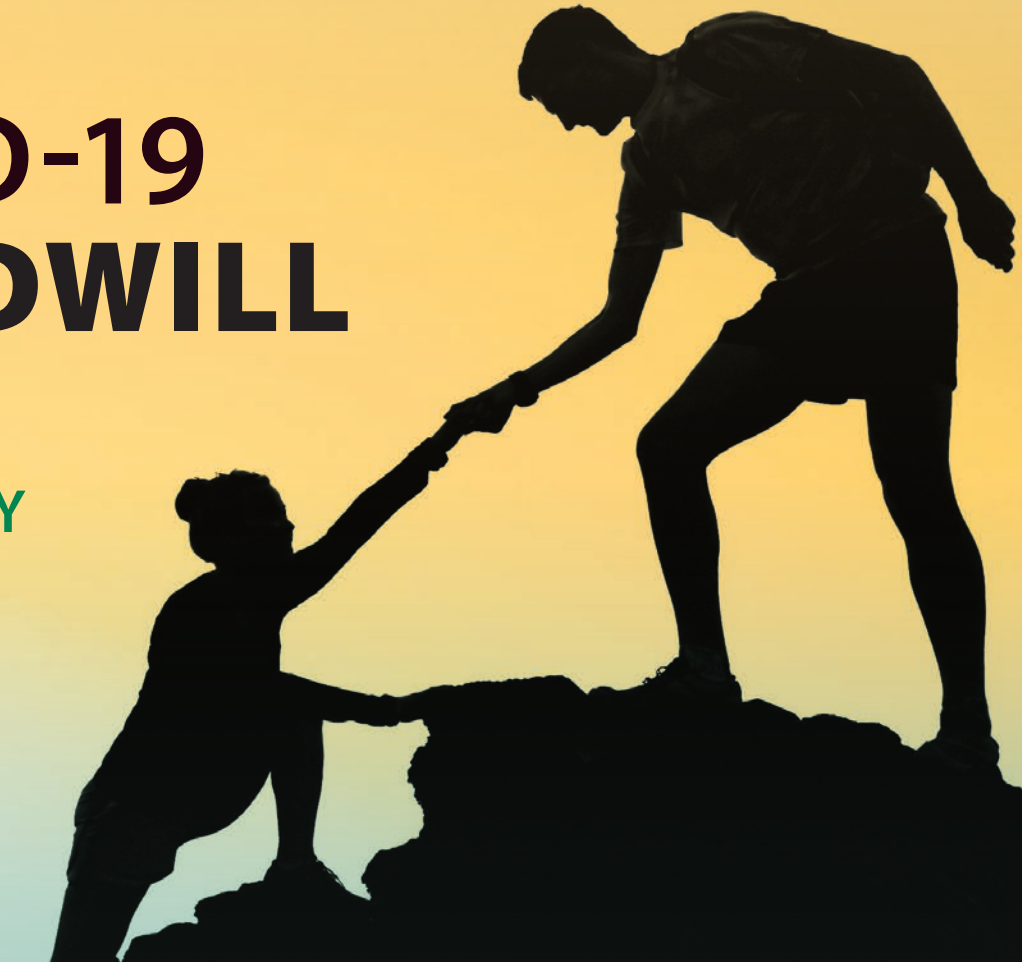


WILMU[®]

COVID-19 GOODWILL

THE WILMU
COMMUNITY
STEPS UP

- 
- A home run for faculty mentors and athletes
 - A partnership with global biopharmaceutical company Incyte
 - 2020: The Year of the Nurse and Midwife. Two alums pay it forward
 - The new graduate certificate in Trauma and Resilience



“We celebrate the compassion displayed by so many.” —Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon



Dear Friends,

It was on March 11, 2020, that the World Health Organization deemed COVID-19 a pandemic. The world changed that day, and perhaps changed forever.

Many Wilmington University students and alumni worked on the front lines, some in the health care and law enforcement fields, others in education, communications, IT, and others. We were grateful to them and all the first responders who risked their lives to make ours safer.

COVID-19 disrupted our way of life, but we worked together to ensure that it didn't disrupt our students' lives, at least in terms of their studies. We provided for those enrolled in face-to-face courses a seamless and immediate transition to the online environment. Our administration, faculty and staff worked collaboratively to serve all students in all capacities. We established the WilmUnity Support Fund to assist students impacted financially by COVID-19, and opted not to increase tuition rates for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Many members of the University community went beyond the call of duty throughout the pandemic. Our cover story, “COVID Goodwill,” is for them. Space did not allow us to list every act of kindness, and those good deeds continue to this day. We celebrate the compassion displayed by so many.

While the State of Delaware and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention established stay-at-home orders, social distancing practices, and provided medical information that was continually updated, the University carried on. This issue is full of stories illustrating just that: the two nursing alums who are paying it forward; a new partnership with a global company; a former Philadelphia Eagle and WilmU alumnus who now serves at-risk children; and an inspiring story about 15 faculty mentors who are serving each of our athletic teams.

There are several other stories I hope you'll enjoy. But most important, please continue to stay safe. [WU](#)

Sincerely,

Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon
President



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EDITOR'S NOTE: Production of this issue occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, when our writers, photographers, editors, and designers were quarantined. Close to deadline, we were finally able to schedule photo shoots, and we thank photographers Susan L. Gregg, Paul Patton and Ron Dubick for venturing out to capture subjects so beautifully and at safe distances. We are also grateful to the many people we interviewed who were kind enough to send photos. And we are indebted to designer Randy Clark, whose artistry is evident in every issue, but was critical to this one.

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#TRENDING

by Rebecca Slinger



1. The Spring class of 2020 celebrated completing their programs virtually. **LAFENUS PICKETT JR.** (right) and **SHAKASHA D. CLARK** are a mother and son who graduated together. You can see more virtual celebrations on any social network with the hashtag #wilmugrad!



2. In partnership with the **MUSCLE MOVEMENT FOUNDATION** (founded by WilmU alum **ROB DEMASI**), the WilmU Baseball Team helped student **MICHAEL SMITH's** mother get a new wheelchair accessible van.

"It is going to make a world of difference in Michael's transportation! We are forever grateful!" his mother, Jackie, said.



3. As part of International Nurses Week in May, Wilmington University extended its appreciation to frontline workers through WilmU Care packages. Each one contained supplies that included WilmU reusable bags, a WilmU mask, reusable cups and hand sanitizers. **Alferi Cardiology nurses** wear their new WilmU swag.



4. **CONGRESSWOMAN LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER** visited WilmU's New Castle site to deliver the Keynote address to Year Up Wilmington cohort graduates just before our locations closed temporarily due to the pandemic. She recited an inspirational poem she wrote called "Don't Look." *Don't look at where I come from, look at where I am going,* she read.

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THE NEWS

Lynn Moore

HISTORY AND COMMUNITY

Preserving history requires the stewardship of responsible and dedicated people. **LYNN MOORE**, chair of Wilmington University's History department in the College of Arts and Sciences, takes this to heart, as evidenced by his involvement in restoration efforts in his hometown of Georgetown, Delaware.

Moore is a self-described jack-of-all-trades. In addition to his WilmU responsibilities, he was a high school basketball referee for 19 years and is now an assistant high school boys' basketball coach. He is the founder and board member of Delmarva Christian Schools and was recently named vice president of the Historic Georgetown Association (HGA), founded by his uncle Carlton Moore in 1996. Carlton also founded the Indian River Land Co. in 1969.

The HGA has restored numerous buildings, including the Georgetown train station. After the Civil War in the late 1860s, the station was the transportation hub for Georgetown and southern Delaware until cars replaced trains. Once it closed, it fell into disrepair after years as office space and a gym. The HGA bought the station from a private owner, then rebuilt its second story in 2003. Later, its exterior was restored using the original bricks. Today, the station hosts local events like Return Day, a Delaware tradition dating back to 1792.

A large model train station takes up nearly a full room, and it's a nice perk when holiday season rolls around, says Moore. "We host dozens of families at Christmas who always seem more interested in the model train than Santa."

In 2006, Moore helped restore the original Georgetown firehouse (circa 1904), which had become a grain and feed store. It was transported via flatbed truck to an empty lot across from the train station. It's home to beloved "Lil Toot," a small train modified from a riding mower. Moore says that the children in the area know Lil Toot well.

Moore believes his work with the HGA is his way of serving his community while keeping history alive. **WU** —Aaron Agresta

PHOTO BY SUSAN L. GREGG

FALL 2020 7

A Role in Recovery

A master's in Counseling helped **ANAH GALLOWAY** help trauma victims.

She has played a part in Wilmington University's Alumni Association since graduating with a B.S. in Psychology in 2014. As an assistant vice president on its executive board, she's encouraged countless graduates to "share their time, talent, and treasure" as Wildcat alumni.

Earning a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling through WilmU's College of Social and Behavioral Sciences has enabled her to put that recommendation into practice. In the two years since completing her master's, she's been applying her education toward assistance, most recently at Survivors of Abuse in Recovery (SOAR). This statewide nonprofit organization provides mental health services to victims of sexual trauma and their families.

"I do exactly what my master's program prepared me to do," says Galloway, "and I love what I'm doing. WilmU has opened up so many doors for me."

She joined SOAR full-time in April of 2019. As a program manager, she conducts clinical assessment interviews with adult clients, manages the intake process, and coordinates efforts at the Wilmington, Newark, Dover, and Georgetown locations. She's even started training and supervising SOAR's interns, a role she'd filled herself during the final semesters of her master's program.

"The Clinical Mental Health Counseling program does a good job of integrating practical and experiential learning into its coursework," she says, including actual group therapy sessions in which classmates are participants.

It also proved to be ahead of the curve in terms of teaching its students what they'll need on the job. "I found out once I began working in counseling that our program really highlights trauma-informed care," she says. "It incorporates it into every class, which is useful because I work with trauma survivors. Everyone in helping professions should be trauma-informed, but not everyone is."

For Galloway, it's taken time to learn how to help guide survivors of physical and emotional trauma toward recovery. But one's talent can prove to be a treasure to those in need, she says.

"I never saw mental health counseling as something unfamiliar or shameful," she says. "I'm proud to take my strengths and apply them to care." **WU** —David Bernard



To Survive and Defend



from the work they've done with at-risk youth. Both brothers hold supervisory roles at Elwyn, a Delaware County, Pennsylvania-based nonprofit organization that educates, treats, and supports those with autism or intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Emmanuel's dissertation focuses on whether local elementary school teachers understand positive behavior intervention and supports an evidence- and data-based alternative to student discipline, while Darius examined whether parents can influence sixth-graders' academic achievement at the critical transition from elementary to middle school.

When Emmanuel fell ill, Darius stepped up to help coordinate care and communicate between the family, healthcare providers, and others, including WilmU. "Our professors understood we'd have to take a pause," he says.

Emmanuel describes his continuing recovery from COVID-19 as "an uphill climb," and it's nowhere near over. "It's hard every day," he says. He's dropped 45 pounds since his hospitalization. There's a parade of medications every day, plus physical therapy and speech therapy sessions, twice a week for each. He's also reckoning with the cognitive impact of the illness and post-traumatic stress.

"I'm thankful that I have a good support system," he says, "and I have to thank Taylor Hospital for doing their job."

"I asked him if he was ready to go back to school," Darius says. "He said, 'going back to school is what's going to keep my mind on track, and not falling into depression.' So far, we're on the right track." **WU** —David Bernard

finish my degree this summer."

He has to. His younger brother has no intention of finishing his own doctorate by himself.

Since 2013, both Emmanuel and Darius Gilbert have been pursuing the College of Education's highest degree. They studied in the same cohort for three years. After four off-and-on years of applied research, as time and finances allowed, both aimed to defend their dissertations in May.

"I was going to earn my doctorate," says Emmanuel, "and my brother said, there's no way you're leaving me behind. We push each other to achieve."

"Then, from 2011 to 2013, he kept talking about a doctorate," says Darius. "He'd say, 'we've just got to do it, let's just see what we can do.'"

Their research projects emerged

C COVID-19 may have delayed **EMMANUEL GILBERT**'s doctoral degree, but it didn't derail it.

He planned to complete his Ed.D. in Organizational Learning, Leadership, and Innovation by Memorial Day. He was working on the second round of revisions and even scheduled a mock dissertation defense, with the real thing to follow. Then, on March 30, he was hospitalized after contracting COVID-19.

His stay in the intensive care unit at Taylor Hospital in Ridley Park, Pennsylvania, included 29 days on a ventilator, and he wouldn't return to his Chester home until the end of May. "That changed a lot of things," he says. He's still recovering from the infection and its aftereffects. "But the goal is to



Multitasking Mom

For **SAMANTHA SPECK**, support is a shared resource.

Speck was a stay-at-home mom of three boys when she earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Wilmington University in 2018. Now she's pursuing her master's in Applied Family Science through the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Let's just say she's a superstar multi-tasker.

For the past two years, she's been helping other families. At her job as an international adoption specialist for Madison Adoption Associates in Claymont, Delaware, she manages cases originating in China and Bulgaria. Her other job with Wilmington-based Wingmom allows her to be part of a team of local moms lending a hand in homes

throughout New Castle County.

"I feel very fortunate that I found not one, but two positions that have allowed me to use what I've learned at Wilmington University to give back to the community," says Speck.

Speck was Wingmom's first hire in June 2018, as it began its growth from a two-woman babysitting, grocery delivery, and ride-to-the-airport startup to a full-service, 40-mom-strong community-based business. It now offers household assistance with everything from home organization to meal preparation to doctor's appointment transportation for seniors to waiting for the cable guy to show up. "If we can do it," says Speck, "we'll definitely do it for you."

Founder Kate Maxwell was

inspired to create Wingmom by the support she received from family and friends after her fiancé, Christopher Leach, a 14-year veteran of the Wilmington Fire Department, died fighting the Canby Park house fire in September 2016.

While the cautions surrounding COVID-19 have curtailed the demand for rides and inside-the-house services, Wingmoms equipped with masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and wipes are still providing contactless grocery drop-offs at their clients' front doors.

"When this all began, I wondered how I could support Wingmom without putting my family at risk," says Speck. "But without our services, some families wouldn't be able to put food on their tables. So, it's worth it to me to continue to work for them." **WU**



Bonnie Dudley (left) and Kate Maxwell say they can be your Wingmom, running errands and shopping for groceries during the pandemic



Librarian and Assistant Professor Melissa Jones

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES: A WIN-WIN

Open Educational Resources (OER), a concept that has been evolving for more than a decade, holds great potential for both educators and students. Wilmington University is looking to tap that potential.

“I see it as the wave of the future,” says **DR. SALLIE REISSMAN**, assistant vice president and dean of the College of Online and Experiential Learning.

OER encompasses teaching and learning materials that are freely available online for instructors, students, or anyone interested in learning. These materials can be used,

reused, modified and shared openly. Examples of OER include full courses, course modules, syllabi, lectures, homework assignments, quizzes, lab and classroom activities.

Integration of the University library’s data bases is a major component of OER, says Dr. Reissman. “It will focus students on the scholarly materials there rather than random online sources.”

Dr. Stephen Buchanan, director of Instructional Design, says research pinpoints two major advantages of OER. “First,” he says, “students

generally have a positive experience with OER in terms of accessing and interacting with course content. This is an important consideration in that ease-of-access to educational materials is a central challenge to transitioning from traditional commercial textbooks to OER. Second, student performance tends to remain the same, or, in some cases, increase slightly with the use of OER versus a traditional text.”

So far, just a handful of colleges and universities have gone all-in on OER. At WilmU, an “OER Knowledge Cloud,” with more than 4,000 published records and file archives, already exists on the University website.

Librarian and Assistant Professor Melissa Jones will be instrumental in growing OER. She was selected to participate in a certification program conducted by the Open Textbook Network. Jones, who was scheduled to complete the certification in September, cites another OER plus that should appeal especially to cash-strapped students: It can reduce the need for textbooks.

“Textbooks average about \$100 and can cost up to \$200 brand new,” she says. “In the past decade, the cost has increased at three times the rate

of inflation.”

This leads students to buy older editions or use their financial aid to purchase books. “Or,” she says, “they don’t buy one at all. This is particularly concerning.” In extreme cases, she says, the student drops the course because of the textbook cost.

Dr. Buchanan says decisions about adopting OER into curricula lie within the leadership of the academic colleges. “The instructional design team works with the colleges to design online content at the institution,” he says. “We work closely with department chairs, subject matter experts, and the university’s library to facilitate the use of OER in online course development.”

Dr. Reissman says a major goal is to develop an entire degree program online with OER. “We could market it by pointing out that, based on current textbook costs, it would save the student thousands of dollars over the course of a program by going textbook free.”

Like online learning, OER has the potential for far-reaching effects in academia, according to Dr. Reissman. “It will take multiple years, but it is a great path to take.” **WU**

—Bob Yearick





What Makes Remarkable Teachers Remarkable?

Close your eyes. Imagine your favorite teachers. What made them special?

Wilmington University's best teachers have enhanced their teaching effectiveness by enjoying professional development and training programs at the New Castle location. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic changed things up.

Over five days in May, the Online Learning and Educational Technology department hosted its 11th annual Teaching and Learning with Technology Symposium. Hundreds of WilmU faculty members attended via Zoom. Each year, the program offers faculty an expansive menu of training on technical topics and adult teaching strategies. In the past, this event took place on one day and featured different tracks. Faculty could get up to six hours of professional training by attending five of 20 sessions, then enjoying a keynote presentation. Thanks to stay-

at-home orders and other restrictions imposed by the pandemic, the Educational Technology team seized the opportunity to transform the usually one-day event to five virtual days via Zoom.

The symposium opened with a keynote titled "Chart Your Course," presented by WilmU's Sandy Bennett, Pam Huxtable, Dr. Josh Simpson, and Mary Beth Youse, who discussed Pathways to Instructional Excellence. Trainers from Educational Technology, library, and the Center for Teaching Excellence taught 18 workshops on various subjects.

The presenters are fellow teachers, an important distinction that Assistant Vice President and Dean of the College of Online and Experiential Learning Dr. Sallie Reissman has stressed as vital. "Our trainers are not just showing faculty what buttons to push to use an educational technology tool," she says. "They are teachers themselves, so they know how to

utilize technology to better help students master learning objectives."

Instructional Technologist Pam Huxtable taught "Using Groups in Canvas." Librarian Melissa Jones offered a PIE workshop called "Open Educational Resources." Multimedia Specialist Kelsey Styles led the popular and new PIE session "Using Images to Enhance Content," and Stephen Scheib presented "Gamify! Make Your Course Exciting!". A trainer from Instructure, Canvas's parent company, delivered a full day and led a question-and-answer session.

Attendees were encouraged to turn on their webcams, which created a grid of faculty members' familiar faces. While separated by physical location, faculty connected virtually in the same way.









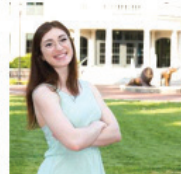



"When our department's biggest training event of the year was forced to move online, we could not have expected to have one of the most well-attended symposiums in years," says Director of Educational

Technology and Multimedia Russ Lichterman. "In subsequent years, this event will likely follow a flexible modality, allowing instructors to attend either in-person or online."

COVID-19 meant that participants were legally required to learn behind keyboards and backlit screens. But the immediate transition from face-to-face courses to online modalities

demonstrated their dedication to enhancing academic excellence and strengthening the teaching skills of faculty, regardless of modality.

—Adam Voyton

<p>Gradebook in Canvas Mary Beth Youse</p> 	<p>Using Groups in Canvas Pam Huxtable</p> 	<p>Implementing Universal Design and Accessibility in Canvas Sandy Bennett</p> 	<p>Designing Engaging Class Sessions Dr. Josh Simpson</p> 
<p>Gamify! Make Your Courses Exciting Stephen Scheib</p> 	<p>Advanced Searching with Library Resources Lynda Gillow</p> 	<p>Advancing Student Engagement Using Multimedia Dr. Christina Asroff</p> 	<p>Ice Breakers and Topic Starters Dr. Terri Trent</p> 
<p>Using Images to Enhance Content Kelsey Styles</p> 	<p>Student Polling Christian Broderick</p> 	<p>Open Educational Resources Melissa Jones</p> 	<p>Virtual Proctoring Services Adam Voyton</p> 

An Unsung Hero and Mask Maker



KRISTINA HOFFMANN wasn't quite planning on turning into a mask- and scrub-hat maker, but that's what happened as living in the age of COVID-19 required everyone to wear protective gear.

The Wilmington University alumna of the College of Business says she pulled out her sewing machine and got to work using material she had in the house.

"It started off with helping family and making sure they were protected," says Hoffmann, who made masks for her husband

(also an essential worker), her two 7-year-old sons, her parents and her brother and his wife.

Then people at her workplace at Queenstown Bank in Queenstown, Maryland, found out she was making masks, and so she was suddenly making more for several of her co-workers.

And after she posted a picture on Facebook, Hoffmann started getting more requests. "Word spread," she says.

She couldn't say no, so she ordered more fabric and tie ribbons from a local shop, cut them, and kept sewing.

A request for matching scrub hats came from a group of nurses, and so she learned to make those as well.



Working mostly in the evenings and weekends, she put together each mask or hat in 20 to 30 minutes. Hoffmann says that the masks are made of two layers of cotton fabric and one layer of flannel, plus a pocket for an extra filter and a bendable nose piece for a better fit. "Especially for hospital staff," she adds. Hoffmann says she's made over 100 masks and 15 scrub hats.

She just received a Paypal Unsung Hero award for, as noted in the citation, "going above and beyond to help people during this difficult time."

Hoffmann holds a B.S. in Organizational Management, cum laude, which she earned in 2019. —Janice Colvin



Michael Mendick

When Great is Not Good Enough

Until last year, **MICHAEL MENDICK** was self-taught, the bulk of his education coming from real-world experience and books on tape (“Automobile University,” he calls them). He devours the books while driving 70,000 miles a year covering a three-state area for his HVAC company. As a result, he peppers his conversation with quotations from self-improvement gurus like Dale Carnegie, Tony Robbins, and Zig Ziglar.

Coming from most people, the quotes would be mere bromides. But Mendick delivers them with a conviction that can't be denied. And they have

served him well, continuing to inform his life.

But in 2019, he detoured from the road of self-education, and it brought him to Wilmington University. It resulted from a vow he made 18 years ago when his first child was born.

“I promised myself then that I would get a college degree by the time my daughter graduated from high school,” Mendick says. True to his word, he received an associate in Liberal Studies from WilmU in May.

He has found the academic world much to his liking. Attacking it with his characteristic dedication, he plans to

earn as many as four WilmU degrees.

Mendick's journey to higher learning took several turns after he graduated in 1999 from William Penn High School, in New Castle, Delaware. At William Penn, he was an accomplished athlete, excelling in football and wrestling.

His parents divorced when Mendick, the oldest of four brothers, was young. Thus, he says, “My coaches were like father figures to me. They taught me work ethic, overcoming adversity, no excuses, how you conduct yourself.”

After graduation, he spent a year in the Parallel Program sponsored by the University of Delaware and

— that focuses on the customer's confidence in, not necessarily affection for, the sales person and his product.

“It's a myth that you have to have a lot of rapport with the customer,” Mendick says. “In fact, you might buy from me over someone you liked better. What you really want when you're paying \$8,000 to \$12,000 on a heating and air-conditioning system is confidence that your money is well-spent, the project is done right and there will be no problems on the back end.”

“And,” he adds, “I genuinely care that you get more than what you paid for.”

His other “secret to success”: “I was number one not because there was something intrinsic within me; it was because I outwork everybody. When they clock off, I go home and study my craft.”

His associate degree in hand, he's now working toward a bachelor's in Business Administration in the fall of 2021. But apparently that won't slake his new-found thirst for classroom learning. “My ultimate goal,” he says, “is to get the MBA and hopefully the DBA.”

He has found that the University makes such aspirations attainable. “The beautiful thing about Wilmington University is you can pick up a degree on your way to a degree,” he says. “At a traditional college, you can go for a bachelor of Business Administration and if you don't achieve it, you're left with nothing. But at Wilmington, on your path to that degree you can grab an intermediate degree.”

Grabbing with both hands, Mendick has added a minor in Finance, and he also has earned a Certificate in Entrepreneurship.

He has maintained a 4.0 while choosing online courses that, for the most part, are relevant to his business, like Climate Dynamics. On the other

hand, he says, “Art Appreciation was one of my hardest courses, but it stretched my mind. I like that. I don't want to be stuck in a box.”

Mendick makes sure to fit family into his jam-packed schedule. Daughters Morgan, 18, and Regan, 16, play volleyball and softball, and he tries never to miss a game, doing classroom assignments on his computer between volleyball matches, or in his motel room while he follows the girls' travel teams.

He and his second wife, Dina, have a three-year-old son. A great believer in the value of sports, Mendick plans to enroll Michael III in a youth wrestling program next year.

Meanwhile, despite the crater-ing economy, he says Greenway Comfort Solutions is thriving. “We are actually looking to hire more people,” Mendick says.

Of WilmU's role in his quest for self-improvement, he says: “No way I could do college at a traditional school. Those people who feel they're too old, too busy, their circumstances don't allow them to go to school? I'm the perfect example of why that's not true.” **WU**

—Bob Yearick

COVID-19

GOODWILL

| BY MARIA HESS |

It was the worst of times, and in some ways, the best of times.

In late 2019, a virus that caused the coronavirus disease emerged in Wuhan, China, then spread to more than 200 countries and territories. On Feb. 11, 2020, the World Health Organization officially named the new coronavirus COVID-19, and by March 11, 2020, deemed it a pandemic.

Businesses shuttered, schools and churches closed, local and national sports and entertainment events were canceled. Global citizens were ordered to shelter-in-place to prevent the spread of the disease. Face masks became standard garb for anyone venturing outside their dwellings. As of September 2020, the Johns Hopkins University tracker reported that global infections from COVID-19 were close to 30 million, with deaths of nearly 950,000. The numbers continued to rise as viral and antibody tests were developed.

Employees of industries deemed essential by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security — health care, law enforcement, public safety, first responders, food and agriculture, energy, communications, IT, and more — could not stay home. They served on

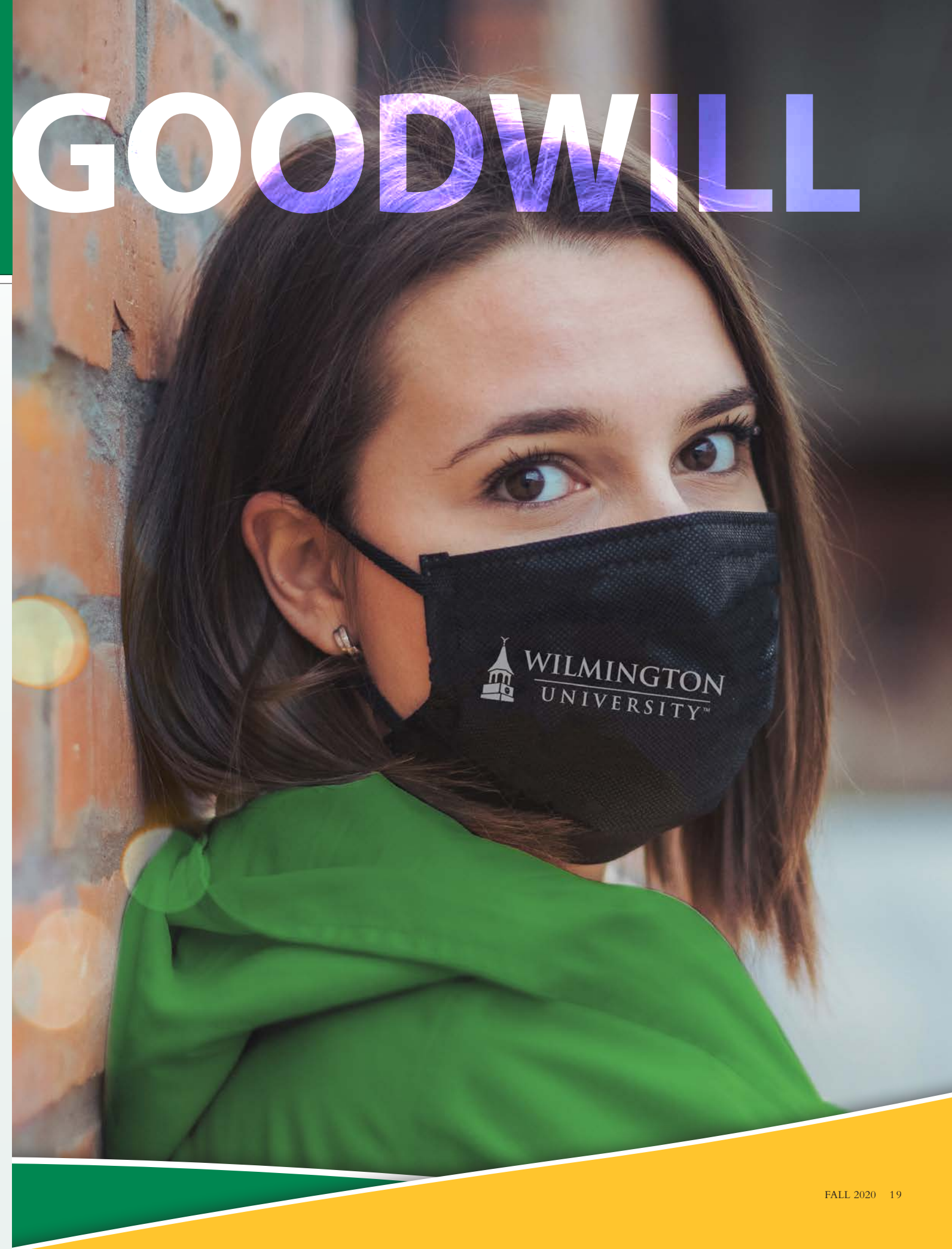


the front lines, inspiring a new world beholden to their efforts. Many Wilmington University students and alumni stood on those front lines.

COVID-19 disrupted the norm, but it did not disrupt students' ability to learn at Wilmington University. The University sprang into action, using its advanced technological capabilities

and the dedicated Educational Technology team, with support from IT, to provide face-to-face students with a seamless and immediate transition to the online environment. This rendered the same academic quality and support to which students had been accustomed. The IT team worked intently to ensure that staff members were equipped to work remotely — that involved handling, delivering, and setting up the equipment so that virtual operations ran smoothly.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE STORY SUBJECTS



WilmU's Maintenance and University Safety teams worked around the clock. Everyone's safety and well-being remained a top priority as the administration closely monitored daily updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Education Advisory Board, and the State of Delaware. The University's Emergency Management Department was in constant contact with the Delaware Division of Public Health for local information and support. Remotely, staff and faculty worked collaboratively and maintained their traditionally excellent service to students.

WilmU established the **WILMUNITY SUPPORT FUND** for

students whose lives were financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign is ongoing, and members of the entire WilmU community continue to donate. To further assist students, there was no tuition increase for the 2020-2021 academic year.

"I have never taken our dedicated board of trustees, administration, staff, or faculty for granted," says WilmU **PRESIDENT DR. LAVERNE T. HARMON**. "But when you face a crisis like COVID-19, you are reminded of how much colleagues care about students and each other. You truly appreciate the character it takes to remain strong during difficult times."

In It Together

President Harmon led the University through the pandemic, facing immediate challenges concerning the safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff," says Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer **DR. ERIN DIMARCO**. "She made critical decisions as news about COVID-19 grew increasingly more alarming, and things changed day-to-day. Dr. Harmon had to consider how the pandemic would impact the University from a business perspective while safeguarding its academic integrity." The President asked Dr. DiMarco to convene a small response planning group whose mission was to develop a COVID-19 preparation strategy. This became the **RESPONSE PLANNING COMMITTEE**, and it comprised several University leaders who focused on ensuring that all operations ran smoothly. "She communicated frequently with staff, faculty, and students, and

collaborated with the teams she put in place," says Dr. DiMarco. "As a result, our administration, faculty, and staff worked together to ensure our students' safety and success."

The **HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT** worked tirelessly to keep employees informed and engaged, and quickly moved all employee development opportunities online. The team collaborated with Educational Technology to offer fun and informative sessions designed to keep colleagues connected. "Additional resources were provided for all aspects of employee health and wellness," says Vice President for Administrative and Legal Affairs Chris Trowbridge. "The well-known compassion and caring of our HR team were on display remotely as they offered countless individuals the personalized assistance, guidance, and support they needed."

The **WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY** and **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY** teams immediately increased the number of laptops to lend to students. "As students requested these laptops, they were mailed to their homes at no cost to them, and we eliminated all due dates so they could keep them until the crisis was over," says Library Director **JIM MCCLOSKEY**. The library continued to mail books and other materials to students at no cost and quickly increased the number of virtual instruction sessions. Staff prepared a COVID-19 research guide to assist anyone who sought unbiased, research-based e-journal articles, ebooks, and reliable statistical sources about the virus. Also, the library initiated an eReading Circle to allow students to engage librarians and fellow students. "We also expanded access to electronic resources through several publishers, databases, and global online dissertations," says McCloskey.



Dr. Robin Weinstein's M25 Initiative serves Cumberland County residents who face food insecurity and economic challenges. Each lunch bag contained food and masks.

The **COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS** held weekly town hall meetings via Zoom for students and faculty. The Sunday evening, one-hour forums provided accurate information via personal interaction. This offered a touchstone for students, many of whom were already employed in the health care industry. WilmU honored their work on the front lines by remaining flexible and cognizant of the struggles they faced personally and professionally throughout the pandemic. "The meetings covered local, regional, and national public health updates; nursing accreditation and certification updates; how our academic programs are responding and revising in the face of the current circumstances; and our

shared perspectives on the personal and professional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic," says Dean **DR. DENISE WELLS**. "They also proved essential in addressing the COHP's decision, based on authorities' recommendations and healthcare facilities' restrictions on access to their facilities, to suspend all direct care clinical experiences for graduate nurse practitioner and post-graduate certificate programs, and in developing alternative courses of action." The sessions helped students feel connected. "They were a sure thing in a world of day-to-day uncertainty."

University departments and colleges held regular Zoom meetings throughout the quarantine period, including **ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT**

and the Student Success Center, which was on call to assist with a variety of projects and hold virtual tutoring sessions.

DR. ROBIN B. WEINSTEIN, chair of the Human Resources Management Program in the **COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**, is president and founder of The M25 Initiative, which serves Cumberland County, New Jersey, residents who face food insecurity and economic challenges. He announced recently that the M25 board awarded more than \$50,000 in grant funding to assist programs feeding the Cumberland County community during the pandemic. Approximately 20 county-based programs were awarded funding. "This funding is aimed at supporting those on the front lines of fighting pover-

*// We want our armies of compassion to know that **we have their backs** while they look after the needs of our neighbors. //*

—Dr. Robin B. Weinstein



ty, homelessness, and hunger,” says Dr. Weinstein. “We want our armies of compassion to know that we have their backs while they look after the needs of our neighbors. We also want the community to know that our Housing First Collaborative is continuing to find homes for those who face chronic homelessness, and we expect to meet our goal of 100 people housed by the end of this year.”

The **EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY** and **HUMAN RESOURCES** departments started a “Take 15” series to create fun and engaging content during the crisis. Topics included cooking, fitness, entertainment, art, and more.

DR. MATT WILSON, associate professor and chair of Humanities, First Year Experience and English as a Second Language in the **COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**, developed and implemented a virtual weekly luncheon series for Leadership Delaware entitled “Leadership Beyond COVID-19.” Topics included responding, reopening, restoring, rebuilding, and resilience. Featured speakers included Dave Tiberi, Alan Levin, Malia Boone, and Peter Atwater. Dr. Wilson serves as a board member for Leadership Delaware.

DR. STEPHANIE BATTIS, a full-time faculty member and graduate advisor in the **COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**, coordinated via Zoom the Business Skills for Leaders program to high school students who took part in Jobs

for Delaware Graduates, a nonprofit that assists high school students in developing skills for future jobs. According to its website, JDG was designed in 1978 by five working groups in Delaware, drawn from business, educational, workforce, labor union, and community leadership to address Delaware’s unemployment and dropout rates. Dr. Battis supported **ALEX YOH, DR. LYNDA FULLER, DR. FRANK INGRAHAM,** and **DR. JANICE WARDLE** as they presented workshops to several students throughout May. They covered business writing, customer service, job preparation, personal branding, job search, and social media.

THERESA BENNETT, of the College of Education, funded a MacBook for alumna **KARILLERAS**, a teacher in Brooklyn, New York. The teacher then connected remotely with her students throughout the pandemic. “Kari Lleras was a WilmU student in our first Master’s in Reading cohort in Laurel,” says Bennett. “I’m so proud of Kari and the work she did in Delaware and now in Brooklyn. It was my pleasure to fund 90 percent of her Donor’s Choose project.”

Shortly after the pandemic began and shelter-in-place orders emerged for states including Delaware and New Jersey, **DR. DEBRA BERKE**, director of Psychology Programs and the Center for Prevention Science in the **COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND**

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES, was asked to speak to Bethany Grace Community Church in New Jersey about coping with trauma and the quarantine. “Dr. Robin Weinstein, a WilmU colleague and pastor at Bethany Grace, arranged the presentation via Zoom,” says Dr. Berke. According to Dr. Weinstein, “The forum was open to church attendees and members from the community, including other clergy. It had over 40 participants. Dr. Berke’s presentation was compassionate and informative. During a time of heightened stress, she validated the feelings of the participants and gave all of us tools to not only help ourselves but to help others during the COVID pandemic.”

The **ONLINE LEARNING AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY** Department hosted its 11th annual Teaching and Learning with Technology Symposium, allowing hundreds of WilmU faculty members to attend via Zoom. Each year, the program offers faculty an expansive menu of training on technical topics and adult teaching strategies. In the past, this event took place on one day and featured different tracks. Faculty could get up to six hours of professional training by attending five of 20 sessions, then enjoying a keynote presentation. Thanks to stay-at-home orders and other restrictions imposed by the pandemic, the Educational Technology team seized



“Although the world was halted due to COVID-19, that didn’t mean there were not families who were still caring for loved ones. WilmU has continued to donate breakfast for the families staying at the Ronald McDonald House.” —Katie Burke



the opportunity to transform the usual one-day event to five days online. That way, the faculty could attend all sessions. “Our trainers are not just showing faculty what buttons to push to use an educational technology tool,” says **DR. SALLIEREISSMAN**, assistant vice president and dean of the **COLLEGE OF ONLINE AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**. “They are teachers themselves, so they know how to utilize technology to better help students master learning objectives.” (Read Adam Voyton’s story on page 14.)

In place of her regular monthly volunteer shift, **KATIE BURKE**, assistant

to the vice president of **EXTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**, delivered breakfast sandwiches to 12 family members at the Ronald McDonald House in May. “Although the world was halted due to COVID-19, that didn’t mean there were not families who were still caring for loved ones,” says Burke. “WilmU has continued to donate breakfast for the families staying at the Ronald McDonald House. Our volunteer WilmU chefs missed their cooking shifts, but we were still donating and dropping off food until we could get back into the kitchen for our monthly Saturday

breakfast shifts.” The **COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY** joined forces with Italian Kitchen to send 50 meals to Unit 5C at Christiana Hospital. It was their way of thanking the brave workers for their perseverance throughout the pandemic. “**TIM DAY** came up with the idea and coordinated it,” says **DR. ANTHONY CARCILLO**, dean of the College of Technology. “While doing this, we discovered that the manager of Unit 5C, **BENITA ROBINSON**, is a WilmU graduate!”

Wilmington University’s **CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE** didn’t skip a beat



DIANE BANSBACH



Masks by DR. KATE COTTLE

during the COVID-19 pandemic. Directors **DR. RAY CARR** and **SCOTT DUFFEY** developed a partnership with The Vidocq Society, which provides pro bono expert assistance to the law enforcement community in solving cold case homicides throughout the world. In cooperation with Vidocq, the CJI created a webinar series called “To Catch a Criminal.” The inaugural offering, “The Forensic Genetic Genealogy Revolution” was presented virtually in June by Dr. Colleen Fitzpatrick, the creator of Identifiers International, and recognized widely as the founder of modern forensic genealogy. Throughout the quarantine period, the CJI nurtured its relationship with the Delaware Department of Corrections via Zoom and developed an eight-week block of instruction that will be taken by all DOC employees over the next three

years. Additionally, adds Dr. Carr, “we developed free online versions of our Cyber Intrusion course for the Wilmington University community and the public.” In July, Dr. Carr was inducted virtually into the Vidocq Society and is now one of just 82 full members in the world.

WilmU alums and adjuncts **JEFFREY BENSON JR.** and **KATHRYN BURRITT**, as well as alumnus **DR. JULIUS MULLEN SR.**, the chief clinical officer of Children & Families First, joined forces with the Seaford Community of Hope. They coordinated food trucks that served more than 35,000 meals to Seaford School District students since the COVID-19 school shutdown.

The **UNIVERSITY RELATIONS** team created a thoughtful campaign to thank first-line responders and other local heroes for their work during

COVID-19. They also developed WilmU face masks and special designs for the **CLASS OF 2020**.

DR. CLINT ROBERTSON is a member of the Downtown Dover Partnership, which worked vigorously to support Dover businesses during the pandemic. He also wanted to support the essential agriculture industry by working with his former U.S. Merchant Marine Academy student Gordon Inouye, a retired executive from American President Lines who lives in Hawaii. Inouye supports the Hawaiian flower exporting business. Hawaii was hit hard by the coronavirus quarantine, mainly because a two-week quarantine was required of its visitors. “Another large industry hit by the quarantine was the florist shops in the U.S. and Canada were closed, the flower brokers and wholesalers were not ordering fresh flowers.” Dr. Robertson supported Pacific Florists in its efforts to survive.

Members of the **COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES** became mask makers. Math Chair **DIANE BANSBACH** used her friend’s 50-year-old sewing machine to make masks for Kent County business employees. Her husband’s company, Dixon Valve & Coupling, printed hundreds of ED plastic masks for EMT personnel. **DR. KATE COTTLE** made her masks for friends,



The Seaford Community of Hope coordinated food trucks that served more than 35,000 meals to Seaford School District students during the COVID-19 school shutdown. (Masks were removed for photo purposes.)

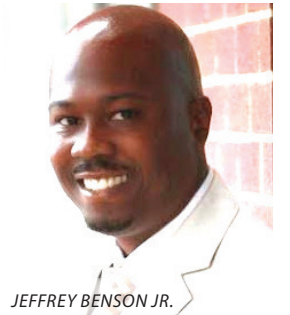
family, and others. She used recycled and scrap fabric when she ran out of elastic for the ties. The college also donated gloves, surgical masks, and cleaning wipes from WilmU’s science programs to Christiana Hospital.

To celebrate the May 2020

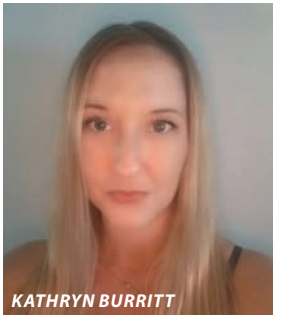
graduates, Senior Director of Web and Systems Communications **KEVIN BARRY** led the WilmU homepage

design that featured dynamic scrolling text listing their names, degrees, and colleges. **WU**

The WilmUnity Support Fund supports students whose lives were financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic by providing funding for tuition, books, and fees. If you would like to offer a donation, visit wilmu.edu/WilmUnity.



JEFFREY BENSON JR.



KATHRYN BURRITT



DR. JULIUS MULLEN SR.

“Since most of the florist shops in the U.S. and Canada were closed, the flower brokers and wholesalers were not ordering fresh flowers.” —**Dr. Clint Robertson**, who supported Pacific Florists in its efforts to survive.



ALL IN — Every University department remained fully operational and generally virtual to ensure that students stayed on track: Academic Advising, Academic Affairs, Academic and Corporate Partnership Centers, Administrative and Legal Affairs, Admissions, Alumni Relations, Bookstore, Career Services, Center for Teaching Excellence, Criminal Justice Institute, Education Technology, Financial Affairs, Financial



Aid, Government Relations, Human Resources, Information Technology, Institutional Research, International Affairs and Admissions, Maintenance, Military Affairs, Publications, Public Relations, Recruiting, Registrar, Student Billing, Student Life, Student Success Center, University Information Center, University locations, University Relations, University Safety, and the Office of the President.

Insight for Incyte

A WilmU *esl* team proves 'flexible and nimble' in developing training for employees of the global corporation.

| BY BOB YEARICK |

At this writing, the 2020 football season was in danger of being cancelled because of the coronavirus. If so, Danielle Bergez will hardly notice. The Wilmington University adjunct professor and adjunct program coordinator for TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and ESL (English as a Second Language) is simply not a football fan.

That doesn't mean, however, that she's not familiar with football terms. The game long ago replaced baseball as America's favorite sport, and even non-fans, through osmosis, if nothing else, have a smattering of gridiron knowledge. And so, like any resourceful teacher, Bergez used that knowledge when she conducted Wilmington University's first English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) training program.

Her class was made up of 18 employees from Incyte. Headquartered in Wilmington, Incyte is a global biopharmaceutical company with a strong investment in science and R&D excellence. The company has more than 1,500 employees in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Japan.

In the spring of 2019, Incyte officials contacted WilmU to inquire about EOP training for some of its employees — non-native English speakers “who had expressed interest in honing their language skills,” according to Incyte Human Resources Director Shannon Maroney-Garrett.

“Our HR team researched several programs in the Wilmington area and concluded that Wilmington University most closely matched our needs,” says Maroney-Garrett.

Incyte's first point of contact was Jeff Martino, director of WilmU's University Partnership Center. “They knew our history with working with adult learners and they knew about our ability to be flexible and nimble,” he says, “and they wanted a quick turnaround.”

He immediately consulted Bergez and Dr. Matt Wilson, chair of

Humanities, First Year Experience, and ESL.

“We offer English for academic purposes, of course, but this was a little bit new,” says Martino. “However, Danielle and Matt said we could take a lot of that learning and translate it for a specific occupation, in this case, the pharmaceutical industry. So we were able to leverage previous programs to develop a new, customized program specifically for Incyte.”

The WilmU team discussed with Maroney-Garrett the goals for the training, then put together a survey that was distributed to managers throughout the company.

Says Bergez: “I used the feedback to create objectives and an overview of the intended content. This was sent to Incyte for approval and to help them promote the training.”

Incyte was onboard quickly. “Their offering was more comprehensive [than competitive programs], and their team was more responsive,” says Maroney-Garrett. “And they were willing to tailor their program to our needs.”

It was agreed that 20 hours of instruction in two-hour segments over 10 weeks would be held at Incyte offices on Augustine Cutoff in Wilmington. Formally titled Enhancing Communication Skills for Non-Native Speakers, the classes began last October. Considering that discussion started in May and this was the University's first foray into EOP training, that would seem to qualify as “flexible and nimble,” to use Martino's phrase.

The 18 trainees in the fall program were scientists and researchers with advanced degrees — some with two doctorates — whose native languages included Chinese and Telugu, which is spoken in parts of Southern India. Their facility with English varied. “Some were lower intermediate,” says Bergez, “but others were high advanced, and we had to challenge them.”

She found that the group had no problems with industry-specific language, but they wanted to improve their communication abilities in

professional situations, both in written and spoken formats.

Much of the class work focused on what she calls “pragmatic conventions, such as body language, register and tone of voice, turn-taking, direct and indirect communication, and speaking up in meetings. For example, how do you interrupt appropriately?”

Producing speech with minimal pausing and appropriate rate of delivery — often a challenge for non-English speakers — was another goal of the training. Here, class exercises and interaction were key, Bergez says. “We did role play, including dialogues, and mock meetings about a given topic. Sometimes I would put them in small groups, and they would discuss a subject, then come back and report. The whole class joined in a debate about which of two candidates they would hire. They had a chance to agree, disagree, acknowledge another person's point, and support their opinion with facts.”

It was in some of these exercises that she found a couple of football terms useful. “The idioms were in the context of a business or professional setting,” Bergez says, “such as to ‘kick off’ a meeting or to ‘drop the ball’ on a project.”

She says baseball terminology — hitting a home run and striking out — also cropped up during discussions.

“They seemed to enjoy sports idioms,” Bergez says.

Writing effective emails was another focus of the training — “how to make the email clear and concise, organized and accurate, polite and professional. They analyzed samples, suggested improvements, and wrote practice messages about topics that were relevant to their work situation,” she says.

Talking to Bergez about Incyte training introduces even a professional writer to a whole new vocabulary relating to the English language. There are, for instance, modals — verbs that combine with another verb to indicate mood or tense to express advice or obligation. E.g., “you might

Danielle Bergez



Dr. Charlie Xie



Dr. Jia Li



“The training helped improve my conversational English, which is very important for daily communication with colleagues and regular teleconferences with research organizations and vendors.”

—Dr. Charlie Xie

want to” versus “you should” versus “you have to.”

The classes also worked on segmentals — pronunciation of specific sounds that can be challenging, such as “th,” and the past tense ending “ed,” which can be pronounced three ways.

And then there were supra-segmentals, which, Bergez explains, “refers to the musical characteristics of speech. For example, intonation is the rise and fall of tone in English. This carries meaning. If you say, ‘what do you mean?’ with the intonation rising at the end, you're asking a real question, seeking clarification. If the intonation falls at the end, it carries with it the sense of a challenge or disbelief or irritation.”

Among the language nuances the class learned were some idioms used in saying “no” or “I'm too busy” — a somewhat common occurrence in the workplace.

Says Bergez: “We discussed and practiced using expressions like, ‘I'd like to, but I have too much on my plate.’ Also, ‘I'm up to my ears in... reports, work, submissions, etc.’ Note the potential for confusion there. Sometimes, having to refuse or disagree with someone in another

language — especially in a work context — can be difficult due to the potential nuance of the language.”

Bergez is quick to credit Beth Kudlick, a TESOL master's student, who assisted in developing course content. “She created individual, communicative activities such as dialogues,” says Bergez.

The first round of 10 classes began in October and ended in mid-December. Another group of 18 Incyte employees started a second session in the spring of this year. Those classes were conducted by Stephanie Berridge, a current TESOL master's student who is also chair of WilmU's Behavioral Science Program.

Midway through the second session the coronavirus shutdown struck, and the University closed (temporarily) on March 17. But the WilmU team reacted quickly, and EOP training resumed less than a month later, this time in online form.

Says Bergez: “Stephanie's flexibility in making this move online was greatly appreciated, and the participants noted the smooth transition to virtual.”

The team has received positive feedback on the training from both students and Incyte management.

One of the students, Dr. Charlie Xie, a research investigator for Incyte's Global Pharmaceutical Development, says most of his days are spent in the lab doing formulation and analytical work. “That does not give me much time to talk and improve my English,” he says. “The training helped improve my conversational English, which is very important for daily communication with colleagues and regular teleconferences with research organizations and vendors. Danielle's lectures were easy to understand, interesting, and helpful. She prepared everything we needed, including binders, printouts and even pens for the classes.”

Dr. Jia Li, a senior research investigator in Global Pharmacokinetics, calls the training “a great learning program with excellent, dynamic structure, including different aspects of pronunciation, email writing and meeting communication. The email writing skills I learned from the class are very useful, especially for the current COVID-19 remote work situation.”

As Incyte's Human Resources director, Maroney-Garrett sat in on many of the classes. “I was impressed with both the in-person and the Zoom format,” she says.

“The Wilmington team had the experience and knowledge and earned the respect of the participants. The team was really a pleasure to work with.”

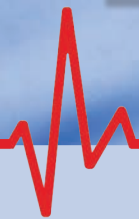
More classes for Incyte employees are under discussion. “Incyte is rapidly growing, and we're excited to partner with them,” says Martino.

“The plan is to have offerings again in the fall with the possibility of a second level of training during the same time,” adds Dr. Wilson.

He credits Bergez and the WilmU team for the quick response in developing the University's maiden voyage into the world of EOP training. “But this is the norm at Wilmington, in my experience,” he says, “and it demonstrates how the University continues to creatively meet the needs of the community around us.” **WU**

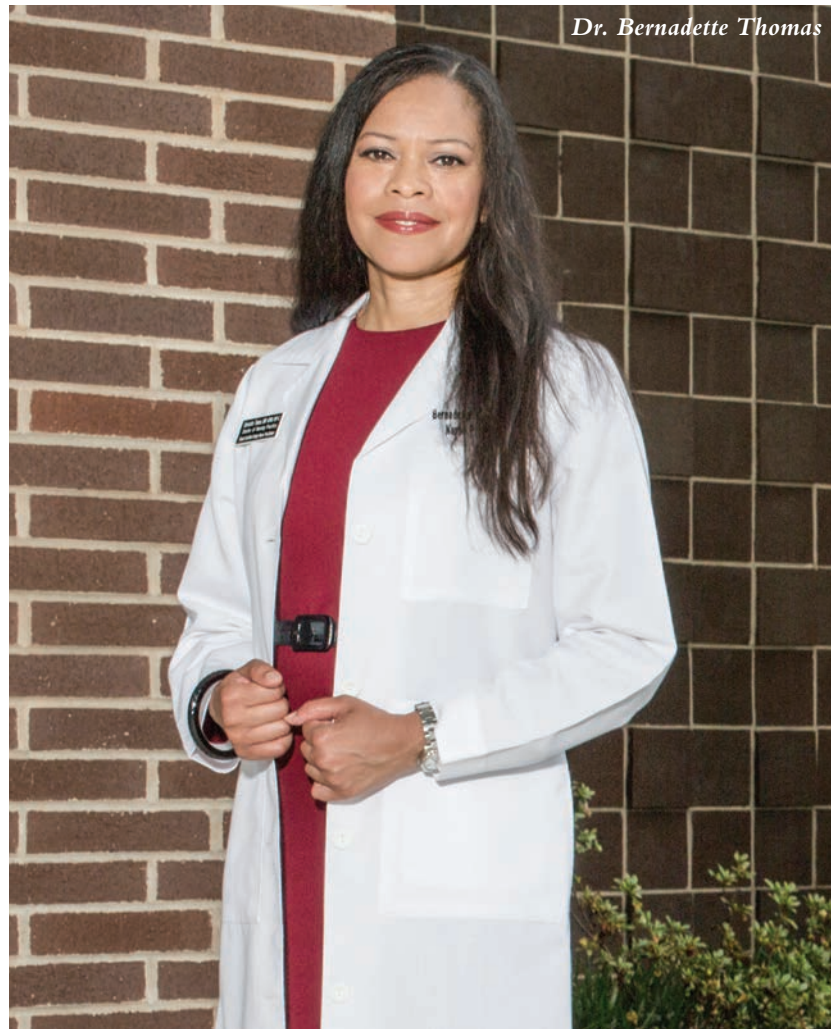
| BY MARIA HESS |

THE YEAR OF THE NURSE



When the World Health Organization declared 2020 the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, alumnae **Dr. Candace Sandal** and **Dr. Bernadette Thomas** had an idea.





Dr. Bernadette Thomas

Anyone whose health care journey was championed by a nurse will celebrate the World Health Organization's decision to decree 2020 the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, in honor of Florence Nightingale's 200th birthday.

That's especially notable considering the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the International Council of Nurses, "The courageous work of nurses and other health care workers in the face of coronavirus does honor to the Year of the Nurse and Midwife 2020. Florence would be proud of you."

Proud, too, are Wilmington University alumnae Dr. Candace Sandal and Dr. Bernadette Thomas. Both are passionate ambassadors of their alma mater and tireless in their

efforts to support aspiring nurses and serve as industry advocates. They have a good role model: Nightingale also used advocacy in the development of modern nursing.

COVID-19 disrupted the health care system. Drs. Sandal and Thomas saw the writing on the wall and realized that students needed support. They gave every ounce of compassion and energy they had during the pandemic, and sadly, the pressure was too much for some. Drs. Sandal and Thomas recognized the intense struggles that nurses endured and nursing students feared.

That's why they founded The Future of Nursing Excellence Scholarship at WilmU — with funds out of their own pockets. Nursing, after all, is about care, and care is about giving back. The alumnae want

to ensure that everyone, regardless of their financial limitations, can thrive in this noble profession.

The world needs nine million more nurses and midwives to achieve universal health coverage by 2030. If there was ever a time to support current and future nursing and health sciences students, this is it.

THE SCHOLARSHIP

The Bureau of Labor Statistics lists Registered Nursing among the top occupations through 2026. COVID-19 aside, the RN workforce in the U.S. is expected to grow from 2.9 million in 2016 to 3.4 million in 2026.

That growth, according to the bureau, will occur for several reasons: an increased emphasis on preventive care; escalating rates of chronic conditions like diabetes and obesity; and demand for services from baby boomers, who are living longer. Since these stats came out before the pandemic hit, the need for nurses is likely more dire than the data indicates.

A world of possibilities lies ahead for nurses, and it's reasonable to assume that more people will take advantage of them. But becoming a nurse isn't just about money or titles; it's about a calling. More to the point: It's about being free enough from life's distractions to hear the calling.

"We understand the challenges," says Dr. Sandal. "We have seen the stark images of nurses exposed to COVID-19 and other illnesses, many without proper personal protective equipment. We know we are going to be about 120,000 nurses short in our country alone. We also know that working incredibly long hours impacts young people's decisions about going into the profession."

On the other hand, Dr. Sandal says, "I have been so privileged to see into the window of people's lives that are never shared otherwise. I am there during their private moments of

elation and distress. Every single day, I feel like I make a difference."

Drs. Sandal and Thomas are passionate about WilmU nursing students because they attribute much of their success to their alma mater. Yet, when you fuse the toll that COVID-19 took on nurses with challenging coursework, it's no wonder students feel pressured.

Created in May of 2020, as the virus continued to advance, The Future of Nursing Excellence Scholarship that honors Nightingale's birthday is designed to offer hope to nursing and health sciences students by easing their financial burdens. The scholarship is privately funded, but donations are certainly welcomed.

"It's incredible that Drs. Sandal and Thomas developed such a strong and lasting relationship at WilmU," says Development Director Felicia Quinn, "and are now generous and kind enough to give back to our nursing and health sciences students."

"Yes, it's coming out of our own pockets, and we hope it becomes a successful annual offering as long as we can support it," says Dr. Thomas. "This is our way of telling students that even if they can't see us while they're going through their journeys, the scholarship is our way of letting them know that people like us are screaming, 'You can do this! Whether you crawl, walk, run, or climb through it, we're there.' And that's because we got that same attention at Wilmington. Do you see what our University does to people?"

"It seems innate that nurses and health professionals desire to make a difference since that was the motivation for many to enter the profession," says College of Health Professions Dean Dr. Denise Wells. "Yet, WilmU further inspires our faculty, students and alumni to pay it forward. Our institutional values speak of caring and respect for one another. Drs. Sandal and Thomas are exhibiting those very beliefs in their thoughtful actions."



Dr. Candace Sandal

THE WILMU JOURNEY

Dr. Sandal holds five degrees: RN, BSN, MSN, DNP, and an MBA in Health Care Administration from WilmU, where she taught for 23 years for the colleges of Health Professions, and Arts and Sciences. She also held several nursing positions at St. Francis Hospital in Wilmington. In 2016, she started a practice in Newark, Delaware, called Up and Away Travel Health, and offers medical consultations, vaccines, and information before clients travel abroad. The MBA was relevant to Dr. Sandal because it opened doors to the corporate medical world. She established and implemented ongoing continuing education programs across the Dow/DuPont global sites for nurses and nurse practitioners,

physicians' assistants, and physicians. Additionally, she managed eight Health Services sites across DuPont.

Dr. Thomas earned three degrees, a BSN, MSN, and DNP, the latter two from WilmU, where for nine years she was a hybrid and distance learning adjunct for the College of Health Professions. Before nursing, she served in the military as a senior airman of the U.S. Air Force 31st Medical Group, then left to pursue a BSN at the University of Maryland. Dr. Thomas has worked as a family nurse practitioner at several facilities in Delaware and Maryland and was a lead corporate health and wellness nurse practitioner for JP Morgan Chase. In 2019, she founded the Monarch Wellness Center in Wilmington, where she focuses on the health and wellness of patients

with thyroid diseases and provides adjunct care to patients with other autoimmune diseases.

Dr. Thomas was a student of Dr. Sandal's. Both put teaching on hold to focus on their practices, but their concern for student welfare and success never waned.

"Wilmington opened me up to a whole world of awesomeness," says Dr. Thomas. "I could be a part of great medical groups, in primary care, management, or internal medicine. But I got more than degrees from WilmU. I met people who encouraged me and made me feel strong—that I could do anything. Dr. Sandal was a role model. I looked at her and wanted to be like her."

The feeling is mutual for Dr. Sandal. "One of the joys of teaching is seeing the lightbulb go on," she says. "Bernadette was exceptional, always motivated. She was able to really absorb the information. I was fortunate enough to have her work with me at my clinic, and she brought a great deal of kindness to the job."

Dr. Thomas also brought with her an authentic view of hardship. "I was a foster kid," she says. "I started out differently, and there weren't many people who were beside me during my journey. It wasn't until I got to WilmU and met people with humility and kindness. When I started teaching there, it was like family. That's why the University was such a huge deal."

In addition to running her practice, Dr. Thomas recently began teaching online at Georgetown University, focusing on Pathophysiology and Pharmacology. "Long ago, you couldn't have paid me to say I teach," says Dr. Thomas. "But WilmU gave me the tools, and now I can do so much with them."

ADVOCACY

Dr. Sandal was part of an advanced practice nursing (APN) advocacy



Passionate health care ambassadors Dr. Bernadette Thomas and Dr. Candace Sandal practice their social distancing. (Masks were removed for photo purposes.)

group that approached Delaware Sen. Tom Carper in Washington D.C., and lobbied for full practice authority legislation for nurse practitioners in Delaware. As a result, she served on the APN Council to successfully achieve full practice authority. Subsequently, legislation was approved, granting APNs independent practice. (Dr. Thomas was a DNP student then, and attended several of the group's meetings.) Passed in July of 2015, during the last hours of the 148th General Assembly legislative session, the Advanced

Practice Nurse Act grants nurse practitioners and other advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) independent practice after meeting certain requirements, meaning, they are free to practice without the oversight of a physician. SB 57 changed the title of Advanced Practice Nurse to Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. Senate Bill 101 included provisions regarding the scope of practice for APRNs.

"We worked for a long time with the Advanced Practice Nurse Council of Delaware," says Dr. Sandal. According to its website,

the council advocates for advanced nurses through legislative channels and regulatory activity, resulting in beneficial outcomes for Delaware citizens.

Drs. Sandal and Thomas have advocated for nurses most of their lives through teaching and service. The Future of Nursing Excellence Scholarship expands that support.

"The need is great," says Dr. Sandal. "This was born of an idea that we can give back to nursing. We see the value. We want to make a small ripple in a big area."

INSPIRATION

WilmU students Brenda Brunskill and Jennifer Washkalavitch were the first recipients of the scholarship in June. Washkalavitch is on track to complete her BSN in early 2021; Brunskill is working on her B.S. in



Health Sciences.

"This scholarship is incredibly meaningful to me," Washkalavitch says. "I began my path to the BSN a few years ago but was interrupted due to breast cancer. I questioned if moving forward was even a possibility. At the end of my treatment, I became even more motivated to continue."

Brunskill is equally appreciative. "I'm very grateful because the scholarship allows me to take additional classes at a faster pace and provides financial relief," she says. "Witnessing how team members of a hospital can come together and provide the utmost care during this unprecedented time has encouraged me to move forward. Helping others is a passion of mine."

As arduous as the pandemic has been, both beneficiaries found inspiration. They were nurturing people who were gravely ill, not to mention terrified. That meant the world to them.

COVID-19 has obviously tested the health care industry. But even Florence Nightingale said that there was no part of her life upon which she could look back without pain. Then again, she said, "I attribute my success to this: I never gave or took an excuse."

"Being a student is hard, the material is hard, physically, spiritually and emotionally," says Dr. Thomas. "It's difficult to juggle life and education. We know that these students need to breathe, to have relief from all the demands. We want to hold their hands and offer compassion and empathy throughout their journeys. There is no burden to me to do that."

Nurses power through hardship, she adds. "And we change lives." **WU**

Drs. Sandal and Thomas invite COHP alumni or other members of the WilmU community to join with them in supporting aspiring nurses and health care professionals. Should you wish to donate, please visit wilmu.edu/giving. The scholarship is listed as a designation option on the online gift form.

*WilmU's College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
brings together expertise from three WilmU colleges to create
the new graduate certificate in Trauma and Resilience.*

| BY DAVID BERNARD |



*From Concern to
Collaboration*



Early exposure to abuse, neglect, or family dysfunction has a lasting impact on a child’s physical, mental and social health. Traumatic experiences later in life are all but inevitable. Even entire communities can be traumatized by poverty, violence and discrimination.

Professionals in many fields, including human services, education and healthcare, have the potential to guide victims toward recovery. Wilmington University’s new Trauma and Resilience certificate program aims to build that potential into ability. The graduate-level certificate, launched this summer by the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, offers the evidence-based training necessary to promote preventive health, healing and growth.

“No matter where you are, you’ll find people who are experiencing the effects of trauma,” says Dr. Rebecca Ghabour, who chairs the college’s Psychology and Organizational



Dr. Rebecca Ghabour

PAUL PATTON

Dynamics programs. “Our Trauma and Resilience certificate is designed to educate the people who are out there doing the work of helping.”

Since trauma and the resulting responses cut across the entire span of human lives, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences sought the collaboration of faculty members from WilmU’s colleges of Education and Health Professions in creating the Trauma and Resilience certificate. The curriculum for the five-course, 15-credit program includes coursework options in classroom teaching, educational counseling and nurse leadership, as well as psychology, administration of human services, and applied family science.

“We wanted the certificate to be able to educate everyone in the social safety net,” says Dr. Debra Berke, director of Psychology programs and the Center for Prevention Science. “Everyone who comes in contact with a trauma victim’s life is key, and they can all help.”

Hidden in Plain Sight

The idea that early trauma can shape the course of a person’s life isn’t particularly revolutionary, but research surveying just how often early trauma occurs has attracted significant attention in the two decades since its publication.

The numbers emerged from an unexpected source. Researchers at health care network Kaiser Permanente’s weight-loss clinic in San Diego were seeing about half of the clinic’s patients quit the program, even though nearly all of those who dropped out had lost weight.

Interviewing 286 of the dropout patients, Dr. Vincent Felitti, then-director of Kaiser Permanente’s Department of Preventive Medicine, discovered that the majority had suffered sexual abuse as children. Had their weight gain been a method of coping with the emotional after-effects?

To find out, Dr. Felitti and Dr.



Dr. Debra Berke

PAUL PATTON

Robert Anda of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveyed 17,337 Kaiser Permanente patients about adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs. In addition to sexual and emotional abuse, these traumas included physical and emotional neglect, mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, divorce, maternal depression, homelessness and incarceration.

The resulting study, published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* in 1998, estimated that about two-thirds of all adults have suffered at least one ACE. Forty percent of the survey’s respondents reported two or more, and 12.6 percent had experienced four or more.

An examination of the respondents’ medical and social histories led Drs. Felitti and Anda to suggest that ACEs can disrupt the

development of children’s brains, which is likely to impair their social, emotional and cognitive abilities. These deficits may lead to risky health behaviors, which in turn might trigger disease, disability, and/or social problems, and ultimately an early death.

In 2017, researchers Dr. Wendy Ellis and Dr. William Dietz of George Washington University complemented the study’s findings with a look at the impact of adverse community environments. These environments — in which populations are affected by poverty, discrimination, community disruption, a lack of opportunity, economic mobility or social capital, poor housing quality and affordability, and violence — often contribute to and then compound adverse childhood experiences, a health and social hazard the researchers call “a pair of ACEs.”



Alumna and educator Wendy Turner

Cultivating a Curriculum

The George Washington University study proposes a solution through “building community resilience” to increase public engagement and improve the quality of life in a community. This process, the researchers write, depends on interdisciplinary networking, training, and partnership among healthcare providers, human service agencies, educators and other organizations.

“You can’t address social ills from just one angle,” explains WilmU’s Dr. Berke. “You have to approach them from all sides.”

That type of collaborative outreach fueled the Trauma and Resilience certificate. It also informed the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences’ previous trauma-related educational initiatives, which helped to lay the foundation for the new program.

The undergraduate certificate in Trauma-Informed Approaches, launched in 2016, “is one of our fastest-growing programs, in terms of enrollment,” says Dr. Ghabour. “We’ve seen it drawing interest from master’s students in Education and Health Professions as well,” which highlighted the demand for a graduate-level option.

The launch of WilmU’s Center for Prevention Science followed. Designed as a resource for community assistance, the center channels faculty members’ research and students’ hands-on coursework toward social and public health concerns. Most recently, Dr. Berke oversaw training for more than 450 Delaware Department of Labor employees from February through June on trauma awareness, the first of the four-stage continuum to becoming trauma informed. In addition, Dr. Ghabour presented workshops to the faculty and staff of Delaware elementary schools on how ACEs affect children’s learning behaviors and how identifying and responding



Al DiEmedio

to trauma’s impact can result in better outcomes, healing and resilience.

It’s a trend to which educators are increasingly attending. “We’re just opening the door on this topic, but over the last several years it’s gained more and more momentum,” says Al DiEmedio, director of Teacher Preparation programs in the College of Education, who notes that WilmU’s early childhood and elementary education courses now address trauma-informed teaching.

“We’ve learned that students bring a lot of needs into the classroom,” he says. “We want our future educators to be able to have a positive impact on these kids who’ve experienced violence or abuse.”

The College of Education introduced a new course, Building a Responsive Classroom (MED 6801), for the Trauma and Resilience certificate. It originated from an in-service training program for new teachers at New Castle’s Colonial School District.

“If we can prepare new educators with experiences that help them to look at situations with new eyes, that changes the dynamic for us,” says Melanie Barbas, lead teacher for classroom culture at Colonial, who co-taught the course there with WilmU assistant professor Tyler Wells and who brought it to WilmU for 2020’s Summer Block II. “And if they

can develop positive relationships with their students, they can instill in them a sense of hope that their circumstances won’t necessarily define the rest of their lives.”

Different Backgrounds, Common Goal

We recognize the responsibility and the need for this type of education in graduate nursing,” says Dr. Lisa Drews, RN and chair of the Master of Science in Nursing Leadership program at WilmU’s College of Health Professions. She recommended three graduate-level course options for the Trauma and Resilience certificate.

“Unfortunately, most people have some significant traumatic experiences that inform their health choices and their overall health,” she

notes. “Nurses are out there, in every area of health care practice you can imagine, seeing those patients face-to-face, at every stage of their lives.

“It’s always been the heart of nursing to put the patient first,” says Dr. Drews. “Learning about trauma and resilience is nurse leaders gaining a new perspective, a new worldview, and incorporating new strategies to promote the health of the whole patient.”

To the benefit of those who are affected, it’s not just health care providers who will see them now. “We’re reaching out to different parts of the community,” says Dr. Ghabour. “When we talk about trauma in a proactive way, the response has been positive. People want to know more. We can share a common understanding. We’re really excited about that.” WU



Tyler Wells

Courses for Concern

Three psychology courses from WilmU’s College of Social and Behavioral Sciences make up the core of the graduate certificate in **TRAUMA AND RESILIENCE: TRAUMA AND THE BRAIN (PSY 6100)**, **RESILIENCE** and **SELF-CARE (PSY 6200)**, and **LEADERSHIP IN TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES (PSY 6300)**.

The certificate program also requires the completion of two elective courses from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the College of Education, or the College of Health Professions, based on a student’s career background and areas of interest.

For more information about the Trauma and Resilience graduate certificate, visit wilmu.edu/behavioralscience/trauma-and-resilience-certificate.aspx. To read about the ACE study, visit cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy.

LORNE BICKLEY: A Lasting Legacy

LORNE BICKLEY is now back in his native England, but he leaves behind a legacy at Wilmington University that will be hard to match — both on the soccer field and in the classroom.

Bickley was named the 2019 D2CCA Ron Lenz National Player of the Year after leading the nation with 26 goals and 55 points, both Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference and WilmU records. He is the first Wildcat to earn a National Player of the Year award in any sport in the NCAA era, and only the second player from the East Region to earn the award for men's soccer.

He also became just the seventh Wildcat in Athletic Department history to be named a CoSIDA Academic All-American, which gives equal weight to academics and athletic achievement. Bickley earned a degree in Sports Management in just three-and-a-half years.

Wilmington Soccer Coach Nick Papanicolas snagged Bickley during a one-week recruiting trip to England in 2015. Along with about 150 other coaches, he watched the lean, 6-4 forward perform in a showcase event. Afterward, Papanicolas sat down with Bickley

and his mother and told them about WilmU. A few weeks later, Bickley accepted a scholarship to the University.

He had an immediate impact on the soccer program, earning Rookie of the Year and first team All-CACC honors as a freshman.

“Lorne is what we call a one-touch finisher,” says Papanicolas. “His 26 goals for 2019 will be a very difficult record to break for future strikers.”

Papanicolas says Bickley “was a pleasure to coach.” What’s more, many members of the team are from other countries, and Bickley “mentored some of the younger players to help them adjust to college life in the U.S.,” the coach says.

Bickley himself had to explain to teammates and others that he was from Jersey, but not *New Jersey*. “I’m from Jersey, Channel Islands,” he says. “It’s a tiny Island situated in between England and France.”

In fact, New Jersey was named for that island. King Charles II gave the colony to his brother James, Duke of York, and James later named it New Jersey to honor Sir George Carteret, who had been governor of Jersey. “They copied the name from us,” Bickley jokes.

He will be living in Jersey during the off-season after signing with Hartlepool United to play in England’s National League. He joined the team in March, but unfortunately the season was cancelled because of the COVID-19 outbreak. In the meantime, says the 22-year-old striker, “I’m training hard in preparation for next season, whenever that may begin. I’m keeping focused in order to have the best season I can, constantly looking to improve.”

Bickley credits Papanicolas and Wilmington University for “the best four years of my life.”

“I was able to play full-time soccer and meet friends and coaches which I would now class as family,” he explains.

Among his fondest memories of his time here: “Never losing at home in two seasons; trips to California and Florida for pre-season; and being lucky enough to graduate and my family flying in for the ceremony.”

He says the University opened many doors for him. “I will always be grateful for the opportunity I have been given. It allowed me to be the person I am today.” **WU**

—Bob Yearick



Lorne Bickley was recruited by WilmU in 2015 and became the first Wildcat to earn a National Player of the Year award in any sport in the NCAA era.

A HOME RUN for Mentors and Student-Athletes

Wilmington University Mathematics Chair **DIANE BANSBACH** has a relatively new screen-saver on her computer: a picture of her with nine international members of the men's soccer team, taken the day after Thanksgiving last year at her house.

"I invited the international students over for dinner because they didn't have any place to go for Thanksgiving," she says, "so we had dinner together and then hung out." Then she adds: "Some of them call me their American mom. That's very meaningful to me."

Dinners, pizza parties, one-on-one and group meetings — even the creation of vision boards and virtual graduations — those are just some of the activities initiated by 15 faculty mentors appointed in 2019 for each of the University's athletic teams. The mentors — all volunteers — often attended games and practices, conferred with coaches, acted as liaison between athletes and faculty as well as tutors, and were available for phone calls or texts at all hours of the day and night.

The program had its genesis in early 2019 when Erin Harvey, the University's NCAA Compliance officer, attended the NCAA National Convention, where a representative of McDaniel College, in Westminster, Maryland, described that school's Faculty Mentor program.

"I loved the idea," says Harvey, who

is also the associate athletics director. She, along with Director of Athletics Dr. Stefanie Whitby and Faculty Athletic Representative Dr. Matt Wilson, are constantly searching for ways to support student-athletes and help bridge the gap between athletics and academics. A Faculty Mentor program seemed to be an ideal way to help accomplish those goals.

"I saw this as a unique opportunity," says Dr. Wilson. "I don't think a lot of colleges have something like this."

When he gave a presentation describing the mentor program at the Faculty Senate in September, he says, "It was amazing the response from full-time faculty members who showed interest in helping out in one form or another."

With the mentors quickly on board, the program was rolled out as the new 2019–20 academic year began.

"It's done wonders to provide another layer of support for our student-athletes and afford additional avenues of assistance for them," says Dr. Wilson.

The "job description" states that "Each faculty mentor will have their own style and way of interacting with the student-athletes and coaches."

This has certainly been true for Dr. Adrienne Bey, director of the University's Center for Teaching Excellence and mentor for the women's basketball team.

Dr. Bey, who played basketball at William Penn High School in New



Math Chair Diane Bansbach is one of several faculty mentors for WilmU's student-athletes.



Castle, met with the team and attended many of the home games during the 2019–20 season. She suggested and attended team-building activities, including a dinner to celebrate Thanksgiving.

She also led the team in the creation of vision boards.

“For the new year, we did a vision board to talk about their goals for the future,” says Dr. Bey. “You use poster board, scissors and glue, and cut out words and pictures from magazines that depict what your vision is. Then you stand up and explain what your board means for your future.”

She feels that she was able to support team members in meeting some of their life challenges. “We expect them to function in the classroom, on the basketball court, and in life, and that’s a lot of pressure on student-athletes.”

Says first-year Coach Jamie Hensley: “I could not have been happier with Dr. Bey joining our

family. She was a big piece of our team’s academic success this year and helped us reach our goal of a 3.0 team GPA. Aside from her academic help, her vision aligned with the coaches, in that we wanted to do more to prepare the young ladies for life after college.”

Kiersten Comer, who plays first base for the Wildcat softball team, says Faculty Mentor Dr. Stephanie LoBiondo was a great help to her and the team.

“It can be hard living away from home and family, taking on the schedule of a college athlete, and doing it all with a smile on your face,” says Comer, from Long Island, New York. “I find that sometimes it’s easy to feel defeated when you have a bad game or practice, but Dr. LoBiondo did exercises with us that promoted self-confidence.”

Comer says a workshop led by Dr. LoBiondo last fall helped the team bond. “She explained how

it’s during times like 6 a.m. lifts or extra-inning games that I have to be able to look at the girl next to me and know that my teammate is in the same position I am, and we will do anything to ensure that we achieve our goals.”

The pandemic postponed May graduation ceremonies, but Dr. Janice Wardle, chair of the Sports Management program and mentor for the men’s golf team, was determined to celebrate the team’s seniors. On May 13, she set up a virtual graduation for them. By that time, two were home in British Columbia, Canada, and another was in Georgia. They all “Zoomed” together to watch as Dr. Wardle, in full doctoral cap and gown, oversaw a well-orchestrated event that started with the playing of “Pomp and Circumstance” and the video of University President Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon’s address from January graduation ceremonies. That was followed by a power point

spotlighting the athletic achievements of the seniors during their years at WilmU.

Dr. Whitby, Erin Harvey and Coach Mark Hall all spoke, as did the graduates, who thanked Dr. Wardle for her efforts.

“They’re great students and athletes,” she says, “and I just felt they needed to be recognized.”

While the Faculty Mentor program is aimed at supporting student-athletes, it’s been a meaningful experience for the mentors themselves.

“Personally,” says Bansbach, “being a mentor has done wonderful

things for me because as chair I don’t have a lot of interaction with students. So this gives me a better perspective on what student-athletes have to face. They have a lot on their plates.”

As Faculty Athletic Representative, Dr. Wilson says his role is not only to support overall student well-being but also to help faculty members understand student-athletes and the challenges they face in dealing with practices, games and academics. “And if any questions come up, I’m there as a resource for the faculty and the athlete.”

Dr. Whitby says faculty mentoring of student-athletes is especially

important at Wilmington University. “Because we’re a commuter school we don’t have the dorms, we don’t have those natural, day-to-day ways of running into faculty here,” she says, “and I think that’s a big reason why everyone’s so enthusiastic about the program.”

She believes the year-old initiative has just scratched the surface in terms of its potential. “We’ve encouraged coaches to think about how to bring their mentors into the fold of the team,” she says, “and many of them see that potential and are looking forward to next year.” **WU**

—Bob Yearick

While the Faculty Mentor program is aimed at supporting student-athletes, **it’s been a meaningful experience for the mentors themselves.**



ALUMNI

A GENTLE GIANT

A master's from WilmU influenced this former Philadelphia Eagle's lifetime work. Now the ex-fullback is fully invested in his community. **by Bob Yearick**



When **MICHAEL HADDIX** was 9 years old, he suffered a child's worst nightmare: His parents, as well as an aunt, were killed when their car was struck head-on by a drunken driver as they were coming home from a high school reunion.

It happened on Christmas Eve. Three days before his 10th birthday.

That kind of devastating tragedy can lead to a textbook full of emotional struggles for a child —

unless that child has a strong support system. Fortunately, young Michael did.

His maternal grandparents, Devoe and Ruby Rainer, took him in, along with his 13-year-old sister and his infant sister and brother. "There was never any question of us going into foster care," Haddix says.

He and his siblings joined his aunt's children and his grandparents' children, who were in high school, to make a total of 14 kids on the Rainer farm.

It was a big farm near a small town — Walnut, Mississippi (population in 2010: 717). "We had milking cows, raised hogs, chickens, we chopped cotton, grew corn, cucumbers, peas, even had horses," says Haddix. "One thing we knew about was hard work."

Thanks in part to the day-long demands of farm life as well as loving adults to guide him through his formative years, Haddix says he never got into the mischief so common to adolescent boys. "I was always a kid who worked hard and was a good student. I was disciplined."

For that, he says, his father was at least partially responsible. "My dad was only with me for nine years of my life, but I think everything that he ever taught me I remembered. Then my grandfather and grandmother picked it up from there."

He also was well aware of how fortunate he was, as an orphan, to have a stable home life. That awareness would shape his career choices, eventually bringing him to what was then Wilmington College, where he earned a master's degree in Administration of Human Service, with a focus in the juvenile justice system and at-risk children.

He explains his educational choice this way: "Anytime you come through what I went through, you want to give back to kids who are less fortunate."

Haddix graduated from Walnut High School in 1979 with a desire for a college education instilled in him by his grandmother. His exceptional athletic ability helped him fulfill that desire with a four-year scholarship.

"My true love was basketball," he

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PHILADELPHIA EAGLES



Michael Haddix

says, “and I got offers, but I was only 6-2 and a power forward and I figured I was too short to play power forward in college.”

That left him with football. Big, fast and country strong, he terrorized opposing defenses from his running back position. Although Walnut High — with a graduating class of 45 — was hardly a gridiron powerhouse, Haddix caught the attention of several schools and wound up accepting a full ride to Mississippi State University, in Starkville.

Losing his parents and the long, hard days on the farm had combined to forge a mature young man, and that helped him in the classroom, where he earned a degree in Elementary Education, as well as on the football field, where he averaged six yards a carry — still an MSU record — and was twice named to the All-Southeastern Conference team.

Haddix’s journey to Wilmington College can be traced to the 1983 NFL draft, when the Philadelphia Eagles picked him in the first round (eighth overall). He went on to play six seasons

with the Eagles, usually as the starting fullback, before finishing the last two years of his career with the Green Bay Packers.

“I loved Philadelphia,” Haddix says.

He especially appreciated Head Coach Marion Campbell, who drafted him ahead of some big-name players, telling him he had “the size, the speed and the toughness” to eventually replace star running back Wilbert Montgomery, who was near retirement.

During his Eagles career, Haddix earned the nickname “Giant killer” from Buddy Ryan, who succeeded Campbell in 1986. Ryan habitually mispronounced players’ names, and he usually called his fullback “Maddix.” Explains Haddix: “I was pretty much the only one who could block (All-Pro New York Giant linebacker) Lawrence Taylor, and Buddy said, ‘Yeah, that Maddix kid, he’s my Giant killer.’”

Taking on the unglamorous role of a blocking back helped his image with the Eagles faithful. “The fans were always good to me,” Haddix

remembers. “I think they appreciated a blue-collar guy, a hard worker.”

He retired in 1991, then accepted a job at a residential facility for youth in Mount Holly, New Jersey. He also joined his wife, Yulanda, to help her in a program in Camden, New Jersey, that focused on rehabilitating former gang members.

Helping youth was his “passion,” Haddix says. “I also wanted to try to dispel the myth that all football players could do is coach or teach. So I went in a total different direction, and I loved it.”

While working with troubled youth for several years, Haddix also became something of an entrepreneur. “I got into the tailoring business,” he says. “We would tailor suits for professional athletes. We would go all over — Chicago, Washington, wherever — and measure these guys and they would order five or six suits at a time. It did real well.”

After a few years in the workforce, he felt the need for an advanced degree. He researched nearby colleges and decided to continue his education at



Michael and Yulanda Haddix



Michael Haddix as starting fullback for the Philadelphia Eagles

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

PHOTO COURTESY OF MISSISSIPPI STATE ATHLETICS

Wilmington. “I lived in Washington Township, New Jersey, so it was close,” he says, “and I had heard good things about the school. It was a nice, quiet place where I wouldn’t be distracted.”

“People were really about business there,” he adds, referring to adjuncts who were actually working in his chosen field. “I enjoyed all my classes and my professors.”

He received his degree in 2009.

Today, Haddix and Yulanda live in Starkville, where they are both fully invested in the community. Haddix has established the Professional Football Players Charitable Foundation, of which he is president and C.O.O. He says the nonprofit deals largely with “behavior modification in adjudicated youth.”

Yulanda Haddix became president of the Oktibbeha County chapter of the NAACP in January of last year.

In a story on her election in *The Dispatch*, the local newspaper, her predecessor, Chris Taylor, said: “She and her husband really want to give back. I think they’re going to be a great team because her husband is really involved in some of everything in the community.”

Haddix also has retained an entrepreneurial spirit. Together with his wife, he owns Big Dawg’s Station 26 (his jersey number), which he calls “a country store.” Customers can fill their gas tanks, buy bait, and feast on barbecue, catfish sandwiches and Yulanda’s caramel cake.

Haddix is proud of his seven sons and two daughters, all of whom are successful. One son, Tajee Almon, played basketball for WilmU from 2012–17, and still holds the single-game record for blocks — nine.

Another son, Michael Jr., is founder and CEO of Empower3d, which provides athletes with financial advice and a network of experts to support the next chapter of their careers.

Last fall, Haddix was inducted into the Mississippi State Sports Hall of Fame. In his speech, he said he viewed the honor as an acknowledgement that he was more than a football player.

“I am being recognized not only for the talent I brought on the field but for my character and demeanor off the field as a student-athlete,” he said. “That is one thing I don’t think people realize: You are not just an athlete. You are a role model, and you influence a lot of young people.”

Michael Haddix understood this maxim at an early age, and he has lived his life accordingly. **WU**

—Bob Yearick

WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS... *Doesn't necessarily stay in Vegas.*

At least not in this case. by Maria Hess

You can bet that Wilmington University's Las Vegas Wildcat Mixer held on March 10, 2020, at the Border Grill in the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino hit the jackpot. The venue could not have been more exciting. Founded by superstar chefs Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger — both revered by Food Network fans — Border Grill is considered a Vegas hot spot.

Special Events Manager **BRANDI PURCELL** plans large-scale fund-

raising events like this regularly, including WilmU's Green and White Scholarship Gala, homecoming, and the Scholarship Golf Classic. She had already registered for the Special Event 2020 Conference hosted by Catersource in Vegas.

"The idea to engage and connect with fellow Wildcats while attending the conference in Nevada seemed like the perfect opportunity," Purcell says. While initiated by the Alumni Relations Department, the planning

process was led by Purcell. It required surveying online students and alumni in the Vegas area.

WilmU staffers, alums, and students took it all in, savoring appetizers and refreshments in a private room overlooking a pool bathed in twinkling white lights and hugged by palm trees and lush shrubbery. Each attendee received a WilmU T-shirt, alumni pin, WilmU thumb drive (uploaded with information about the Alumni Association, Young Professionals Association, and ways to connect online), and an admissions card with a promo code waiving registration fees.

A link to attend virtually via Zoom Social Hours was provided to fellow alumni and students throughout the United States and abroad. "Continuing to strengthen relationships with our online and out-of-state Wildcats is of utmost importance to us," Purcell says. "Learning about their individual experiences as students and where they are today is truly inspirational."

Some of those inspiring people at the mixer were alumna **YULIYA DAVIDZENKA** and current students **JORDAN GOODMAN**, **CHARD GONZALEZ** and **ROMELIA JACKSON**.

Davidzenka completed her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice in 2015 while living in Delaware, then moved to California to pursue a law degree at Thomas Jefferson



From left: Chard Gonzales (student), Joshua White (guest of Chard), Brandi Redding (Alumna and WilmU employee), Romelia Jackson (Alumna and current doctoral student), Feliciano Lopez (guest of Jordan Goodman), and Jordan Goodman (student)



A sample of the Vegas swag

School of Law. She resides in Nevada, where she is an associate attorney at Alverson Taylor & Sanders.

Current student Jordan Goodman and his wife, who live in Utah, had already planned a Vegas trip. "He was so excited when he noticed on Canvas (WilmU's cloud-based

Learning Management System) that there was a student and alumni mixer held the same week as his vacation," says Purcell. Goodman plans to travel to Delaware for commencement. "Putting in all the work, he wants to walk across that stage!"

Chard Gonzalez, an online student participating in the Guild program via its WilmU partnership, traveled from California to attend the Vegas mixer, opting to turn the trip into a mini-vacation with his partner. "Chard mentioned that his previous schools had only reached out to him for monetary donations," says Purcell. "This WilmU event appealed to him because we just wanted to get to know him and engage."

Alumna and current online WilmU doctoral student Romelia

Jackson recently moved to Vegas from Delaware. She earned her bachelor's in Business Management at WilmU in 2014, and now holds the rank of Senior Master Sergeant in the Air Force. Jackson enjoyed connecting with friends from her beloved alma mater.

"Romelia told us that she had such positive experiences in person at both our Dover and Dover Air Force Base locations," says Purcell. "WilmU exceeded her expectations, and she raved about its flexibility." **WU**

If you would like to share your personal stories and stay connected with fellow alumni and current students, visit wilmu.edu/alumni. Your town could be our next stop.

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1993



LARENCE KIRBY, B.S. Behavioral Sciences, of Cheswold, Delaware, completed his Ph.D. in Human

Services from Walden University. He serves as the owner and licensed counselor at Key 2 Clarity Counseling Services, where he helps clients unlock their potential.

1994



KATHRYN SZEGDA, M.Ed. in School Leadership and Instruction, of Wilmington, was recognized by the

Delaware Press Association and National Federation of Press Women for her middle-grade novel about Spanish Influenza called "Pharmacy Girl: The Great War, Spanish Influenza, and the Truth about Billy Detwiler."

2007

BETH SCHMIDT, M.S. in Literacy, of Newark, Delaware, a first-grade teacher at Nellie Hughes Stokes Elementary School, was honored as Caesar Rodney School District's Teacher of the Year.

2008

JANICE CZARNECKI, Ed.D. in Educational Innovation & Leadership, of Bluefield, West Virginia, was promoted to interim dean of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) at Bluefield State College.



2009

RACHAEL GATLING, MBA, of White Plains, New York, announced the opening of her professional development coaching company called Change Your Story, to assist others in developing skills to succeed using their innate strengths.



2012

TRAVIS BROWN, M.S. in Marketing Management, of Burbank, California, signed a deal with UKW Media, a multicultural family and kids channel

streaming on Roku, to premiere original programming this summer.



2015

RAVEN CONCES (HUBBARD), M.S. in Administration of Justice, of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina,

announced the opening of her business with Realty One Group Docksider. The business helps people realize their financial goals by investing in income properties.



2016

KELLI GEHRKE, M.S. in Career and Technical Education, of Georgetown, Delaware, has been

named Sussex County Technical School's 2021 Teacher of the Year.



WILMUNITY



Introducing the WilmUnity Support Fund

**A crisis should not
disrupt anyone's
opportunity to learn.**

WilmU understands the financial limitations imposed on students whose lives have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The WilmUnity Support Fund helps them continue their educational journeys by providing funding for tuition, books and fees.*

**Scholarship amounts are based on individual need.*

Donate today at wilmu.edu/WilmUnity

Thank you, supporters!

We extend our deepest appreciation to our generous donors.

UPDATES

A NEED TO MEET THE NEED

DR. BARBARA SARTELL sees the patient, not just the problem.

The idea that it is much more important to know what sort of patient has a disease than what sort of disease a patient has, is credited often to Sir William Osler (1849–1919), one of the founding physicians of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and the inventor of residency programs and bedside clinical training for medical students.



Dr. Barbara Sartell

Dr. Osler's wisdom rings true for Dr. Sartell, a nurse practitioner and professor in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program at WilmU's College of Health Professions. "The quote embodies the need to really get to know the person you are treating," she says, "as this can greatly affect any treatment you can provide. The best providers out there understand the patient as a person."

Seeing the person inside the patient is key to her interest in geriatric psychiatry, an interest she's expanded with recent academic and clinical achievements. In December of 2019, she completed a Post-Master's Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner certificate through the University of New Hampshire and passed the national board certification exam for the Psychiatric Mental

Health Nurse Practitioner credential.

The year-long course of study trains nurse practitioners to evaluate and provide mental health care to patients, to communicate the risks and benefits of treatment options, and to advocate for the medical and legal rights of patients and their families. It includes in-person residencies during which students discuss case studies and demonstrate their diagnostic interviewing skills.

As WilmU's only full-time faculty member to hold the PMHNP-BC credential, Dr. Sartell plans to apply her accomplishment toward teaching courses in WilmU's Post-MSN Nurse Practitioner graduate certificate — which offers a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner concentration — and toward the patients she helps to treat at local long-term and rehabilitation care facilities.

"There is a large, unmet need in the mental health spectrum of health care," she says. "As our population lives longer, it stands to reason that we need to meet the mental health needs of aging patients, in order for them to enjoy that increased length of time and experience a meaningful existence." **WU**

—David Bernard





COLLEGE OF EDUCATION **ADDS TWO**

The College of Education is growing, adding two new members to its team.

NICOLE GARRITY is the undergraduate program coordinator. She worked as a school psychologist in San Diego and Wilmington before moving to work in the Sussex County Consortium.

Garrity has been teaching at Wilmington University in the undergraduate and graduate programs for the past three years. In her new role, she will be working closely with WilmU's early childhood and elementary programs to develop and extend partnerships with organizations and community colleges. She also will focus on onboarding new faculty.

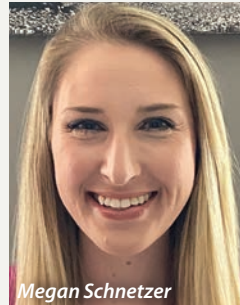


Nicole Garrity

COURTESY OF NICOLE GARRITY

MEGAN SCHNETZER is the new lead adjunct instructor. For the past six years, she has been an elementary and special education teacher in the Appoquinimink School

District in Delaware. For the past two years, she has been teaching in a pilot program for students with a classification of severe autism. At WilmU, Schnetzer will continue developing and growing the College of Education's cohort-based coursework and will bring her experience and expertise to special education coursework. **WU**



Megan Schnetzer

COURTESY OF MEGAN SCHNETZER



En Route to Med School

Recent Wilmington University graduate **JAMES KENNEDY**, who majored in Environmental Science and Policy, was accepted into Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine's MS program in



COURTESY OF JAMES KENNEDY

Interdisciplinary Studies in Biological and Physical Sciences. Qualifying students in the program may enter the college's Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program, which can put them on a path toward becoming a physician.

"We congratulate James on this tremendous achievement," says Biology Chair Dr. Milton Muldrow. "His work will serve as a model for many students at WilmU for years to come." **WU**

Entrepreneur Chairs Marketing Program

DR. SCOTT J. WALTON is now chair of the undergraduate Marketing program for the College of Business, bringing his experience as a corporate executive, business owner, and educator to Wilmington University.

For five years, Dr. Walton was an executive at United Parcel Service, where he focused on management, supply chain, budgeting and project management. As a consultant, he developed a plan for Starbucks to outsource its daily maintenance operations in more than 300 locations in the United States and Canada. Dr. Walton also is a successful entrepreneur,

founding Velocity Performance Apparel, a screen-printing and embroidery company based in Aberdeen, Maryland, that serves corporations and sports teams.

Before joining WilmU full-time, Dr. Walton taught at Harford Community College and Cecil College in Maryland. He also was an adjunct instructor in the Marketing Program at WilmU. In his new role, he teaches a variety of courses, including marketing, social media marketing, entrepreneurship,



COURTESY OF SCOTT WALTON

small business, business management, and accounting. He is a sought-after speaker, lecturing to businesses and organizations on such topics as generational differences, enhancing established teams, strategies for team development, and effective communication.

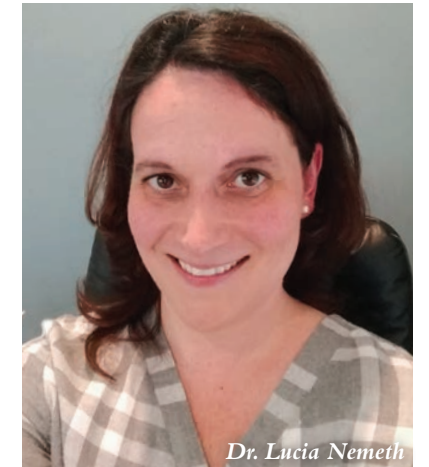
He earned his doctoral degree from WilmU, an MBA from Loyola University, and dual bachelor's degrees in Business Administration and Economics from Washington College. **WU**



EXCELLENCE — Regardless of Modality

DR. LUCIA NEMETH was recently named Wilmington University’s director of Educational Effectiveness and is working with a dedicated team to ensure that students receive a high-quality learning experience as online learning enrollment grows and expands.

“Wilmington University is a proven leader in distance learning,” says Dr. Nemeth. “The largest increase in our enrollment has been in the area of online learning. In collaboration with the colleges and areas within Academic Affairs, the online coordinators and



Dr. Lucia Nemeth

I will ensure that online courses remain relevant, current, and provide online students with a high-quality, high-touch learning experience.”

Under the leadership of Vice President for Academic Affairs **DR. JIM WILSON**, the combined experience of these professionals played a significant role during the COVID-19 quarantine, in terms of providing the tools that face-to-face instructors needed to transition to the online environment successfully. “Fortunately, because of Dr. Wilson’s and the deans’ foresight, instructors were already familiar with Canvas, our learning management system,” says Dr. Nemeth.

Students receive a quality education regardless of modality, and the Educational Effectiveness team remains

committed to “being proactive in our training and in tailoring our instructional efforts to meet the ever-changing demands of online learning,” says Dr. Nemeth.

WilmU’s online coordinators, **DR. JENNIFER BENNETT, DEDRA POE, JOSH RUGIERO** and **KELLY WINCHELL**, play a critical role by providing support and outreach to faculty, impacting thousands of students and hundreds of courses each semester, says Dr. Nemeth. “They may not directly interact with students, but their work behind the scenes is crucial to ensuring that students are receiving an exceptional online experience.”

Dr. Nemeth says she’s proud to be associated with an institution that has been a trailblazer in distance learning. “It’s a commitment that enables us to continue providing excellent educational opportunities,” even in the face of a crisis like COVID 19. **WU**

—*Maria Hess*



Retirements

Five longtime colleagues retired from Wilmington University: Mark Paris on March 31; Trudy Hite, Laura Leary and Alice Corning on June 30; and Sue Miller on July 31.



Mark Paris with his granddaughter Cody

COURTESY OF MARK PARIS

Mark Paris joined then-Wilmington College in 1981. He started in the Maintenance Department, overseeing grounds and maintenance at the Old Customs House on King Street in

Wilmington. (WilmU had purchased that building to serve as a graduate center.) After five years in that role, he was named head of Maintenance at the New Castle location. In the early to mid-2000s, Paris served as Purchasing Coordinator, a title he held until retiring on March 31. He describes his time at WilmU as “many years working at a great place with many great people.”

Alice Corning joined the University in 1983 as assistant to the program director and retired as director of Alumni Relations in Kent and Sussex counties. In 1986, she was promoted to site coordinator while also working part-time as an advertising coordinator. In 1992,

Alice was named site manager for Silver Lake and New Castle, and in 2001, she became site manager for the Dover and New Castle sites. In 2003, Alice was named site director for Dove, then was promoted to her current role in 2011.

Trudy Hite was hired as bursar in 2000 and retired as senior director of Student Financial Services. She led numerous projects and was instrumental in her work with CAMS and Banner implementations. In addition to her leadership in Student Payment and Financial Aid areas, her considerable knowledge fortified her expertise in student service operations, making her a valued member of many com-

mittees and a colleague many depended on. When she proposed policies and processes, she put the needs of students first. Colleagues often depended on her extensive skills.

Laura Leary joined then-Wilmington College in 1986 as a part-time graduate program coordinator at the Dover Air Force Base site. She supported the MS in Management program designed specifically for military students. In 1987, Leary became full-time, then was promoted in 1990 to director of WilmU’s DAFB site. Her position changed in scope to United States Air Force liaison and Site Operations director. At a WilmU ceremony in March of 2009, the Delaware National Guard’s 198th Military Transition Team presented Leary with a Certificate of Service and a flag that was flown over their base camp in Iraq in recognition of supplies her team had sent to their troops in Iraq. With her

close-knit team, Leary also collected and delivered supplies from WilmU staff and students at all locations, then sent more than 40 packages from the DAFB. She earned another Certificate of Appreciation for collecting more than 200 boxes of supplies for troops serving in Desert Storm.

Sue Miller joined then-Wilmington College in 1993 as an administrative assistant to the dean of Nursing and retired as assistant to the senior vice president and COO. Her considerable writing skills made her an excellent communicator as well as an outstanding recorder for all UCC meetings, Board of Trustees meetings, and until last year, Faculty Senate meetings. Her compassionate nature served students well as she helped them overcome challenges and followed up consistently to ensure their success.

“These colleagues embodied our values,” says Wilmington Universi-



Sue Miller and her husband John

COURTESY OF SUE MILLER

ty President Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon. “While they each excelled in different areas, they had in common their dedication to students, respect for co-workers, and commitment to the University. I wish them the best in their retirements.” WU

—Maria Hess



Laura Leary

COURTESY OF LAURA LEARY



NEW AT WILMU

Certificate in Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the fastest growing areas of computer science. This certificate program will deepen students' understanding of AI and help them gain the skills they need to build predictive AI models. That will help them drive the development of intelligence software solutions.

New or seasoned tech professionals teach the course, which means they are knowledgeable about the industry and career growth. This six-course program offers a combination of lectures and hands-on activities that utilize industry-standard software, including Python and Azure Notebooks.



Dr. Victoria Haddad

"Artificial Intelligence will equip students with the confidence and skills they need to make decisions and revolutionize their company into a competitive, sustainable and

innovative company of the future," says **DR. VICTORIA HADDAD**, chair of both undergraduate Computer Science and graduate MS-IST programs.

Completion of this Dual-Credit Certificate® adds viability to one's résumé, whether he or she plans to develop applications or pursue managerial roles in AI strategy. It can also serve as a stepping stone toward an undergraduate degree, since the credits may be applied to WilmU's BS in Computer Science. [WU](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION about this and other certificates, visit wilmu.edu/certificates.



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*Source: National Council of State Authorization of Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) 2018-19 enrollment data. WilmU is a registered trademark of Wilmington University. All rights reserved. © Wilmington University 2020





AH, THOSE PRE-COVID DAYS — This photo of WilmU’s indefatigable Human Resources team was taken before the pandemic, but the group remained positive while serving the WilmU community virtually.

(From left) Julie Vivolo, Courtney Rossi, Karen Sheats, Jennifer Workman, Dr. Nicole Romano, Jaimee Campbell