

# WILMU<sup>®</sup>



## THE FAMILY UNIT

*The family that studies together succeeds together.  
Meet Alexa, Tamra, and Eric Baurys.*

- THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE
- AN ALUMNA IN ABU DHABI
- WILMU FACULTY RESEARCHERS



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“We have always considered the University community to be a family.”

—Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon



## Dear Friends,

**W**e usher in spring with stories of hope and perseverance, traits we often attribute to the people of Wilmington University.

We have always considered the University community to be a family, so it's wonderful that our cover story features another family: a mother and her two children who completed their degree programs together. Tamra, Eric, and Alexa Baurys pursued their studies while working full-time and tackling obstacles presented to them throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic didn't stop our faculty researchers either. We wanted to showcase a few of their projects, though many others are in process. Topics include housing for the homeless, parental stress during the COVID-19 stay-at-home lockdowns, a clinical nurse educator acquisition tool, and trauma-informed therapy for at-risk youth. Our faculty bring real-world ideas and solutions into their classrooms, and we hope their research benefits local and global communities.

Service is important to all of us, and we take pride in our alumni who are making significant contributions. Dr. Lorrain Mott-Baptiste helps lead a \$2 billion charter school program for the Abu Dhabi school system. Chelsea Botsch, a former WilmU student-athlete and All-America softball pitcher, is now an attorney who devotes much of her time to the Innocence Project, an initiative to free U.S. prisoners wrongly convicted.

The Wilmington University Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) has had a major influence on the regional law enforcement field. Directors Dr. Ray Carr and Scott Duffey have cultivated our relationship with the Department of Corrections, delivering professional education to each of its 2,100 employees. They have also worked with the Delaware State Police to develop the Constable Academy, an online in-service course for more than 300 officers. The CJI has become a respected entity in the national law enforcement landscape and a viable service to local populations.

These are just some of many stories I hope will inspire you. Please enjoy the issue and continue to stay safe. [WU](#)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "LaVerne T. Harmon".

Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon  
*President*



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LORRAIN MOTT-BAPTISTE



Dr. Lorrain Mott-Baptiste



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*WilmU Magazine is designed and  
published by:*

*Today Media Custom  
Communications*

3301 Lancaster Pike, Ste. 5C

Wilmington, DE 19805,

800-466-8721

www.todaymediacustom.com

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*WilmU Magazine is a publication for  
WilmU students, alumni, staff, faculty,  
friends, and Board of Trustees. Produced by  
the Office of Executive Communications  
and distributed twice a year, the magazine  
has a circulation of more than 65,000.  
Personal views expressed in articles do  
not necessarily reflect the official policies of  
Wilmington University.*

# #TRENDING

by Rebecca Slinger



1. WilmU has kicked off a new program with **CARVERTISE**, a rideshare advertising company headquartered here in Delaware. All of the drivers in WilmU-wrapped cars will be current WilmU students or alumni. **Wave if you see us!**



JULIA DARLING

2. When **JULIA DARLING** was impacted by the pandemic, she doubled down on her goals. Completing 11 courses in a semester, she finished her degree in just three months. Julia said: "Don't give up. Don't give in. Fight for what you want. And when you get there, pull up another chair for someone to be able to do the same."



Julia Darling

LINDSEY VANGERTEN





ANSELY MARELLE



KATHRYN SHARPE



ASHLEE MERSON

**3.** COVID-19 can't stop our students from celebrating their educational achievements. Our **WILMU GRADS** took to social media to share their accomplishments with us. Share your journey by tagging us or using the hashtag #wilmugrad 🎓



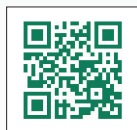
**4.** The ENTIRE **WILMU WOMEN'S BOWLING** team earned places on the East Coast Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll. The Commissioner's Honor Roll is for student-athletes who receive a 3.25 or better cumulative grade point average. Now those are some smarty-cats!



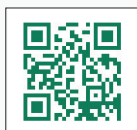
Dr. Tracy Balduzzi

**5.** Recent grad **DR. TRACY BALDUZZI** presented her dissertation research at the Online Learning Consortium's 2020 Accelerate Conference. Her session focused on engagement and social presence in online graduate education.

## CONNECT WITH US



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# THE NEWS

## ALUMNA NAMED FIRST FEMALE DSP SUPERINTENDENT

**C**OL. MELISSA A. ZEBLEY, a Wilmington University alumna, last year became the first woman to be appointed Superintendent of the Delaware State Police (DSP).

Appointed by Gov. John Carney on July 9, 2020, she is the 26th superintendent of the law enforcement agency.

Zebley, who became a State Trooper in July of 1992, graduated from the Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command in 2000. She received her Master of Science degree in Administration of Justice from WilmU in 2003, the inaugural year for that degree. She also became an adjunct instructor that year, and a program assistant in the University's Criminal Justice Program. It's a particular source of pride for her that she traveled to every WilmU location as an adjunct instructor.

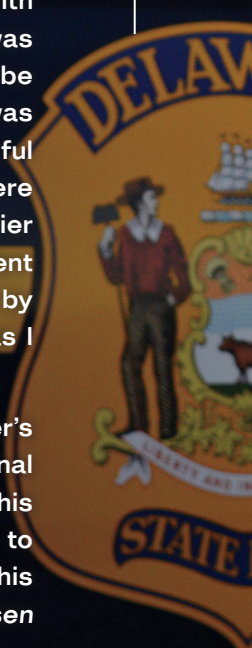
During her time at the University, Zebley organized and led its annual Women in Criminal Justice Leadership Conference from 2005 to 2010. "The first Women in Criminal Justice Leadership Conference was attended by 80 people," Zebley recalls. "By 2010, the conference had grown to several hundred attendees. That was solid

growth over five years. Looking back, the conference was also an excellent recruiting opportunity for both the University and a wide variety of state agencies."

Zebley continued her professional development, working her way through the ranks of the DSP. In 2008, she became a graduate of the 235th session of the FBI National Academy. In August of 2019, then-Major Zebley was promoted to lieutenant colonel by Superintendent Col. Nathaniel McQueen Jr., signaling her selection as his apparent successor.

Looking back on her 29-year journey with the DSP, Zebley says, "My appointment was a tremendous honor, and I believe it would be the same for anyone — man or woman. I was blessed with opportunities and wonderful mentors. Female officers of higher rank were especially helpful throughout my earlier career. My appointment as superintendent is a tremendous honor, and I'm humbled by the confidence others have had in me as I prepared to assume this role."

"My Wilmington University master's degree has been absolutely foundational to my growth and my appointment to this office," she adds, "and I'm grateful to everyone who has walked with me on this journey." **WU**  
—Laurie E. Jensen







Col. Melissa A. Zebley





# A Hurricane, an Earthquake, and a Pandemic

— An essay by student OMARYS DAVILA of Puerto Rico —

Puerto Rico continues to feel the impact of the 2017 Hurricane Maria. It is recovering from a 2020 earthquake and still reeling from COVID-19. Yes, being an online student in Puerto Rico is difficult.

The difficulty hasn't occurred because of economic aspects. It's more about the unpredictable things that happen that limit us from performing certain functions. I remember that by September 2017, when sources predicted that a hurricane named Maria headed for Puerto Rico could be a Category 5 when it hit the Caribbean Sea. It was a moment of great fear and frustration since I had never been through anything like this. The day before Maria, we had to take refuge in my grandmother's niece's house because we live in a floodplain.

When Sept. 16, 2017, arrived, at around 6:15 a.m., the wind and rain came. It was one of the worst days of my life. When everything had settled down, we went home and found that the river had entered our house. We lost almost everything. It was a sorrowful moment. We were without electricity for four months and water for more than a month. There were long lines at gas stations and shops, and many had lost jobs.

At the end of October 2017, I started studying at a local university. Having no electricity or water posed many limits. I was also unemployed, so I couldn't afford gasoline to go to university, and it was complicated and frustrating. A friend who was fortunate enough to have water and electricity and was close to the university offered me a place to stay and saved me financially.

Then came Jan. 7, 2020. At 4:24 a.m., a 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit and lasted 37 seconds. We had to get up and leave since the high magnitude threatened the house, which was positioned near a beach, and we didn't know if there was a tsunami warning. There was a lot of damage in the southern area of Puerto Rico. The electricity came quickly for my family and me, but it took a long time to arrive in other towns. Our university was severely affected, and its facilities were not suitable for receiving students. The town itself lost power for an extended period.

By the end of January, I moved to Delaware with my mother and brothers. I decided to leave college and my enchanting island. It took several days to find a university I liked and felt valued. I sent applications to several universities to see who supported me

and accepted me faster. I was very nervous because it was a new challenge and experience for me, and I'm not very good at English.

When I finally received the acceptance email from Wilmington University, I was overwhelmed. I was eager to start and meet new people until COVID-19 arrived, and I had to leave for Puerto Rico. COVID-19 was very tough at its peak. I had no job but had to pay college tuition. I found ways to do that, mainly bake sales and a fundraiser. The process was complicated because we were locked down, and it was problematic getting the things I needed.

We tried not to leave the house much since we didn't want to get infected. I live with my elderly grandparents. By taking the necessary steps, we paid for college, and I finally enrolled in Fall Block 2 classes.

It has been hard for the students of Puerto Rico. We have gone through things that have caused extensive delays: a hurricane, an earthquake, and a pandemic. And yet, thanks to Wilmington University, I know that all things are possible. **WU**

*Thanks to the College of Arts & Sciences, Omarys Davila is interning for WilmU Magazine. She hopes to gain experience for a communications career.*







# The ‘ARTC’ of Special Education

**A**mong the myriad acronyms that pepper the vocabulary of educators, ARTC is a relatively recent addition. It stands for **ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO TEACHER CERTIFICATION**, and it is of particular importance to paraeducators (also known as teacher’s aides or classroom assistants), who are responsible for specialized or concentrated assistance for students in elementary and secondary schools.

Wilmington University first offered the ARTC Pathway to complete the Master of Special Education degree in the fall of 2018. The program enables graduates from regionally accredited institutions of higher education to earn a master’s degree and Delaware licensure/certification in one or more

of these areas: teachers of preschool exceptional children, teachers of K-12 students with disabilities, and teachers of students with autism and/or severe disabilities.

Says Special Education Chair **DR. DONNA MITCHELL**: “I began developing the program when I realized 87 percent of those enrolled in that degree were paraeducators, working in Delaware public schools already. And many were faced with the challenge of having to take a leave of absence from their employment to complete their student teaching. Many were not able to do this since their income and health care were a vital part of their family’s economic success. Leaving their job with no pay and also paying for their own

health insurance for 15 weeks was a serious hardship. This led to many of them graduating with the Education Studies degree and not being able to transition to a teaching role, their life’s dream.”

Thanks to WilmU’s ARTC Pathway, those enrolled in the M.Ed. Special Ed degree and meeting the state ARTC eligibility criteria can receive a letter of eligibility permitting them to begin applying for teaching positions in the area of Special Education and the content subject area for which they are qualified – without having to take a leave of absence.

Dr. Mitchell says the full degree can be completed in as little as 18 months, while students complete



*These WilmU graduates are the first cohort to earn their M.Ed. in Special Education degrees and meet the state ARTC eligibility.*

COURTESY OF DONNA MITCHELL

their two-year term as an ARTC teacher of record.

The ARTC Pathway is a welcome option for many WilMU students pursuing a master's in Special Ed. Says Tanya DeCosta Guinal, a former paraeducator and now a third-year teacher in the Red Clay School District: "The ARTC program offers access to experienced educators from various levels of educational hierarchy who serve as mentors. The weekend workshops are great because they avoid conflict with your work schedule and provide motivational interaction with colleagues and classmates. The people you meet here can relate to your journey and form a support system outside the classroom. And the ARTC administrative staff goes above and beyond to support their candidates. If teaching is new for you, the ARTC program is the way to go."

Dr. Mitchell points out that the state and nation are facing a serious teacher shortage, especially in teaching students with exceptionalities. Meanwhile, she says, administrators are trying to hire more teachers who reflect the growing diversity of student populations.

"As it happens, the paraeducator pool in Delaware is extremely diverse," she says. "Many of our paraeducators are non-white and offer diversity across the underrepresented populations of teachers in our teacher workforce. What's more, our enrollment in ARTC currently reflects over 40 percent teachers of color. So this seemed like the perfect time to include ARTC in our offerings." **WU**

—Bob Yearick

# Communication Redesigned



The College of Arts & Sciences has unveiled a redesigned Communication degree.

Students now have a choice of one of three concentrations: Digital Journalism, Public Relations & Strategic Communication, and Visual Communication, all offered face-to-face and online.

"We are really excited to offer

this redesign," says **DR. JANICE COLVIN**, chair of Communication.

"We researched the possible directions of the future economy and saw a continuing strong need for communicators with a wide set of skills across the board, not just technical but those soft skills of writing, creativity, and critical thinking that employers prize so much in their workforces. We specifically redesigned the program to help meet those needs. In many ways, I consider it a STEAM degree."

She said that each of the new concentrations, while containing the same courses as the previous degree program, now offer wider options for students.

"The program offers a lot of flexibility," she says. "Embedded in each concentration is a certificate — Technical Communication, Social Media Management and Graphic Design — which students earn automatically as they move through their coursework."

"Also, with this change comes the addition of 15 free electives in each concentration," she adds. "This addition allows students to take another certificate of their choice, take a minor, or take advantage of an accelerated degree option while taking two graduate courses in the College of Business, Master of Science in Management, Business Communication concentration."

Dr. Colvin also says that four new courses are part of the redesign: Social Media Management, Current Trends in Social Media, Advanced Reporting, and the Communication Capstone.

"Businesses and organizations now use social media universally for public outreach," says Dr. Colvin. The social media management certificate meets this need.

"Our students must understand how social media works for a business and how they can use that knowledge to help their employers post targeted messages to a particular audience," she says. Students move beyond the limited understanding of social media as just a user — they learn the deeper workings of each platform and research the pros and cons of using each type, including analyzing user data.

Advanced Reporting takes students to a higher level of journalistic writing, building on skills learned in the introductory news writing course. The Capstone course pulls the learning of the past years into one package, she says.

"We've worked hard to make this a degree for the future, for both students and employers," she adds. "And we'll be adding more certificates and courses as we move forward, to make this degree what I like to call 'a living degree,' flexible and ready to change." **WU**

For details, visit [wilmu.edu/artsandsciences/comm.aspx](http://wilmu.edu/artsandsciences/comm.aspx).



# A Dream Deferred No More

**A**mber Hickman-Taylor, director of the Greater Newark Boys & Girls Club, calls it “my top Club moment of all time.”

That moment occurred in a room at the club that was filled with kids, staff, board members and volunteers, as well as representatives from Wilmington University. They were there to join in the celebration as a surprised **CHARNAË LUSBY**, a long-time club “kid” and now an employee, received a full academic scholarship to Wilmington University.

Lusby had grown up around the club. She developed her skill at basketball there as a member of the Lady Sharks, and she went on to become a standout at Christiana High School. A 5-6 point guard, she made All-Conference and played in the annual Blue-Gold All-Star Game in 2013.

At that point, basketball seemed to be her ticket to higher education, and she received a scholarship to Harcum College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. Things didn't work out there due to a coaching change, and she transferred to Lincoln University near Oxford, Pennsylvania, as a redshirt freshman. After her first year there and another coaching change, her scholarship was

not renewed, and she dropped out due to lack of funds. She returned to her parents' home in Newark and went to work for the Boys & Girls Club. Her dream of a college degree at that point seemed to be deferred indefinitely.

Lusby started as a “gym assistant,” a title that covers myriad jobs, including cleaning up the gym, setting up for basketball and other games, keeping score, and more. From there she was promoted to Youth Development Professional, counseling teenagers and helping them to find jobs. She also works with younger children, from kindergartners to pre-teens. At a busy club like the Newark facility, she says, she may deal with 100-150 kids.

“There are so many teaching moments and the chance to teach critical thinking all day long, helping children make better decisions” she says. “I love seeing the smiles on their faces, giving back to the community. I love the kids and the kids love me... the joy they bring to me is what gets me up every morning. This is where my heart is happy.”

Lusby is an unabashed cheerleader for Boys & Girls Club programs, calling them “phenomenal” and adding that the public is largely unaware of the potential they offer. “What a lot of people don't know is

the club opens the door to creativity,” she says. “We have writing programs, and reading, and arts and crafts, computer rooms, besides a basketball court. We have it all.”

Hickman-Taylor, who has worked at the Newark club for 16 years, says Lusby has been a welcome addition to her staff. “Charnaë is my right and sometimes my left hand,” she says. “She is there whenever any of us need her, she takes initiative to implement and run programs, and goes above and beyond her job description. We love her!”

As if she's not busy enough at the club, in her spare time Lusby does some







*Charnaè Lusby*

catering. She learned cooking from her maternal grandmother, whom she lived with while attending Lincoln, and has catered a lot of weddings, which, she says, usually order chicken or salmon. Her specialty, however, is tacos.

She calls receiving the WilmU scholarship “a life-changing moment.” “I’m so thankful for this opportunity,” she says, “and I want to thank everyone who’s played a part in helping me achieve this goal.”

Says Dr. Dana Chapman, senior director of Institutional Research and Data Governance: “WilmU is known for giving students a second chance. We are thrilled that Charnaè

is still committed to furthering her education and we are looking forward to the day when she can cross the stage to graduate. We are inspired by her work at the Boys & Girls Clubs and hope to continue this partnership in supporting higher education for deserving staff members.”

Lusby is majoring in Organizational Management while continuing to work at the Newark club. After graduating, she hopes to open a restaurant while working at a Boys & Girls Club or another nonprofit, perhaps as an owner.

Lusby is the second Boys & Girls Club employee to win a full scholarship

to WilmU. Jermaine Duncan received the first one in June of 2016, earning a degree in Organizational Dynamics. Now the program director at the Greater Dover (Delaware) Boys & Girls Club, Duncan has continued his studies at the University, in the Administration of Human Services master’s program.

Meanwhile, Lusby has begun working toward her WilmU bachelor’s degree. She’s balancing a full-time job, her catering side hustle, and studies, so graduation may be a few years in the future, but whenever it happens, the entire Newark Boys & Girls Club is looking forward to the party. **WU**

—Bob Yearick



# Promises Worth Keeping

In elementary school classrooms, racially and ethnically diverse student populations benefit from diversity among their teachers. In most school districts, however, teacher diversity is in short supply. A new scholarship opportunity developed by Wilmington University's College of Education seeks to change the face of teaching, starting with three aspiring educators.

WilmU's Promise Grants program kicked off with the spring 2020 semester to recruit and



COURTESY OF MICHAEL CURRY

*Michael Curry believes that mentorship, along with the grants, makes the difference.*

encourage students who want to lead classrooms — specifically male students of color, a demographic that is underrepresented in elementary education.

"The promise in the Promise Grants is our commitment to the future of education," says **DR. MICHAEL CURRY**, who chairs WilmU's undergraduate teacher preparation programs. "We want to support people who share that commitment."

## *From opportunity to occupation*

The grant program funds tuition, fees, and textbooks for full-time studies toward the Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education (K-6) at the University, and delivers one-on-one guidance for graduates from experienced educators.

"We don't want finances to be a hurdle they can't overcome," says Dr. Curry, "but we also want to provide professional mentoring as they begin their careers, as we build an educational workforce that looks more like the students it's serving."

Grant recipients are selected based on recommendations from College of Education faculty or administrators at Delaware Technical Community College, in the cases of promising students who are completing associate degrees in education there.

For three of the College of Education's students, Promise Grants have opened the door to opportunity.

## *Jaime Flores-Suaza*

After earning an associate degree at Delaware Tech's Georgetown campus in 2018, Jaime Flores-Suaza worked as a classroom assistant at Georgetown Elementary School in the Indian River School District and as an assistant teacher at Delaware Tech's pre-school. He'd also volunteered his time at the Caesar Rodney School District's John S. Charlton School for students with special needs in Camden, and to other educational and community opportunities in the Dover area.

"With the help of this award, I have been able to resume my educational career, and am taking steps

toward earning a bachelor's degree," says Flores-Suaza, who started his WilmU coursework in January 2020 with an eye on dual general and special education certification.

He sees his educational and career goals as a means to fulfilling his own teachers' encouragements to develop the next generation. "I've realized how important an educator's role is to our community," he says. "To help inspire young adults into helping each other, and to provide a safe and positive environment, is what got me interested in teaching as a career."

## *Walter Siefa*

Walter Siefa was six courses away from a bachelor's degree in Organizational Management from WilmU's College of Business when he changed his mind, the direction of his studies, and his life. In August, he began coursework toward a bachelor's in Elementary Education, with the assistance of a Promise Grant.

"I wanted to make a different kind of impact," he says. "I want to bring some kind of change, even if it's small. Any kind of change is good."

The pursuit of teaching as a career is a major change for Siefa, who began his WilmU education as a participant in Year Up Wilmington. The local chapter of the national nonprofit prepares students for business careers through intensive professional skills training at WilmU and internships with area companies. In fact, Siefa's internship at JPMorgan Chase & Co. led to his current full-time job as a financial analyst with the firm.

His dream job, however, is still





*Academic Advisor Andrew Stratton knows that the grants help inspire lifelong learning.*

CAL STRATTON

ahead. “I’ve learned to be open-minded in everything I do,” he says. “You never know what it’s going to lead to.”

### *Titus Mims*

For 15 years, while he supervised the pre-teens and adolescents living and learning together in a group home, Titus Mims considered the influence that a positive role model might have on younger children.

“I knew that teaching was my path when I began working with children with mental health and behavioral issues,” says Mims, now a paraeducator at Seaford Elementary

School. “I thought, if I could meet them earlier and give them something else to live for, to believe in, I could help to change their course.”

His first step toward that goal was earning an associate degree from Delaware Tech this past spring. The next was starting his bachelor’s at WilmU in the fall semester. For a husband and father of five, there’s no understating the time and effort that his degree will require. But, he says, he’s grateful for the Promise Grant.

“It came at the right time,” says Mims. “It’ll help me to continue and complete something I’ve been

striving for for a long time. It’s definitely a blessing.”

### *A lasting impact*

“As educators, we see the daily impact we have on students in the classroom,” says **ANDREW STRATTON**, Flores-Suaza’s academic advisor at WilmU’s Dover location, “but one of the things we don’t see much of is how we actually end up influencing the rest of their lives. In this case, though, we do. For our recipients, their future careers may not have been available without this grant.” **WU**

—David Bernard





Mallory Nolte





# The 27,000-Mile Internship



Eighteen strangers, traveling in three vehicles for 49 days to 22 states, 21 cities, 10 national parks (a total of 27,000 miles); four emergency room visits; endless mechanical problems — all while consuming 1,176 cups of coffee, approximately 1 million PB&Js, and just 35 home-cooked meals.

Those are the essential statistics from **MALLORY NOLTE**'s summer of 2020. It all added up to an experience the Wilmington University senior calls “life-changing.”

Nolte, a Video and Film Production major, was the official videographer, vlogger and drone operator for the Zoon Garden Promotional Tour, a cross-country odyssey that promoted “The Zoon Garden: The Decline of a Nation.” A social critique of 21st century America, it's the debut novel of 27-year-old Jordan O'Donnell, who wrestled and earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Virginia Tech before working 2 ½ years for the FBI. The “Animal Farm”-like allegory tells the story of Clarendon Zoo and the dogmatic wolf and sheep tribes that trigger its downfall.

Nolte came across the gig while searching the internet for a summer internship after the job she had lined up was scuttled by — what else? — COVID-19. Having recently received her drone operator certification through WilmU, she applied for the job and in May became part of the team. She almost immediately began

making and editing videos and a trailer for the tour from her parents' home in Townsend, Delaware. In mid-June, everyone assembled at a farm in Randallstown, Maryland, and prepared for their cross-country adventure.

The 18 interns traveled and slept in a three-vehicle caravan: a converted school bus and two trailers, one towed by O'Donnell's car and one by his manager's vehicle. “There were three guys and three girls in the bus,” says Nolte, “five guys in one trailer, and seven girls, including me, in the other trailer.”

They held a kickoff party at a Richmond, Virginia, brewery, then headed west to Colorado, then north to Idaho before driving to California. But early in their journey, COVID reared its ugly and ubiquitous head, making a shambles of the schedule.

“While we were traveling, gatherings of more than 10 people were outlawed, so we couldn't hold events,” says O'Donnell. “We had to adjust.”

Eventually, he says, the team was split into target groups: newspapers, news stations, libraries, independent book stores, and podcasts. “Every day we would go to a coffee shop, send emails, make calls, and then around 4 o'clock we would cut off work and go adventure wherever we were.”

“Mallory's videos on social media were definitely a big help,” O'Donnell adds. “As our main vlogger and drone operator, she was a vital part of the video team. She took many of the documentary's most iconic shots, including the base-jumping shot in Idaho Falls.”

Says Nolte: “The itinerary must have changed 20 times. Some states were totally locked down and I couldn't get a permit to fly drones there.”

But, she says, the experience was invaluable. “It taught me to adapt to any situation.”

The interns forged several strong friendships. “I always like meeting new people,” she says, “and we all had a good connection. We were on the same mission — promoting the book. Plus, I love to travel.”

O'Donnell confirms that she was a perfect fit for the group: “Mallory has a fun-loving attitude with a healthy dose of sass. She kept everybody on their toes, wasn't afraid to speak her mind, and always had a funny comment in her pocket.”

An officer in the National Honor Society at Middletown High School, where she also excelled in volleyball and tennis, Nolte has continued her student-athlete ways at WilmU. After graduating from Middletown in 2017, she scored a partial WilmU tennis scholarship and is a Dean's List student and one of two Wildcat tennis players named to the 2019 Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference All-Academic Team — for the second time.

Nolte says she has enjoyed her time at WilmU. “The school allows me to continually grow in my studies, my confidence, and my independence,” she says.

Having had a taste of the nomadic life, she hopes after graduating to start her own videography business and travel the world taking aerial shots via drone. **WU** —*Bob Yearick*



by Dr. Kelly Cheeseman, Dr. Jodi Fletcher King, Dr. Krista Hitchens, Dr. Kimberly Huhn Murphy, Dr. Angela Hunt, Dr. Rochelle Johnson, Dr. Debra Mason, Dr. Sharron Raymond, and Dr. Rebecca Trent

# THE INAUGURAL NOTABLE 9



*The Doctor of Social Science in Prevention Science's  
first cohort shared their thoughts in an essay they wrote to  
**Drs. Debra Berke and Shawn Stevens**  
of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.*

**W**e accept that we had to sacrifice every Wednesday evening and most weekends for the last two-plus years to earn our doctorate degrees. And, we do think you're crazy to ask us to write this article highlighting our experiences in this program, especially after conducting, writing, and defending our own dissertation studies during a pandemic. Some days it feels like our time in the Doctorate in Social Science in Prevention Science program has flown by quickly. We still remember you asking us to introduce ourselves in the first semester. When we started this program, we saw ourselves in the simplest terms and the most convenient definitions of who we had been in our work. We introduced ourselves as a financial aid administrator, registered nurse, probation officer, child welfare

specialist, licensed professional mental health counselor, family therapist, educator, and two licensed social workers.

You saw more in us than what we identified as, and we thought we had to give. You saw prevention scientists! At the beginning of this program, you encouraged us to focus upstream by always thinking at least two steps ahead while concentrating on prevention. For many of us, this completely changed the perspective of the community work we had been engaged in for years. You demonstrated the use of trauma-informed educational approaches as we navigated our final year and began our own research studies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Modeling these approaches gave us a critical skill when we had to adjust our methods and apply them to work quickly.

Our experiences in this program

were precious, and like the Breakfast Club, we bonded as a group that will forever support one another. For some of us, this was our first experience in a group of professional and supportive women. We discovered that we could push the boundaries of who we thought we were. We learned that we are not bound by the labels that people have assigned to us, or we assigned to ourselves. We are dynamic professionals who can be a little bit of everything, and we can change when we want to meet the needs of the people and communities we serve.

We can be frontline workers and researchers. We can hold people accountable through monitoring but still consider challenges and barriers that prevent them from succeeding. We can quickly assess and identify the root causes of those barriers — and not only overcome them but prevent those barriers from reoccurring. **WU**





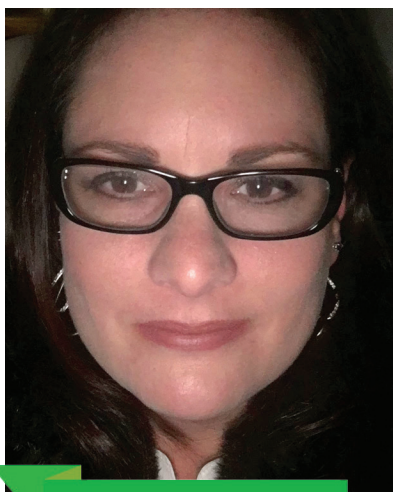
DR. KELLY CHEESEMAN



DR. JODI FLETCHER KING



DR. KRISTA HITCHENS



DR. KIMBERLY HUHN MURPHY



DR. ANGELA HUNT



DR. ROCHELLE JOHNSON



DR. DEBRA MASON



DR. SHARRON RAYMOND



DR. REBECCA TRENT



# John Washburn: Living His Best Life

Amid the much-deserved plaudits heaped on doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers during the pandemic, fast-food workers were a somewhat overlooked subset of those deemed essential. With indoor dining curtailed or prohibited, drive-through restaurants became the go-to source of sustenance for many, including those same doctors, nurses, and other more high-profile heroes of the crisis.

At Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen in Newark, Delaware, **JOHN WASHBURN** served throughout the pandemic, as he had been doing since 2010. A 1995 graduate of what was then Wilmington College, Washburn is a valued member of the crew at the fast-food favorite on Kirkwood Highway.

"John opens for us five days a week, works the cash register, and expedites food orders," says General Manager Awais Cheema. "He is always on time and he's a hard worker."

A 1988 graduate of Mount Pleasant High School in Wilmington, Washburn has autism spectrum disorder. Formerly known as Asperger's, it is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulties in social interaction and nonverbal communication, along with restricted and repetitive patterns

of behavior and interests. It was not, however, an impediment to his pursuit of a college degree.

After high school, Washburn enrolled at Widener University and earned an associate degree. He then spent a brief time at the University of Delaware. However, he says, "UD was way too big for me."

But he quickly found a home at a small school — Wilmington College. In 1992, he enrolled in the Aviation Management program and joined Alpha Eta Rho aviation fraternity.

"The fraternity members took John in and made sure he went on all the flights they took, they came to his graduation party and his birthday party, and they really were amazing at how nice they were to him," says his mother, Lois Lipton Parker. "He would kind of try to stay by himself, but they would talk to him about flying, sports, and other things so he wouldn't be alone. I was really impressed with them."

Says Washburn: "We flew to various small airports in the area and went to the Air & Space Museum in D.C. It was a lot of fun. They were a great group of guys and gals."

After three years, he found himself one class short of a degree in Aviation Management, but the class he needed would not be offered until the following year. He was informed, however, that at that point he had completed

the requirements for a Business Management degree. "So," he says, "I said, great, and I took that degree."

Looking back on his Wilmington College experience, he says: "It was what I needed. It was a small school, so I was able to get the attention and help that I needed through classwork and friends."

His mother says Washburn "has always gone to work every day since he graduated from high school." He worked 15 years at Burger King in Concord Mall when he and his mother lived in North Wilmington. Then, when they moved to the Pike Creek area south of Wilmington, he got the job at Popeyes.

While 2020 was a challenging



John Washburn





year for the nation, stressful times for Washburn and his co-workers actually began months earlier — on Aug. 12, 2019 — the day Popeyes introduced the crispy chicken sandwich. Social media immediately erupted with a favorable comparison to Chick-fil-A's classic chicken sandwich, and lines formed at every Popeyes in the country.

"We got so busy we were running out of filets and buns," says Washburn. "And not just our store, all the stores in the area."

Then, of course, in March of 2020, COVID-19 struck. "Thankfully, my boss was proactive and closed our lobby right when it first hit," Washburn says.

His summing up of 2020: "This

whole year has been an adventure."

In his spare time, Washburn plays video games to keep his mind sharp, and dotes on his 10-year-old rescue cat, Merry, which he and his mother inherited when his step-sister moved to Texas.

Pre-pandemic, he had been helping his mother when she hosted monthly brunches for area musicians. Parker, a 2019 inductee into the Delaware Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, is founder of Luray Productions, which has brought top-name musical talent to the Wilmington area for several years.

"John always was a big help," she says. "He has been ServSafe certified for years and recently took the test to become an instructor and to administer the certification

test." (ServSafe is a nationally accredited certification program on food safety designed by the National Restaurant Association.)

Washburn is enrolled in a program with the Columbus Organization in Newark, a group of caring professionals whose mission is to assist children and adults with physical and intellectual disabilities to achieve independence.

Isheta Smith, community navigator for the organization, has come to know Washburn. "John has a great personality and is very motivated, and he handles responsibility very well," she says, "especially during the pandemic. He's a good citizen, and I think he's living his best life." **WU**

—Bob Yearick





Eric, Tamra, and Alexa Baurys



THE WILMU FAMILY THAT STUDIES  
TOGETHER SUCCEEDS TOGETHER.  
MEET THE BAURYS FAMILY.

## THE FAMILY UNIT

Tamra Baurys and her children, Eric and Alexa, each completed their Wilmington University degree programs in May of 2020: Tamra, with a doctorate in Educational Leadership; Eric, an MBA; and Alexa, a bachelor's in Elementary Education. Through it all, they managed to both love *and like* each other.

Tamra, who is celebrating her 30th anniversary as a teacher at Greensboro Elementary School in Maryland, had already earned two master's degrees from then-Wilmington College: one in School Leadership and Instruction; the other in Literacy. A proud WilmU ambassador, she loves the University for several reasons.

PHOTOS BY PAUL PATTON







*Tamra Baurys*

“But I have to say that flexibility is number one,” Tamra says. “It’s about the continuum of classes, not taking long breaks, and those seven-week blocks. Flexibility allowed us all to finish at the same time.”

Perseverance is part of this genealogy. Tamra had started her doctoral program in 2004, taking two classes at a time. “But I got a wake-up call when my dad passed away,” she says. “It was my sign to take a break from the program. I left the cohort and knew that when the time was right, I’d finish.”

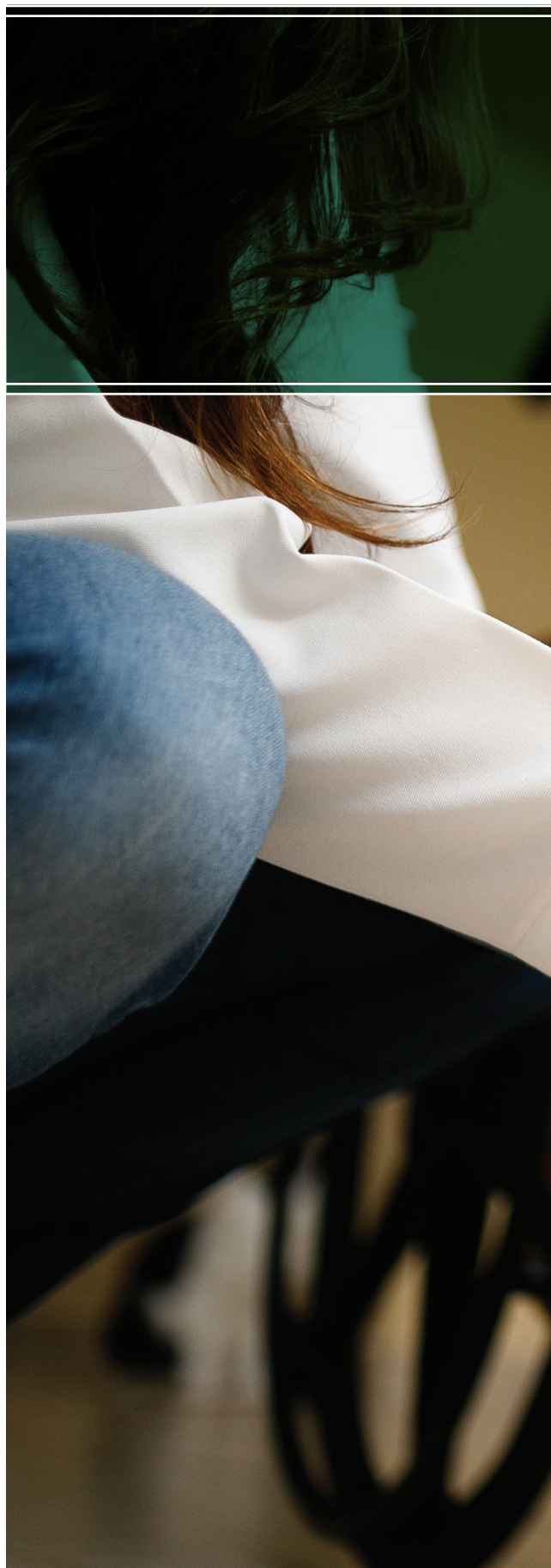
That time came in 2016, when she joined Cohort 26 in Dover. “It was challenging working full-time and juggling assignments,” she says, “but I was with two others in the School Leadership track, and we got to be great friends. I loved the group projects, and we all benefitted from them.”

Tragedy struck again when Tamra’s sister Denise died in the fall of 2018. “My teachers and especially Dr. Joseph Crossen were very accommodating,” she says. “I was able to do all my work online and be with my sister before she passed. I will always be grateful for that.”

She kept in close contact with her classmates. “I asked a lot of questions and kept the communication open with my teachers and Dr. Crossen.”

Dr. Crossen, the chair of Educational Leadership for the College of Education, ended up being Tamra’s dissertation chair. “She showed her leadership the first night of the first class,” he says.

Dissertation topics could focus on things the cohort was passionate about, so Tamra chose dogs — one of hers, Molly, is a certified therapy dog. “My main purpose was to visit retirement homes and assisted living facilities,” says Tamra. “I didn’t realize Molly would





**“ MY MAIN PURPOSE WAS TO VISIT RETIREMENT HOMES  
AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES. I DIDN'T REALIZE  
MOLLY WOULD EVENTUALLY BE THE SUBJECT OF MY  
DISSERTATION. ” —Tamra Baurys**





eventually be the subject of my dissertation. She was sitting in front of me the whole time when I defended. I used her in my classroom and had permission to bring Molly with me to WilmU every Tuesday. My attendance rate was best on Tuesdays, coincidentally.”

When the school year ended, Tamra crafted her dissertation, *Perceptions of the Use of a Therapy Dog in the Classroom*.

“Tamra’s cohort mates were tentative, but she led the activity and got them all to get involved,” says Dr. Crossen. “As the dissertation loomed, it was Tamra who nudged and encouraged the others not to give up. I never thought I would chair a dissertation on therapy animals in the classroom, but there we were, Tamra and Molly the Therapy Wonder Dog. I’ll always remember the photo of the little girl reading to Molly and Molly in rapt attention.”

## Alexa and Eric

Alexa had started her studies at Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina, then transferred first to Delaware Technical Community College, then WilmU. She was a student teacher at Kent County Community School and now works there full-time, serving children with special needs. “Moving full-speed ahead on her master’s in Special Education at WilmU, Alexa has done 10 classes in a year,” Tamra adds. “She plans to complete that degree in spring 2021. She’s a worker.”

“My bachelor’s in Elementary Education and dual certification in Special Education have helped me with my first year of teaching immensely,” Alexa says. “Having the dual certification has made me so prepared for teaching Special Education. I learned a ton of things during my

**“MY BACHELOR’S IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND DUAL CERTIFICATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION HAVE HELPED ME WITH MY FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING IMMENSELY.” —Alexa Baurys**







*Alexa Baurys*



*Eric Baurys*

undergrad (program) that have prepared me for a great first year of teaching. The practicum experiences I had during my undergraduate experience helped me to get comfortable with working in the classroom and made teaching feel natural when this school year rolled around.”

Her brother Eric, a gas analyst at Chesapeake Utilities in Dover, is also thriving. After completing his Finance degree from the University of Delaware in 2017, he wanted to graduate with his sister and mother, working feverishly to earn his WilmU MBA. “The MBA has allowed for further discussions and possible opportunities within my company to put my degree to use,” Eric says.

### *Why WilmU?*

**W**ilmU was the right choice for the Baurys family. Alexa chose to pursue her master’s here largely because of familiarity and comfort. “I had a very enjoyable undergraduate experience and knew my graduate experience would be the same way,” she says. “I have had a lot of amazing teachers through Wilmington University, both in my undergraduate experience as well as my graduate experience so far.”

Eric enjoyed “its location and flexible schedule since I was still full-time at my current job,” he says. “The professors were all personable, and there were great discussions using real-life examples for the applicability

of what we were learning.”

“WilmU was definitely a lot more flexible,” says Alexa. “I love online classes and was able to complete almost my entire undergrad online through WilmU. I am also able to complete my entire graduate program online, which is a huge plus for me since I’m teaching full-time. While I had great professors at the other institutions, I’ve found that the professors at WilmU have been more helpful, understanding, and eager to teach and see success in their students.”

COVID-19 didn’t make it any easier for the family to stay sane while pursuing their academic goals. They managed to keep loving and *liking* each other.

“It was awesome,” Alexa says. “I really enjoyed seeing us all reach our respective goals at the same time.”

“We applaud every student for reaching their academic goals,” says Wilmington University President Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon. “But it’s not every day that three people from the same family earn their degrees together, and we admire the way they supported each other throughout their journeys. I offer my sincere congratulations to the Baurys family.”

The operative word being family. The ties that bind are stronger than ever for the Bauryses. “It definitely was an interesting experience having all three of us in school at the same time and all going for varying levels of degrees,” Eric says. “I’m very proud of both of them.” **WU**




*Scott Duffey and Dr. Raymond Carr  
of the Criminal Justice Institute*



| BY DAVID BERNARD |

# Teach, in the Name of the Law



A photograph of two men in dark uniforms, possibly law enforcement or security, looking out from a balcony with white railings. The man on the right is looking down, while the man on the left is looking towards the camera. The background shows a brick building and some greenery.

## Experience is education for WilmU's Criminal Justice Institute

PHOTOS BY PAUL PATTON





Scott Duffey

There's no substitute for experience. When Dr. Raymond Carr and Scott Duffey, the assistant professors who direct Wilmington University's Criminal Justice Institute, lead a continuing education program for law enforcement professionals, their combined 64 years in the field add the weight of authority.

Their True Crime Lecture Series has packed the ballroom of a Concord Pike hotel by inviting the investigators, profilers, and undercover agents behind headline-making cases to reflect on their careers.

They've shared statistics and strategies for responding to an active shooter incident with the faculty and staff of a local school district in order to prepare them to protect their students.

"Ray and I love face-to-face instruction. We love audience engagement," says Duffey. "It adds to the grasp of whatever you're learning. It's hands-on in our classrooms and when we're learning about the needs of those we train."

## CHANGING COURSES

The past year's circumstances have, of course, tapped the brakes on bringing experience into most rooms, but they haven't slowed the educational efforts of the two former Federal Bureau of Investigation special agents.

"COVID has changed the way we do things," Duffey says. "It is different, there's no doubt. Ray and I have been

learning the realities of doing everything virtually and facing the challenge of, how do you continue to engage your audience, how do you keep training relevant, when you're behind the screen?"

It's a good question, and it requires a whole new skill set, as many educators have learned over the past year. "I personally feed off the classroom environment," says Duffey. "We have a lot of Q&A. Six to eight hours just disappear, and then people stay behind to ask me for more information. If we condense the content into a 60-to-90-minute presentation, can it offer the same punch?"

They're finding out, most notably in the new training courses they've introduced in the second block of this spring semester. One course focuses on responding to animal control and animal cruelty issues. "That's a subject that's a lot different from what the average police officer is trained to handle," says Dr. Carr. "We heard people in law enforcement saying, we don't really have anyone who can do that. Here in Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, police usually partner with the local SPCA, so we're looking to provide the responders getting into it with the rules, regulations, ethics, and professional standards."

The other course, designed for the WilmU community and members of the public, covers cyber security and protecting the privacy of one's personal information against intrusion. "The role-playing we use in training doesn't work the same when it's seen online," says Dr. Carr, but cyber security is compatible with videoconferencing. "You can engage people with audiovisuals."

## WHO'S WATCHING?

Online instruction also offers the possibilities of increased reach and a wider audience. Since last summer, the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) has been producing a monthly webinar series called "To Catch a Criminal" in partnership with the Philadelphia-based Vidocq Society. The society, whose members include homicide investigators, forensic scientists, psychologists, prosecutors, coroners, and others, has been meeting since 1990 to review cold cases for new insights. "Our webinars for the Vidocq Society have gone nationwide," says Dr. Carr. "They've been viewed by some of the greatest criminal justice minds in the country." (Dr. Carr was inducted recently into the Vidocq Society and is now one of just 82 full members in the world.)

Dr. Carr's contribution in November to the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences' Human Trafficking Awareness Webinar series likewise drew distant participation. His discussion of the links between trafficking and pornography counted virtual attendees from Europe and Japan.

"Our influence is growing," he says. "The pandemic has caused us to take a look through a different lens, and we've



expanded what we've been able to do."

Don't expect an international presence anytime soon, though. Since its founding three years ago, the CJI has focused on the local, offering customized professional development and training courses on a range of topics to law enforcement agencies in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

"Scott and I always want to make sure that our primary audience of local law enforcement professionals have access to the resources they need, so we're not in a hurry to expand," says Dr. Carr. "That's really our mission, making law enforcement better. And law enforcement, they're not shy, they'll tell you what they need."

## STATE OF THE PROFESSION

In the wake of a 2017 hostage crisis at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center in Smyrna, the Delaware Department of Corrections hired the CJI to provide the facility's employees with specialized training as part of its efforts to reform conditions at the prison.

The CJI continued its relationship with the Department of Corrections last year, signing a three-year contract to deliver a short course of professional education to each of the department's 2,100 employees. The eight-week blocks of live videoconferenced sessions cover leadership and ethics for senior staff and de-escalation, conflict resolution, and communication for cadets.

Working with the Delaware State Police, Dr. Carr and Duffey have also developed the Constable Academy, an online in-service course for the more than 300 officers who carry out civil service duties for the state's Justice of the Peace Court, including serving summons and subpoenas and conducting evictions.

These educational initiatives are an area of increasing importance, particularly considering the politics and pressures involved in many discussions of law enforcement.

"We've been in touch with our law enforcement partners to learn how they've been impacted," says Duffey. "The past year has exposed a lot of things that weren't previously in view. We're seeing things change rapidly, for better and worse. And the problems aren't just outside of the occupation, but also inside."

Continuing education isn't unwarranted, he says, given that much of a first responder's training occurs on the job, as they approach and manage each individual situation.

"We can be the bridge to bring over the resources they need," says Duffey. "We're not just providing a slogan, but also solutions."

For the CJI, the learning runs both ways, and this is essential for two instructors who've retired from the front line. "No matter who we're training, we always walk away with something new that we've learned," says Dr. Carr.



**Dr. Raymond Carr**

"Then we make our training session better the next time we're teaching it. It's a constant evolution."

Adds Duffey, "I never want to be a dinosaur, teaching stuff that's out of date."

## NEXT AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES

For teaching and learning, there's no substitute for firsthand experience, and Dr. Carr and Duffey are eagerly anticipating bringing it once again.

While the CJI's first annual Violent Crime Symposium — which was scheduled to bring law enforcement officers from across the country to Wilmington in April of 2020 for three days of professional development and discussions of current issues — was postponed indefinitely among last spring's COVID-19 precautions, they're still looking forward to making it a reality.

They've also been in contact with the speakers who'd been on deck for the monthly True Crime Lecture Series, including a retired FBI hostage negotiator, an agent who'd infiltrated an organized crime family, and a Unabomber case investigator, and are waiting for the day they can welcome them to Wilmington.

"Our audience has been growing," says Dr. Carr. "We're ready to roll, once we get the all-clear." **WU**

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*For more information about Wilmington University's Criminal Justice Institute, please visit their website at [wilmu.edu/cji](http://wilmu.edu/cji).*



| BY MARTIN RESS |

| BY DAVID BERNARD |

# THE POWER OF RESEARCH





*Wilmington University faculty  
researchers are making real-world  
contributions to the real world.*

| PHOTOS BY PAUL PATTON |



**A**re you using a laptop, tablet, or cellphone to read this? What about that steady wi-fi connection and the heat and light in your house, making you comfortable as you read?

These, and many more good things, have come to us through research. Here's a truth: Research helps people; research helps you.

Wilmington University can boast several faculty members who, through research, are making vital contributions to bettering our communities. Their topics include helping form trauma-informed therapy for at-risk youth, looking closely at parental stress during the stay-at-home lockdowns in 2020 for COVID-19, exploring students' use of Flipgrid instead of journals or discussion boards, testing a new academic clinical nurse educator skill acquisition tool for data validation, and determining if providing housing to the homeless before addressing other needs can help reduce costs and improve lives.

"Wilmington University is committed to academic excellence," says Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Jim Wilson. "Our faculty bring real-world skills and practices into the classroom, and many are conducting research nationally and globally that focuses on real-world problems."

This is research that improves all our lives, and students benefit.

### *Drs. Amy Danley and Robin Weinstein*

**C**ollege of Business Professor Dr. Amy Danley and Dr. Robin Weinstein, associate professor and chair of Human Resources Management program, have been mining data, specifically records from hospitals and jails that can tell them about the use of those facilities by the chronically homeless. They want to discover what changes in someone's life when that person is permanently housed with wrap-around case management services.

They found it did change, significantly.

"It costs about \$40,000 a year for a homeless person to be on the



Dr. Robin Weinstein

streets," says Dr. Weinstein, quoting statistics spoken in 2012 by former U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan. Weinstein estimates that putting these people in housing first reduces costs to closer to \$12,000.

Working with New Jersey's Cumberland County Housing First Collaborative through the M25 Initiative, a consortium of social service organizations, faith-based institutions, and government agencies addressing the needs of the chronically homeless, Drs. Weinstein and Danley gathered data over the past year that compares an individual's usage of jail and hospital services before and after housing placement.







*Alisha Fletcher*

Dr. Weinstein notes that in 2015, the local hospital system in the county served 107 homeless individuals through the emergency room department and behavioral health units in one year. These 107 individuals accounted for 662 visits in one year.

Since 2017, the Housing First Collaborative has placed 92 individuals in housing who had experienced chronic homelessness. He says initial findings indicate a reduction of hospital utilization by between 60 and 90 %. Based on the data compiled from the local jail, initial findings indicate a reduction of jail stays by between 86 to 95 %.

Putting these folks into housing before any other intervention works,

hence the term “housing first.” To illustrate, Dr. Weinstein uses the story of one person in this study who was homeless for eight years. “He was one of the first people we housed,” he says. “He had 86 jail stays, 78 hospital visits. Once he got housed, two hospital visits, and zero days in jail.”

And, Dr. Danley adds, “There’s significant savings, not only from a cost savings perspective, but in recidivism rates. This initiative has had a tremendous impact.” Their data shows an approximate payor costs savings of over \$6 million to related agencies.

The two have planned several presentations to note this cost savings and reduction in jail and hospital

visits to encourage more partnerships throughout the community with health care providers, county and state agencies, police departments, and others. They want to encourage the integration of housing first throughout these organizations.

“This really needs to be embedded in the hospital system and in law enforcement,” says Dr. Weinstein. “As in, ‘OK, let’s have this housing first approach. How do we get these people stabilized?’ Ideally it would be going from a bed to a roof. The overall effect saves lives and saves money.”

He notes their work will continue, though COVID-19 restrictions put them behind. They had wanted to see 100 people housed by this point in their research.

“Housing first is a theoretical concept, and we’re taking snapshots at any given moment in time,” says Dr. Weinstein. “Our data is based on 2019 data. We need to further stretch that out and see what makes them successful or what doesn’t.”

While the research of Drs. Danley and Weinstein was delayed due to COVID-19 lockdowns over the last year, these same COVID-19 restrictions led to a different kind of research — on parental and child stress.

### *Alisha Fletcher*

**A**lisha Fletcher, an adjunct in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and a licensed clinical social worker at Delaware Psychological Services, is studying the effects of those lockdowns on parents with children at home, and using that data to help people feeling overwhelming stress.

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic abruptly upended family life, she says, with the adults in the family either having to work from home while also serving as full-time educators of young children, or as essential



workers traveling away to work, and at the same time with those children suddenly expected to learn remotely.

She says she and a colleague at Delaware Psychological Services, Kathleen Honeywell, discussed what was happening with patients.

"This is something so unique," Fletcher notes. "You can't replicate these sorts of situations. When you have something that presents itself, it

just seemed like there wasn't an option to not collect data in that moment as to how people are feeling."

Fletcher says 70 parents of children 12 years and younger volunteered to participate in an online survey to measure parental mental health in the parent-child relationship, child adjustment problems, and to help identify dysfunctional parenting. The project was put into motion from the

beginning of the lockdown, with data collection occurring from mid-May to mid-June 2020.

The survey asked many general questions related to COVID-19 and changes in the family. For example, says Fletcher: "Are people needing to apply for unemployment and did they feel that this had a negative or a positive effect on them? Are they sitting down to more family dinners now that they're home? How are parents sleeping?"

Even something most would consider a minor issue in times past became huge challenges for people. Fletcher says the survey included two established measures. "One of them asked parents questions that would promote further inquiry if parents were anxious, depressed, feeling anger, about sleep, about personality functioning."

For the other part of the survey, the Parental Stress Index-4-Short Form was used. "This measures the parent-child system based on the parent's perception of a child's characteristics, the personal characteristics of the parent, and the interaction between the child and parent."

Fletcher says the data analysis is still ongoing, but she reports some early findings. "The two biggest for parents overall, more than half reported feeling more irritated, grouchy, or angry than usual, so that's anger. The other is anxiety, so feeling nervous, anxious, frightened, worried, or on edge."

The percentages are telling, as well: 63% of respondents reported feeling anger and related feelings, with 60% reporting feeling more nervous, anxious, or worried.

Also, respondents reported childcare responsibilities increased significantly (60%) with most parents (57%) converting to at-home work. More than 70% of children participated in school online, and half of the respondents reported that they did not feel their children work well

*"If we can get children the services they need, such as mental health counseling, then perhaps we can prevent violence from occurring and help them be safer."* —Dr. Debra Berke



Dr. Debra Berke



independently at home on learning activities.

And, a little over 30% of parents reported parenting a child with difficult or challenging behaviors. A quarter of the sample shared feelings of Parent-Child Dysfunction, meaning that interaction with their child is not reinforcing to themselves as parents.

So how do you help these parents and children in the middle of a pandemic?

“In response to the pandemic crisis, most parents in this study converted treatment for or with their child or themselves using teletherapy,” Fletcher notes.

A therapy Fletcher uses is Parent-Child Interaction Therapy. In her office, “the PCIT trainers were able to come together and develop adaptations to what we needed to do to be able to continue to practice with fidelity online.”

The results of this survey will help inform what works best while continuing remotely, “and that’s evidenced-based practice,” she adds.

“We will be looking at a working blueprint that discusses those evidence-based models, as far as their effectiveness in teletherapy, so we can support potential subsequent interruptions in life,” she continues. “And these models will also be able to support parents in a way that they don’t need to commute, they can get this help and support right there in their living room.”

### ***Drs. Debra Berke and Shawn Stevens***

A community focus continues in research by Dr. Debra Berke, professor and director, Psychology/Organizational Dynamics Programs, and Dr. Shawn Stevens, assistant professor and chair of Doctor of Social Science — Prevention Science program, along with Dr. David



*Dr. Shawn Stevens*

Chen of ChristianaCare, Wilmington University Adjunct Tiffany Jester, and Shana Powell of Delaware Guidance.

Titled *Overcoming Barriers to CBO-based Trauma Informed Therapy for At Risk Youth*, the idea for this research is based on results from a study done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on violence prevention, says Dr. Berke.

“They found that people most at risk actually were early adult males,” she notes. “But that’s not the population we are working with. Our intent was, if we can get children the services they need, such as mental health counseling, then perhaps we can prevent violence from occurring and help them be safer.” The children addressed in this research are ages 8 to 18.

Dr. Berke adds they have partnered with Hilltop Lutheran Center and Urban Promise in the City of Wilmington.

But then COVID-19 entered the picture. This was to be a two-year project, and like other research in the past year, the direction and methods had to be adjusted to this new scenario.

“We’re in the beginning stages, because initially we were going to roll this out face-to-face right about the time COVID-19 hit,” says Dr. Berke. “Then we had to regroup and figure out how can we do it online in a virtual environment. We’re probably a year behind schedule.” They have now added an additional year to the project.

This fall, “we’ve trained their staff to screen the children, with consent by their caregiver, for mental health





Dr. Aaron Sebach

***“We started replacing discussion boards and journal assignments in the Doctor in Nursing Practice program with Flipgrid, and it was very well received by students.” —Dr. Aaron Sebach***

issues,” she says. “The screens are reviewed by licensed counselors at Delaware Guidance, who score it and determine whether the child needs to be interviewed, to determine if they need mental health services or just somebody to talk to once, and they’re really fine. They just might be having a bad day, an off day.” If the youth need mental health services, Delaware

Guidance works with the youth and their caregivers to provide them. Wilmington University’s role in this is to oversee the data collection and analysis, she adds.

Some screenings have already been done at Hilltop, and they are starting to screen children at Urban Promise.

Because of COVID-19, Dr. Berke says, “we’re now testing telehealth

and the ability to get children and youth access to mental health services through that, which can eliminate some barriers, like transportation, but brings other barriers, like technology. Part of the project is to figure out what those barriers are and then get them the access to whatever they need.” Dr. Berke adds that Social Contract oversees the administrative aspects.

Dr. Stevens is providing data analysis for the project. “Once the data starts rolling in, I will probably take a little bit more lead in some of the data collection results and interpretation, and be involved with some of the training of community-based staff to be able to implement the project,” he says.



He notes that Wilmington University has many close ties with the community, with faculty experts prepared to participate in all types of research, like this project. “Wilmington University is well positioned to do more and more of that,” Dr. Stevens says.

### *Dr. Aaron Sebach*

Research that impacts the community of Wilmington University students is being led by Dr. Aaron Sebach, associate professor and chair of the Doctor in Nursing Practice program. His research is in two areas: The first, a program app called Flipgrid that Doctor of Nursing Practice students are using in the classroom, and, second, testing of a skill validation tool for clinical nurse educators.

“In January of 2020, we were looking at different technologies that were available to enhance student engagement,” Dr. Sebach says. “We identified that, through looking at nursing education literature, Flipgrid is a great method to increase a sense of community. So we started replacing discussion boards and journal assignments in the DNP program with Flipgrid in the spring semester and it was very well received by students.”

Flipgrid is a free app that allows students and instructors to interact using a grid system, which acts as a message board. Students video their responses and post them in the grid. Microsoft owns Flipgrid and markets it as a K through Ph.D. level education technology tool.

“We give them a prompt and they respond to the prompts and the faculty provider,” says Dr. Sebach. “We can review it in real time, give feedback in real time. That works really well for our doctoral students who are implementing projects. We can provide feedback to them in a video format, and this is more interactive than a traditional discussion board.”

Dr. Sebach says previous studies on

doctoral students’ use of Flipgrid could not be found, so he decided to conduct one. “There’s a gap in the literature that we needed to fill, and the study was started in the fall 2020 semester.”

The qualitative survey asked the students about their experiences and sense of community over a two-week period. “Our response rate was overwhelming,” he says, with 35 of the DNP students replying, which is 37 percent of the doctoral students. Using the information he had gathered, he also presented on the use of Flipgrid at the National League for Nursing Conference, and is working on a manuscript for publication.

Using Flipgrid is like having a conversation instead of a discussion board. “They are able to articulate their thoughts clearly. And by the end of the program, the students said that participating as Flipgrid allowed them to be better prepared as a public speaker,” Dr. Sebach says.

“It’s a group tool, and the more I’ve learned about it, it’s really exciting. And it even has a Canvas integration. The maximum time a student can record is five minutes. So it’s not like hours of review time.”

Dr. Sebach sees value in this as an educational tool that others in the university might like to use. “I hope other colleges will be able to use the program. We’ve expanded it in our master’s degree in nursing program and I think some undergrad, so it’s picking up in popularity.”

### *Dr. Sebach and Indiana University’s Dr. Teresa Shellenbarger*

Dr. Sebach’s other study is in collaboration with Dr. Teresa Shellenbarger of Indiana University in Pennsylvania. “She is a doctoral nursing program coordinator, where I got my Ph.D.,” he says. “I became interested in skill acquisition of nursing faculty, and that was

my dissertation, looking at skill acquisition of the DNP-prepared nurse educator and Ph.D.-prepared nurse educator.”

Here again, Dr. Sebach says he found a gap in the literature regarding the nurse educator teaching in a clinical setting. “There, skills are very different than those facilitating lecture activities,” he notes. “There are validation tools that assess the competence of nurse educators, but no validation tool to assess the competence of clinical nurse educators. So we identified that as a gap in literature.”

Dr. Sebach and his research partner conducted a validity test and a reliability test with the tool with 168 participants, which included students from both Indiana University and Wilmington University.

“It was a pretty good completion rate, and it was a convenient sample of clinical nurse educators,” he says. “Now that we have the tool, which is called the academic clinical nurse educator skill acquisition assessment tool, and have done the validity and reliability testing on the tool, we’ll be able to do a randomized sample of clinical nurse educators throughout the United States.”

This tool is a first, says Dr. Sebach. “There is a credential offered by the National League for Nursing, certified clinical nurse educator. So the competencies are new for clinical nurse educator, just this year. And there’s not been a validated tool to look at the competency for that.”

Dr. Sebach notes that tool development is challenging and time-intensive. “This truly will be a tremendous asset to the body of nursing education and knowledge,” he adds. “Hopefully, this will be a benefit for my colleagues across the country.” **WU**



# *From Brooklyn to* **Abu Dhabi**

| BY BOB YEARICK |





*Sometimes, on the way to a successful career,  
it's necessary to adapt, change course,  
or pivot — to use a vogue word. That's  
what this WilmU alumna did.*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LORRAIN MOTT-BAPTISTE

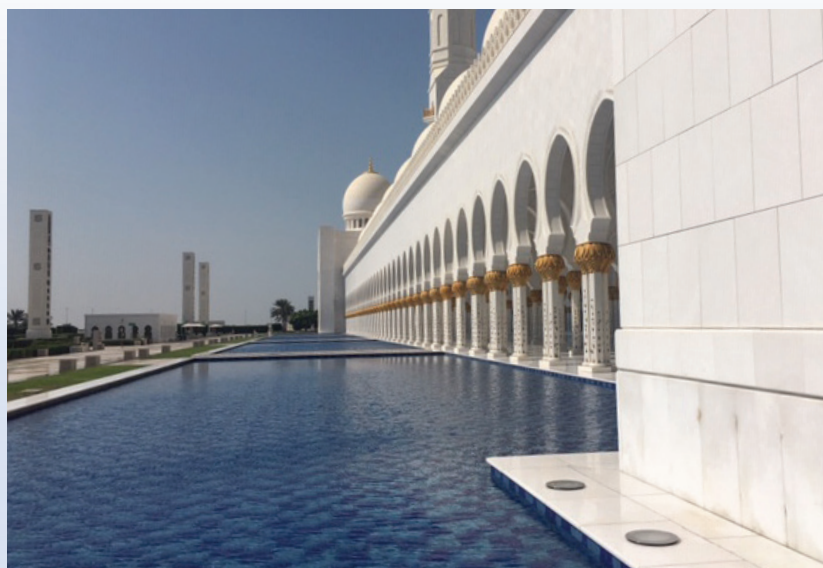




**D**r. Lorrain Mott-Baptiste has made two significant course corrections on her way to success — *pivots* that have brought her to the unlikelyst of places — Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, where for two years she has been a leader in the start-up of a charter school system.

She began her journey as Lorrain Mott, born in Carriacou, a Caribbean island, to bi-racial parents who moved to Brooklyn in 1972, seeking a better life. Her Grenadian mother, Louise, was a registered nurse, and her English father, William, was a machinist. They quickly found jobs, Louise working long hours in a nearby hospital while William held a factory job and later became a security guard at the World Trade Center. They soon afforded a townhouse in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn, and Lorrain and her older brother attended public school there.

At Meyer Levin Junior High, she





got involved in the performing arts and successfully auditioned for The High School of Performing Arts on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. There, alongside Chastity Bono, Jennifer Aniston, Reno Wilson, and other celebrities and celebrities' children, she caught the acting bug. And no wonder. Known today as Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, the school spawned the Broadway, film, and TV musical "Fame."

"I was into drama — mostly method acting," she says. And she would have pursued that dream, but family considerations intervened.

"My mother was never comfortable with my traveling to Manhattan to attend school," says Dr. Mott-Baptiste. "As an immigrant and culturally my mom was afraid of something happening to me, becoming a statistic and not being successful. The idea was that if I failed, she failed. All the effort that it took to come to America would have been in vain."

No problem. She quickly pivoted, enrolling in Brooklyn College in 1986. "It gave my mother comfort knowing I was close to home," she says.

With jobs at a hospital and as a substitute teacher at a nearby high school, she worked her way through college, earning a bachelor's degree and then a master's, both in Political Science. At that point she was considering law school. But then marriage and eventually, twin daughters, intervened. "That was pretty much the end of law school," she says. So she became basically a stay-at-home mom while her husband moved up the ranks of hospital administration in Teaneck, New Jersey, and Durham, North Carolina.

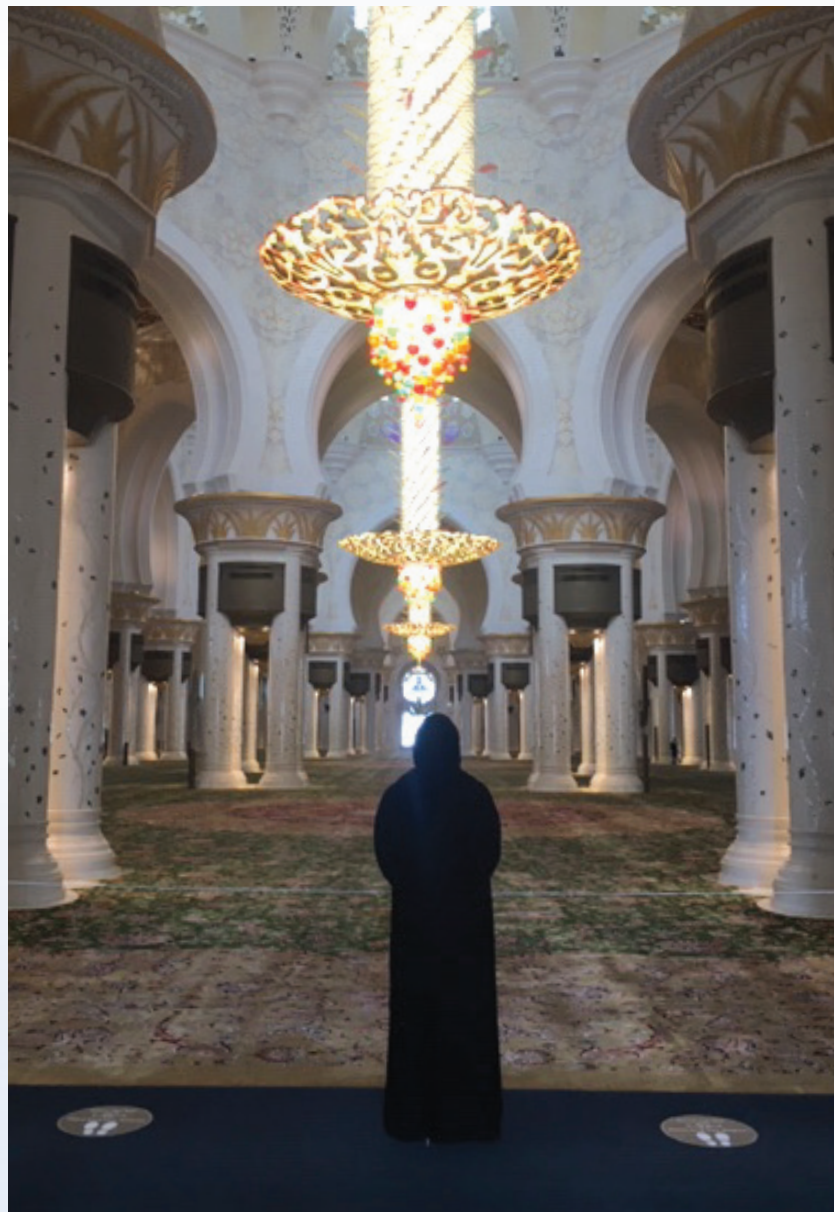
It was in New Jersey that Dr. Mott-Baptiste made her second and final pivot — into education. She had enjoyed her time as a substitute teacher while attending college, and teaching would free up her summers — a perk for a young mother — so it seemed like a logical next step.

She began a peripatetic and often challenging journey into her new profession by teaching history at Princeton Country Day School, which did not require certification. But when the family moved to North Carolina, she discovered that she would need certification if she wanted to teach. To get the credentials, Dr. Mott-Baptiste returned to familiar surroundings — her alma mater. So every week for three semesters, she took a 4 a.m. flight from Raleigh-Durham Airport to Brooklyn ("Jet Blue, \$100 round trip, plus points") and stayed in an aunt's basement while attending classes. Once she earned the

certificate, she taught social studies at a middle school in Durham's Research Triangle.

In 2011, her husband was named COO of St. Francis Healthcare in Wilmington, the family moved to Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, and Dr. Mott-Baptiste was hired by Universal Audenried Charter High School in Philadelphia to teach social studies, geography, and African-American history and culture.

That also was the year she enrolled in the Ed.D. program at WilmU. She says it was curiosity and a thirst for learning, not a desire to increase her salary, that prompted her







*Dr. Mott-Baptiste found that the tools she acquired at WilmU strengthened her ability to communicate with colleagues in Abu Dhabi.*

to pursue a doctorate. Still relatively new to teaching, she says she felt “as if something was happening that I didn’t know about, so I was curious to see what they were doing and teaching in the doctoral program. Thank goodness they took me in.”

Thus began a demanding five years leading to her degree. She gives much credit to Dr. Linda Frazer, a full professor now retired from the College of Education. Dr. Mott-Baptiste calls Dr. Frazer “a tough lady” who helped her through her dissertation and mock defense.

“Dr. Mott-Baptiste was a delightful student,” says Dr. Frazer. “Cheerful in the face of difficulty and persistent in getting things done. She was eager and enthusiastic about learning about new people and new cultures.”

After WilmU, Dr. Baptiste earned a post-doctoral certificate

in Improving Schools, the Art of Leadership, from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Her experience in Cambridge compared favorably to her time in Wilmington. “It was thought-provoking at Harvard,” she says, “but very similar to what I learned at WilmU, where I got a fantastic education on a working woman’s budget.”

During those years, she dealt with other trials — a divorce in 2014, a diagnosis of breast cancer (now in remission), and demanding new positions in Pennsylvania’s Chester Upland School District. After serving as a middle school social studies teacher in the district, she was promoted in 2016 and assigned to coach and train 150 teachers in effective methodologies and curriculum design. Her leadership led to a significant reduction in student

disruption and cut security staff visits to classrooms by 85% while increasing student achievement.

The following year she was named assistant principal and tasked with turning around an understaffed middle school with 260 special needs students. The threat of closure hung over the school, but she developed student activities and oversaw school audits, resulting in a dramatic reduction in fighting and bullying while suspensions dropped by 50%.

By April of 2019, her daughters had graduated from college and were starting on their own professional careers, and Dr. Mott-Baptiste was looking to move up the administrative ladder in education. That’s when she spotted what amounted to an ad on LinkedIn, posted by an old friend, about the need for leaders of the first charter school system in Abu Dhabi. She contacted her



friend, then sent in her résumé, and almost immediately received an interview date. She drove two hours from her home in Middletown, Delaware, to Manhattan, where several representatives of the nascent charter school system conducted the interview in a hotel conference room.

She says they asked many questions, “but with my WilmU education, my background of teaching in a tough public school, and the Harvard piece, it all clicked, and I was able to answer all their questions. We had a great conversation. I was impressed with them.”

Her prospective employers felt likewise. “I got a call by the time I reached the Lincoln Tunnel, in bumper-to-bumper traffic,” she says. Two months later, she was in Abu Dhabi.

Located on an island in the Persian Gulf, the city of Abu Dhabi has an estimated population of 1.48 million, and an area of 972 square kilometers, making it the second largest city of the United Arab Emirates (after Dubai).

Dr. Mott-Baptiste is chief of Evaluation for the Department of Education and Knowledge and a key member of a leadership team developing a \$2 billion charter school program for the country’s school system, with the goal of delivering measurable improvements to student performance nationwide.

There are 15 charter schools in the program, with the potential for seven more. Dr. Mott-Baptiste directs the evaluation, strategy, and planning for the schools, including methodologies, policies, processes, performance metrics, and reporting protocols. She also has led evaluations and training workshops for CEOs, operators, and principals.

Like almost everyone else in the world, she has seen her job change due to COVID-19. “It shifted from evaluation of traditional brick-and-mortar learning, then to distance learning, and now to a hybrid of the two,” she said late last year.

Introducing charter schools in Abu Dhabi proved to be a wakeup call for many parents, she says. “Standardized tests showed parents who thought their kids were doing well that they really weren’t doing well, and that helped us get buy-in from them. Much of the country is affluent, and many children attend private schools, but they are ridiculously expensive, starting at about \$48,000 a year. Our pitch was that with a charter school you’re getting a private school education for free.”

Despite all her responsibilities, “I love Abu Dhabi,” she says, adding that she has learned to adjust to the slower pace of life there. “With the load I was carrying at WilmU, my time

management skills even impressed me. There wasn’t a moment that wasn’t taken up with something imperative, and that was day-after-day, year-after-year. And once I finished the doctorate, I was still on that treadmill and sometimes it was necessary and sometimes it wasn’t. But I’ve learned to slow down, smell the roses, tap into my creativity again.”

“I like to crochet,” she adds. “I’ve made two sweaters; I call them my COVID sweaters.”

Speaking of creativity, she says she has not completely lost the acting bug. “It’s sort of on my bucket list. After Abu Dhabi, who knows?”

Which would indicate that perhaps there’s yet another pivot in Dr. Lorrain Mott-Baptiste’s future. WU



*The goal is to deliver measurable improvements to student performance nationwide. For Dr. Mott-Baptiste, every student matters.*



# SPORTS



*Academic All-Conference player Chelsea Botsch worked with the Innocence Project, which aspires to free those in U.S. prisons who have been wrongly convicted.*





# CHELSEA BOTSCH: Her Plea for Justice

**C**HELSEA BOTSCH, an All-America softball pitcher and 2015 graduate of Wilmington University, went on to earn a degree from the West Virginia University College of Law in 2019. While at WVU, Botsch worked with the Innocence Project, an initiative to free those in U.S. prisons who have been wrongly convicted.

For many years, the United States has been the world leader in incarceration. As of 2018, some 2.2 million people were in the nation's prisons and jails. That computes to 655 prisoners per 100,000 people. El Salvador is second, at 615 per 100,000, Russia a distant fourth, at 383.

While the U.S. prison population increased by 500% over the last 40 years due largely to changes in sentencing law and policy, not changes in crime rates, many of those incarcerated were wrongly convicted. Various studies put the number at between 2.3% and 5%, which means as many as 110,000 prisoners are innocent of the charges against them.

Since 1992, it has been the mission of the Innocence Project to right those wrongs. The Project was founded at Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York City by Peter Neufeld and Barry Scheck, who gained national attention as part of O. J. Simpson's "Dream Team" of lawyers. The Project seeks to exonerate the wrongly convicted largely through DNA testing and reforms in the criminal justice system. As of November 2019, those efforts had produced 189 successful DNA-based exonerations.

The Innocence Project benefits from the pro bono work of law schools and law firms throughout the United States. The cases they take on give aspiring lawyers valuable real-world experience in navigating the intricacies of the legal system. The work is particularly satisfying for those budding attorneys when it results in exoneration of someone facing a life sentence.

That was Botsch's experience while at WVU. In her final year there, she worked on the case of Charles Jordan Lively, a 42-year-old man who had spent 14 years in prison after being convicted of first-degree murder and first-degree arson in the 2005 death of Dr. Ebb K. "Doc" Whitley at his home in Iaeger, West Virginia.

The West Virginia Innocence Project took on Lively's case in 2017. Their work eventually led to a successful appeal that was based on reports from state-retained fire experts who found that the fire in Whitley's home was not arson. What's more, the case's former prosecutor stated that he believed Lively was wrongfully convicted. As a result, Lively was released on Sept. 24, 2020.

Botsch recalls her work on the appeal in 2018 and into 2019: "You're broken down into teams with an instructor guiding each team," she says. "There were seven or eight of us on the team and we had a law firm help pro bono. We worked on that case and two others we had inherited. You look through trial records and transcripts, the evidence used, and review the applicant's claims. When I started on the case I was



hoping Charles would get out soon, but it took another year after I left. But the science behind the fire was proved to be faulty, and then the prosecuting attorney signed an affidavit saying he believed Charles was innocent.”

While the Lively case was a successful effort by WVIP, victories are never easy to come by, Botsch says. “Sometimes, your work is not quite enough. Unlike on television or movies, it’s a long process and it can be heart-breaking. A lot of cases span years and a couple of classes (at the law school).”

While working on the Lively appeal, she visited the West Virginia prison where he was incarcerated —

Botsch calls the experience “eye-opening.”

“The people that apply to be represented have been put through a system that didn’t work for them,” she says. “There are many factors that can lead to a wrongful conviction, whether it’s something like science, eyewitness misidentification, or a false confession, and the Innocence Project shows you how devastating such inaccurate evidence can be.”

Botsch’s three years in Morgantown followed a successful four years in the classroom and on the softball field at WilmU, where she majored in Psychology, with a minor in Political Science. She accepted a

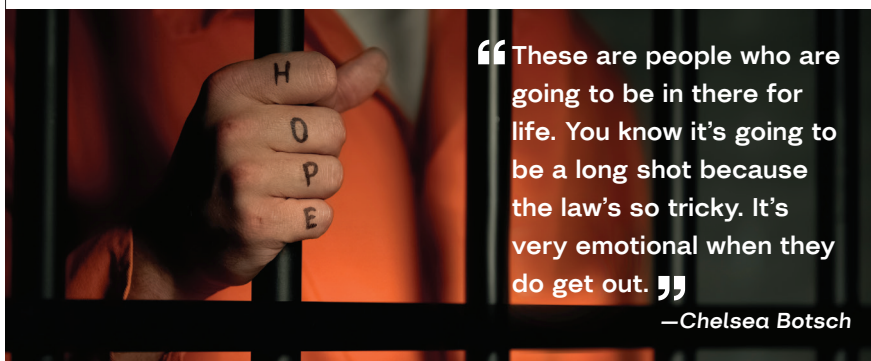
made the Dean’s List and Academic All-Conference team.

“My experience at WilmU was fun and challenging and brought the best out of me as an athlete,” she says. “The block classes were helpful to work with the softball schedule and the school is very helpful with anything you might need. As a team, we continued to accomplish different goals each year and tried to go farther in the post-season than any year before.”

The record shows that she and her teammates were successful in reaching that goal. After going 0-2 in the Central Athletic Collegiate Conference tournament in 2012, the team improved to 2-2 in 2013 and in 2014 won the tourney for the first time in team history with a 4-0 record. That landed them in the NCAA East Regional Tournament, where they were 1-2. In Botsch’s senior year, 2015, they went 2-2 again and qualified for the NCAA Regional Tournament, where they won one and lost two. Botsch pitched all 16 innings of a tough 2-1 loss to Adelphi in the opening round.

After law school, Botsch scored a clerkship with Judge Jeffrey J. Clark in Kent County Superior Court before being hired last October by McCarter & English LLP, a Wilmington law firm. While the firm specializes in civil litigation defense, it also does extensive pro bono work, and is partnering with the Pennsylvania Innocence Project. Botsch is participating in that work, as well as some other pro bono initiatives.

She has found a welcoming atmosphere at McCarter & English. “I was nervous coming into it,” she says, “but everyone has been so helpful in explaining processes and making me feel comfortable. That’s especially important while working remotely. It’s been great, and I have really enjoyed the work and the people.” **WU**



Mount Olive Correctional Complex in Moundsville. She also spoke to Lively’s mother.

“You get to know the people and the family, and they call often to check on their case and just kind of to talk to someone,” Botsch says. “These are people who are going to be in there for life. You know it’s going to be a long shot because the law’s so tricky. It’s very emotional when they do get out.”

“Chelsea’s work during her third year of law school in the innocence clinic was top-notch,” says WVIP Program Director Melissa Gigenbach. “She worked on several high-profile innocence cases and, while the clients weren’t released before she graduated, her work was crucial in securing their eventual release.”

softball scholarship to the University after a stellar career at Smyrna (Delaware) High School, where she was named first team All-State once and second team three times.

She says she chose WilmU because it enabled her to play in a competitive conference while staying close to her family in Smyrna.

She pitched in 21 games as a true freshman, making 15 starts. She continued to pitch throughout her four years as a Wildcat and also started games at second base, third base, and as the designated player. In her senior year, she received Daktronics All-America honorable mention as well as first team NFCA (National Fastpitch Coaches Association) All-East Region and first team Daktronics All-East Region, among other honors. She also



# VINNY TASCA:

## A Goalkeeper Achieves His Goal



Vinny Tasca

**V**INNY TASCA's path to becoming an All-American soccer goalkeeper is the classic story — common not just to sports but many other endeavors: the emergency fill-in who, more or less by accident,

finds his niche with the team, company, business, organization, etc.

For Tasca, it occurred when he was 11. The regular goalkeeper didn't show up for a game, the coach asked him if he would play the position, and Tasca said, "Sure."

"I made a lot of saves in the game," he remembers, "so the coach asked me if I wanted to stay in as goalie, and I said yes."

It was a fortuitous decision, not only for Tasca, but for Wilmington University.

By the summer after his junior year at Methacton High School (Eagleville, Pennsylvania), Tasca had grown to his full 6 feet, 5 inches, and was playing club ball in a tournament at the YSC sports complex in Wayne, Pennsylvania. That's where WilmU Coach Nick Papanicolas, who was coaching another team in the tournament, noticed him. Papanicolas asked to be introduced to Tasca, the two talked, and soon afterward "Coach Nick" offered the young goalkeeper a scholarship.

Since Tasca didn't start at Methacton until his senior year, he had not received any college offers at that point, and he jumped at the chance to come to Wilmington.

Says Papanicolas: "I saw potential that day, and once he arrived at WilmU, he worked to get better every day."

Under former Goalkeeper Coach Greg Cope, Tasca steadily improved, starting seven games as a freshman, becoming the full-time goalkeeper his sophomore year, earning a berth on the All-East Region and All-CACC teams his junior year, and finishing his college career in 2018 by being named Conference Goalkeeper of the Year and first-team All-American.

Now, he's pursuing a professional





“I think we had the best fields and [sports] complex. And the team was really close, we all hung out together, and I got to meet people from other countries and learn about other cultures.” —Vinny Tasca

soccer career, hoping to play the game he loves for a living.

Which is not surprising to Coach Nick.

“Vinny is a tremendous person with a great work ethic because of the values instilled in him by his mother and by his grandparents, who helped to raise him,” says Papanicolas. “All we did was give him the atmosphere to grow as a player and person and then set the stage for him to perform and showcase his skills.”

Tasca is the first to acknowledge the support he received from his mother, Denise, a physical therapist, and his grandparents. “My grandparents definitely played a huge part in my life, as well as so many other family members who helped my mom out while she worked all the time to support my sister and me. My mom always made sure she was at my games and practices, even working two jobs sometimes.”

As for his development as a player, both Tasca and Papanicolas credit Cope with honing his goalkeeping skills. The manager of Admissions Services for the University, Cope is taking a break from coaching, but he says Tasca was one of the best he saw in his 20 years of working with goalkeepers.

“Vinny was athletic and good when he was a senior in high school,

and when he came here he was an incredible kid to work with,” Cope says. “Anything I showed him, he worked and worked and worked to put that skill into his game. The development until his senior year was unreal. In fact, he should’ve been Goalkeeper of the Year twice, but he got edged out his junior year.”

Tasca, who earned a degree in Sports Management, describes his WilmU experience as “awesome.”

“It’s not your traditional college with dorm rooms and campus and everything, but our sports facilities were very good compared to other teams in our conference. I think we had the best fields and [sports] complex. And the team was really close, we all hung out together, and I got to meet people from other countries and learn about other cultures.

“I also really appreciate Coach Nick and Coach Cope and everything they did for me to play on after college. I wouldn’t have been able to do that without their guidance.”

Tasca is continuing to work on his game as he moves into a pro career. As with all aspects of life in 2020, COVID-19 affected his plans. After graduating in 2019, he caught on with a National Independent Soccer Association team in Charlotte, North



Vinny Tasca

Carolina, but last spring, COVID hit, and NISA shut down. Tasca then signed with the Austin (Texas) Bold of the USL Championship league as a back-up goalkeeper for the last nine games of the team’s season. In his lone start, against Kansas City II, he





recorded a 4-0 shutout.

With the off-season, Tasca moved to Bluffton, South Carolina, with his girlfriend, Brianna Cunha, also a 2019 grad who played volleyball at WilmU. He's working at Dick's Sporting Goods and

spending many hours each week on Bluffton playing fields, concentrating on drills that will increase his agility and quickness.

He's currently without a team, but he hopes to hear soon about new opportunities from his agents,

ProConnect Soccer. After his pro career is over, Tasca hopes to stay connected with sports, perhaps as a coach. With his degree in Sports Management, and the examples set by Papanicolas and Cope, his chances of success are excellent. [WU](#)



# ALUMNI

## From the Ground Up: PATRICIA PORCELLO

by David Bernard

**P**ATRICIA PORCELLO hopes that what she's learning in a master's degree program will allow her to help others as much as it's been helping her to navigate the challenges of trauma and recovery in her own life.

"Everything I went through, I can utilize," says Porcello, who began the coursework for a master's in Applied Family Science in January, just a month after completing her Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a certificate in Trauma-Informed Approaches through WilmU Dover. "I've found that you can either let adversity define you and even destroy you, or you can put it to use toward something positive. Wilmington University gave me the opportunity to expand my experiences into knowledge."

In October of 2012, Porcello was crunching numbers for A&E Networks in New York. "I'd finally gotten promoted to IT finance budget manager," she recalls. "I was a workaholic. I had a high-powered job. I got the corner office." She spent some of the vacation days she'd been hoarding on a trip to France while the company renovated her workspace. She never saw the results.

A mishap at Disneyland Paris led

to a fall from a roller coaster's loading platform. The 100-foot drop broke Porcello's neck, bruised her spinal cord, internally severed her left arm from her torso and her left leg from the knee down. She suffered severe head trauma and damage to many of her internal organs.

She was transported to a British hospital for two days in the emergency department, then returned to the U.S. for multiple, lengthy surgeries and intensive physical therapy over the next several years. "It was like medieval torture, some of the work they put me through," says Porcello. "My doctors were telling me, your life as you knew it is over. 'You're never going to be who you were.'"

Medical treatment was only the beginning of her concerns. While recovering at her parents' house in East Hanover, New Jersey, and wading through the red tape of health insurance and disability benefits, she lost her job, her fiancé, and most of her friends.

"I got thrown away. It was like I hadn't existed," she says. "I didn't think I was capable of surviving. You have no idea how angry I was." That anger, along with her desire to exceed the expectations she'd been given, fueled her recovery efforts.

Physical therapy, Porcello notes, trains you to take care of your basic needs, but there's a big difference between being able to put on your slippers and being able to play the piano again. She was paralyzed on her left side, with limited movement on her right, and struggling with impaired cognitive abilities. "I couldn't be fixed unless I knew what I was and wasn't capable of," she says. "I needed to take stock of everything I had to work on."

Returning to school was one way to find out what recovery was going to require. Porcello attended remedial high school classes in a motorized wheelchair, learning how to read, write, and spell again. After moving from New Jersey to Dover with her mother and father, she earned associate degrees in Marketing and Legal Studies from Delaware Technical Community College, then enrolled in a bachelor's degree completion program at WilmU in January of 2019.

In a change of course from her business background, she decided to study psychology, with the aim of assisting others who've suffered life-altering trauma. "The research I've done for my courses has given me the opportunity to expand on the



Patricia Porcello with her beloved Chelsea



“I’ve been inspired by the ability to inspire others, to give back. I’ve gotten myself this far, I’m going to work until I get there.”

experiences I’ve had,” she says. “But instead of just dwelling on what’s wrong with me, I try to consider the people who need more than me. And I’ve been inspired by the ability to inspire others, to give back. I’ve gotten myself this far, I’m going to work until I get there.”

In addition to her undergraduate degree coursework, in which she maintained a 4.0 grade point average, Porcello also planned student

events and organized community service efforts as WilmU’s Student Government Association president.

“I can’t do all that I used to do, but I do a lot,” she says. “I’m a continuous work in progress, though. I have to be careful to not overdo it.”

Sometimes she’s able to cross the room without a walker, but she can’t always comprehend the information on a page. Attention deficit and post-traumatic stress disorders inhibit her

ability to concentrate on any given task, and calculating math problems can trigger seizures. Still, she’s able to count her blessings.

“I’m crippled for life and in pain every day,” says Porcello. “But I’ve been given a second chance, and I’m sure not going to waste it. I’m thinking that the back half of my life is going to be more productive. I’m going to make a difference.” **WU**





# Making the Connection: JEFFREY BENSON JR.

*For this Distinguished Alumni Award winner,*  
**community is life.** *by David Bernard*

**I**n any given day, **JEFFREY BENSON JR.** plays several roles, including father, husband, businessman, student, and community leader. But what keeps his phone ringing, he says, is being a “connector of people.”

“I have the gift of wanting to help people, to see people in a better position than where they’re at,” says Benson. “I honor God for my ability to connect people, to pull together the resources needed to do the things that help.”

His efforts to help the residents of his hometown of Seaford, Delaware, have earned him Wilmington University’s 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award, given annually by the Alumni Association to recognize outstanding achievements among exceptional graduates.

“Sometimes you want to do things that are bigger than yourself,” Benson explains. “I’m not rich, but I have the passion to share resources. My reward is all the greater for helping others. And if you’re

recognized for work that you’re passionate about, how can you not be humbled by that?”

A managing partner at Prominent Insurance Group, Benson is a two-time graduate of WilmU’s College of Business with an eye on a third degree. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Marketing in 2015 and an MBA in Organizational Leadership in 2019. Since May 2020, he’s been studying toward a Doctor of Business Administration as well.

Except for the four years he spent





*Jeffrey Benson Jr.*

in Texas and Germany with the U.S. Air Force, he's called Seaford home for his entire life, which has given him an incomparable perspective on how it's changed. "Economically, it's seen better times," he says. "We have yet to recover from that. We have a lot of people in need. But I live in this area, and I'm proud of this area. We have a lot of people trying to make it work."

Benson's seat on the Seaford School District Board of Education and his participation in a range of statewide development initiatives, including the Vision Coalition of Delaware's leadership team and the Delaware Racial Equity and Social

Justice Collaborative, represent only the surface of his service.

Every other Thursday, he participates in mentoring local middle and high school students with lessons of leadership for young men in crisis. "When you're working with youth, you see a reflection of yourself," he says. "You remember that sometimes you just need to be pointed in the right direction."

His tutoring group, called "The Gentlemen's Club," migrated to a videoconference format last spring. While Benson admits that the virtual sessions don't have quite the same spark as in-person contact, he says they offer much-needed assistance to students who are struggling with remote learning.

He's also one of the organizers of Seaford Community of Hope, a relief project that helps local families and their children to overcome adversity. Developed in 2019 with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Children & Families First, and the Sussex County Health Coalition, the organization found no shortage of needs to address in the Year of COVID.

"We never stopped working," says Benson. Seaford Community of Hope lent a hand in the Seaford School District's food distribution efforts to residents throughout the year. It also offset rent payments and donated gift cards to the residents of a local low-income housing

development, besides arranging a coronavirus testing event there.

"Jeffrey Benson is most deserving of the Distinguished Alumni Award," says Dr. Tina Barksdale, WilmU's vice president of student affairs, alumni relations, and development. "His successful career, his educational achievements, and his impact in the Seaford community — especially the work he has done to help children and families in need and directly affected by the pandemic — make him a standout alum and the ideal person to be honored with this award."

"My first impression of Mr. Benson was of a focused student who was passionate about his studies and desired to learn even outside of the course curriculum," recalls Adjunct Instructor Myron Sartell, whose finance courses Benson attended for his bachelor's and MBA degrees. "Jeff was a polite and respectful student, and it comes as no surprise to me that he has been recognized for outstanding community service."

Making the connections between those in need and those who have the resources to help can take a lot of time — one of the most valuable resources of all. Plus, there's still all those other roles to play. When Benson's schedule is full, he worries whether he's doing enough to keep the students that The Gentlemen's Club tutors on track. "I recognize that they need us," he says, "which is hard because I recognize that I can usually do a little more." **WU**

**The Wilmington University Alumni Association congratulates the following  
2020 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD FINALISTS:**



- Paul Bechly
- Robert DeMasi Jr.
- LeAnn Myers
- Louisa Phillips
- Larider Ruffin
- Melissa Zebley



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## News & Notes Membership is free!

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

### 1985



**JOSEPH LAMONACA**, B.S. in Criminal Justice, of Wilmington, received the FAA

Extraordinary Service Award to the United States Government in the field of aviation safety.

### 1993



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

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

### 1995



**DEREK HORNE**, B.S. in Early Child Elementary Education, of Newark, was named interim principal at

Westernport Elementary School.

### 2000



**KATHLEEN WILLIAMSON**, M.S.N. in Leadership, of Wilmington, has been appointed Mount Carmel

College of Nursing's president and academic dean. She also holds Ph.D. and RN credentials.

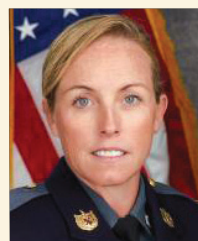
### 2007



**MICHELE CAMPBELL-ENNIS**, M.S. in Human Resource Management, of Delmar, Maryland,

was named director of human resources of Cecil County. She has held government positions for 18 years.

### 2008



**LT. BETHANY RAMEY**, M.S. in Administration of Justice, of Salisbury, Maryland, was appointed administrative

services division commander at the Worcester County Sheriff's Office.



**ALMAR DYER**, M.Ed. in School Leadership, of Pennsauken, New Jersey, is the newest member of the Freeholder

Board. He has served youth athletics and education for more than 20 years.



**NOEL WILLIAMSON**, M.A. in Secondary Teaching, of Delaware City, has written "Job Loss

AppleSauce," a book about finding faith after layoffs. It can be found on Amazon.



## 2008



**APARICIO  
"REESE"  
GIDDINS,**  
M.B.A., of  
Wilmington,  
was named  
president  
and

chief technology officer at  
Greenwood, a mobile banking  
enterprise.

## 2009



**DIANE  
SKOLKA,**  
B.S.N., of  
Salisbury,  
Maryland, is  
now a mental  
health nurse  
at Atlantic

General Hospital and Health  
System.

## 2012



**DENEITRA  
SIMS,**  
M.B.A., of  
Wilmington,  
founded  
Resume  
Hack, a  
writing

and professional development  
consulting service assisting  
professionals with résumés.



**BETH ANN  
SCULLIN-  
OLIPHANT,**  
M.S. in  
Marketing, of  
Townsend,  
Delaware,  
published

"Briton's Beach Adventures —  
Dolphins Surprise," her  
first children's book.

## 2013



**BRENDAN  
BELLANTONI,**  
B.S. in  
Finance, of  
Brooklyn,  
New York, is  
co-founder of  
Sweat from

Home, an interactive workout  
offering.



**ALYSON  
SILVA,** M.Ed.  
in Special  
Education, of  
Georgetown,  
Delaware,  
is special  
education

coordinator and autism specialist  
at Sussex Academy.

## 2015



**MICHELLE  
TALAG,**  
B.S.N., of  
Seaford,  
Delaware,  
recently  
joined  
Nanticoke

Memorial Hospital's medical  
staff. She practices at the  
Nanticoke Health Pavilion in  
Seaford.

## 2016



**KRISANNE  
MILEY,** M.S.  
in Accounting,  
of Wyoming,  
Delaware, was  
named Kent  
County's 2020  
Employee of

the Year. She works in general fund  
accounting for its Department of  
Finance.

## 2018



**SHARIESE  
MOORE,** M.S.  
in Administra-  
tion of Human  
Services,  
of Smyrna,  
Delaware,  
published

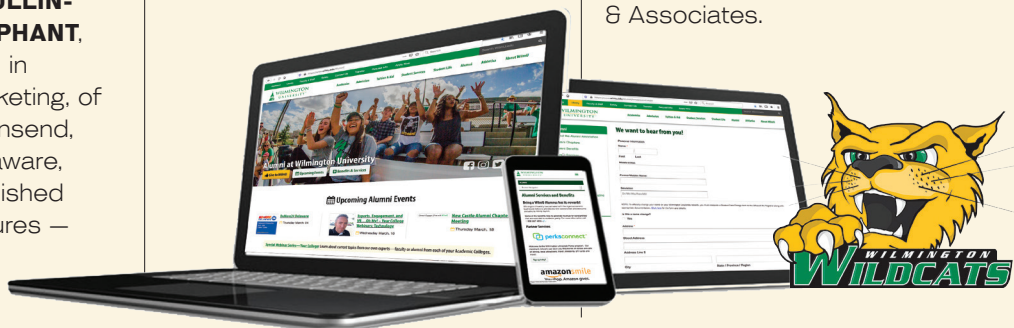
the first three books of her  
children's book series, "Samara  
the Fantastic," based on the life  
and experiences of her daughter  
Samara. Books are available on  
Amazon and her website.

## 2019



**ANDREW  
WESCHLER,**  
M.S. in  
Accounting, of  
Bethany Beach,  
Delaware, was  
promoted  
to senior

accountant with Raymond F. Book  
& Associates.





# UPDATES

## PARTNERS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

**L**ike many alums, **JON EAGLE** derived great inspiration from his professors. One of them, **CRAIG LYTLE**, actually became his business partner. “I first met Craig in a class entitled Organizational Behavior roughly four years ago,” says Eagle. “After a great class together, we entered into a co-op internship shortly thereafter, where I was exposed to the insurance industry for

the first time. Fast forward four years give or take, six professional licenses, three industry certificates, and at least one certification, I have now opened my own insurance agency with Craig that is set to be fully operational by the end of the year.”

According to an article Eagle wrote for LinkedIn, he founded Income & Estate Planning Partners with Lytle, referring to him as his mentor, friend, and employer. “We worked to independently sell

life and health insurance together for years, but the idea of adding property and casualty to the company’s value proposition was something that interested both of us,” Eagle wrote.

After some time had passed, Lytle asked Eagle if he had heard of the Goosehead Insurance Agency, which Eagle describes as a disrupter in the insurance space that makes it easier for clients to purchase the correct, reasonably-priced coverage. As a broker, Goosehead allows customers to work with one agent for the long term.

Eagle knew about Goosehead. “Ironically, I happened to have a job offer from them at the time, and I said, ‘Of course,’” he says. “That day of synchronicity began our journey to where we are now: Fully equipped with proprietary rating technology and access to 25+ insurance carriers to serve the needs of our clients.” **WU**

—Maria Hess







*Jon Eagle and Craig Lytle*



# The Magic of Telehealth

When the COVID-19 pandemic displaced students involved in clinical studies, the Nurse Practitioner Faculty team pivoted to develop a comprehensive set of guidelines for students to use telehealth as a modality for care delivery and assessment.

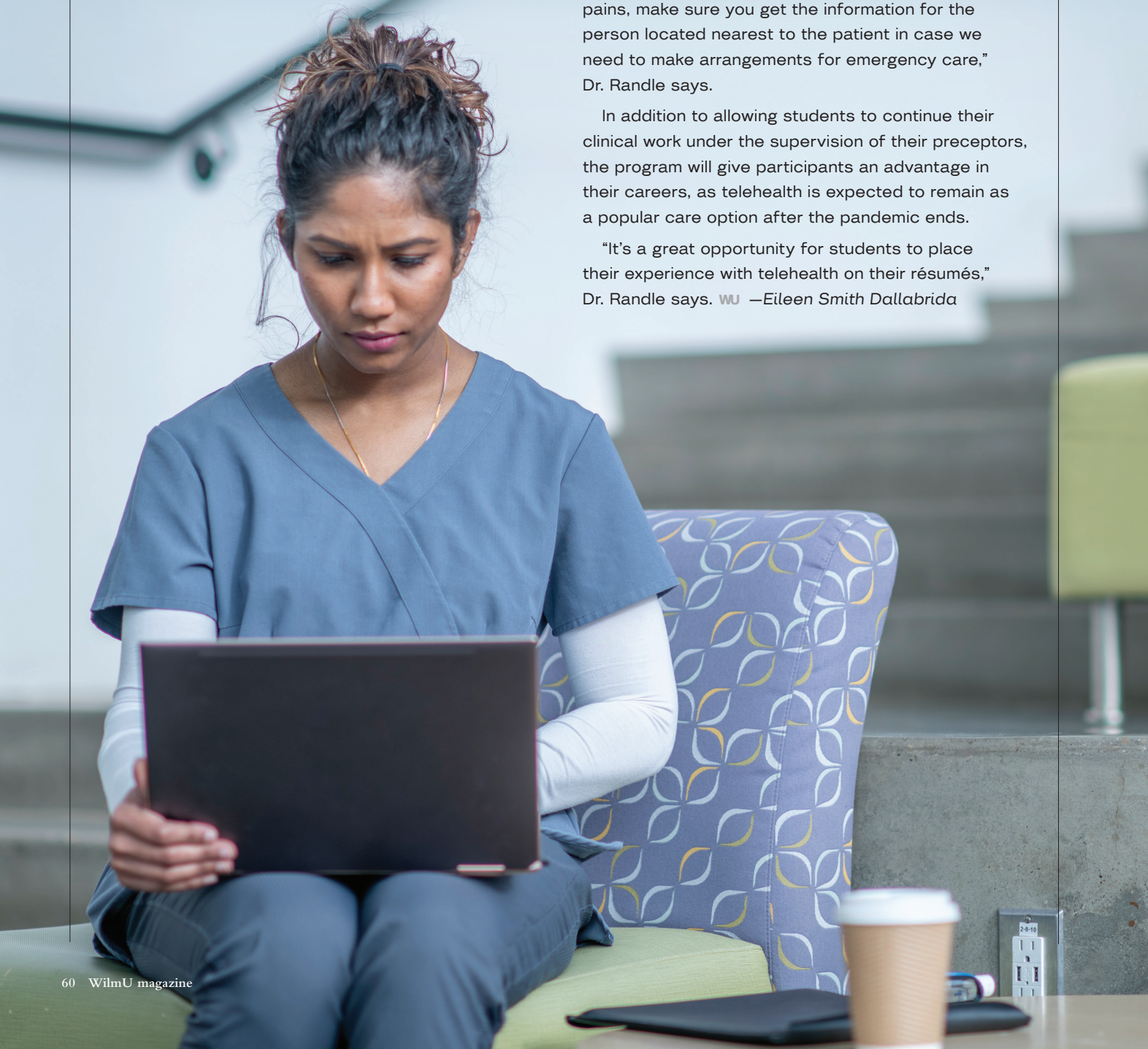
**Dr. Melody Randle**, MSN NP program chair, teamed with **Dr. Lori Irelan**, regional chair,

**Dr. Stacey Graves**, and **Dr. Lynn Thomas-Bauer** to create an evidence-based telehealth educational module in alignment with accreditation and licensing standards. Students learned telehealth skills and techniques to put into practice in interacting with patients via computer or phone.

“For example, if the patient is being seen for chest pains, make sure you get the information for the person located nearest to the patient in case we need to make arrangements for emergency care,” Dr. Randle says.

In addition to allowing students to continue their clinical work under the supervision of their preceptors, the program will give participants an advantage in their careers, as telehealth is expected to remain as a popular care option after the pandemic ends.

“It’s a great opportunity for students to place their experience with telehealth on their résumés,” Dr. Randle says. **WU** —Eileen Smith Dallabrida





# Gatekeeper for Sports Diversity and Inclusion

**D**R. JASON JAMES, an assistant professor in the College of Business, has been named Wilmington University's Athletics Diversity and Inclusion designee.

In the role, which was approved by Divisions I, II, and III at the NCAA Convention in January 2020, he will serve as a gatekeeper of information related to diversity and inclusion, a core value of the Association. According to the NCAA, the position was created partially in response to feedback from athletics administrators who reported that "sometimes information gets bottlenecked and doesn't arrive to key recipients."

Dr. James assumed the post in June, and began working with Director of Athletics Dr. Stefanie Whitby and Faculty Athletic Representative Dr. Matt Wilson. "Our first big initiative was to socialize me with the athletic coaches, the team leaders and captains, and the teams as a whole," he says. "From there, we conducted individual interviews



with all the coaches about race and justice as it relates to sports." They then utilized the coaches' input as the basis for focus groups with student-athletes.

"One thing we learned is that Wilmington Athletics really does foster a spirit of family," says Dr. James. "That comes from the coaches, the student-

athletes, and from the environment that the Athletics administration fosters."

He credits his partnership with Dr. Whitby and Dr. Wilson with facilitating his transition into the new role.

Dr. James plays tennis, but his real connection to sports is through baseball. He is an avid fan, and has visited several Major League ballparks as well as the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri. His great-great uncle, Frank Fountain, managed a Negro League semi-pro team in Milford, Delaware, during World War II, and his younger brother played Division I baseball.

He says he is honored to have been chosen as the University's Diversity and Inclusion designee. "Through this role I've gotten a deeper appreciation and understanding of how sports fits into the larger college scene," he says. "Student-athletes are a very special group, and to hear their passion about what they do, it magnifies how important it is to pay attention to them." **WU**

## Nursing Leadership Student Steps Up During Pandemic

**S**USANNAH MANUPULE, an MSN Leadership Education student, already is a leader in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps. A captain stationed at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, she is the assistant clinical nurse officer in charge (ACNOIC) of the Mother/Baby Unit.

Besides her studies at Wilmington University, Capt. Manupule has an exceptionally busy work schedule because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the primary Army leader on her clinical floor, she leads by example and has stepped up to care for coronavirus patients whenever she is needed, including pulling night shifts and call time for both the day and night teams.

A certified lactation counselor, Capt. Manupule's expertise is in obstetrical nursing. She has served in the Army Nurse Corps for 10 years. Prior to being stationed in Germany, she worked as a labor and delivery nurse at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, where she was born and raised, and Bassett Army Community Hospital in Alaska. **WU** —Eileen Smith Dallabrida





# Remembering Kathy

Ask anyone who knew **KATHY GUGLIELMO** what she was like, and they'll tell you she was one of the nicest people they'd ever known. Selfless in both her personal and professional pursuits, Guglielmo was always last on her own list. She died of kidney cancer on Nov. 9, 2020, at just 51.

Guglielmo had completed every course but one required for her MBA in Health Care Administration at Wilmington University. Toward the end, she was too ill to study, even though she had purchased a WilmU diploma frame earlier in the semester. When Guglielmo realized that she wouldn't fill the frame, she typed a few last wishes on her phone, one of which was to give the empty frame to her parents, never expecting it to contain the credential.

But in Dr. Ken Morlino's eyes, Guglielmo had earned her degree and, along with College of Business Dean Dr. Kathy Kennedy Ratajack and WilmU's administration, he saw fit to award the diploma posthumously.

"The College of Business wanted to recognize Kathy and honor her efforts," says Dr. Morlino, associate professor and MBA chair. "We felt it was in the spirit of the WilmU mission to recognize her academic achievement. Absent her illness, Kathy would have completed her MBA degree in high academic standing."

The framed diploma now rests in her parents' home in Pennsville, New Jersey, on a wall next to Guglielmo's portrait. The family held the frame up to the picture before hanging it, showing Guglielmo she was indeed a master's-level graduate.

Karen Grant, Guglielmo's twin, was born three minutes later than her sister and is considered the baby of the family. "Toward the end, in the



Kathy Guglielmo

emergency room, it all happened so fast," Grant says. "Everything Kathy heard from that day forward was horrible, the hardest things anyone would have to hear, and she had to be strong. She never told me what the doctors told her because she always protected me."

COVID-19 prevented the family from being in the hospital during Guglielmo's final days. "She went through a lot, alone," Grant says. "To handle it all herself was unbelievable to me."

Guglielmo was director of finance and healthcare management at Saint Francis LIFE, an all-inclusive elderly care facility in Wilmington. "Kathy's work ethic, attention to detail, and ease of sharing complicated financial information in a manner easily understood by colleagues was key to the success of the organization," says Executive Director Amy L. Milligan. "Initially hired for her excellent knowledge and experience with finance, Kathy also embraced the Saint Francis LIFE mission to

help frail, elderly, nursing home level seniors, 55 and older living in New Castle County, remain living in their own homes in the community rather than in nursing homes."

Guglielmo was intricately involved in the vision and design of the second Saint Francis LIFE Center called College Avenue, set to open soon in Newark, says Milligan. "The Family Conference Room will be dedicated to Kathy's work throughout her time with Saint Francis LIFE. Kathy's spirit will be a constant presence in this room while caregivers, seniors, and our health team gather and partner in delivering quality care to our frail population. She will be missed and be in our hearts forever."

Her memory will be respected throughout the WilmU community as well. "Kathy exemplifies the true meaning of a College of Business graduate," says Dr. Kennedy-Ratajack. "She made meaningful contributions to the workforce and was committed to serving both Saint Francis and the community at large. We are so proud of her accomplishments."

Ed Guglielmo says his sister worried about others in the final moments, her parents, siblings — especially her twin — and the elderly she served at work. "I even found a petition she was working on that supported the seniors," he says, speaking on behalf of his other siblings, Patty and Bob, and parents Pat and Joan Guglielmo.

"She was a loving aunt to our boys, Jacob and Dylan," adds Bill Grant, Guglielmo's brother-in-law. "She didn't have kids of her own, so she was a second mother to them."

"Kathy was the best sister you could have," Karen says. "I don't think she ever knew the impact she had on all of us, but we do." **WU** —*Maria Hess*



# University Events



## ALUMNI ONLINE

Join the community of  
WilmU grads through  
VIRTUAL MEETINGS

COVID-19 has prevented us from planning in-person events, but social distancing doesn't have to mean social disconnection. The Wilmington University Alumni Association invites you to join fellow graduates for casual conversations or professional networking at the monthly alumni meetings it hosts virtually via Zoom. Register for these events at [events.wilmu.edu](https://events.wilmu.edu) or contact Donna Hardy of Alumni Relations at [donna.j.hardy@wilmu.edu](mailto:donna.j.hardy@wilmu.edu). We'll email you a link to the videoconference. (Events listed in Eastern Standard Time.)

## April

Thursday, **APR. 15**  
**NEW CASTLE ALUMNI CHAPTER MEETING**  
5 p.m.

Tuesday, **APR. 20**  
**INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI CHAPTER MEETING**  
6 p.m.

Wednesday, **APR. 21**  
**ALL CHAPTER MEETING**  
6 p.m.

Thursday, **APR. 22**  
**POWER SOCIAL HOUR**  
5 p.m.

Tuesday, **APR. 27**  
**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION**  
4 p.m.

## May

Thursday, **MAY 6**  
**POWER SOCIAL HOUR**  
5 p.m.

Tuesday, **MAY 18**  
**INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI CHAPTER MEETING**  
6 p.m.

Wednesday, **MAY 19**  
**ALL CHAPTER MEETING**  
6 p.m.

Thursday, **MAY 20**  
**NEW CASTLE ALUMNI CHAPTER MEETING**  
5 p.m.

Tuesday, **MAY 25**  
**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION**  
4 p.m.

## June

Monday, **JUNE 14**  
**KENT & SUSSEX ALUMNI CHAPTER MEETING**  
6 p.m.

Wednesday, **JUNE 16**  
**ALL CHAPTER MEETING**  
6 p.m.

Thursday, **JUNE 17**  
**NEW CASTLE ALUMNI CHAPTER MEETING**  
5 p.m.

Tuesday, **JUNE 22**  
**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION**  
4 p.m.

Thursday, **JUNE 24**  
**POWER SOCIAL HOUR**  
5 p.m.

The **WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** is committed to building and sustaining lifelong connections with the University and its diverse alumni in the spirit of its educational mission of opportunity for all. As a Wilmington University graduate, your active involvement in and commitment to its efforts provides you an opportunity to share in the success of current students.

**FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION** on alumni meetings or other WilmU events, visit our online calendar at [events.wilmu.edu](https://events.wilmu.edu) or contact the University Information Center at 877-967-5464 or [infocenter@wilmu.edu](mailto:infocenter@wilmu.edu).





## Organizational Leadership: College of Business

This fall, the College of Business will offer a new interdisciplinary undergraduate degree program in Organizational Leadership. This collaboration between the colleges of Business and Social and Behavioral Sciences will emphasize innovative leadership practices, “demonstrating a sensitivity around humanity,” says **DR. MARY PAT BRAUDIS**, assistant professor and assistant chair of New Jersey programs for the College of Business.

“This degree also recognizes the prevalence and impact of trauma and stress within organizations,” adds Dr. Braudis. “It’s designed to develop leaders with empathy to keep employees engaged and productive and develop leadership skills that will influence an employee’s well-being and productivity. Students will gain a strong business and psychology foundation that will help them break down complex ideas and behaviors that transfer into leading others.”

Key areas of development will focus on leadership in a diverse and multi-cultural environment, decision-making, interpersonal relations, change management, team facilitation, and the six principles to a trauma-informed approach. The program will prepare students for a range of leadership positions in the public and private sector, health care, nonprofit agencies, businesses, and the service industry. **WU**



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- Grad programs and admissions
- Paying for your education
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- Learn how to transfer credits
- Navigate the admissions process with our team
- Download helpful guides and materials

**WilmU works.**

Find out how at a virtual event: [\*\*wilmu.edu/Events\*\*](https://wilmu.edu/Events)



## HER 29-YEAR JOURNEY

Meet the first woman (and WilmU alumna) to be appointed superintendent of the Delaware State Police on pg. 6.

