

WILMU[®]



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“When we commissioned local artist Celeste Kelly to create a work that reflected our culture, we hoped she would illustrate the vibrancy of our students, the passion of our faculty, and the dedication of our staff.”

—Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon



Here's to the next 50!

What an exciting year we've had in celebrating our 50th anniversary! We captured its significance in videos, plaques and anniversary flags; we developed stories depicting 50 ways we give back; and we presented 50 scholarships. Our grand finale — the mosaic that now graces Varsalona Hall at Wilmington University Brandywine — is featured on the cover.

When we commissioned local artist Celeste Kelly to create a work that reflected our culture, we hoped she would illustrate the vibrancy of our students, the passion of our faculty, and the dedication of our staff. The theme would center on the iconic clock tower that has served as a symbol of hope and opportunity to our diverse students.

Employees attended clay workshops and designed unique tiles, many of which were embedded in the mosaic. In this issue, we offer a pictorial feature of the process, from beginning to end. I hope you'll find the time to see it.

We present numerous stories about our athletes, students, alumni, faculty and staff. We also produced a feature that explains why transfer students are so successful. Since 2014, more than 75 percent of the students entering our undergraduate programs have transferred credits from other schools. They come to us to complete their academic goals, and we consider it a privilege to fill that critical need. **WU**

Enjoy the issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "LaVerne T. Harmon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon
President

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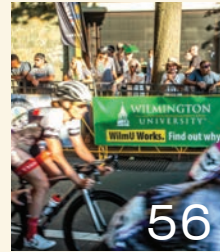


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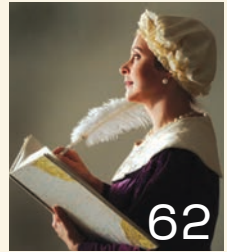
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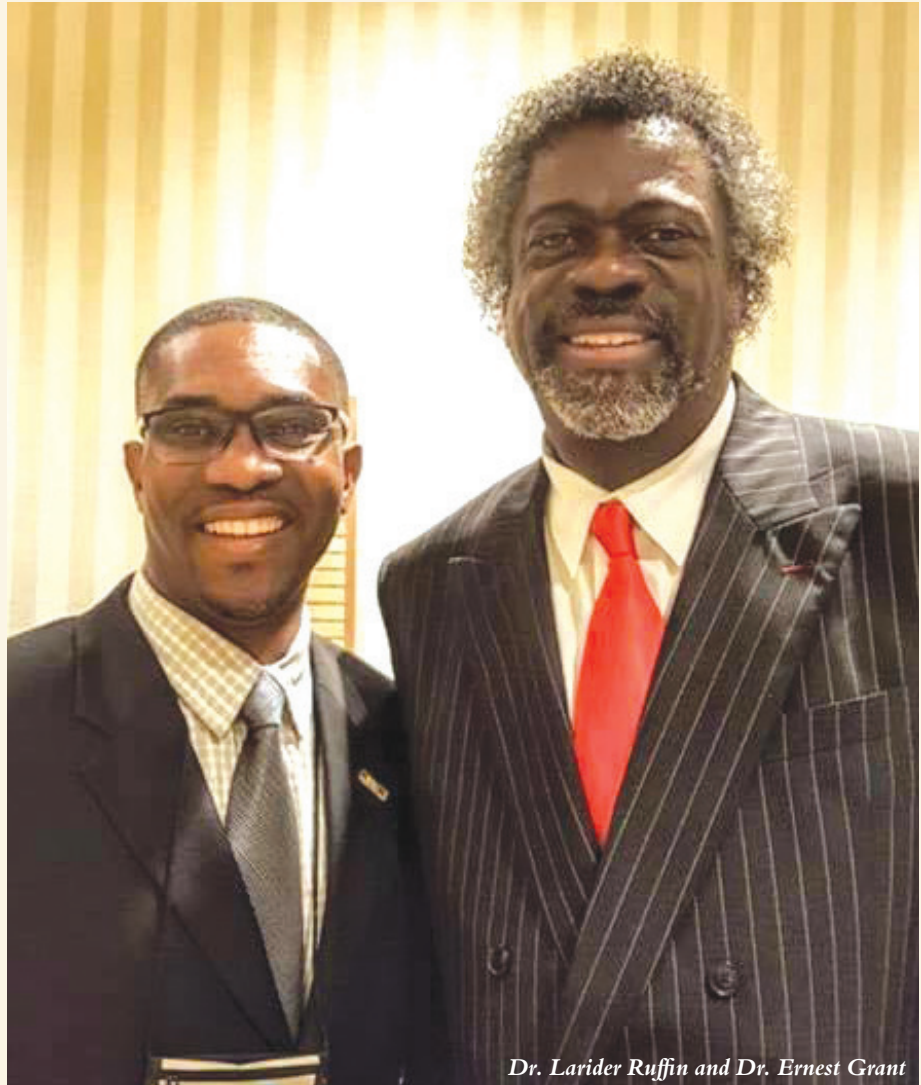
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#TRENDING

by Rebecca Slinger



Dr. Larider Ruffin and Dr. Ernest Grant

1. WilmU DNP alum **DR. LARIDER RUFFIN** (pictured, left, with American Nurses Association President Dr. Ernest Grant) spoke at the National Black Nurses Association Conference this summer. This year, Dr. Ruffin also earned the Trailblazer Award from the association.



2. The **MUSIC SCHOOL OF DELAWARE** now offers college-level (and credit) courses in music education in a new partnership with WilmU that began this fall for high school juniors and seniors, and already-enrolled WilmU students.

3. To mark the NFL's 100th season, Joe Browne, the longest-serving employee ever for the NFL, compiled a list of accomplished NFL alumni who have had successful post-playing careers. Assistant Chairman and Associate Professor **DR. LEM BURNHAM** (Eagles 1977-79), of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, made the list as an educator.



Dr. Lem Burnham



4. NEW STUDENT KICKOFF DAY in August was a blast! We welcomed many of our newest Wildcats who toured the New Castle site and met their classmates and faculty.



5. After a 47-year career as a nurse, **DR. RUTH JONES** retired as chief nursing officer at the University of Maryland Shore Regional Health. She was the first nurse there to obtain a doctorate degree, which she earned at WilmU.



Read exclusive stories on our digital edition.



Don't forget to connect with Wilmington University on Facebook.

THE NEWS

A Champion for International Students

ESRA SURMEN knows a thing or two about volunteerism — likely the reason she earned Wilmington University’s 2019 Trustees Award for Service. Originally from Turkey, she devotes many hours to her Turkish and Wilmington University communities by mentoring and teaching English to children, serving as a translator at a local community center, planning cultural events, and fundraising for the Delaware Islamic Foundation.

The Trustees Award for Service is presented to a graduate who has exhibited outstanding service to Wilmington University and the community. An international student herself, Surmen was overjoyed to represent the international student body.

“This was extremely important to me because it provided the opportunity to show other international students that winning an award like this is possible for them, too,” she says.

Surmen has been in America for more than nine years yet still understands the struggles that international students face. Without the proper guidance and support, entering into a new country can

be intimidating. You don’t have family or friends to support or assist you. Surmen faced these struggles — experiences that now fortify her mission to help international students succeed.

WilmU’s Alumni Association Vice President Dr. Mary Chen helped her realize that she could be more than a student, so Surmen assumed a lead role in the new WilmU International Alumni Association Chapter.

With her 3.39 GPA and B.S. in Accounting, Surmen landed accounting jobs at two small companies and has returned to WilmU to pursue her MBA. She plans to earn her CPA designation.

She is grateful for her Turkish family and her husband, Ibrahim Surmen, whom she married in 2015. She’s made good friends at WilmU and at her two jobs, and is appreciative of the support from the Delaware Islamic Foundation.

One can only speculate on what this distinguished alumna will achieve. **WU**

—Desiree Smith

If you’d like to learn more about WilmU’s International Alumni Association Chapter, contact Donna Hardy at donna.j.hardy@wilmu.edu.

Originally from Turkey, Surmen devotes many hours to her Turkish and Wilmington University communities.

PHOTO BY JMIMAGES.COM



Esra Surmen



An essay by WilmU adjunct Mike Boyd

A TEACHER'S REFLECTION



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE BOYD

I'm nearing the end of what has been a wonderful, life-affirming teaching career. I don't know what the future will hold. The mystery of it all has made me more reflective, prompting me to look back on my career and wonder how I served my students: Did I inspire them? Was I able to make a difference in their lives?

Maybe I did. Once, a parent texted and thanked me for allowing her daughter to express herself through her art. It reminded me of my belief that there's something unique and valuable about every human

being. For this student, art was her solace. One of my teaching roles was to find that uniqueness, polish it, value it and display it. It's not just the teacher's job; it's part of the job of living. We all have to dig in and find our distinctiveness.

In the Episcopal Church, to which my wife and I belong, a tenet is to respect the dignity of every human being. There's not a lot of dignity being respected these days, particularly on social media. Yet even social media can't silence positive voices.

I once taught a foreign student who came to America from a poverty-stricken, unsafe country. I cried when she thanked me for making my classroom a safe place, then described how our class saved her life during a traumatic time.

My students who became teachers are my legacy. Through them, I learned to find that piece of gold in every person; that shred of goodness. I've never met anyone who didn't have it.

Literature teaches us empathy. It teaches us to think. It helps us deal with our emotions. Writing helps us express these feelings. If I have one thought to share, it's this: Finding the goodness within is well worth the effort. **WU**

A former WilmU employee and now adjunct, Mike Boyd was a longtime mentor-teacher for students and practicum teachers. He read and evaluated hundreds of student writing samples that were submitted as part of their graduate admissions processes.

Assistant Professor Dr. Jason James Jr. shares a proud moment with student Dr. Richard Johnson.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD JOHNSON

Dr. Richard Johnson: Employing a No-Nonsense Attitude

In 1988, **RICHARD JOHNSON** received both his bachelor's degree from Norfolk State University and his second lieutenant's gold bar from the Army.

By that time he had already served eight years of active duty as a helicopter weapons repairman. When he transitioned from enlisted man to officer that year, Johnson says, "I was pretty much the oldest lieutenant in the world, and my tolerance for a lot of nonsense was low."

This no-nonsense attitude apparently served him well. Working in military intelligence, he climbed through the ranks and exited the Army in 2012 as a major after a 23-year career.

His work ethic has carried over to his civilian endeavors, especially his side business, Hit the Deck Entertainment, which was incorporated 12 years ago in Johnson's hometown of Orange, Virginia. Hit the Deck is an event and party planning company, with

most of its jobs in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. The company provides audio and video support, photography and catering services, and also conducts various philanthropic events throughout the year.

Through his business, Johnson says, "I had been working with some guys who were ex-convicts, and we had conversations about how they were having struggles with getting jobs and getting a foot in the door with their criminal records."

Their records didn't faze him. Johnson employs about eight people, most of them technicians and sound engineers, and his hiring philosophy can be distilled into two factors: are they hard-working and are they trustworthy?

"I hire people from the neighborhood, people I can trust," he says, "and I would say that about 80 percent of them have drug convictions."

No matter. "These are some of the hardest-working and trustworthy people I know," he says.

This success with hiring ex-convicts while other employers shunned them would provide the spark for his thesis when he enrolled in Wilmington University's Doctor of Business Administration program in 2015.

Near the end of his Army career, Johnson had earned a master's degree online from International American University. But as he settled into civilian life — he holds a full-time position in Washington, D.C., as a management analyst in

"I chose to pursue my doctorate because, as cliché as it sounds, I have been on a lifelong quest for knowledge of business, group dynamics, and other organizational concepts." —Dr. Richard Johnson

the Department of State, Consular Affairs, Passport Services — he found that his thirst for knowledge had not been slaked. That's when he began a search for accredited online programs and discovered WilmU.

"Wilmington had the most flexible schedule as far as online and accredited programs," Johnson says. "And they had a good reputation." Thus began a four-year journey that was both challenging and rewarding.

"Online education has come a long way, and they are not giving away degrees," he says. "If anyone has any inclination that online degrees are easy, they're crazy. Not that it's super difficult, but the work never slowed down."

The title of his dissertation was *Employer Willingness to Hire Individuals Convicted of Drug Crimes in Central Virginia*. In researching it, Johnson surveyed large and small employers throughout the Virginia counties of Orange, Madison, Culpeper, Nelson, Louisa and Albemarle, as well as the City of Charlottesville. He discovered that 53 percent of the respondents would be willing to hire people previously convicted of drug offenses.

He calls working on his doctorate "one of the most rewarding experiences I've had academically." He especially appreciated the efforts of Dr. Jason James, assistant professor in the DBA program, who was his committee chair.

"Dr. James is a stickler for doing things right," says the newly-minted Dr. Johnson, "and he helped make me a lot better writer. It was challenging

but fulfilling and my writing skills greatly improved during the course of the program."

Calling Dr. Johnson "passionate and committed," Dr. James says: "I met Richard a number of times because he would prioritize coming to campus when he was in the area so that he could meet face-to-face with his dissertation committee — myself and Dr. John Sparco [director of the College of Business]. Richard was serious about helping people. I described his research work as being noble and forthright. While working with Richard, I noticed that he exhibited tenacity, discipline, and he remained interested in continuous improvement."

Dr. Johnson again drove north to Wilmington last January to don his tam, and was impressed by the ceremony, calling it "better than some military functions I've been a part of."

Reflecting on his four years at WilmU, he says, "I chose to pursue my doctorate because, as cliché as it sounds, I have been on a lifelong quest for knowledge of business, group dynamics, and other organizational concepts. I believe that the DBA program was the best route to obtaining an understanding of a few business principles that directly impact things that I have always been interested in. And as I stated in my dissertation, I sought my doctorate to prove to the young people of my community that if I could achieve such a milestone, then so could they." **WU**

—Bob Yearick



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD JOHNSON

On June 24, 2017, Dr. Johnson was a guest speaker in his hometown of Orange, Virginia. At the event, a historical marker was placed in honor of Capt. Richard Maples, a Tuskegee Airman who was lost at sea during combat. Maples was from Orange.



ALUM'S ART BECOMES MOBILE MESSAGE

As chair of Wilmington University's Media Design Programs in the College of Technology, Associate Professor **SUSAN L. GREGG** often fields requests for student artwork. Such was the case when Dr. Johanna Bishop, director of Behavioral Science Programs in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, contacted her last spring. Dr. Bishop was preparing to host WilmU's fourth annual Human Trafficking Symposium and she asked Gregg if she might have a student who could

design some artwork for the event.

Gregg says she immediately thought of **MARISSA JANICKI** "because she was such a talented and highly motivated student."

She contacted Janicki, who readily agreed and set to work, creating posters for the event and, eventually, designing six ads of different sizes and layouts that appeared on DART buses in Wilmington. The bus wraps carried five separate messages about human trafficking.

Janicki, who received her degree in Media Design in May of 2018,

says she had already done research on women's issues for her classes and had completed "projects that involved sexual harassment of women and sexual objectification."

When she got deeper into the study of human trafficking, however, she says she was "shocked by the statistics."

"A lot of people, when they think of human trafficking, think of 'Taken' (the 2008 film starring Liam Neeson as a man whose daughter is kidnapped and forced into prostitution) and think of it as something that happens in other countries. But it happens everywhere,



and people may not know the back stories of the victims.”

As Janicki indicates, the United States is not immune to the problem. In 2018, nearly 11,000 cases of human trafficking were reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, according to the Polaris Project, which tracks such statistics. That represented a 25 percent increase over 2017.

“Each year we find the need to raise awareness becomes greater than before,” says Dr. Bishop. “That’s because we are just beginning to

understand the depth and breadth of this problem in society. Fighting human trafficking will require a massive educational effort to change the acceptability of ignoring the most vulnerable human beings among us.

“I appreciate DELDOT’s collaboration in anti-trafficking efforts by displaying Marisa’s art on the buses. I’m so pleased that Wilmington University students are on the forefront of anti-trafficking efforts.”

Janicki says she’s happy not only that her work helped to bring awareness to human trafficking, but that “it was

a way to give back to Wilmington University and share some credit with them.”

Since receiving her degree, she has gone on to freelance as a graphic designer in the Wilmington area while working full-time as marketing director and office administrator at New Castle Insurance, in Old New Castle, Delaware.

Wilmington University recently began offering an 18-credit certificate in Human Trafficking Awareness. It will be the only one of its kind in the country. [WU](#)



Current and prospective students are assessed by Favoroso for their **EXPERIENTIAL WORK** they may have obtained outside of the traditional classroom.

A PASSION FOR PRIOR LEARNING

WilmU Prior Learning Specialist **VINCENZO (VIN) FAVOROSO** recently co-led a PLAN (Prior Learning Assessment Network) webinar titled *Examining variables that impact adult student persistence*. It focused mainly on how the prior learning assessment (PLA) fits into contemporary education systems and why having one as an option — in any capacity at a college or university — can improve retention and graduation rates. The informative webinar shed light on Wilmington University’s PLA capabilities.

“The webinar is a huge topic nationally, but it’s also something I’m passionate about,” says Favoroso. “My thesis, *Wilmington University Testing Center: Value and Barriers to Successful*

Implementation, focused specifically on the benefits of prior learning assessments in terms of retention and graduation rates. In fact, research shows that students who earn credit-granting College Level Examination Program (CLEP) scores increased the probability of receiving a college degree by 5.3 percent.”

In his role at the University, Favoroso works with current and prospective students to assess experiential work they may have obtained outside of the traditional classroom. He also researches and evaluates industry-recognized certifications and trainings and aligns them to college credit. In addition, he offers his insights to University chairs. **WU**



Vincenzo Favoroso

PAUL PATTON

Revealing the Code

MBA students introduce schoolchildren to tech basics

If you want technology that works for you, you need to understand how that technology works. **JONATHAN ADLY** believes that tech knowledge is fast becoming as important as reading and writing, and it's driven him and a classmate in WilmU's Master of Business Administration program to create

Coderrific Academy, an opportunity for Delaware schoolchildren to learn computer coding skills.

"There's a need for everyday people to learn and utilize the building blocks of technology," says Adly, "and the earlier they learn, the more they stand to gain."

The after-school program (located online at coderrificacademy.com)

was inspired by personal experience. In the decade before he began his MBA studies, Adly worked as a pharmacist. "My job was completely transformed by technology," he recalls. Unfortunately, the technology his industry adopted wasn't always the best match for the job's demands.

"I didn't have the skills to write software that did what we needed it



*Coderrific Academy founders
Quynh Nhu Dao and Jonathan Adly*



to do,” he says, “and the people who had those skills weren’t pharmacists.”

After learning how to develop a business plan in one of his MBA courses (with a concentration in marketing), Adly and classmate **QUYNH NHU DAO** (who’s focusing on finance) co-founded Coderrific Academy in the spring of 2018. They’ve enlisted local educators and professional coders to teach logical thinking skills, problem solving, and programming languages

through hands-on, project-oriented classes. At locations in Newark and Middletown, as well as through an online interface, they’re aiming to make the foundations of computer science accessible to school-age children.

The start-up’s efforts extend beyond the classroom, to a process of continual improvement for the educational venture. “Every single week, we’re talking with parents of

children who are participating in the program to get feedback on what’s working and what isn’t,” says Adly.

While he enrolled in WilmU’s MBA program to advance his career, he says it’s having a significant impact on others’ careers, too. “The most important skill I’ve learned, one that I use every day, is how to systematically lead people in a good way,” he says.

WU

PICTURE THIS



A new graduate's visual journey

NADIA GROSS earned her Bachelor of Science in Media Design with a concentration in Photography, so she understands the power of a photo to capture a moment. (Those are hers above.)

In the one taken as she crossed the stage at WilmU's May 2019 commencement ceremonies, "my jaw was dropped. I had this gasp, this look of shock, in all the excitement," says Gross, of New Castle. "That was such a great moment. I'm at a loss for words, even still."

The emotional response was warranted. It took Gross five years of part-time schooling, balanced between part-time work and full-time parenting, to complete her degree — and also to become the first college graduate in the history of her family.

Higher education wasn't always in the picture for Gross. The necessity of working for a living put college out of reach for her parents, and Gross herself dropped out of school in ninth grade for a "life on hold," working unfulfilling jobs. *(Continued on page 21.)*







Gross's supportive family includes her husband, Eric, and children Sophina, Levi and Aidan.



Gross's supportive audience at home was essential to her success, "They've always been cheering me on."

"The future was not looking too bright for me, and I had plenty of people telling me that," she recalls, "but there was no one to push me to better myself."

At age 17, Gross earned a GED through the Wilmington Job Corps. The organization offered financial assistance toward a college degree, but she'd already convinced herself that she lacked the mettle to take on that challenge. "I saw everyone around me, my age group, going to school, getting jobs, finding success," she says. "I was always stuck believing that I couldn't, because that's all I'd heard."

A boyfriend who introduced her to his church and its congregation sparked a change. "There's a phrase they used, 'speaking life into a person,'" she says. "I began to see what I could do, instead of what I couldn't."

Gross enrolled in Wilmington University's College of Technology at age 24, by which time she'd married the boyfriend and was raising three children. WilmU's flexible course scheduling and online learning formats and her supportive audience at home were essential to her success, Gross says. "They've always been cheering me on," she notes.

She also credits photography instructors Bradley Bower and Tim Shaffer with encouraging her confidence in herself and her abilities when working with others. "That's important out in the field," she says. "They were seeing skills in me that I didn't even know were there."

Since her Kodak moment at May's commencement, Gross has been enjoying the new experience of career opportunity. A WilmU-coordinated internship at the Wilmington Public Library on Rodney Square led to the offer of a marketing assistant position. "I had a job before I even crossed the stage," she says, and she's considering other options as well. "I have a really good feeling about this." **WU**

—David Bernard

Aspire Program and WilmU: Perfect Match for Disney Cast Member

A Walt Disney Company Cast Member's successful environmental initiative has led her to enroll in Wilmington University's Environmental Science and Policy program through Disney Aspire, the tuition-free program for employees.

KRISTEE POST was working as a Fairy Godmother-in-Training at the Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique at the Walt Disney World Resort when she suggested a change to the cosmetic glitter used at the boutique as part of guests' royal transformations. Post, who says she has always been interested in protecting the environment, learned through a Facebook video about a year ago that the glitter might contain microplastics that can adversely affect fish and humans.

After discussing her findings with fellow Cast Members at Magic Kingdom Park®, she decided to write a paper suggesting that Disney attempt to find a sustainable glitter alternative. She says she shared the paper with her leaders, co-workers, and eventually Disney's environmental team, who were eager to help find a more environmentally-friendly alternative.

The teams spent months on research, finally finding a glitter that was both sustainable and able to meet its rigorous safety and show-quality standards.

The solution, a plant-based biodegradable glitter that's indistinguishable from the original, has been introduced at

boutiques in Disney parks.

Post says she learned her suggestion had been adopted when members of the Environmental Integration team came to her workplace for a surprise celebration, presenting her with an "Environmental Hero" certificate.

"I was very honored," she says, "but more importantly, it made me decide to pursue a degree [in Environmental Science]." Working through Disney Aspire, she enrolled in WilmU's online courses last winter. She is taking about three classes per semester and expects to receive her degree in four years.

"All the teachers are great," she says, "and I really like working with the student advisors."

The feeling is mutual at WilmU. "Kristee is a bright, hard-working and enthusiastic Environmental Science and Policy student," says Nora Hufe, Science Laboratory supervisor and adjunct professor in the College of Arts and Sciences. "She has already made an amazing difference at Disney, and I can't wait to see her next environmental encore."

A native of Rhode Island, Post has worked for Disney since 2010. She's grateful for the Disney Aspire program.

"I knew Disney Aspire could help me earn a degree so I can continue making positive impacts in the world," says Post.

The Disney Aspire program is supported through Guild Education, the leading education benefits platform. **WU**

Once upon a time...

at the Magic Kingdom

Boutique, there was a Fairy Godmother-in-Training, Kristee Post, who was passionate about protecting the environment.

Kristee discovered that some of the glitter used to make her guests sparkle during their royal transformations could be more magical.

Since some glitter contains microplastics, Kristee started to research sustainable alternatives that would be better for the environment.

She shared an idea with Walt Disney World's environmental team to encourage them to source biodegradable, as safe, durable, and sparkly as possible.



Becoming an Environmental Science and Policy student at WilmU... Making a difference in the world... not just at work, but in the community.

Kristee Post

Upon a time,

Kingdom® Park Bibbidi Bobbidi
Godmother-in-Training, Kristee
about protecting our oceans and

of
be



microplastics,
some plant-based
glitter for the environment.

Disney World® Resort leaders to
degradable glitter that was just
as their current glitter.

Because of Kristee's
Environmental™, every domestic
Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique uses
glitter that is safe for the
environment and fit for royalty
any ball!

Making a sustainable choice does
not require making a compromise.
Where you and the environment can
live ... happily ever after.

No matter what role you have, you can make a difference.



COURTESY OF THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY



A pictorial of art in action:
A work that represents WilmU's past, present and future

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY GRAND FINALE

After a year of celebrating Wilmington University's 50th anniversary, there needed to be a grand finale — a way to symbolize the vibrancy of our students, faculty and staff, and to honor employees who have passed. It would be a work of art reflective of WilmU's culture and service to students.

Local artist Celeste Kelly was commissioned to convey that emotion. She designs and teaches mosaics as a visiting Artist in Residence, and her recent artist-student collaborations appear in Maryland, Hockessin (Delaware), and both Avon Grove and Haverford, Pennsylvania. According to her website, Kelly loves to “break things up and rearrange them into her own traffic-stopping creations.” When you look at the innumerable pieces of glass and “things” in her mosaics, you realize that this is an accurate description.



“Celeste is a highly regarded master artist and expert in the mosaic genre,” says Dr. Sallie Reissman, assistant vice president and dean of the College of Online and Experiential Learning. (She coordinated the project.) “She’s able to take a concept and create a masterpiece that brings joy to those fortunate enough to see it. Her website tag line is ‘Mosaic that stops traffic.’ I couldn’t agree more.”

Kelly grew to understand the importance of what

she was doing. “I’m so happy I was able to highlight Wilmington University’s 50-year milestone with my mosaic,” she says.

The finished piece graces Varsalona Hall at Wilmington University Brandywine.

Work like this has many moving parts. It was important to capture the process, from start to finish.



OPPOSITE PAGE • WilmU employees got in on the first step by attending Kelly's clay workshops. She offered model stamps that served as a starting point, though some colleagues went off the grid and created unique designs. (This is one of many groups that met at various WilmU locations.)

BELOW • Several of the employees' finished tiles found their way into the mosaic. WilmU President Dr. LaVerne Harmon created a butterfly tile in memory of employees who have passed. (If you visit, here's a hint: It flies in the upper-middle section, to the left of the clock tower.)



BELOW • Kelly glazed the tiles before firing them in the kiln.



Kelly mapped out the mosaic tiles in her studio. Here, she's placing the green tiles that would form a foundation for the clock tower as well as a contrast in color.





ABOVE • Once fired, the ceramic tiles were ready for removal from the kiln.



ABOVE • At this point, there were just a few sections that needed finishing.

BELOW • The mosaic now graces Varsalona Hall at Wilmington University Brandywine.



Putting It All

| BY DAVID BERNARD |

*For WilmU's transfer students,
a degree is greater than the sum of its parts.*

You can't really describe an incoming class at Wilmington University as new students. Every year, most of the newest students to arrive at WilmU aren't new to college classrooms or coursework at all, and they're not starting their studies from square one. In fact, for many incoming students, and for many reasons, WilmU is a place to put the pieces together and achieve their educational goals.

Together

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt and black pants, is walking away from the camera on a paved courtyard. She is carrying a black shoulder bag and a clear plastic bag filled with items. The courtyard is surrounded by a brick building with large windows and several green trees. There are black metal benches and potted plants in the area. The sky is blue with white clouds.

Approximately 75 percent of the students entering WilmU's undergraduate programs over the past five years have transferred credits from other schools, a population that far outweighs those who enter as freshmen, or re-enter to continue previous academic work. And transfer students succeed at WilmU. The graduation rate for full-time students

who transfer 60 or more credit hours, or who apply an associate degree toward a bachelor's degree program, is 85 percent.

From New Castle to the World

They come from Delaware Technical Community College and the University of Delaware. They come

from WilmU's partner schools in New Jersey: Rowan College at Burlington County; Cumberland County College and Rowan College at Gloucester County, which joined forces as Rowan College at South Jersey earlier this year; Camden County College; Mercer County Community College, and Salem County Community College —



Many students transfer from Delaware Technical Community College.

even from WilmU’s site at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

Transfer students come from community colleges throughout the region, and beyond. WilmU’s partnership with Denver, Colorado-based Guild Education, which coordinates employer-sponsored education benefits for some of the nation’s largest companies, has opened the University’s doors to students across the country. And WilmU’s wealth of 100-percent online degree and certificate programs has made it possible for students worldwide to transfer credits toward their education.

Whether they’ve previously earned an associate degree or picked up a few college courses here and there; whether they’re completing their degree in Delaware, at one of our New Jersey partner sites, or online, there are a number of reasons why WilmU works for transfer students.

Credit Where Credit is Due

You shouldn’t have to pay for your

education twice. That’s the thinking behind WilmU’s generous credit transfer policy, which accepts up to 90 credit-hours from other accredited schools, prior learning assessments, College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams, certificate programs, military coursework, and occupational trainings and certifications.

In many cases, there’s no expiration date on these credits. And according to WilmU’s transfer credit evaluators, many transfer students start with enough credits to be more than halfway toward a bachelor’s degree.

“An associate degree puts them in an even better position,” says Sherri Strobel, director of academic advising and student success. Community college graduates are able to transfer their entire associate degree into a WilmU completion degree program, a personalized track that includes the courses necessary to build the two-year degree into a bachelor’s.

Affordable and Accessible

“If you’re coming from a community college, university prices can hit you with a sticker shock,” says Strobel. “But we’re affordable. We’re higher education without higher costs.”

WilmU’s tuition rates don’t make a distinction between in-state and out-of-state residents: every student pays the same amount. “That’s why we’re so popular in southern New Jersey,” which is only 15 minutes away but across the state line, says Dennis Huffman, director of student outreach and transfer credit evaluation. It’s also a considerable benefit to students who are telecommuting from Bentonville, Arkansas, or Shenzhen, China.

In fact, transfer students may not even have to cross the bridge from New Jersey to earn their degree from a Delaware university. Depending on their program, they might be able to earn their bachelor’s in community college classrooms close to home, thanks to WilmU’s New Jersey partnerships. Or, of course, wherever their laptop is.

The Story of Two Nurses

Ask Danielle Hughes, a lead practice clinical nurse in hematology and oncology at the MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper Hospital in Voorhees, New Jersey. She was a transfer student by professional necessity. An associate degree from Cumberland County College enabled her to enter the nursing field, but many hospitals and healthcare systems now all but demand their nurses earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).

“After enrolling in Cumberland’s nursing program, I knew I’d have to further obtain a BSN,” she says. “My educational goal at that time was to complete my associate at Cumberland, then immediately enroll in the BSN program at WilmU.”

She was able to accomplish this while holding down a job. “A big factor for choosing WilmU was the convenience of location and accessibility,” says Hughes. “I was working full time in Vineland, so the program made it easy to attend in-person sessions at WilmU’s Cumberland location.”

Patricia Sanchez, the director of risk management for Inspira Health Network in Vineland, also found the New Jersey locations to be a plus. She earned her WilmU BSN in the Garden State after graduating from Cumberland County College and while working as a nurse manager.

“The college is located next to the hospital campus, which made attending classes after work manageable, as did all the online courses available,” she says. “The hybrid format was the best option for my schedule: online for a few courses and in-person for the ones I found more challenging in their content.”

Finishing What They Started

Sanchez received her BSN in 2009, Hughes in 2013. Since then, both have earned Master of Science in Nursing degrees from WilmU: Hughes in



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANIELLE HUGHES

“A big factor for choosing WilmU was the convenience of location and accessibility.”

—Danielle Hughes

2017, Sanchez the next year. This says a great deal about transfer students at WilmU.

Consider the student who has taken college courses — perhaps

an associate degree’s worth, perhaps fewer — and returns to college to complete a bachelor’s degree. Maybe it’s immediately following a community college graduation. Or maybe it’s after life intervened, as it occasionally does. This student has a goal, and is working to achieve it.

“These are students who had started something, and are now demonstrating the grit to continue and start building something again,” says Lindsay Rice, WilmU’s director of academic partnerships. “WilmU provides them with an opportunity to finish what they started.”

The University’s open admissions policy, rolling schedule that begins classes every eight weeks, diverse student population that welcomes working adults, and wide range of programs, locations, and course formats makes this opportunity possible, he says.

“Transfer students are powerful people,” says Rice, “and we fill an important need for the students we serve and the credits they bring.” **WU**

Rowan College at Burlington County is another academic partner.

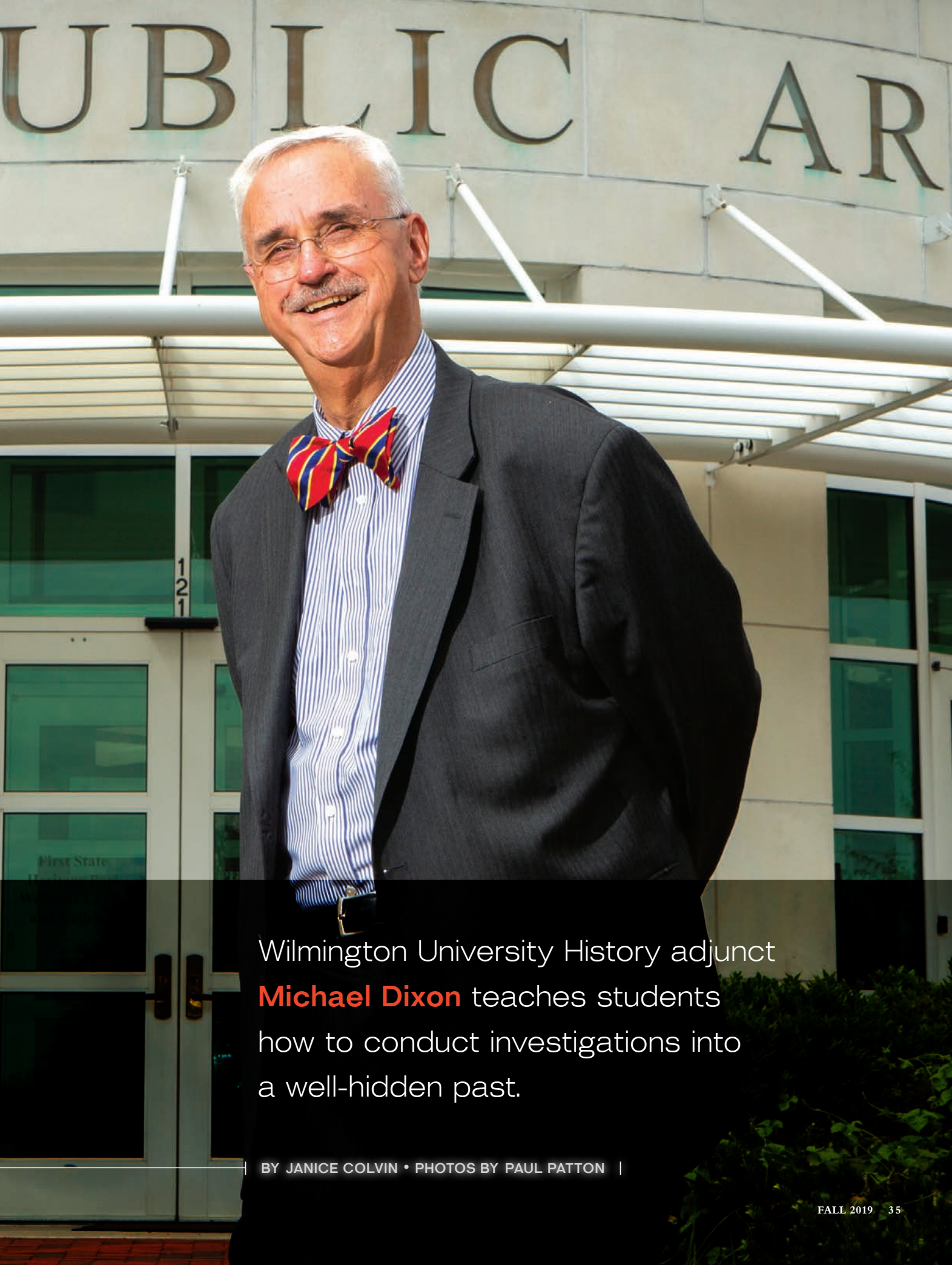




AWARE P

WILM U






Wilmington University History adjunct **Michael Dixon** teaches students how to conduct investigations into a well-hidden past.

| BY JANICE COLVIN • PHOTOS BY PAUL PATTON |



“We are not makers of history. We are made by history.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

n Michael Dixon’s case, he was indeed made by history. For him, even from childhood, history has been and continues to be his life.

But not history of the high and mighty, though Dixon, an author, writer, speaker and Wilmington University history adjunct, has encountered presidents and ambassadors on his ongoing journey through the past. Instead, he says, his focus “is the history of understudied people,

everyday people, those you don’t find in textbooks or chapters of 19th century history.”

In other words, the rest of us.

Dixon says his purpose is to encourage our interest in local historical events and places, and help preserve that knowledge and, in doing so, create a bridge between past and present for us to enjoy and learn.

His knowledge of several subjects is extensive — Prohibition, women’s



suffrage, civil rights, the Cold War, the C&D Canal, the Mason-Dixon Line, the building of the Conowingo Dam (the construction that cost the lives of at least 20 people) — and also subjects many have shied away from in the past or that were simply forgotten or ignored, like unsolved murders of small town police officers or lynchings in the 19th and 20th centuries. He is always interested in learning more about topics he comes across in his many travels around the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond.

Information on national issues is always plentiful on a broad scale, Dixon

says, so he digs deeper to uncover what hasn't been uncovered for a long time — and he teaches his students to do the same.

“You can find plenty of material on the national suffrage movement, for example, but how did people in Delaware or Delmarva react to it,” he says of the movement to give women the right to vote. “Delaware had some pretty significant actions going on. It had a chance to be first to pass the 19th Amendment, and they failed and passed it to Tennessee. The Delaware legislature had to ratify the constitutional amendment, and with

their ratification, they would have given women access to the ballot box, but they literally failed to decide.”

As a historian, he started early. As noted in his online biography, he was a young teen in the 1960s when he began volunteering at the Historical Society of Cecil County. At the end of summer vacation, the Society newsletter noted, “Mike was the first high school student who has ever evinced sufficient interest in local history to offer his services to the Society.”

Dixon went on to earn degrees in History and Behavioral Sciences from Washington College, St. Joseph's University, and Wilmington University. He specializes in African-American studies, cultural and social history, regional and community studies. He's a visiting scholar for the Delaware Humanities Forum and Delmarva Discussions, as well as a member of the speakers' bureau for the Maryland Humanities Council.

Dixon has appeared on the “Today Show,” Maryland Public TV and broadcast news programs; in National Geographic, Southern Living, and Chesapeake Life magazines; and in various scholarly journals. His digital presence includes a website and blog containing useful links for those working on historical research.

Recently, he had the opportunity to provide start-up leadership for the development of a 62-acre living history museum for a municipality. That work involved organizing a nonprofit foundation, raising \$1.5 million to start work on restoring a couple of 200-year-old houses, and the development of an interpretive plan for a historic port on the Chesapeake Bay.

Daughters of the American Revolution in May 2019 awarded Dixon the DAR Historic Preservation Recognition Award. The award, according to the DAR press release, “recognizes and honors an



individual or group that has done recent remarkable volunteer work at the community level. The award recognizes achievements in all areas of historic preservation.”

DAR officials noted in the presentation that Dixon’s college course “Susquehanna Tales” chronicled “the geography and settling of the lower Susquehanna River Valley in Maryland and the building of the Conowingo Hydroelectric Dam. This short course involved two hours of classroom lecture followed by two hours touring the visitor sites, both above and below the dam. Since historians are constantly on the lookout for items of historic value that have been discarded or hidden

away, Mike was able to rescue eight large photograph albums of hundreds of photos taken before, during, and after the building of the dam. Viewing these photos made Mike’s lecture and tour come alive, showing the work and sacrifices made towards completion of the dam in 1928.”

He’s also embraced a stint as a guest curator for the Frederick Heritage Historical Society, for which he offered a traveling workshop on the Mason-Dixon Line, the original line surveyed in the 1700s that set the state lines for Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

“They wanted to see, why did that [line] come about, what was segregation like along the line, what



were the social, cultural, even popular media interpretations reinforced?” he says. “I had a great time. All I did was work my way along the little theaters along the line.” He adds that often, the people running the theater would say, ‘Oh yeah, even in Pennsylvania, the theaters were segregated.’”

Dixon’s stories include an interesting one on which he’s currently working about the origin of I-95 through Delaware into Maryland. In the 1960s, when President John F. Kennedy was in office, Dixon noted that several African ambassadors from newly formed, formerly British, nations wanted to travel from the United Nations in New York to Washington,

D.C., and they had to travel through Delaware and Maryland, which were segregated states at the time.

“They would get in their limo, start down the New Jersey Turnpike, then cross the Delaware Memorial Bridge, then we don’t have 95,” he says. “It was the era of Jim Crow in Delaware, and in Maryland. Once they crossed into Delaware, they could not generally stop at a restaurant.”

This was the Cold War era, said Dixon, and Africa was awash in newly formed governments. “Castro and Khrushchev know they’ve got a leverage point, and they start talking to the newly free countries. They say, you know, they talk about equality but you’re not really equal over there, look how they treat you. And Kennedy says we’ve got to get that fixed.”

Kennedy apparently put pressure on the governors of both states, resulting in some laws changing and the construction of I-95. Kennedy opened the Maryland–Delaware section on Nov. 14, 1963, in one of his last public appearances

Dixon’s enjoyment of teaching is obvious, with subjects as diverse as African–American heritage and cultural studies, Delaware history, or history of criminal justice. His take is to get his students moving, actually visiting sites and libraries to conduct research, “getting them in the field,” he says.

“They can go on the internet and get their facts, but what they need to do after they assemble the facts is learn how to evaluate them, how you test them, so when they do that Delaware history course, for example, they go someplace to see the microfilm, to all the archived books,” he says. “The internet is wonderful, but not two or three percent of the historical records are on there.”

Dixon says it can be difficult to take a class of incoming freshmen and

convince them to engage in history. “But they should engage in it, that it can be interesting, that it answers stories about today. I always do a lecture on everything has a past, and we do a little exercise around it. They can even talk about family history if they want.”

Many aspects of local history, even family history, perhaps deliberately forgotten, can be uncovered through this research. As an example, Dixon brings up the history of lynchings in Delaware and Maryland in the last centuries. Through his work on the subject, he has been involved in the recent establishment in Maryland of local memorials to those who died in these lynchings. It is a topic many have avoided. “But we have to know where we came from to know what happened,” he says.

In his classes, he teaches students how to conduct investigations into a well-hidden past. “Each one of these has a deep story about what was going on,” he says. “It even causes people who aren’t too interested in history to pay attention to it, because we work through the process of records. I’ll show them the records, and we’ll come to the conclusion of why some back then didn’t want history remembered that way.”

In fact, through research, such an event was uncovered in one student’s family history, he adds. “Usually what happens is families are so embarrassed, that generation who lived it, they were worried about their own safety. It dies in memory.” He says he hopes his work with his students does not allow that to happen in their lifetimes, to help them remember where they came from.

History will always be his life, says Dixon, so much so he really doesn’t see retiring from it in a traditional sense. “I don’t see stopping,” he adds. “You know, time marches on, but I enjoy it. There’s always something to be curious about.” **WU**



Surviving a Narcissist

It's possible to cope with narcissists.

There's a way to reclaim your happiness. Two of WilmU's College of Social and Behavioral Sciences' certified counselors and faculty explain how.



Dr. James Walsh



Dr. Todd Grande

THE GOOD NEWS IS that the world is full of thoughtful people who value others, give attention rather than seek it, and own their weaknesses. We see our value in their eyes and learn to recognize it in ourselves.

Yet even the most inspiring people are a little narcissistic. In fact, we all are, and that's a good thing.

Healthy narcissism equals healthy self-esteem, which helps us recover from failure and work toward goals. A healthy narcissist can love because she's learned to love herself.

Pathological narcissists, on the other hand, are toxic. “Narcissists who are pathological have very low self-esteem, so they require excessive amounts of admiration and cause suffering for other human beings,” says Dr. James Walsh, a licensed professional counselor of mental health and assistant professor for the M.S. Clinical Mental Health Counseling program in Wilmington University’s College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. (WilmU’s M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is the only program in Delaware accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.)

Pathological narcissists, herein

The 2018 U.S. Census reports the U.S. population at 327,167,434. If six percent have NPD, and each has just one victim, then nearly 20 million people fall prey to narcissists.

Whether through marriage, friendship or at work, a narcissist will probably blow through each of our lives. They won’t comprehend the destruction they left behind, nor will they recognize the need to apologize for it. “Personality largely doesn’t change,” says Dr. Grande. “Normally what starts to change is a realization that someone *needs* to change and a narcissist never has that realization. So you’re left with changing yourself. We have to make



referred to as narcissists, “are recognized by their need for social dominance, arrogance and sense of entitlement,” says Dr. Todd Grande, also a licensed professional counselor of mental health and an associate professor for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. “At the clinical level, those who exhibit extreme traits are diagnosed often with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD).”

According to the “Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,” a product of the American Psychological Association, the prevalence of NPD in the nation’s general population is six percent.

our own adaptations to survive what is called narcissistic abuse.”

Which could be mitigated by reacquainting ourselves with the people we were before the abuse. Drs. Grande and Walsh believe there are ways to lessen narcissists’ control. Victims have to embrace change, and change is hard — until they decide definitively that everyone, including themselves, deserves happiness.

As Maya Angelou said: “You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.” The same is true of narcissists. You can’t avoid them, but you don’t have to be reduced by them either.

Suffering

Ebenezer Scrooge was the ultimate narcissist, says Dr. Walsh. (Scrooge is the protagonist and antagonist in Charles Dickens’s “A Christmas Carol.”) He has the perfect victim: his impoverished and compassionate assistant, Bob Cratchit, who today might be described as an empath, the narcissist’s polar opposite.

“Scrooge diminishes and ridicules Cratchit regularly, but Cratchit takes it in stride,” says Dr. Walsh. “He enjoys the richness of his family life and refuses to bring Scrooge into his happy home.” Cratchit can barely feed his kids yet holds no animosity toward the man who pays him.

This is fiction, of course. Ghosts have reportedly never visited a narcissist and facilitated his transformation into a benevolent person — overnight. In reality, Scrooge would not have changed. And Cratchit would’ve been thrown to the wolves the moment he stopped idealizing him.

A narcissist “feels entitled to make all the decisions, even if they’re simply incorrect,” says Dr. Walsh. “They wield power with complete impunity. They’re so deserving of your admiration and so lacking in empathy that they get into a fantasy world. And in that world, they are never at fault with anything.”

Even a decent relationship with a narcissist can erode. “When they have someone in their life who’s really admiring of them, they think of them highly,” says Dr. Walsh. “But the moment that person disagrees with them, she will be proclaimed an idiot or moron, usually in a very public manner, leaving intact the narcissist’s damaged ego.”

“Narcissistic Personality Disorder bleeds over to the clinical arena when it’s extreme; when they display a highly exaggerated sense of superiority, grandiosity, fantasies of unlimited power, and the constant need for special treatment,” says Dr.

Narcissists appear confident, but inside they're extremely insecure. They feel shame, vulnerability and humiliation, and try to hide that by monopolizing conversations.



Grande. “Their relationships tend to fail. They're vulnerable to the slightest criticism, so if they're challenged, they become unhinged.”

According to the Mayo Clinic, people with NPD present certain traits: They react with contempt and try to belittle others to make themselves appear superior. They can't regulate their emotions, so they experience major problems dealing with stress and adapting to change. They become moody when they fall short of perfection.

Narcissists appear confident, but inside they're extremely insecure, says Dr. Grande. “They feel shame, vulnerability and humiliation, and try to hide that by monopolizing conversations. With narcissism, we see other related traits. One of them is psychopathy, which is usually thought of as scary or serial killers, but most of the time it isn't anything like that. Psychopathy can be subclinical, as can narcissism, and both have destructive characteristics.

“Within psychopathy is superficial charm. That means that narcissists, if they're psychopathic, which often they would be subclinically, have very good initial presentations. They do well on interviews and with social situations where they greet people, smile and shake hands. What they lack is any depth or sensitivity. They build an efficient shell that mirrors what they see other extroverted people doing.”

They appear charming at first and people are drawn to their charisma — until their true colors pop. “Narcissists aren't respected; they're tolerated,” says Dr. Walsh. “That doesn't mean

they're not good at what they do.”

In fact, adds Dr. Grande: “They're often intelligent, productive people. They may do things so crucial that they can't be replaced. They can have high conscientiousness. And being disagreeable can be an asset, depending on their professional roles.”

Perhaps most painful to people who become disillusioned by narcissistic spouses, parents, friends, coworkers or managers — anyone they once admired — is the realization that their relationships are built on shaky ground. In time, “their” narcissists will devalue them in order to feel good about themselves.

“They tend to leave behind a trail of broken relationships,” says Dr. Walsh, which he attributes largely to their lack of compassion. “Narcissists don't have the emotional experiences most of us have when we feel empathy. If I walked into a room and you were tearful, I would feel something. The empathic behavior comes naturally and internally. Narcissists don't get that feeling.”

Healing

Again, the stats say that about 20 million people suffer narcissistic abuse. “But the number of victims would actually be higher if one were to consider vulnerable narcissists (not captured by the definition of NPD) and subclinical narcissists (not captured anywhere),” says Dr. Grande. “Given the prevalence of NPD — and the probability that it'll only get worse — victims would be well served by learning to cope with them.”

The first step involves personal space. Drs. Walsh and Grande agree that it's critical to set boundaries, whether the relationship involves a spouse, friend or work colleague.

That's not always possible, but Julie L. Hall, a regular contributor to The Huffington Post and author of “The Narcissist in Your Life,” offers suggestions: Document your feelings to become more self-aware; give yourself permission to say no; take time for yourself; and don't become isolated. Seek support from a therapist to release feelings you've kept buried. She also notes the importance of being direct, so learn to communicate what you will and won't do. (Sometimes difficult to do in a professional environment.) Finally, be patient with yourself. Healing takes time.

When you date a narcissist, you can call it quits. “But when people get married, it gets more complicated,” says Dr. Grande. “Couples believe it's for the long term. Society demands that they intertwine financially and logistically; a wife may take a husband's name, children may be involved. It's a very engrained social construct. Even when a spouse discovers she's married to a narcissist, leaving is not always a viable option. Narcissism alone actually dissolves very few marriages.”

Dr. Walsh adds that couples considering separation or divorce can choose counseling. “It's possible for the narcissist in the relationship to become aware of his behavior. The disorder can be treated.” If narcissists can get to a point where they own their weaknesses, and that's a big “if,” a mental health professional can

offer strategies to help manage them. Professionals also can guide them in the realization that they're not perfect and some things actually *are* their fault. Dr. Walsh says it's a long and difficult journey — for both spouses — but possible.

Professional situations get tricky. "It's about managing the narcissist, yes, but more often, being managed by the narcissist," says Dr. Grande.

they target their weaknesses.

According to Dr. Leon F. Seltzer in his article for *Psychology Today*, "When approaching disagreements with a narcissist routinely results in feeling punished, you soon learn that to achieve any peace in the relationship, you'll be required to keep your frustrations to yourself. And the manner in which most people accomplish this superficial harmony

he's not, let him win, counselors advise. He needs to be right more than you do. The object is to work hard and lose the resentment. In time, your work should speak for itself.

A set of skills called Resource Management Ability can help with job tension, adds Dr. Grande. "Sidestep the narcissist, whether she's a coworker, client or manager, and find other ways to get your job done. Find people who will help make your job more efficient; learn to network; find other methods to do your job, like new software or webinars — if possible, at your own expense. Build alliances with non-narcissists who value your strengths. Talk to someone you trust. Sometimes it's just a matter of being heard."

"People who choose to stay in toxic relationships are not weak," says Dr. Walsh. "They seek a higher purpose." Maybe their love for their children cancels out divorce, or the narcissist-spouse is the major breadwinner. Sometimes people choose to serve an organization they honor and take the good with the bad.

"When you do stay in the relationship," says Dr. Walsh, "keep in mind that the abuse is not about you. Having a narcissist work for you can be bad for your job longevity. Watch out from below!"

Living

"Seek your source of self-knowledge and self-esteem from people who love you," says Dr. Walsh. "Introspection is fine, but most of us come to know ourselves when we see how others perceive us. Live a healthy lifestyle — actually, live a good life."

Then, once you've taken back your self-respect, you can do something outrageous: Have compassion. "Narcissists have often suffered severe mental or physical abuse," says Dr. Grande. "It can be very sad to learn how a toxic personality developed."

To paraphrase a report from Dr. Darryl Cross, a clinical and

"The narcissistic personality is driven toward self-aggrandizing efforts and sometimes that can be achieved through work. Because their social skills are so lacking, work is the one place where they can gain rank and status."

Dr. Walsh says that you can manage up, but carefully; you're dealing with a fragile ego. "A narcissist may feel entitled to call you at 4 a.m., and get an immediate response," he adds. "She's not going to have any sense that she doesn't deserve to have you do that. If you respond without any pushback, it just reinforces her behavior. You can say, 'It's 4 a.m., and I'll do this, but I'll be coming in late.' You'll either earn respect or get fired. Making bold moves like this can be empowering, but they may come at a cost."

Victims tend to avoid confrontation. Like bullies, narcissists are better at it. They'll argue till they win. Plus, they will undermine people once

is through accommodating or pacifying them."

Yet pacifying them too long can be psychologically devastating. "The narcissist may demand more of you than you can actually produce, and then if you fail, she'll blame you," says Dr. Grande.

It's called gaslighting, and it's one of the most effective strategies narcissists use to gradually manipulate people until they start to question their worth or sanity. Once she drags her victim to his lowest point, she'll compliment him. It's a power play; a game that keeps victims off-kilter and narcissists in control. (Gaslighting is also a common technique of abusers, dictators and cult leaders. Its name comes from the 1944 film "Gaslight," about a woman whose husband slowly manipulates her into believing that she's going insane.)

Healing starts when victims ditch the need *to be right*. If the narcissist insists he's right, even when you know



Victims tend to avoid confrontation. Like bullies, narcissists are better at it.



organizational psychologist at the Institute for Leadership Coaching in Australia, vulnerable types of narcissists had parents who lacked warmth and were highly critical and faultfinding. Narcissistic children develop an endearing sense of self to counteract feelings of inadequacy. Theirs is a lifelong journey to seek the praise and adulation they never got.

“It’s not what’s wrong with this person, it’s what *happened* to this person,” says Dr. Walsh. “If you look at someone’s case history, you can see that he or she never experienced unconditional love. That’s not to dismiss the agony narcissists cause;

it’s just to say that their behavior is the manifestation of their life experiences.”

Everyone gets disillusioned at some point; it’s how we handle it that matters.

It starts with forgiveness. “If you don’t practice forgiveness, you might be the one who pays most dearly,” according to researchers from the Mayo Clinic. “By embracing forgiveness, you can also embrace peace, hope, gratitude and joy. Consider how forgiveness can lead you down the path of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.”

Cratchit had it right all along —

or more accurately, Charles Dickens did. Arguably the greatest novelist of the Victorian era, Dickens was born in poverty. He had no formal education and worked in a factory. Critics say that his empathy for the poor likely inspired many of his characters.

So the lesson comes from his humble Cratchit: Leave the toxicity behind. No one has power over us unless we give it to them. The world is full of people who choose to honor others, not belittle them.

Most of all, find peace in a place you love, with the people you love.

That’s happiness. **wu**

Do You Have Narcissistic Traits?

The following quiz* was designed to quickly assess narcissistic traits and is not to be used as a substitute for clinical assessment. For a comprehensive and valid assessment, please see a licensed professional mental health counselor.

This quiz is for your eyes only, so be honest. It may help you recognize traits that affect others negatively.

For each of the following items, indicate whether the statement is mostly true or mostly false.

- Others have acknowledged that I am special or great
- I can talk my way out of problems
- Getting respect from others is crucial
- I will be famous someday
- I enjoy being the center of attention
- I am well-suited to be a leader
- Others are jealous of my talent
- Others can learn a lot from me
- I deserve the best of everything
- When I enter a room, I take charge right away
- Modesty is for underachievers
- If I am not in charge, problems are sure to arise
- People who criticize me are simply jealous
- I dream of being powerful and successful
- I get angry at those who don't recognize my abilities
- I hang around with successful people
- I am confident that I can accomplish anything
- My leadership abilities inspire people
- It bothers me when ordinary people believe they are my equals
- When I am telling a story, everyone pays attention

Add 1 point for each mostly true response.

0 – 2: Low narcissism

3 – 5: Average narcissism

> 6: High narcissism

*Raskin, R., & Hall, C. S. (1979). A Narcissistic Personality Inventory. *Psychological Reports, 45*,590.



SPORTS

WILDCATS HAVE MADE THEIR MARK IN DIVISION II

IT'S BEEN 15 YEARS since Wilmington University sports transitioned from NAIA to the more competitive NCAA Division II status, and the numbers indicate the move has been successful.

Back in 2004, the University fielded teams in nine sports: baseball, softball, women's volleyball, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's soccer, and men's and women's basketball. Golf was added in 2007, and women's tennis and women's bowling came along in 2016. Men's lacrosse was added in 2018, and men's and women's track and field debuted this year, for a total of 15.

WilmU served notice of its arrival in the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) right away, with the volleyball team winning the Conference championship in the fall of 2004. Since then, Wilmington's student-athletes have proved to be up to the challenge of Division II competition, winning 40 team championships, while 36 Wildcats have earned All-America honors.

During the decade-and-a-half of Division II membership, WilmU has been led by three athletics directors: Frank Aiello held the post until 2011, and Linda Van Drie-Andrzjewski served until February 2018, when Dr. Stefanie Whitby became director.

The CACC comprises 14 schools in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut. [WU](#)



The 2004 volleyball team was the first WilmU program to win both a CACC tournament championship and a conference championship as a full member of the NCAA.



ERIN HARVEY



Lance Berry

Alums Coach Delaware Schools to Baseball and Soccer Titles

June was a big month for two Wilmington University alumni as they helped coach their Delaware high school teams to state championships in baseball and girls soccer.

At Appoquinimink High in Middletown, first-year Head Coach

Mike Torres (Sports Management, '16, MSM, '19) guided the baseball team to an undefeated (22-0) season on their way to the state title. Appo defeated Caravel 3-0 in the championship game at Wilmington's Frawley Stadium, becoming the first unbeaten state baseball champion

since St. Mark's High School went 22-0 in 1999.

"It was a surreal experience," Torres says of the season. "I knew this team had the talent to compete at a very high level, but never in my wildest dreams did I imagine an undefeated 22-0 season with a state



JAMES JONES

championship to cap it off, especially in my first year as a head coach.

“Every guy embraced their roles and were completely selfless. It’s a huge credit to the players for believing in not only me, but themselves from the very beginning.”

Torres, who pitched for two years at WilmU, spent 2 1/2 years as an assistant coach at Goldey-Beacom College in Wilmington before signing on with Appoquinimink. He is School Operations specialist at Las Americas Aspira Academy, a bilingual

charter school in Newark, Delaware,

Lance Berry (Business Management, ‘15) was the assistant coach of the Caravel Academy girls soccer team as they too recorded an undefeated (18-0) season on the way to the Delaware Division II title. The team scored an astounding 67 goals to the opponents’ four, and also knocked off the Division I champ, Padua Academy, 1-0, during the season. Caravel’s record earned them a ranking of 29th in the nation.

For his efforts, Berry was named the Delaware Assistant Coach of the Year for girls soccer, and this year he

took over as head coach for both boys and girls soccer at Caravel, his alma mater. He previously coached the boys team at Appoquinimink High School for three years.

Berry, who works in the Christina School District in the Delaware Autism Program, had an outstanding four-year soccer career at WilmU. He received second team All-Conference honors as a junior, then in his senior year was voted to the All-Conference and All-Regional first teams and was named second-team All-American his senior year. **WU**



Mike Torres

FRANK STALLWORTH

ALUMNI

DR. CAROL BIRNBOHM: Homegrown Leader By Bob Yearick

CAROL BIRNBOHM first displayed her innate leadership abilities on Memorial Day, 1988, on a softball field in Marlton, New Jersey — although she didn't realize it at the time.

Now *Dr. Carol Birnbohm*, she is superintendent of schools in the Lenape Regional High School District and 2019 New Jersey Region III Superintendent of the Year. But on that day 31 years ago, which she remembers

as “excruciatingly hot,” she was a 17-year-old trying to encourage her teammates on the Cherokee High School softball team.

“We didn't normally practice on a holiday, but we had a playoff game the next day,” she says. “And even though the stakes were high, most of us were probably thinking about our friends at the shore or the pool, barbecuing and having fun. Everyone seemed to be just going through the motions.”

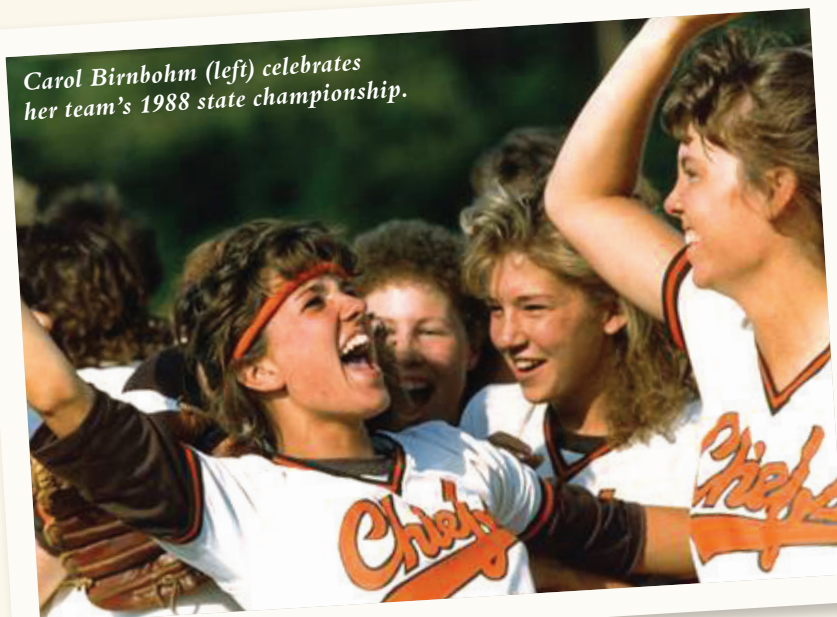
That's when the senior shortstop and three-year starter felt compelled

to speak up. “I wanted to change the attitudes of some, including my own,” she says. So she gathered her teammates and made a short speech. “I recall the moment, but not what I said. I knew we all wanted to win our upcoming playoff game, but we certainly weren't practicing like a championship team. I picked up my enthusiasm and my attitude and just reminded my teammates what we had been working for all season.”

The pep talk worked — the Cherokee Chiefs went on to win the Group IV New Jersey softball championship.

It speaks to Carol Birnbohm's selfless approach to life that she didn't realize what an impact her brief monologue achieved, or that it was a defining moment for her. Months later, after she had enrolled in Trenton State University (now the College of New Jersey), her lacrosse coach showed her a magazine article that quoted the Cherokee softball coach, Mike Medrick.

“He said I provided him and our team a much-needed pep talk going into the playoffs,” says *Dr. Birnbohm*. “That's when I realized that my attitude and my words mattered, and I first identified myself as a leader.”



Carol Birnbohm (left) celebrates her team's 1988 state championship.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROL BIRNBOHM



PAUL PATTON

Dr. Carol Birnbohm

Her leadership qualities blossomed in college. She became co-captain of Trenton State's two-time NCAA Division III national championship lacrosse team, even though she had never played the sport in high school, where she was busy with field hockey, basketball and softball. And once again, sports provided a life lesson.

"Grit and a great work ethic are in the DNA of every successful leader," says Dr. Birnbohm. "And, as I learned from my college lacrosse coach, so is integrity. After we won the National Championship, my coach discovered that we had an ineligible player. Without hesitation, she reported it. I'm sure it was hard, but doing what is right is the only thing to do when you're a leader. I carry this lesson with me whenever I'm faced with a tough decision."

After graduating with a degree in Mathematics in May of 1992, Birnbohm became a homemaker —

in the best sense of that word. She returned to her alma mater and threw herself into all aspects of Cherokee High life, teaching math and serving as head coach of girls' varsity lacrosse and varsity swimming, and as assistant coach in field hockey. (In 1998, the Newark Star-Ledger named her New Jersey Lacrosse Coach of the Year). She also served on the Human Relations Committee.

In 1998, she returned to college to work on her Master's in Education at Rowan University. She earned that degree in May of 2000, but wasn't able to walk at graduation — for a very good reason: she was on two months' bed rest with her twins, Jenna and Kaitlyn, who were born in July of that year. Both are now students at Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island. Dr. Birnbohm also has a son, Dylan, 14, an eighth-grader in Southampton Middle School.

In 2001, she moved into

administration, becoming assistant principal at Cherokee and also supervisor of mathematics and guidance.

Her career has continued on an ascending arc ever since her first day as a math teacher, culminating in her appointment as superintendent of schools in the Lenape Regional High School District in 2012. One key to her success was earning an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership in 2010 from Wilmington University, which she chose in part, she says, because of the cohort style of the program. "You were grouped as cohorts, face-to-face, so I knew every Wednesday night I had to drive to Delaware, but I was going to be with a group of 25 like-minded people, and we were going to be able to dialogue and learn from each other as well as from the professor. I know the trend is to online courses, but I really felt it was important to go to a university that was going to help build collegiality."

As she had hoped, Dr. Birnbohm

was able to develop close bonds with her classmates as well as her professors. She especially remembers Dr. Lillian Lowery, former Delaware Secretary of Education and an adjunct at WilmU at the time.

“As an aspiring superintendent, I often enjoyed the courses that were instructed by practitioners, and Dr. Lowery’s level of experience was unmatched,” says Dr. Birnbohm. “I was able to learn many important skills not taught in the literature from her experiences as the superintendent of the Christina (Delaware) School District.”

Dr. Lowery, now vice president and COO of Student and Teacher Assessment at Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, remembers Dr. Birnbohm as a leader in the class.

“Carol came to every class — after a full day of work — energized and excited about the experiences that her students and teachers were having each week. As she presented her qualitative and quantitative research findings in support of required class projects, she demonstrated a natural ability to build coalitions and beneficial partnerships in ways that compelled her peers to seek her advice, participation, and expertise.”

Dr. Lowery’s assessment was confirmed in 2010, when, at graduation ceremonies, Dr. Birnbohm received the Audrey K. Doberstein Award for Leadership “and dedication to the philosophy and mission of Wilmington University.”

Two years after receiving her doctorate, she was named superintendent of the Lenape High School District, and in 2017, she was recognized as a “Superintendent to Watch” by the National School Public Relations Association.

In leading a school district with

6,840 students in grades 9–12 in four high schools, Dr. Birnbohm draws heavily on her athletic experience, meaning that teamwork has been a watchword in her administration. The virtual opposite of a narcissist (*See Maria Hess’s story on this subject on pg. 40*), she is quick to credit all members of her team for the district’s success.

“Throughout my life, I’ve thrived as part of a team, which guides my leadership today,” she says. “I know that to move more than 1,000 employees in the same direction is impossible if I go at it alone. Just as others have helped me find my voice, today as superintendent, I draw from my experiences to guide, nudge and encourage my team members to take risks and find their own voice so we can continue to do great things for our kids.”

Harking back to that Memorial Day speech of three decades ago, she adds, “I continue to choose my words carefully because words have power. Strong leaders must be strong communicators.”

That includes communicating with the community her district serves. Some school superintendents across the country have rocky relationships with the taxpayers who are paying the bills, and school board meetings can devolve into contentious affairs. Not at Lenape, where Dr. Birnbohm and her team have sought to bond with the community. Last year, they conducted four three-hour meetings in the district to learn the community’s perspective on their schools and what they expected “three to five years out.”

“I was overwhelmed by the number of parents and students and staff who came to those events,” says Dr. Birnbohm. “We had close to 400 attend those evening meetings and over a thousand people completed

our survey. It was inspiring, motivational.”

As for funding, she says: “Our community knows that we’re very fiscally responsible. We get what we need, not always what we want. If we have wants, we seek grants, partnerships, donations.”

That approach seems to work. The district was able to introduce an engineering and math program donated by a local company, and added two turf fields — at Shawnee and Cherokee High Schools — donated by community members.

The district provides education offerings to meet the learning goals of students with special needs, including a Transition Services Program that aids in the development of life-long job skills with help from about 60 area businesses. Each district high school offers more than 60 clubs and 25-plus athletic programs aimed at a broad range of student talents and interests.

Dr. Birnbohm also notes the district’s participation in the Anti-Defamation League’s No Place For Hate program. The pro-tolerance, pro-diversity initiative offers students an opportunity to lead programs for peers and faculty, and to engage with such events as Martin Luther King Jr. Day through assemblies and hands-on activities. It trickles down to eight municipalities, with posters focusing on Lenape District students that urge students to stand up for others.

Fully aware now of the impact of her words, Dr. Birnbohm characteristically deflected praise when she was named New Jersey Region III Superintendent of the Year in October 2018. “It’s been a humbling experience in that I encounter such great leadership every day,” she said. “I have learned so much from my peers in the region and beyond through the years.” **WU**

Dr. Barbara Thomas



DR. BARBARA THOMAS: Following Her Heart

By David Bernard

DR. BARBARA THOMAS hopes you know that your goals aren't subject to prior authorization. That what others tell you is possible doesn't matter nearly as much as what's in your heart. It's a lesson that's changed the course of her life, and she hopes you'll remember it, too.

"You tell them for me and for you, 'Yes I can. Yes I can,'" says Dr. Thomas, 72, of Boiling Springs, South Carolina, who earned her bachelor's degree in Business from Wilmington College in 1995 after three decades in the workforce. "When it comes to education, the only thing that limits you is yourself."

She's taken that message of encouragement and self-development to 40 nations in her second career as a missionary and motivational speaker to women's and youth ministries. That message has taken her a long way from a Philadelphia high school in the mid-1960s, where a counselor who saw her researching college scholarships advised her to apply for department store jobs instead. "He told me, 'Black kids from the projects do not go to college,'" she recalls. "I had capabilities, but I didn't realize them."

Eventually, though, they made themselves known. By the early 1990s, she'd worked her way up from answering phones and directing calls

at DuPont to arranging access to the IT department's databases. The company announced that it would reimburse employees' tuition for degrees in Business, not just Chemical Engineering. "And I decided to jump on the opportunity before they changed their minds," she says.

She'd passed age 40. She was working full time and raising a teenage daughter following the death of her husband. Still, she transferred credits she'd earned at St. Joseph's University and Delaware Technical Community College to Wilmington College and attended classes at night. "It was a lot," she says. She graduated in less than two years, and when she did, her name was on the dean's list.

"Wilmington College gave me the ability to put it all together," she says. "I wasn't basing my education on what other people said. I thought, 'If I can do all this, I can do just about anything.'"

She also thought about what she might be able to do to benefit someone else. After retiring from DuPont, earning a master's degree in Biblical Studies and a doctorate in Divinity prepared her to spread the word worldwide. "Praise is what I do," she says.

The impact of her Wilmington College education sent ripples throughout her family. Neither of her parents completed high school, but her daughter and — as of May 2019 — her granddaughter have both earned college degrees. "That's three generations of educated women," says Dr. Thomas.

While a stroke has limited her ability to travel over the past year, she's continuing to work with a pastor who's providing support to Haitian orphanages, and she's still hoping to bring her message to ministries in South Africa, Switzerland, and Israel again.

"I'm blessed that I was able to step up to the plate," she says, "and I'm blessed to be able to challenge someone else." **WU**

STAY INVOLVED WITH YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.

Membership is free! Become an active member of your local chapter. Learn more about Wilmington University Alumni Association's events and meetings by visiting WILMU.EDU/ALUMNI.

1986

KEVIN WILSON, B.S. in Business Management, of Clayton, currently serves as a criminal and civil judge and formerly as a truancy judge. He was appointed to the position in the Justice of the Peace Court in Kent County by Delaware Gov. Jack Markell in 2015. He serves on the Continuing Education Committee and teaches in the basic legal education program for new judges. He has attended the National Judicial College twice.

1998

NOEL RODRIGUEZ, M.Ed. in Elementary Education, of Magnolia, recently returned to Delaware to accept a position as the director of Business Relations for The Cloud Geeks in Dover.

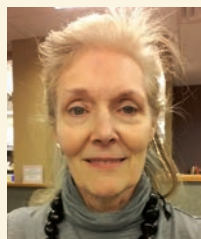
2003



MELISSA A. ZEBLEY, M.S. in Administration of Justice, of Wilmington, was promoted from major to lieutenant colonel with the

Delaware State Police. Zebley started her career with the DSP as a trooper in July of 1992 and has served as drill instructor, sergeant, patrol supervisor, and public information officer. In September 2010, she was promoted to major and served on the executive staff as administrative and operations officer.

2005



TINA SONZOGNI, B.S. in Marketing, of Georgetown, recently retired and works part-time at the Georgetown

Library's circulation desk. She says that her WilmU Business Marketing degree enhanced her work on the library displays and website.

2006

GARY JONES, B.S. in Business Management, of Rehoboth Beach, has joined Capital One as account manager, supporting the Walmart retail credit card relationship. In this role, he will work with Walmart stakeholders to drive engagement and identify growth opportunities. Prior to joining Capital One, Jones spent eight years with GE Capital/Synchrony Financial and the relationship on their TJX Companies portfolio.

2009



KRISTEN BLIZZARD, M.Ed. in Elementary Education, has been named Teacher of the Year for Mispillion

Elementary in Milford. She started teaching in Milford 16 years ago, at Lulu

Ross Elementary. Blizzard transferred to Mispillion Elementary when it opened in 2011, and is currently teaching first grade. Her favorite part of being a teacher is that every day there is a new opportunity to make a difference.

2011



BRITTANY KELLER, MBA, of Wilmington, is the director of marketing and communications at Ursuline Academy.

2012



KEITH ILLIDGE, B.S. in Studio Production, of Wilmington, is an actor, singer and model, and has worked in film, television and theater in

New York and Chicago. He received a Black Theatre Alliance Award nomination for his portrayal of Lincoln in "Topdog/Underdog," and appeared at Inis Nua Theatre in Philadelphia in the American premiere of "Untitled." The play was a monologue in which he played two parts: Nigerian-born twin boys. They are separated at 7 months old when one is taken to England by their mother. The other stays in Nigeria until their deep connection forces them back together.

2013

WALLENA GOULD, Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership, of Mickleton, New Jersey, a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), is the recipient of the 45th Annual Agatha Hodgins Award for Outstanding Accomplishment during the 2019 American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) Nurse Anesthesia Annual Congress in Chicago. Dr. Gould is a former chief nurse anesthetist at Inspira Health System and Mainline Endoscopy Centers, and the founder and chief executive officer of the Diversity in Nurse Anesthesia Mentorship Program. In 2007, she founded the Diversity in Nurse Anesthesia Mentorship Program (DNAMP) as a nonprofit.

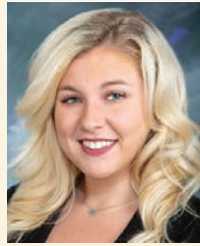
MATTHEW KURTEN, M.S. Administration of Justice, of Wilmington, was named chief of police of Brookhaven, Pennsylvania. Kurten has 22 years of law enforcement experience and previously earned the rank of captain. During his career, he led the following divisions: human resources; organized crime and vice; uniformed services; the office of professional standards; and special operations. Kurten also served as a 12-year member of the department's SWAT team, including commander, and most recently, as a crisis and negotiation team commander.

2015



DONTEZ COLLINS, M.Ed., Career & Technical, of Millsboro, is a Sussex Technical High School math teacher and

nine-year teaching veteran. He was named the district's 2020 Teacher of the Year. District Superintendent Stephen Guthrie said Collins serves as a role model for excellence.



KELSEY DICKERSON TILGHMAN, MBA, of Laurel, was promoted to project manager at The Bank of Delmarva. An

employee of the bank since 2012, Tilghman recently completed the Maryland Banking School program and graduated with honors.



FRANCIS WHEATLEY, M.S. of Administration of Justice, of Upper Dublin (UD), Pennsylvania, was sworn

in as Upper Dublin's chief of police. He started his career in 1983 as a UD police dispatcher, then joined Whitmarsh Township police while attending the Pennsylvania State Police Southeast Training Academy. Wheatley has served as a field training officer and coordinator, Attorney General Drug Task Force officer, motorcycle officer and coordinator, and SWAT team member, in charge of hostage negotiations. He was promoted to detective, patrol sergeant and patrol lieutenant, and has received numerous commendations, including a Commendation of Valor.

2017

KIMBERLEY ECKERSON, MSN in Leadership, of Hockessin, recently joined the Hockessin-Pike Creek Home Marketing Center as a sales associate. She is an active member in her community.



KIRSTEN JENNETTE, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, of Delmar, Maryland, was recently named the

2019 National Distinguished Principal for the state of Delaware by the

National Association of Elementary School Principals. She is principal of Blades Elementary School, whose Latino Family Literacy Project was a 2019 recipient of the Superstars in Education Award from the Delaware Chamber of Commerce.

2019



JEFFREY T. BENSON, JR., M.S. in Organizational Leadership, of Seaford, recently worked with a group of eight Seaford school district students, who learned how to be shareholders/owners of a bank. Seaford School Board member Jeffrey T. Benson Jr., along with La Mar Gunn Sr., of Gunn Wealth Management, and Wilmington City Treasurer Velda Jones-Potter spearheaded the Youth Shareholder Initiative.



PETE KIDD, M.S. in Organizational Leadership, of Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, was promoted to director of commercial

claims in the Eastern Division for Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company. He states that his promotion was a direct result of his recent completion of WilmU's master's program.



CHESNEY WEST, M.S. in Accounting, of Seaford, was recently promoted to business analyst at the Bank of

Delmarva. She joined the bank in 2015 and is now enrolled in WilmU's DBA program.

UPDATES

WilmU Scholarship Lights the Way to a College Degree

The STAR Scholarship halves the cost of tuition for qualified students

For 10 years, Wilmington University's STAR Scholarship has enabled stellar students to launch their careers with a bachelor's degree they can afford. Recent revisions to this financial assistance program — part of WilmU's partnership with Delaware Technical Community College — put higher education within reach of even more students.

"The STAR Scholarship demonstrates Wilmington University's mission to give back to Delaware," says **LINDSAY RICE**, WilmU's director of Academic Partnerships. "It's creating accessible and cost-effective educational opportunities for some of the state's most motivated learners."

The program builds on the state-backed SEED (Student Excellence Equals Degree) Scholarship, which awards full or partial funding toward two-year associate degrees for qualifying graduates of Delaware's high schools.

WilmU's STAR Scholarship, in

turn, offers a 50 percent tuition reduction to SEED Scholarship students who have earned their associate degree at DelTech and are aiming to complete their educations with bachelor's degrees.

As of May 2019, the STAR Scholarship has expanded its eligibility criteria, inviting any SEED-sponsored DelTech associate degree graduate with a grade point average of 3.25 or higher to apply. The GPA requirement was changed from 3.5 to match the existing qualifications for Delaware Tech's honors program.

Other eligibility requirements include enrolling in a WilmU bachelor's degree program within six months of associate degree completion; attending fall and spring semester classes full-time (12 credits per semester); and maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.0.

"It's a great opportunity for students to gain an education without crushing debt," says Rice. "With the help of SEED and STAR, DelTech and

WilmU, they can earn a bachelor's degree for tuition of less than \$13,000."

Hundreds of students have benefited from the STAR Scholarship since its inception in 2008. The program has a 95 percent graduation rate, with the average GPA of graduates at 3.8.

Many of the scholarship program's participants have an eye on education. As of 2019, nearly a quarter of them have earned or are studying toward a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (Grades K–6). Bachelor's degrees in Behavioral Science, Criminal Justice and Business Management have also been popular choices.

The STAR Scholarship took its name from the Student Transition to Academic Readiness Act, the Delaware Senate's unsuccessful 2007 attempt to fund a statewide bachelor's degree version of the SEED Scholarship. **WU**

For more information about Wilmington University's scholarship programs, including the STAR Scholarship, please visit wilmu.edu/scholarships.



Shekinah Reynolds: Crowning Achievements

It was back in 2007 when **SHEKINAH “KYE” REYNOLDS** first realized that beauty contests were about more than physical beauty. Then in seventh grade, she was visiting a friend at the Ronald McDonald House in Wilmington when she saw a former Miss Delaware doing volunteer work there.

Reynolds was already engaged in community service work, collecting donations for hurricane victims and helping out at the Food Bank of Delaware.

“Seeing Miss Delaware there showed me that there is community service and leadership beyond receiving the crown, and community service was something I was already doing,” she says. “That inspired me to combine it with my personal goals and to develop a platform.”

Reynolds went on to enroll at Wilmington University and continued her community involvement, including participating in the Student United Way organization at the University. She received her degree in Criminal Justice last year and is now studying for an MBA, with a concentration in Marketing, while working as an assistant in the

Reynolds was named **Miss Delaware North America**, a competition that was based on how well contestants had executed a community-related platform. Hers was called the “Know Your Rights” campaign.



University’s Career Services. She is on track to receive her master’s in May.

Inspired by the encounter with Miss Delaware, Reynolds has entered several contests, including the Miss Delaware USA competition in 2017, where she won the non-finalist interview award for having an outgoing personality and being well-spoken.

Last year, she was named Miss Delaware North America, a competition that was based on how well contestants had executed a community-related platform. Hers was called the “Know Your Rights” campaign.

“I want to be a lawyer someday, so I saw this as a wonderful opportunity to teach K–12 students the importance of knowing their rights and finding creative ways to memorize the first 10 amendments,”

she says. She visited many schools, and says it “was very exciting.”

“The kids were very enthused to learn and realize the decisions they make today will impact their future,” she says.

Last November, Reynolds married Darryl Smith, Jr., so any future titles she attains will not have the word “Miss” in them, but that doesn’t rule out more pageants, especially since, as she says, her experiences so far have been invaluable.

“Competing in pageants has helped me increase my networking skills, become more confident, remain outgoing and realize giving back truly makes a difference,” she says. “Some people feel that pageantry is just being beautiful and walking off stage, but true queens are also leaders in the community and want to see growth.” **WU**



Shekinah Reynolds

WILMU SUPPORTS PRO WOMEN CYCLERS

WilmU was the title sponsor of the Pro Women's Criterium in West Chester, Pennsylvania in August. This exciting race was the penultimate cycling event in the Benchmark Classic, which attracted cyclists from around the country. WilmU athletes and staffers were there to cheer on the athletes. WU



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Visit wilmu.edu/ScholarshipFund to find *even more* ways you can support WilmU students —and lock in tax deductible donations for 2019—before the end of the calendar year!

University Events



DEC. 14

Ongoing

GET TO KNOW WILMU BRANDYWINE

Visit WilmU's new Brandywine site, located at Beaver Valley Road and Route 202 in Wilmington, across from Concord Mall. Explore the full-service facilities, apply for one of our 150+ career-focused degree or certificate programs, or register for classes. WilmU Brandywine is open to visitors from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., and until 7 p.m. on Wednesdays. wilmu.edu/VisitUs



Dec. 7

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA CLAUS

Bring the family for a breakfast buffet, photos with Old St. Nick and arts and crafts activities from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Doberstein Admissions Center auditorium at the New Castle campus. Donate a new, unwrapped toy to CBS 3's annual Joy of Sharing toy drive for a chance to win a \$50 Visa gift card.

Dec. 14

NEW YORK CITY BUS TRIP

Experience the sights and sounds of the holiday season in New York City on Student Life's annual group trip to NYC. Bus departs from Pratt Student Center on New Castle campus at 8 a.m. and leaves New York at 7 p.m., returning to WilmU at approximately 9:30 p.m. Registration is open to current WilmU students at \$15 per person, with a limit of two guests per student at \$30 per guest.

Contact brad.w.gilbert@wilmu.edu

Jan. 26–27

WINTER COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

Congratulations to Wilmington University's Class of 2020, whose academic achievements will be recognized as the new graduates cross the stage at the Chase Center on the Riverfront in Wilmington. wilmu.edu/Graduation

Feb. 2

POLAR BEAR PLUNGE

Join the WilmU chapter of Pi Gamma Mu, the social sciences academic honor society, for its annual winter dip in the Atlantic Ocean. The event raises funds for Special Olympics. Meet at the Boardwalk Plaza Hotel, 2 Olive Ave., in Rehoboth Beach, between 11 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. for the 1 p.m. plunge.

Contact johanna.p.bishop@wilmu.edu

March 16

"AMENDING AMERICA: HOW WOMEN WON THE VOTE"

Actress Kate Campbell Stevenson brings the women's suffrage movement to the stage in a one-woman show that commemorates the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guaranteed American women the right to vote. The presentation, which is free and open to the public, starts at 6 p.m. in the Doberstein Admissions Center auditorium on the New Castle campus.



Alumni Events

Nov. 16



HARVEST RIDGE WINERY TOUR AND TASTING

Sample a tasting menu of two dry white, two dry red, two sweet and two dessert wines with the Kent & Sussex Alumni Chapter during an afternoon winery tour. \$20 per person includes tasting, tour, food and souvenir glass. \$10 for students age 21 and over with valid ID. Meet at Harvest Ridge Winery, 447 Westville Rd., Marydel, Delaware. Contact donna.j.hardy@wilmu.edu

March 9

AN EVENING WITH CAREER SERVICES IN DOVER

The Kent & Sussex Alumni Chapter hosts Kim Plusch, assistant director of WilmU's Career Services Office, at the Dover site for a discussion of professional experiences and the office's career planning resources, networking and outreach opportunities, and mentoring. 6-7:30 p.m. Contact donna.j.hardy@wilmu.edu

March 21

ALUMNI LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Wilmington University's Alumni Relations Department and Alumni Association Executive Board invite both alumni and students to a day of learning, networking and friendship. Buena Vista Conference Center, 661 S. DuPont Hwy., New Castle. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Contact donna.j.hardy@wilmu.edu



Career Services Events

March 18

EXECUTIVE NETWORKING NIGHT

Meet representatives of some of the region's leading companies and learn career strategies at the Wilson Graduate Center in New Castle from 5 to 7 p.m. Contact careerservices@wilmu.edu



April 1-2

SPRING CAREER FAIRS

Students and alumni are invited to network with local employers at the Doberstein Admissions Center auditorium on the New Castle campus from 2-5 p.m. April 1 highlights the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business, and Technology. April 2 highlights the Colleges of Education, Health Professions, and Social & Behavioral Sciences. Contact careerservices@wilmu.edu

Admissions Events

Ongoing

WILMU WEBINARS

Listen in on 20-to-30-minute information sessions covering financial aid, undergraduate programs, graduate studies and other topics, then submit your questions to WilmU staff. View a schedule of upcoming webinars and register at wilmu.edu/VisitUs.



NEW AT WILMU

The CJI's True Crime Lecture Series

Last month, Wilmington University's Criminal Justice Institute launched its True Crime Lecture Series. CJi directors Dr. Ray Carr and Scott Duffey lined up internationally recognized FBI profilers, undercover agents and investigators who handled some of the most notorious crimes in recent history. The October and November presentations were packed with true-crime buffs, as well as others who wanted to peer inside the minds of violent offenders.

The series premiered on Oct. 15 with **JEFFREY RINEK**, special agent with the FBI and author of "In the Name of the Children." Recognized worldwide for his superior interrogation skills, Rinek is most identified for obtaining a surprise confession from serial killer Cary Stayner, whose brutal slayings of four women and girls became known as the Yosemite Park Murders.

ANGELO LANO, a case agent for the FBI, hit the stage on Nov. 12. He and fellow agents gathered evidence that led to the creation of articles that resulted in President Nixon's impeachment and resignation.

One lecture remains for the fall season, featuring FBI forensic linguist **JIM (FITZ) FITZGERALD**, the author of "A Journey to the Center of the Mind." He gained worldwide prominence for his work on high-profile cases that include the Unabomber, Jon Benet Ramsey, Anthrax and the D.C. Sniper.

Fitzgerald will appear on Tuesday, Dec. 10, at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 4727 Concord Pike, Wilmington, from 5:30-8 p.m. The lecture is free to the public; however, registration is required and can be completed at wilmu.edu/cji/index.aspx.

The Spring 2020 True Crime Lecture Series will premier in



PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM FITZGERALD

FBI forensic linguist Jim Fitzgerald, whose high profile cases include the Unabomber, Jon Benet Ramsey, Anthrax and the D.C. Sniper, will appear on Dec. 10, at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Wilmington.

February, and will feature FBI heavyweights like profiler Charles Dorsey; Robert Wittman, author of the New York Times bestseller "Priceless"; and Jack Garcia, author of "Making Jack Falcone: An Undercover FBI Agent Takes Down a Mafia Family," also a Times bestseller. **WU**

—Maria Hess

*The Criminal Justice Institute is planning other exciting events. **FOR MORE INFORMATION** about the True Crime Lecture Series or the Institute, contact Rebecca Lawton at cji@wilmu.edu or (302) 268-1556.*

A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a light-colored shirt, sitting on a couch and reading a book to two young boys. The boy on the left is wearing a grey t-shirt and is looking at the book. The boy on the right is wearing a red and black patterned shirt and is also looking at the book. The book is green and has the word "Trucks" written on it. The background shows a patterned blanket with stars and numbers.

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