevelopment and Land Bank Authorities of Lancaster.



KREIDER '12

► **KATELYN "KATE" KREIDER '12**, New York, NY, graduated from the Smith College School for Social Work in 2018 and was named an NYU Silver School for Social Work Zelda Foster Leadership Fellow in Palliative and End-of-Life Care.



EVANGELISTA '13, '15M

► **JORDAN (OTT) EVANGELISTA '13, '15M**, Manheim, was selected by the Alumni Association as a Young Alumni Achievement

Award winner for the 2025-2026 academic year. Evangelista co-owns HQ Water Solutions, a growing company recognized with the SCORE Lancaster-Lebanon Small Business Award and featured in national and local publications. She also manages an Airbnb business in downtown Lancaster and serves on the Manheim Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors, where she advocates for local business and community growth.



WEEBER '14

across Central Pennsylvania. A Lancaster County native and J. P. McCaskey graduate, he became a hotel general manager by the age of 24 after launching his own aquatics business as a teen. Weeber also serves on the boards of Explore York and the Ephrata Baseball Association, where he is an active coach and community volunteer.

► **SETH WEEBER '14**, Ephrata, serves as regional manager for The Wankawala Organization, overseeing a portfolio of hotels



BEKERÉ '16

2025-2026 academic year. Bekere earned her medical degree from Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine and completed her family medicine residency at Lancaster General Hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic. She now practices family medicine in New Hampshire, providing compassionate care informed by her global health training and outreach experience.

► **DR. PINEAL BEKERÉ '16**, Lebanon, NH, was selected by the Alumni Association as a Young Alumni Achievement Award winner for the



GREENE '19

Marauder for the 2025-2026 academic year. A two-time national champion, eight-time All-American and 12-time PSAC champion, Greene was recently inducted into the Millersville University Athletics Hall of Fame. She works as a financial analyst at High Real Estate Group and continues to serve Millersville as a volunteer track and field coach and board member for the Cy Fritz Foundation.

► **SUNFLOWER "SUNNY" GREENE '19**, Mount Joy, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous



MCNEIL '15

► **SIERRA MCNEIL '15**, Lancaster, was selected by the Office of Alumni Engagement as a Marvelous Marauder for the 2025-2026

academic year. McNeil serves as director of workforce development at La Salle University and president of the National Association of Social Workers-Pennsylvania Chapter, where she leads statewide efforts to strengthen the behavioral health workforce and advance social work advocacy. She also mentors emerging professionals, modeling advocacy, compassion and resilience.



DINORSCIA '17

► **ANTHONY DINORSCIA '17**, Newport News, VA, joined Analytical Mechanics Associates as a research scientist at NASA Langley Research Center.



MARTORANA '18

► **JENNA MARTORANA '18**, Pottstown, was crowned Ms. Collegiate USA 2025 during the national competition held in Washington, D.C.



SNELLEN '15 (right)

► **DOUG SNELLEN '15**, Macungie, was named a Lehigh Valley Business Forty Under 40 honoree. He serves as AVP Market Manager and

Financial Wellness Chair at First Commonwealth Federal Credit Union.

Representing Pennsylvania, she was recognized for her dedication to mental health advocacy and her platform, "It's Okay To Not Be Okay." Throughout her year of service, she will continue partnering with local and national organizations to promote mental health education, awareness and access to resources.



RIVARD

► **SERGEANT FIRST CLASS ALLAN RIVARD**,

Lancaster, was selected by the Alumni Association as an Honorary Alumnus for the

2025-2026 academic year. Rivard arrived in 2017 as a military science instructor at Millersville, where he revitalized the Army ROTC program, guided students through the challenges of the pandemic and helped preserve campus traditions like the Marauder Salute Cannon. After retiring from 22 years of distinguished military service, he returned in 2024 to serve as program manager for Army ROTC and the Veterans and Military Resource Center, where he continues to mentor students and expand opportunities for military-connected learners.

Faculty/Staff

Celebrations



PICCININO's '10, '11

Michelle, on Feb. 10, 2025.



WALTON '12

John and Michael Roland, on June 12, 2025. They join proud big brother Benjamin.



WIRTH '15 & BROGAN '16

baseball game and chose to raise funds for Millersville Athletics in lieu of wedding gifts.



NEWTON '21

Scranton. Emily earned a Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Millersville University and teaches second grade in the Valley View School District. The couple honeymooned at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL.

► **SAMANTHA (CAMPBELL) PICCININO '11 and MICHAEL PICCININO '10, Albany, NY, welcomed their daughter, Elaina Michelle, on Feb. 10, 2025.**

► **KATELYN (JERNIGAN) WALTON '12, and husband, Miles, of Southbridge, MA, welcomed twin sons, Christopher and Benjamin.**

► **JOHN BROGAN '16 and CHELSEY WIRTH '15, Lancaster, were married on July 25, 2025. The couple met at a Millersville**

baseball game and chose to raise funds for Millersville Athletics in lieu of wedding gifts.

► **EMILY NEWTON '21, Eynon, married Russell Pacovsky on Oct. 26, 2025, at the Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel in**

Scranton. Emily earned a Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Millersville University and teaches second grade in the Valley View School District. The couple honeymooned at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL.

In Memory of 1960s



KRAMER '62

► **FAY FOLLETT KRAMER '62, Millersville, died Oct. 24, 2025, at the age of 92. After graduating from Millersville State Teachers College, she began teaching at Penn Manor Jr./Sr. High School before joining Millersville's educational foundations department, where she served from 1970 until her retirement in 2000. A Millersville University Hall of Fame inductee and local historian, she was active with the Historical Preservation Trust of Lancaster and the Lancaster County Historical Society. She is survived by her son, Bruce, and his family.**



NIED '62

► **JOHN A. NIED '62, Danville, died April 27, 2025, at the age of 84. While at Millersville, he was a member of Alpha Beta Alpha, the Newman Club and Student Council, and served as secretary of the Theatre Arts Club as well as manager for the basketball and track teams. Nied earned his degree in library science and later a master's degree from Villanova University. He worked for the Danville Area School District for 40 years, most of them as the high school librarian. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; four sons; and 12 grandchildren.**

► **P. RICHARD FORNEY '68, Myerstown, died Sept. 27, 2025, at the age of 93. He earned degrees from both Millersville University and Elizabethtown College. Forney**

taught and later served as director of guidance services at Annville-Cleona High School. Following retirement, he served in the Brethren Volunteer Service and as executive director of Lebanon County Christian Ministries. He also codirected The Palms Estates Retirement Community in Lorida, FL, with his wife, Verna. Active in the Myerstown Church of the Brethren, he sang in the choir and served as moderator and board member. He is survived by his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



HITE '68

► **SHIRLEY A. HITE '68, Dover, died Oct. 15, 2025, at the age of 79. She earned her bachelor's degree from Millersville University and a master's degree from Shippensburg University. Hite taught for 30 years at Dover Elementary School, where she was known for her kindness and dedication to students. She is survived by her husband of 49 years, Steven; daughter, Wendy; twin grandchildren, Nathan and Allyson Wisotzkey; and brother, Brian Coble.**



EBERLY '69, '71M

► **BONNIE L. EBERLY '69, '71M, Lititz, died Oct. 16, 2025, at the age of 77. As a Millersville student, she was a member of the synchronized swimming team, the Dolphins. Eberly taught in the Ephrata Area School District for more than 20 years and was an active member of the Ephrata Lions Club for over four decades. She is survived by her husband, G. Robert; daughters, Denise Hills and Melissa Strunk; and grandson, Austin.**



WITMAN '69

► **PHILIP E. "PHIL" WITMAN '69,** Narvon, died Oct. 10, 2025, at the age of 78. While at Millersville, he was a member of the

Roddy Scientific Society, Band, Choir and Alpha Phi Omega, where he served as secretary and second vice president. Witman taught biology at Garden Spot High School for 34 years and later volunteered as a docent at the Philadelphia Zoo for two decades. He was also active with Historic Poole Forge and Elverson United Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, Kathy; two children; and four grandchildren.

1970s



GRETTON '73

► **JOAN E. GRETTON '73,** Wexford, died Sept. 25, 2025, at the age of 74. While at Millersville, she was a member of

Delta Phi Eta and the Touchstone. Gretton began her career as a biology teacher before earning a second degree in food science from Delaware Valley College, graduating as valedictorian. She later worked as a scientist and cancer researcher at the University of Pittsburgh, coauthoring numerous publications in radiation oncology. She is survived by her sons, Kevin and Todd, and three grandchildren.



FRESE '75

► **CHRISTOPHER R. FRESE '75,** Conestoga, died June 13, 2024, at the age of 71. Born in Sellersville, he was the son of Herman C. and

Elizabeth S. Frese. Frese began his career as a fisheries biologist at Muddy Run Ecological Laboratory in 1974 and joined Kleinschmidt Group in 2000. Much of his work centered on the Susquehanna River. He is survived by his wife, Susan; children, Katherine S. and James C. Frese; and sister, Wendy J. Irwin. He was preceded in death by his parents and brothers, Richard S. and W. Scott Frese.



MAIALETTI '76

► **DEBORAH ANN MAIALETTI '76,** Hatboro, died Oct. 13, 2025, at the age of 70. While at Millersville, she was a member of Delta Phi Eta, the Archery Club and the women's soccer team. She earned a degree in psychology from Millersville and a master's degree from the University of Connecticut. Maialetti worked as a counselor and advocate for young women before dedicating her life to ministry and youth leadership at Trinity Orthodox Presbyterian Church. She is survived by her husband, Mark, and daughter, Emilyann.



ZAHNOW '77

► **JUDY ZAHNOW '77,** Wilmington, DE, died Sept. 26, 2025. She earned her degree in education from Millersville and dedicated her career to teaching and inspiring students. Known for her kindness and creativity, Zahnow was admired by colleagues and former students alike. She is survived by family and friends who remember her warmth and lifelong commitment to education.

► **JOHN C. MANTON '78,** Philadelphia, died Sept. 27, 2025, at the age of 77. While at Millersville, he was a member of the Archery Club and Choir. Manton earned his degree in education and

a master's degree in library and information science from Drexel University. He worked as a librarian for the Free Library of Philadelphia and as a rare book cataloger at the American Philosophical Society. An accomplished historian and author, he published several works on the history and architecture of Philadelphia. He is survived by extended family and friends.

1990s



LUCARINO '98

► **LAWRENCE J. LUCARINO '98,** Downingtown, died Sept. 26, 2025, at the age of 49. While at Millersville, he was a member of Acacia Fraternity, the All Greek Council and the American Society of Safety Engineers. Lucarino built a successful career in safety management and was known for his dedication, humor and love of family and friends. He is survived by his wife, Mary (McKee) Lucarino; his mother, Rosemary (Connors) Lucarino; and sons, Frank and Vincenzo Lucarino.



OTTINGER '98

► **SHELLY A. (WALKLETT) OTTINGER '98,** Upper Chichester, died Oct. 8, 2025, at the age of 49. While at Millersville, she was a member of the Theta Phi Alpha sorority. Ottlinger earned a degree in marketing and served as senior marketing manager at BPG International for 11 years. She was a devoted wife, mother and community volunteer, remembered for her joyful spirit and love of family. She is survived by her husband, Glenn; and sons, Zachary and Chase.



ARNOLD '12

►**ERIK ANTHONY ARNOLD '12**, Lancaster, died Oct. 13, 2025, at the age of 37 after an eight-year battle with brain cancer. A former Millersville football

player, he earned his bachelor's degree in 2012 and most recently worked for HDI Railing Systems in Columbia. Arnold was known for his craftsmanship in woodworking, love of the Buffalo Bills and devotion to his family and dogs. He is survived by his wife, Riley; parents, Thomas and Marisa; brother, Seth; and extended family.

Faculty and Staff



THOMSON

►**DR. EDWARD A. THOMSON**, Raleigh, NC, died Oct. 5, 2025, at the age of 85. Born in Lisbon, NY, he earned his bachelor's degree

in physical education from SUNY Cortland, a master's degree in counseling education and a doctorate in psychology from Penn State University. Thomson dedicated his career to higher education administration, serving at Penn State University, SUNY Cortland, SUNY Geneseo and Millersville University. During his time at Millersville, he especially enjoyed coaching lacrosse and working with international students and Greek organizations. He retired in 2000.



To inform us of a passing, contact the Millersville University Office of Alumni Engagement by email at alumni@millersville.edu, by phone (717) 871-7551 or by completing the Class Notes form here: millersville.edu/alumni/class-notes



It's official!

We hope to see our alumni and friends on campus Oct. 17, 2026, for next year's Homecoming festivities.

DR. RICHARD WILL '52

Dr. Jennifer Shettel '92, professor and department chair for early, middle and elementary education, shared in an email to colleagues the passing of her father, Dr. Richard Will '52, professor emeritus of educational foundations. She included a photo of a 1972 article from the Millersville State College Exchange, "Richard Will: Dedicated Through-and-Through," that



WILL '52

highlighted her father's experience as a public-school teacher and administrator, and finally, as a Millersville University faculty member.

Will entered Millersville as a social studies/secondary education major in 1948. He met his wife, Barbara, at the University. She was also an education major. After graduating, he taught for the Warwick School District for 14 years, then spent one year as a junior high principal at Manheim Central School District. Eager to get back to teaching, he returned to his alma mater and spent five years supervising student teachers in their classroom. He then took over teaching the ED211 course, "Foundations of Modern Education."

"One of the ways Will sees himself as helping college students is as an experienced teacher," the Exchange article reads. "'I'm not a scholar,' he explains, 'and I'm not a research professional or anything like that. But I've spent most of my time in public schools, and I can give kids good practical advice.'"

Will and Barbara passed along the teaching gene to their three daughters. "In fact, teaching seems to run in the family," the article says. "Daughter Jody, who is married, teaches at the Cocalico Middle School, and Peggy is teaching her first year in Elco. Even 9-year-old Jenny wants to teach; she hopes to be a dog trainer."

As it turns out, Jenny did launch a career in teaching. After 16 years as an elementary teacher at Cocalico School District, she returned to her alma mater, Millersville, just like her father.

Will's full obituary is below:

Richard S. Will, age 95, passed away peacefully on Sunday, October 26, 2025, at the Moravian Manor in Lititz, PA. He was the son of the late Lloyd and Eva Will. He was preceded in death by his three brothers: Lloyd Jr., Ray, and Eugene. He is survived by his loving wife of 72 years, Barbara (Grill) Will, his three daughters Jody Lausch (wife of Robert Lausch), Peggy Will, and Jennifer Shettel (wife of Ted Shettel), five grandchildren: Adam Lausch, Elizabeth (Lausch) Elmer, Jordan Lausch, Noah Shettel, Lucy Shettel, and five great-grandchildren.

Richard was born in 1930 and was a long-time resident of Ephrata, PA. He graduated from Ephrata High School in 1948 and served as class reunion leader for many years. In 1952, Richard graduated from Millersville University and completed his master's degree in Education at Temple University in 1956. In the 1960s Rich continued with graduate work in history, also at Temple University.

As a navy reservist, Rich was called to active duty in 1952 and served for two years as an officer aboard the DE-447, Albert T. Harris. His career as a teacher in the Warwick School District began in 1954 and included studying the Russian language at F&M College as well as Dartmouth College. Rich taught elementary Russian at Warwick in the 1960s. He served as a principal for one year in the Manheim Central School District before taking a job as a professor of Educational Foundations at Millersville University in 1969. Rich retired as a Full Professor from Millersville in 1990.

Rich was an active member of Bethany United Church of Christ in Ephrata for many years, where he taught Sunday School classes, served on the Consistory, and worked to preserve the church's history through the publication of several book projects. Rich enjoyed serving on the board of the Cocalico Valley Historical Society as well as the Ephrata Recreation Center.

In 2018, Rich and his wife Barbara moved to the Moravian Manor community, enjoying their life there together. Rich loved reading, travelling, and artistic drawings. ♦

