

# WILMU<sup>®</sup>

## FIVE MINUTES AT A TIME

Surviving unspeakable loss  
has made **Dr. Angela Herman**  
a better teacher, mentor and  
human being.



Summer in New Castle



PHOTO BY PAUL PATTON

*“I’m always struck by the journeys so many of our students, faculty and staff at Wilmington University have taken.”*

—Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon



## A Meaningful Journey

I’m always struck by the journeys so many of our students, faculty and staff at Wilmington University have taken. There are students who come back to college after long periods of time, learning all over again how to study and navigate constantly evolving technology. Some survive workforce reductions and attend classes to discover new and meaningful careers. Many juggle work and family obligations while attending classes or managing productive careers.

And then there are people like Dr. Angela Herman, who survived a devastating tragedy and inspired us with her strength, courage and dignity. As you’ll read in our cover story, Dr. Herman is the chair of our Health Sciences program in the College of Health Professions. She credits her colleagues and fellow faculty members, but they will tell you that it was her energy and hard work that helped this exciting program grow 200 percent in just three years.

While she was serving as an ambassador for WilmU, touting the benefits of Health Sciences to community and business leaders and prospective students, she was dealing with an overwhelming loss. Yet throughout this ordeal, she never lost sight of her students.

As a clinical nurse specialist and researcher, Dr. Herman brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to those students, and she is a beloved mentor and teacher. The tragedy made her stronger, and she is more passionate about student success than ever. Teaching is her salvation.

We offer many other stories we hope you’ll read during the warm days of summer, including an update on the construction of our future Brandywine location, a report on our partnership with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services regarding trauma-informed approaches, and a profile on an alumna who runs a thriving franchising enterprise.

Enjoy the issue. [WU](#)

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

Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon  
President

# CONTENTS

page 34



PHOTO BY SUSAN L. GREGG

## FEATURES

Training for trauma-informed care took place at Wilmington University over several months.

### COVER STORY

## 24 *Five Minutes at a Time*

Surviving unspeakable loss has made Dr. Angela Herman a better teacher, mentor and human being.

by Maria Hess

COVER PHOTO by Paul Patton

## 32 *Brandywine Beginnings*

Construction for Wilmington University Brandywine in North Wilmington is underway — and it all starts with a great foundation. A pictorial.

Content provided by Curtis Harkin, AIA, Homsey Architects

## 34 *Why Trauma-Informed Approaches Matter*

What's causing some lifespans to be shortened by up to 20 years? Would you be surprised to learn that the cause is toxic stress?

by Lori Sittler

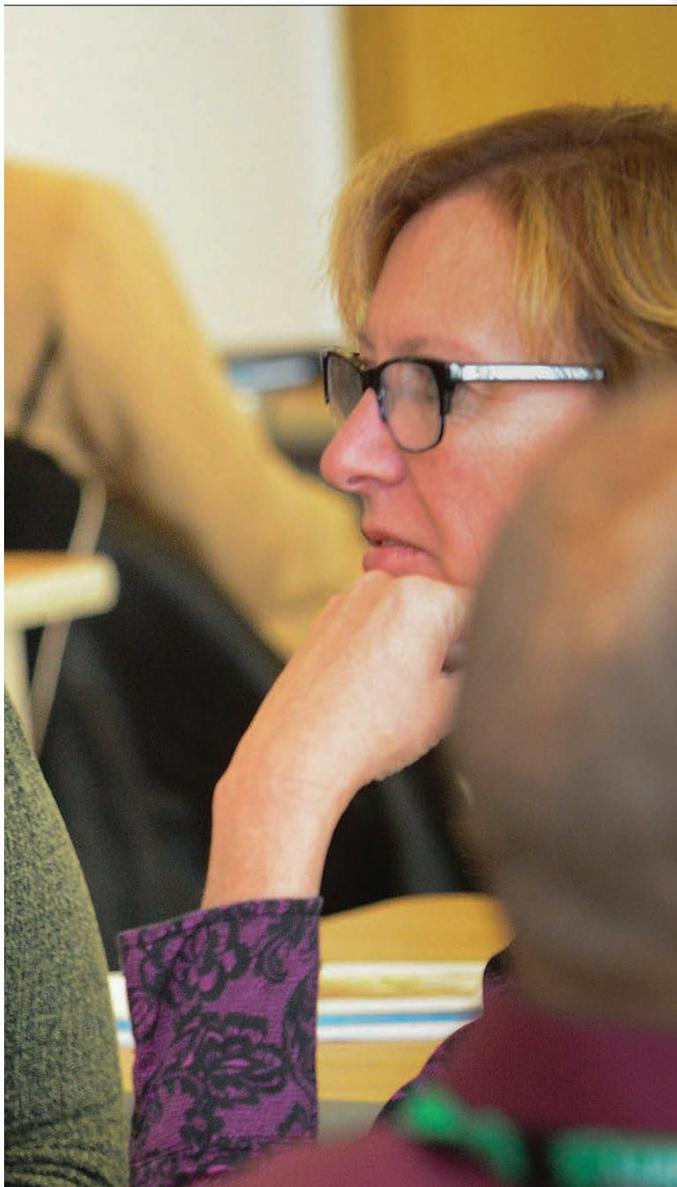


PHOTO BY PAUL PATTON



PHOTO BY SUSAN L. GREGG

### 5 Trending

Hot topics in social media.  
*by Britney Gullede*

### 6 The News

The latest news about WilmU's faculty, students and staff; plus Luminary.

### 44 Sports

WilmU cheerleaders continue their streak as UCA Small Coed Division II national champs; Dr. Stefanie Whitby is named athletics director.  
*by Dan Lauletta*

### 48 Alumni

Caitlyn Eckles has formed a franchising enterprise; Geneva Fonda looks forward to a promising future; and News & Notes.  
*by Bob Yearick and Jake McCready*

### 58 Updates

Interesting reports about equally interesting faculty, students, alumni and staff of Wilmington University; plus New at WilmU.

### 66 Events

See what's going on at various campus locations, and what the alumni and admissions departments are cooking up.  
*Compiled by Britney Gullede*

## 40 *The Future of Paramedic Education*

A DBA alumnus is helping to inspire change that could save lives.

*by Ruth Norman*



PHOTO COURTESY OF PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY



## CONTRIBUTORS



### RUTH NORMAN

Dr. Ruth Norman was named a full professor in April, after 10 years of service as a Wilmington University faculty member. She is deeply committed to helping students achieve their personal and career objectives and has treasured the opportunity to mentor 45 Doctor of Business Administration students in their doctoral research. Before joining the faculty, Ruth served as global director of marketing for the Resins Division of Hercules and held marketing, planning and technical management positions at Simplica, Delmarva Power, Scott Paper Company and ICI. She lived in France as an exchange student and taught in Bosnia, and has been published in numerous academic journals. Ruth holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations, with an emphasis on business policy and corporate social responsibility, and her areas of research include business policy, international business, strategic management, business ethics, innovation, marketing, corporate social responsibility and executive decision making. Ruth offers "The Future of Paramedic Education," which profiles DBA alumnus Dr. Chris Boyer, whose doctorate catalyzed his leadership role in public service.



### LORI SITLER

Lori Sitler is the executive director of CHILD, Inc., a Delaware nonprofit agency serving children and their families. She was an assistant professor in Wilmington University's College of Social and Behavioral Sciences from 2005 until May of 2018, and chaired the Government and Public Policy program and served as the coordinator of Child Advocacy Studies (CAST), a certificate program she helped create. Lori holds an MSW and a second graduate degree in Law and Social Policy, and is pursuing her Ph.D. at Bryn Mawr College's Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research. She offers "Why Trauma-Informed Approaches Matter," a report on an exciting partnership between WilmU and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services. Lori was a valued and talented contributor to this magazine, and we will miss her. We extend our warmest wishes for a successful and fulfilling career at CHILD, Inc., and we are certain that she will have great impact on a great organization.

### CORRECTIONS

In the Spring 2018 issue, we incorrectly stated that Dr. Linda Van Drie-Andrzjewski was WilmU's first athletics director.

Also, Lyft partners with Guild Education do not offer drivers discounts on tuition to Wilmington University.

We regret the errors.



#### President

Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon

#### Institutional Advancement

##### Vice President

Dr. Jacqueline Varsalona

#### University Relations

##### Assistant Vice President

Bill Swain

#### WilmU Magazine Staff

##### Editor-in-Chief/Senior Writer

Dr. Maria Hess

##### Digital Editorial Associate/Writer

Britney Gullledge

##### Staff Writer/Proofreader

Bob Yearick

##### University Photographer

Susan L. Gregg

##### University Photographer

Paul Patton

#### Writers

Dr. Debra Berke Dr. Ruth Norman

Dan Lauletta Lori Sitler

Jake McCready Adam Voyt on

Eileen Smith Dallabrida

#### Photographers

Ron Dubick

Verlin Jay Alexander III

Mat Boyle

#### Have a question or comment?

##### Contact Dr. Maria Hess

maria.f.hess@wilmu.edu

##### Want an event listed?

##### Contact Britney Gullledge

britney.j.gullledge@wilmu.edu

##### Like us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/

WilmingtonUniversity/

##### Follow us on Twitter:

@thewilmu

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

Chairman Robert F. Martinelli

President Jonathan Witty

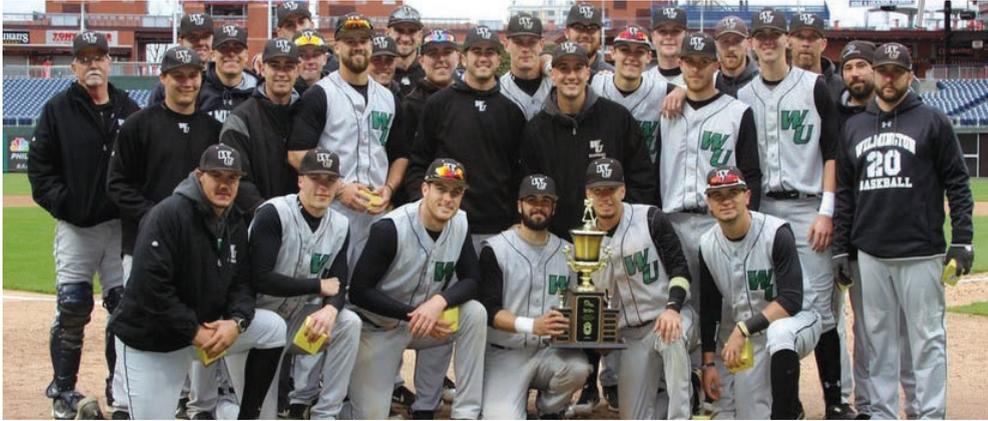
Creative Director Randy Clark

Project Manager Julie Lang

WilmU Magazine is produced in-house for Wilmington University students, alumni, staff, faculty, friends and its Board of Trustees. It is published and distributed three times a year and has a circulation of more than 60,000. Personal views expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the official policies of Wilmington University.

by Britney Gullede

# #TRENDING



## 1. GO WILDCATS!

WilmU's baseball team won the 2018 Bill Giles Invitational held at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia. That's what we call #Catitude!

**2. LEADING WITH HEART!** Wilmington University President Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon was featured on "NBC10 News Presents: Today's Inspiring Woman," hosted by NBC10 anchors Rosemary Connors, Denise Nakano and Tracy Davidson. The special featured stories of local women driving change and inspiring their communities.



SUSAN L. GREGG

**3.** The class of 2018 celebrated commencement by decorating their mortarboards and — of course — posting about the event on social media. **#WILMUGRAD** buzzed with support and excitement for the graduating class. *Read more on page 64.*



COURTESY OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

**4. HOMETOWN HERO.** Dr. Robin Weinstein, chair of the Human Resource Studies programs, was named "South Jersey Man of the Year" for his nonprofit service. Dr. Weinstein dedicates himself to ending homelessness and poverty, reducing crime and revitalizing his Cumberland County community.



**5.** With more than 200,000 views, a video from WilmU student **TROY HENDRICKSON** went viral. He's now touring the Greater Philadelphia area as Aunt Mary Pat, his beloved character.



Read exclusive stories on our digital edition.



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



*Veda Wooley*

# THE NEWS

## First to the Bench

**S**tudent **VEDA WOOLEY** will be attending the Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law this fall as the first Wilmington University alum to be admitted.

At 4, Wooley knew she wanted to be a lawyer. While her peers were preparing for kindergarten, she got a backrow seat viewing college courses while her parents taught at WilmU and Widener University School of Law.

She remembers sitting in on a class taught by her mother, attorney Vera Holmes Toliver, and correctly answering a question that stumped second-year law students. “They were discussing (details involving) preserving witness statements,” says Wooley. “I raised my hand and said, ‘Can’t you video record the statement?’”

Later, she disclosed that she’d learned that technique on her favorite cartoon, “Jimmy Neutron,” when the character investigated toy theft.

“I thought law school was easy after that,” says Wooley, who earned her B.S. in Finance in 2017, and will complete her MBA this

“I know the type of relationships people build here, so there was no other place I wanted to attend for my undergrad and grad degrees.” —*Veda Wooley*

fall, both from WilmU.

Her father, College of Business adjunct professor David Wooley, has taught at WilmU for more than 20 years. She’s monitored his classes since she could walk.

“I know the type of relationships people build here, so there was no other place I wanted to attend for my undergrad and grad degrees,” says Wooley. Her sister, Davina, also graduated from WilmU in May with a B.S. in Business Management.

Wooley credits that WilmU support for her acceptance into Drexel’s program, which was ranked one of the Top 50 Law Schools in the U.S. by The National Law Journal and Above the Law. She hopes to specialize in corporate law.

Her professors knew of her law school dreams and connected Wooley with resources and assisted

her through the studying and application processes.

Dr. Audrey Blume, chair of the Business Management program, met Wooley during her first semester. “She took the initiative to set up an appointment with me to discuss the Business Management degree program and her goals,” says Dr. Blume. “During our meeting, I became aware that Veda was focused, mature and strategic, and that whichever path she set, she would reach her goals. As expected, she maintained a 3.99 GPA, was inducted into the Delta Epsilon Rho Honor Society and the Sigma Beta Delta International Honor Society, and graduated summa cum laude.”

Says Wooley: “I can’t wait to combine my business acumen with my law studies. All that studying will finally pay off.” **WU**

# STARTING EARLY

Incoming WilmU freshman **ALEXIS WEBB** got a head start on college. In fact, she completed a semester's worth of classes before joining most of her fellow incoming classmates this fall.

Webb, a recent Caesar Rodney High School graduate, participated in the Early College Credit program throughout her senior year, simultaneously juggling high school and college homework.

"It was a lot of work, but I had to figure out how to organize my schedule to complete all my assignments," she says. "Time management became my biggest priority."

The program allows high-achieving high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn college credit by attending courses at a Wilmington University location. According to studies by Jobs For the Future, early college students are outperforming their peers nationwide, with 90 percent of participants graduating from high school compared to 78 percent nationally who don't take early

college courses.

"I've been able to forge relationships with people outside my age bracket in my classes," says Webb. "It's put me in a circle of people who are focused on learning, which motivates me to be better."

Although Webb says she enjoyed getting a start on college life, she was most excited about the financial benefits and potential to graduate early.

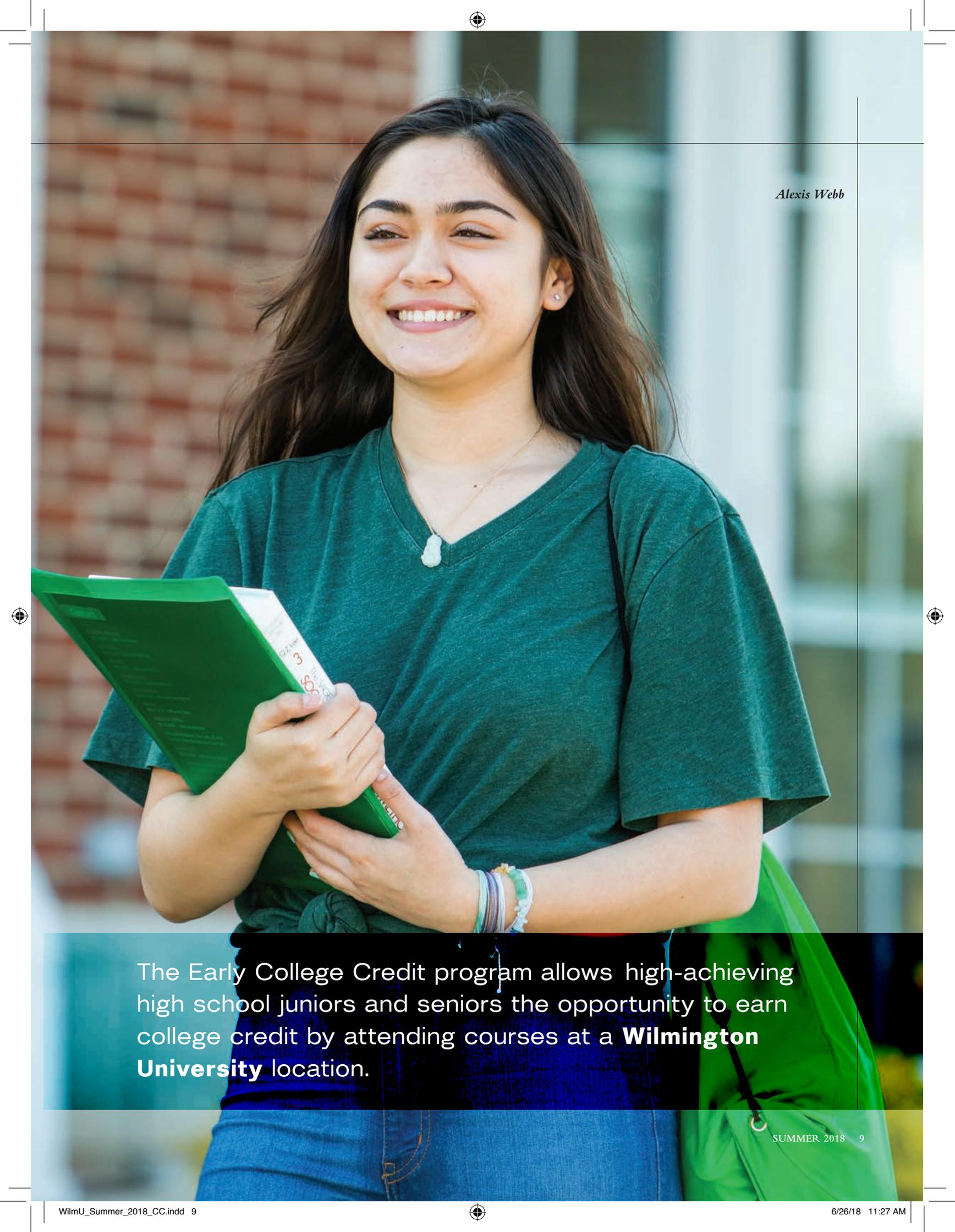
According to WilmU Academic Partnership Manager Lisa Lombardozzi, Early College Credit participants are offered up to four courses at about 10 percent of the cost of traditional undergraduate courses.

Webb plans to study Media Design in the College of Technology, though she has already created a reputation with her friends as the go-to for Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator software systems.

"I feel accomplished knowing that I'm already prepared for college-level courses," she says. "This is just one step closer to my degree." **WU**

—Britney Gullede

PHOTO BY PAUL PATTON



*Alexis Webb*

The Early College Credit program allows high-achieving high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn college credit by attending courses at a **Wilmington University** location.



*Alumnus Walter Nathan Durant uses chess to teach students about life.*

# The ‘Pawn Pusher’

**WALTER NATHAN DURANT** was just a text message away as the Thomas Edison Charter School team placed second in the 2018 National Junior High Chess Championship. The team was vying for a third national championship, having taken first place twice since 2014. This was the

first year that Durant, chess coach and educator, couldn’t make the trip physically, but he was there in spirit.

“I spent the weekend glued to my phone sending tips and motivation,” says the WilmU alumnus, who uses chess as a tool to teach students about life.



PHOTO BY PAUL PATTON



Durant understands how motivating learning chess can be for young minds. In fact, he credits the game for helping him channel his energy during his middle school years in North Philadelphia. Durant was a self-proclaimed knucklehead. After he got into a fight, his teacher, Salome Thomas-EL, told him that chess players don't fight with their fists; they fight with their minds.

Something clicked.

In Durant's TEDxWilmington talk, "From Pawns to Kings: Chess Champions of Murdertown USA," he gives a clever description of the game, paying particular attention to the so-called underrated pawns. While pawns are not powerful at the start of the game, they can be promoted if the chess player makes smart decisions throughout the game.

Today he brings that same lesson to kids in Wilmington. Durant and his former teacher, Thomas-EL, landed at Thomas Edison Charter School in 2010 — Thomas-EL as the principal and Durant as a behavioral interventionist before becoming a science teacher.

The duo introduced chess to third graders by using simple math concepts, through a program called Move Up. They believe it helped change the culture of the school by inspiring forward-thinking students.

"I wanted kids to get involved in something that challenged their minds," says Thomas-EL. "They have to survive on the streets in the city, and when they get on the chess board, they already have that personality of grit, perseverance and resilience."

Durant earned his master's in School Leadership at WilmU's College of Education in 2012. He believes the degree, combined with his passion for helping students excel, was the catalyst for him to be named director of Student Activities at Freire Charter School in Wilmington, where he helps more than 400 students find their passions and discover creative outlets.

"The students are my passion," he says. "I've worked mostly with students who live at or below the poverty level and don't always have access to resources such as robotics, yoga or chess.

"To me, chess teaches us to plan ahead, that every move and decision has consequences that need to be weighed against its reward. I know my students — former and future — take that with them for life." **WU**

# From the Heart

**F**eb. 2, 2017, is a date that is seared into the memory of **SHAVAUGHN FLOYD FELDER**.

On that day, her brother, Lt. Steven R. Floyd Sr., a corrections officer at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center in Smyrna, Delaware, was killed during a riot at the prison.

The loss was devastating, but Felder, who received a master's in Community Counseling from Wilmington University in 2007, has used her brother's life and legacy to inspire others. That was apparent when she spoke during his posthumous induction into the Sussex Central High School Hall of Fame this past fall.

"Steven is our hero," she said during the ceremony, "not because of his sacrifice, but because he set a great example for us to follow in every aspect of our lives. He showed us that treating people



right would take us further in life than money ever could. He loved each and every one of us unconditionally, and he laughed often. The chain of stories and memories go on and on, never ending. Just like his legacy will never end because we will tell our children's children all about him and through those stories they will know how much he meant to us."

Felder's speech was so inspiring that she was invited to return on May 30 to speak at Sussex Central's commencement. An alum of the Georgetown school herself, she readily agreed, and decided that she would wear her WilmU cap and gown for the occasion. Unfortunately, when she and her husband, Army Master Sgt. Leondra Felder, moved last August with their four children from Millsboro, Delaware, to Fort Belvoir, Virginia, her commencement regalia was lost. Undeterred, she contacted the

University registrar's office and the staff promptly sent her a replacement.

Garbed in WilmU green, Felder delivered another powerful message that focused on leading a fulfilling life. She hopes her speech resonated with the graduates. "When times get tough," she says, "they will be able to reflect on those words and keep pushing toward greatness."

Felder describes herself as an Army wife, but she also owns a daycare center in Alexandria, Virginia, prepares taxes for military personnel, and is co-facilitating an Alternative Violence Program at the Sussex Correctional Institute in Georgetown, Delaware.

Her brother continues to inspire her, and she says his encouragement helped her deliver both of her moving speeches at her alma mater. "He always believed in me and thought that I had a way with words," she says. "He would always say, 'when you speak, everybody listens.'" WU

## DID YOU KNOW?...

## FUN FACTS about WilmU's Career Services Department

- WilmU's Career Services department is a **FREE RESOURCE** for students and alumni who wish to learn more about their chosen career fields and to develop career plans?
- The Career Services team assisted **11,641 STUDENTS AND ALUMNI** in 2017?



Shavaughn Floyd Felder



COURTESY OF SHAVAUGHN FLOYD FELDER

“ Steven is our hero, not because of his sacrifice, but because he set a great example for us to follow in every aspect of our lives.”

—Shavaughn Floyd Felder

by Britney Gulledge

↪ WilmU students and alumni are connected to more than **200,000 EMPLOYERS** through the Handshake app?

↪ The Career Services team suggests **HANDSHAKE, LINKEDIN, ZIPRECRUITER** and **BUZZFILE** as the best sites for people looking for employment?

↪ Career Services hosts five **CAREER FAIRS** each year, including two online career fairs for students across the U.S.?

↪ The team hosts LinkedIn **PHOTO SHOOT EVENTS** to provide students and alumni with up-to-date, professional headshots?

# Be the Change

**JUDY HUTT** is passionate about helping others. She works with women in prison to develop the life skills they need to become productive members of society.

Hutt, who earned a master's in Administration and Human Services at WilmU, was selected by Ashley Biden, executive director of the Delaware Center for Justice and founder of Livelihood, to be the instructor for the center's Women In Transition Moving On program.

She teaches at the Hazel D. Plant Women's Treatment Facility in New Castle. The goal is to reduce the women's rate of recidivism through a curriculum that utilizes evidence-based models focused on risks that lead women to crime, including environmental, behavioral and family factors.

"They are transitioning back to society, some to their former neighborhoods and communities," says Hutt. "It's imperative that each woman is equipped with the skills she needs to succeed. The program gives women the skills to develop personal and social resources that promote healthy living and equip them to better deal with the



## Hutt worked full-time while she pursued her undergraduate degree in Behavioral Science.

stresses in life.”

Women also benefit from All About Me, a component of the program designed to help women realize their self-worth.

On a personal level, Hutt embodies the power of positive change. She enrolled at WilmU when her oldest child began studies at Delaware State University. Hutt worked full-time while she pursued her undergraduate degree in Behavioral Science.

“You want to bring change? Be the change,” she says.

In addition to her work with the Delaware Center for Justice, Hutt is employed full-time at Children & Families First as a community educator, where she facilitates workshops for early childhood educators. Her topic: Family Engagement on the Front Line, Breaking Barriers and Bridging the Gap.

“I am taking my Human Services degree and doing good in the world,” she says. “Wilmington University was my pathway and now the sky is the limit.” **WU**

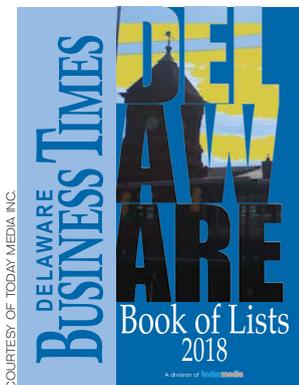
—Eileen Smith Dallabrida

# DESIGN STUDENTS GET REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

**D**esigning the cover of the Delaware Business Times 2018 Book of Lists gave three Wilmington University Media Design students an intimate look at the world of publishing, from pitching ideas to a client to final publication.

The project began in February, when DBT contacted WilmU Public Relations Director **LAURIE BICK-JENSEN**, who then connected with **SUSAN L. GREGG**, associate professor and Design Programs chair. Editor Christi Milligan explained that DBT would like to work with WilmU students to come up with a design for this year’s edition of the list, which is a compilation of businesses, companies, organizations and industry leaders with more than 50 categories.

Soon afterward, Gregg and three students — **MARISSA JANICKI**, **BREN LAWLER** and **ANNA STEELE** — met with Milligan and staffers from Today Media, publishers of DBT. Milligan and her team provided general guidelines about the cover concept and requirements, and at a second meeting, each student pitched her cover design to the Today Media team.



Actual cover designed by WilmU student Bren Lawler

“I think the presentation day was a little nerve-racking for the students since nine of us gathered around a large table in a conference room lined with framed magazine covers,” Gregg says. “But the students were prepared. The use of photographs, illustrations and layout was of a professional level. And it was great for students from the Media Design program to engage in a real-world opportunity by presenting their work in a competitive design campaign to pros for consideration.”

Says Milligan: “It was amazing to see how they took what we suggested and came back with their own unique offerings. All were fantastic, all very different.”

Ultimately, Today Media selected Lawler’s design. “Hers really kind of captured what we were looking for,” says Milligan. “It’s fresh, something different from anything we had done in the past, and it captured that Delaware feel.”

Milligan says the project, which involved multiple submissions and tweaking designs, “was very representative of the publishing process.”

Adds Gregg: “All three of the students’ final designs are worthy of being the cover of the 2018 Book of Lists.” **WU**

# BLACKBOARD: Phoning It In

**B**lackboard is the online learning platform used in all of WilmU's online and hybrid courses, and to support face-to-face courses. For the past 10 years, DIS 095, WilmU's Blackboard training course, had been completed by thousands of students and served as the prerequisite course for online and hybrid classes. A traditional e-learning course, DIS 095 was designed to be completed on a traditional desktop computer, and it took the average learner about an hour to complete.

Times have changed. At the start of the spring 2018 semester, the University switched to the "myWilmU" student information system, and DIS 095 was replaced with a more convenient option. WilmU's Online and Educational Technology staff created a training course using Articulate Storyline software that can be completed in about 20 minutes on any device, including iPads, tablets or smartphones.

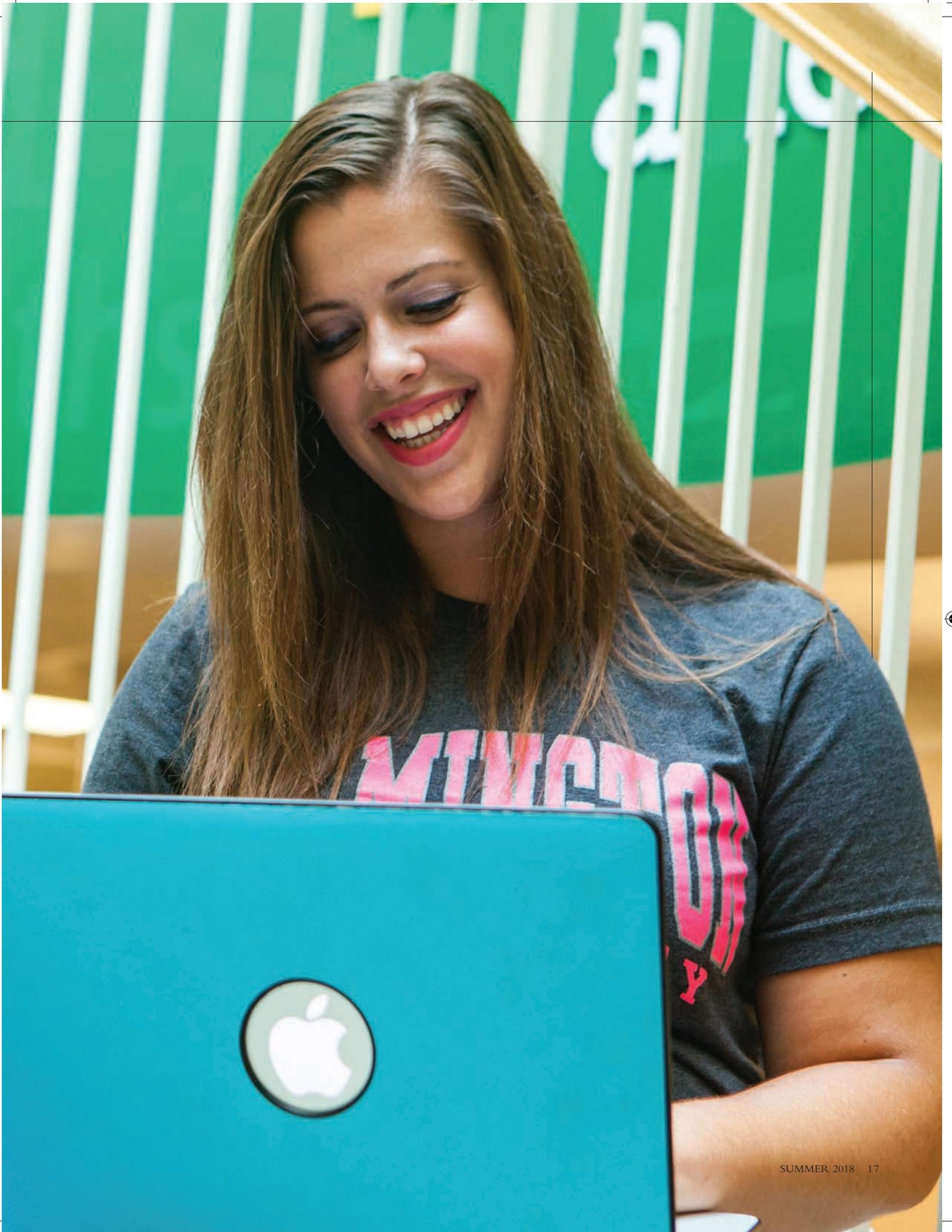
Now students can enjoy a stress-free, interactive simulation called the "Online Course Orientation," which teaches them to use the core features of the Blackboard system by using an excellent blend of interactivity and narrative. By following a series of simulations, on-screen callouts,

videos and voice narrations, students enjoy a quick and easy way to become competent with tools commonly used in online courses, such as discussion boards and checking grades. On-screen prompts and sequential step-by-step demonstrations show the learner exactly where to click.

In addition to changing the way students learn Blackboard, the training also focuses on requisite skills — those technical tasks most commonly used in online classes. This includes how to analyze a SafeAssign originality report used for research and writing courses. So if a student has a challenge uploading an assignment to Blackboard, for example, he or she can simply note the course announcement posted on the homepage of all online and hybrid courses that will link directly to the Online Course Orientation.

More than 900 students accessed this training within one semester. And 97 percent of students who completed a post-training survey agreed that it enabled them to perform their online coursework. According to one student, "I found this orientation was relevant to the Blackboard training needs of new WilmU students. I actually wish that it was available when I was a new student." **WU**

—Adam Voyton



*Brenda Kline Roark*



# Building Community Through Nutrition

When alumna **BRENDA KLINE ROARK** took over the Bear Nutrition Club in Bear, Delaware, she'd never run a brick-and-mortar business. She had spent 16 years as a social worker or counselor after earning a bachelor's in

Behavioral Sciences from WilmU.

But what Roark lacked in business acumen, she made up with heart.

Sadly, Roark lost her husband when he was just 28, due to complications from Type I diabetes.

"It was hard to see him go through the many surgeries," she says. "The

whole situation changed me. I knew my boys were counting on me and I refused to leave them parentless."

Roark made a conscious effort to reverse her sedentary lifestyle. She focused on nutrition, and lost 53 pounds. "My colleagues would comment on my weight loss journey



and ask for suggestions,” says Roark.

Before she knew it, she’d grown a reputation as a supporter for those looking to make healthy lifestyle changes. She cultivated then motivated an online community of thousands of nutrition enthusiasts — so much so that the previous Bear Nutrition Club owner asked Roark to take over the store.

Her club has become a hangout spot for many, including players from WilmU’s athletic teams. “We have members from administration to athletes that frequent the club,” says

Roark. (The club is two miles away from the WilmU Athletics Complex.)

Senior volleyball player Jenna Brown often makes a stop (or two) at the club a day. “Brenda has become someone I can talk to about everything from school to relationships,” says Brown. “You can come in for a shake and before you know it, you’ve met up with other athletes and have great conversations.”

“It’s coming full circle for me because I still get to use my experience as a counselor while encouraging the next generation

of WilmU alumni to take care of themselves,” says Roark.

She’s happy to see what has manifested from a life tragedy. She has demonstrated to her sons, Derek, 25, and Brett, 24, the importance of self-care, hard work and supporting others.

How does she keep the athletes coming back? “I make them the ‘Mama Special,’ where I blend up everything chocolate,” Roark says. “No one can resist it.” **WU**

—Britney Gullede

# THE INAUGURATION OF Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon



President Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon

Mr. Gary Seydel performed John Ness Beck's "Consecration"



From left: Ms. Carolyn Meadows (Dr. Harmon's sister), Mrs. Laura Thomas (Dr. Harmon's mother), Mr. Jerome Thomas (Dr. Harmon's brother)

**O**n March 8, 2018, Wilmington University hosted the first presidential inauguration in its nearly 50-year history.

**DR. LAVERNE T. HARMON** was honored in a celebration at the Chase Center on the Riverfront that included a formal procession of trustees, distinguished guests, faculty and staff. Program highlights included an invocation by Rev. Dr. Christopher Alan Bullock, pastor of Canaan Baptist Church of Delaware; a welcome by Board of Trustees Chairman Joseph J. Farnan Jr.; and a keynote address by Dr. Kenneth L. Ender, the president of William Rainey Harper College. Wilmington University President Emeritus Dr. Jack P. Varsalona presented his successor with the University Key. **WU**



THE NEWS



Left: Dr. Erin DiMarco, COO and Senior Vice President

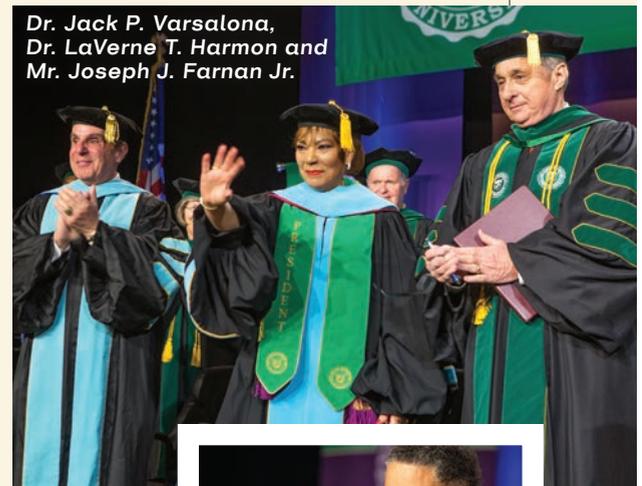


Shekinah (Kye) Reynolds, Student Government Association President

Below: Mrs. Laura Thomas and Mr. Jerome Thomas

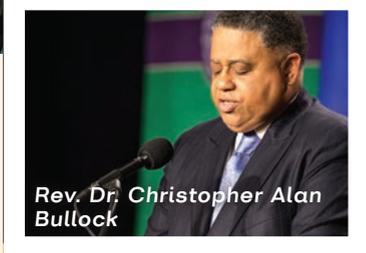


Dr. Jack P. Varsalona



Dr. Jack P. Varsalona, Dr. LaVerne T. Harmon and Mr. Joseph J. Farnan Jr.

Below: Dr. Kenneth L. Ender



Rev. Dr. Christopher Alan Bullock



Above: Mr. Malone Harmon (Dr. Harmon's husband)



Mr. Joseph J. Farnan Jr.



Board of Trustees procession

Below: Faculty procession



Left: Dr. Jim Wilson, Vice President for Academic Affairs





*Dr. Regina Allen-Sharpe*

# Journey to Joy

**DR. REGINA ALLEN-SHARPE** says she's in the "dream development" business.

"Everyone comes to college with a dream," she says. "I like to think I play some small part in making that dream come to fruition."

Named assistant vice president of Student Affairs in January, Dr. Allen-Sharpe has served Wilmington University for 17 years, as a director of Career Services, then senior director of Career Services and Student Life. She's also an assistant professor in the College of Business, for which she's taught myriad courses for 11 years. As AVP, she oversees the Career Services and Student Life departments and is responsible for policies, procedures and the Student Handbook. She's excited about collaborative projects with fellow AVPs who are creating services and programs that affect all areas of the University.

The passion she feels for work is the same passion she feels for life. The students she's served have inspired joy, contentment and gratitude.

About 10 years ago, Dr. Allen-Sharpe was a career counselor for a student who had just started her program. They lost touch but reconnected at a Career Fair, where Dr. Allen-Sharpe learned that the student had fallen on hard times. The night before the Career Fair, in fact, the student planned on taking her own life.

But she thought about the fair and something stopped her. She sought out Dr. Allen-Sharpe, telling her that WilmU had literally saved

her life. The career fair, she thought, might offer her a second chance at life.

"At first I cried because you think you're just putting on an event, but really, you might be changing someone's life," says Dr. Allen-Sharpe, adding that she offered the student resources and followed up on her progress. Today, that student is thriving.

Dr. Allen-Sharpe has mastered empathy, not just because she's learned to think beyond herself and understand other perspectives, but because life confronted her with challenges she fought to overcome. In 2007, she was diagnosed with colon cancer and underwent a colectomy to remove nearby lymph nodes. Four years later, she received the crushing diagnosis of breast cancer and endured a bilateral mastectomy — and eight surgeries in seven months.

"Breast cancer and the mastectomy were life-altering," says Dr. Allen-Sharpe. "There was no family history of breast cancer, and I found myself asking, 'what have I done?'"

According to the National Cancer Institute, that was a normal reaction. Cancer patients often feel guilty for upsetting the people they love, or they blame themselves for lifestyle choices they think led to cancer.

After a period of introspection, Dr. Allen-Sharpe had an epiphany. "First I thought, why me?" she says. "Then I thought, why not me?"

It was either fight or succumb. "So I remembered who I was and

decided to be strong," she says. "Nothing in my soul was telling me it was the end. I didn't care what the doctors said. I just knew I still had things to do."

She had many things to do. Thanks to loving support from her husband, Oscar, her mother, who moved in with them for months, and WilmU colleagues, she won the battle and has been cancer-free for more than six years. She also discovered yoga at the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center at Christiana Hospital, which affected her life profoundly.

"The first time I got on a yoga mat after breast cancer, Jesus showed up," she says. "And He's never left."

Dr. Allen-Sharpe is now a certified yoga instructor who teaches from a spiritual perspective. She's also a certified Ayurvedic yoga specialist. Ayurveda is an ancient science that helps practitioners take action to bring their bodies and minds back into balance.

And she counsels cancer patients, telling them to listen to their inner voices.

Listening, after all, is what she does best. She listens to students. She listens to colleagues. She listens to people who face terrifying diagnoses. And she listens to herself. That internal voice hasn't let her down yet.

Through hardship and pain she found joy, which she attributes to the Highest Power. "I'm the happiest I've ever been," says Dr. Allen-Sharpe. "Everything has brought me to this moment. And even on bad days, things are good." **WU** —Maria Hess



# Five Minutes at a Time

*Surviving unspeakable loss has made **Dr. Angela Herman**  
a better teacher, mentor and human being.*

# W

hen Dr. Angela Herman joined the Wilmington University faculty full-time in 2015, she was asked to transform the former Allied Health program into an innovative and practical offering called Health Sciences. In just three years, the program has grown 200 percent. Much of the recognition goes to Dr. Herman, its chair, though she credits staff and faculty for the significant growth. A nurse by trade, she is passionate about student success and wellness, and is determined to educate the health care industry on the merits of Health Sciences. But amid the success, and for the entire time she has served as a fervent ambassador for Wilmington University, she has carried inside her an enormous burden. She is a beloved mentor, professor and colleague, and teaching is her solace. It is the one thing that has allowed her to thrive despite lingering and indescribable hardships.

PHOTOS BY PAUL PATTON

Health Sciences, a four-year degree or a completion program, explores multiple areas of health care like policy, research and leadership. It was designed to accommodate a broad population of health care workers like respiratory therapists and dental hygienists, as well as generalists who don't have specific licenses or pathways. When Dr. Herman came on board, her plan was to serve students who loved the health care industry but were neither nurses nor physicians. "Our students are taught to use evidence-based practice in health care and public health," she says, "which is the new thing in health care. All of these things are built into the curriculum."

She needed to educate the public, so she visited high schools to tell students they could either earn an associate degree in Allied Health first or enroll at WilmU right after graduation and earn their four-year degrees. She went to community colleges like Delaware Technical Community College to offer Health Sciences as the next step for graduating students. She developed relationships with many organizational and community leaders, including those at Christiana Care Health System.

"It's been a wonderful thing to be part of," says Dr. Herman. "I feel there are several directions that are important for me to take: to expand the number of students who have access to the program, since it's so new and because after meeting with our community partners about what we should change, it became clear that it was very competitive to get into those career pathways and many great students who had an interest in health care got turned away."

The former Allied Health program had a business focus because administrators thought that most allied health professionals wanted a bachelor's to help them climb

the management ladder. "But in my investigation for our program review," says Dr. Herman, "I found that there were several reasons people came back to get their bachelor's. Health care professions are starting to consider a bachelor's degree as the entry level for practice, similar to changes happening in the nursing field."

Others sought careers that required graduate degrees, but first needed to earn bachelor's degrees to bridge the gap. Physician assistants or occupational therapists, for example, need master's degrees. Health Sciences was created to support those populations as well.

The business courses decreased while health care courses increased. "We also did something different by offering students elective courses to help them build their own focus," says Dr. Herman. "So if someone wanted to be a physician assistant, for example, she or he would need more science classes. If they wanted to be a manager, they could add those business courses back in or do a certificate in Human Resources Management."

Health Sciences aligns with the WilmU mission by treating students as individuals and providing the right courses for specific jobs. "So we encourage them to be thoughtful about what they want to do at the end of this program," says Dr. Herman. "They don't all know what that is, but as part of the early classes, we challenge them to look at our certificate programs and ask them what they could do with those. We also encourage them to consider work-integrated learning experiences, or co-ops, particularly the four-year students. We urge them to get out there and work in the community; to create objectives specific to them."

There have been outstanding co-op offerings for these students.

The American Lung Association, for example, offers WilmU students the chance to work in Wilmington elementary schools, where they assist professionals who teach students with asthma about their symptoms. "These are kids who may not have those opportunities to have someone to talk to about asthma," says Dr. Herman. "Our completion degree students who may have been practicing in their professions for years often have only worked in hospital settings, so co-ops like the one with American Lung offer them alternative settings outside of the acute care area, such as schools."

Dr. David Caffo, director of Work-Integrated Learning, says that students can either integrate co-ops with core curriculums or build them as electives. "Angie is very innovative in her approach to her program and has embraced the work-integrated learning modality of teaching," he says. "She gets that experience is what sets our students apart. Her work with experiential learning gives our students the tools and confidence they need to be successful."

She's focused on the job market, too. A student who has earned a bachelor's degree and is already working in allied health has a better chance of getting promoted. Other graduates can find work in numerous fields, such as care coordination, particularly as America ages. More nurses are expected to retire, so the need for support services will increase. Employers will also need prevention professionals to assist doctors or nurses with employee assessments. There are opportunities for medical supervisors and research assistants, and the list for potential careers is growing.

Dr. Herman works with local facilities, including Christiana Care Health Systems' Care Management program, where she talks about WilmU's curriculum and informs

outside professionals of the training students get. She listens to what the professionals say. “If there’s something that’s missing in our students’ preparation, let’s add it,” she says. “I’m always glad to hear what will make our students more marketable.”

WilmU’s Health Sciences offering is distinctive. Most university programs have specific tracks, but WilmU students can plan individual programs. “Health Sciences graduates are passionate about their prospects,” says Dr. Herman. “This gives them an opportunity to make a difference in the health of the population around them. We want to open their eyes as to what that might be.”

Whether it’s in public health, care in a hospital setting, or working in policy, Health Sciences graduates can enact change. Their teachers are helping them understand that they can make a difference.

This is a message that Dr. Herman is passionate about, and despite her personal struggles, her energy has never wavered. She has carried the weight of the world on her shoulders, and her work has lightened that load.

A native Delawarean, Dr. Herman attended Lake Forest High School and grew up in Harrington, in the shadows of the Delaware State Fair. Her 96-year-old mother, Anne Minner, is a fair board director, so the Delaware tradition is in her blood. She never misses the fair.

She earned two nursing degrees (BSN and MSN) at the University of Delaware and her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree at Wilmington University. She worked as a staff nurse at the Veteran’s Administration Hospital in Wilmington for two years in the early 1980s, then joined the Delaware Medical Center staff (now Christiana Care) and worked there until 2015, serving in various



*Dr. Herman holds BSN, MSN and DNP degrees.*

intensive care areas, first as a manager and then as a member of the Medical Center’s Critical Care per diem pool.

“Nursing makes you very inquisitive,” says Dr. Herman. “Medicine is a mystery. It’s about finding out what’s going on with someone. Nursing is the holistic view of that. Not only do nurses learn about symptoms; we also help patients cope with them.”

The bulk of her career involved working within the cardiovascular research trials program that included research trials in all cardiovascular

areas (cardiology, interventional cardiology, radiology, cardiac surgery, electrophysiology and vascular surgery). In 1991, she had started the program at Christiana Care in its cardiovascular research division. Christiana wanted someone with ICU experience, management skills and a master’s degree. Few nurses had graduate degrees then, so Dr. Herman earned the privilege of working with new drug research and investigation and other topics related to cardiac medicine.

She started teaching as a WilmU

adjunct in 2002. (One of her coworkers was a BSN student and learned of an opening.) By that time, she had two daughters in college and a young son, and was “blown away” by how much she loved teaching research. “It was so powerful,” she says. “I just love teaching research because it’s a topic students are afraid of. I had such an advantage of working with research so I had lots of stories to help explain it. I loved walking through the halls at Christiana and seeing how many nurses were excited about research because of their classes at WilmU. So many nurses in Delaware come to WilmU.”

“Dr. Herman has a wonderfully unique attitude toward life and the people around her,” says Dr. Jim Wilson, vice president for Academic Affairs. “Our students are fortunate to have the opportunity to engage with such a caring, understanding and compassionate faculty member.”

She taught as an adjunct until 2015, when her current position became available. She loved the collegial atmosphere, her colleagues and especially her students. The University provided the quality of life she desired.

And that life — and her job — would soon see Dr. Herman through her most trying time, literally saving her life.

Dr. Herman’s first marriage ended in divorce, but the couple produced three children: Natalie, Caroline and Peter, their youngest. After the girls left for college, Peter remained, their mother-son bond cemented by a traumatic event when Peter was just 2: He fell into a pond on the family’s property in rural Kemblesville, Pennsylvania, and when his mother found him, he was barely breathing.

“I had to perform CPR on him,” she says, remembering the torment of waiting for the ambulance. The

driver couldn’t find the house because two streets had the same name. But the other paramedic recognized the address because his sister had babysat for the girls. Peter was helicoptered to Christiana Hospital, where he survived.

Peter left the nest for the University of Delaware. The future entrepreneur and fervent Baltimore Ravens and Miami Heat fan thrived at UD, studying business while becoming a music producer and lacrosse team co-captain. He had even started developing movie scripts. At 20, he moved to an apartment off-campus.

On Nov. 7, 2012, his mom took him to Costco to buy “hundreds of dollars of food,” she says with a smile, remembering how Peter could eat, how college students never seem to get enough food, and how moms never tire of buying it for them.

Dr. Herman’s interview at WilmU for the DNP program happened to fall on the same day. “So I loaded up his car,” she says, “but I felt so horrible because Peter said, ‘Hey mom, let’s get something to eat.’ I said I couldn’t. I had to go to the interview, but that we’d do it later.”

She recalls watching him drive away in his small green car, eating something out of a grocery bag.

Five days later, Peter was shot and killed.

When she got the call from Peter’s father alerting her to the shooting, he told her that Peter was helicoptered to Christiana. She thought about the day long ago at the pond, and how Peter survived. “I was so certain he was gone back then, but my friend told me he was OK. I kept thinking it would be the same this time and that Peter would be saved. But he wasn’t.”

The date of her DNP interview is seared into her memory. It was the last time she saw her son. Her acceptance letter to the program came amid a

flurry of sympathy cards. “I remember opening it up and thinking I just can’t do this. But I thought about it a lot, and getting a doctorate was a long-time dream. I knew the DNP was a good fit.” She also knew that Peter would have wanted her to become a doctor, and that the program might provide an escape from the agony of losing a child.

“When Peter died, Wilmington University was wonderful to me,” says Dr. Herman. “They told me not to worry about my classes. But I came back within a week and every single person was so good to me. Every student came up to me and gave me a hug. Peter was so young and so many

*One of Dr. Herman's passions is inspiring students to succeed, and making them aware of opportunities available to them in the health care industry.*



people came to the service.”

That support got her through the most difficult moments of her life. Little did she know that more would follow.

A few months after Peter's death, in the spring of 2013, Dr. Herman's then fiancé, Michael Herman, started to experience severe pain in his ribs. An x-ray revealed nothing and a battery of tests presented only anemia. A hematologist then labeled Michael's symptoms as a Vitamin B12 deficiency.

But something wasn't right, at least not to an experienced nurse like his fiancée. She conducted her

own research and discovered that the symptoms of multiple myeloma, a blood cancer, mirrored Michael's.

She requested a bone survey (a series of x-rays of every bone in the body). On the way home from the test, they drove by a house in Galena, Maryland, that they had always loved and that had just become available. Michael bought the house the following Tuesday. Two days later, he was, indeed, diagnosed with multiple myeloma. He had 100 lesions in his body and was ordered to start immediate treatment.

If there was a time for Dr. Herman's faith to be shattered, this was it. "I thought, 'How can this be?'"

she says. "I lost my son and now I'm going to lose my husband-to-be?"

They didn't waste time. "I said we're going to get married and we're going to live in this house we just bought," she says. "We moved in in July and got married in September."

Throughout all this, she had been working on her doctorate. "But I realized I couldn't be doing research for a Discussion Board when I should be researching how to keep my husband alive."

She dropped out of WilmU's first DNP cohort. By January, Michael had gone to Arkansas for treatments with the renowned Dr. Bart Barlogie (originally from The



*“I just love teaching research because it's a topic students are afraid of. I had such an advantage of working with research, so I had lots of stories to help explain it.”*



*When Dr. Herman walked across the stage to don her tam, her emotions covered the gamut, from sadness and regret to joy and triumph. “Peter would have been proud,” she says. “He was with me.”*

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center) at a center built by Walmart founder Sam Walton, who also had multiple myeloma. Michael stayed there for nine months, and family members took turns while he endured two stem cell transplants.

Dr. Barlogie moved to Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City in 2015, and the couple now travels there for treatments.

Time went on, albeit slowly and painfully. Cohort One had long finished and by that point, Cohort

Six would soon commence. Enter Dr. Aaron Sebach, chair of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program.

“It took me about a year to convince Angela to return to the DNP program,” says Dr. Sebach. “I kept bringing it up in conversation

and sending degree plans. I knew that earning a terminal degree in nursing was a personal and professional goal of hers and I was determined to assist her in reaching that goal. With her extensive background as a clinical nurse specialist and researcher, coupled with her perseverance, I was confident that she would be successful. She seamlessly integrated into our sixth cohort and served as a role model for other students. Her doctoral project combined her expertise as a clinician, researcher and educator to implement a clinical practice change at a small community-based hospital in Maryland.”

She kept her eyes on the prize, he adds. “She never let the death of her son or the health of her husband hinder her success. Angela graduated at the top of her class and proudly delivered a speech at the doctoral hooding ceremony highlighting her doctoral journey. I don’t think that there was a dry eye in the room.”

In that speech, she revealed that the date of her DNP interview was also the last day she saw Peter. When she walked across the stage to don her tam, her emotions covered the gamut, from sadness and regret to joy and triumph. “Peter would have been proud,” she says. “He was with me.”

Dr. Herman’s two daughters, Natalie and Caroline, are both successful business professionals. But Peter’s death left a hole in their lives. “It never goes away,” says Dr. Herman. “Every birthday, every holiday: You feel that loss of what your life should have been and never will be. And you just miss him.”

One of Peter’s friends gave her a recording of a song his friends had written for him and played at his service. They had also recorded his laugh and tagged it to the end of the song. “So I have his laughter,” says Dr. Herman. “I can’t listen to the song

much, but I can always hear his laugh.”

The Hermans give a scholarship every year in Peter’s name to an Appoquinimink High School lacrosse player who embodies Peter’s spirit and leadership abilities. Peter was part of the first graduating class at Appoquinimink.

Dr. Herman takes nothing for granted. “You realize you don’t know what’s coming at you,” she says. “Obviously I would have thought Peter’s death was enough. I would not have thought I would have a husband who had to battle cancer. Cancer has defined our life.”

Every day counts, she says. “When someone else loses a child around Peter’s age, part of me wants to help them, but I don’t know how. The reality is that it hurts. It sounds cliché, but you have to take one minute at a time. If I can just get through the next five minutes, maybe I can get through the *next* five minutes.”

The tragedies have changed her. “I always had a strong faith, but it does harden you a bit,” she says. “I think I’m a good person and sometimes I ask why these two events happened to me. But at the end of the day, I think about the wonderful life I had, and have, and I realize there are no guarantees. There are people who deal with so many other things.”

Being present for her daughters and meeting work obligations keeps her going. “Those things help you,” she says. “Those girls are there for me and this job saved me. The people at WilmU care and they let me be with my husband when I need to be.”

Doing what she loves has aided the healing process. Michael, who is in near-complete remission, often reminds his wife about the good times with Peter. And earning her DNP made the pain somewhat less acute. “You’re moving yourself forward and hopefully showing other people that it’s a mechanism to help,” she says.

Nurses like Dr. Herman tend to be naturally compassionate. “But until you lose a child or deal with a loved one with cancer,” she says, “you don’t understand how truly painful these things are. I think that makes me a more understanding teacher, particularly with students who have challenges. I can help them look beyond them so they’ll be successful. I can better help them meet their educational goals.”

Still, some days are worse than others. She never worried about petty things anyway and after the past few years, she doesn’t sweat the small stuff. “I don’t think there will ever be the pain I felt by losing Peter,” she says. “When you put that as a baseline, and having Michael be so sick, it’s hard to get upset about anything.”

She does worry that people find her cold or unemotional. “I wonder if they say, ‘Why don’t you cry?’, and I think it’s partly because if I start crying, I won’t stop. You have to put those barriers up as a professional. You can’t let it have power over you.”

For now, she and Michael enjoy every day in their dream home. And it just happens that Diane Bansbach, chair of WilmU’s Math department in the College of Arts & Sciences, lives a few houses down the road.

“We share fun times,” says Bansbach. “We watched the Eagles’ huge Super Bowl win together. And we share a great loss: she lost her third child to violence and I lost my third child to a genetic defect. She is so very kind and would do anything for anyone.”

There’s no accounting for the bad things that good people endure. “It’s really about how you’re able to respond to them,” says Dr. Herman. “You have to continue to help others and do what’s important for them.” **WU**

---

*For more information about the Health Sciences program, visit <http://www.wilmu.edu/health/health-sciences.aspx>*

In this view, the building pad has been leveled, the basement excavated, and most of the first floor slab is in place. The first structural steel columns have just been installed, and steel erection proceeded quickly after this.



# BRANDYWINE

Construction of **WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY BRANDYWINE** in North Wilmington is underway — and it all starts with a great foundation.



This view was taken a few months later. The structural steel framing and upper floor slabs are in place. Work on the exterior walls is ongoing. Interior partitions have not been installed yet. The main goal at this time was to get the building weather-tight so interior work could proceed in a controlled environment.



The site has several Brandywine granite walls that recall the historic stone walls typically seen along country roads in this area.



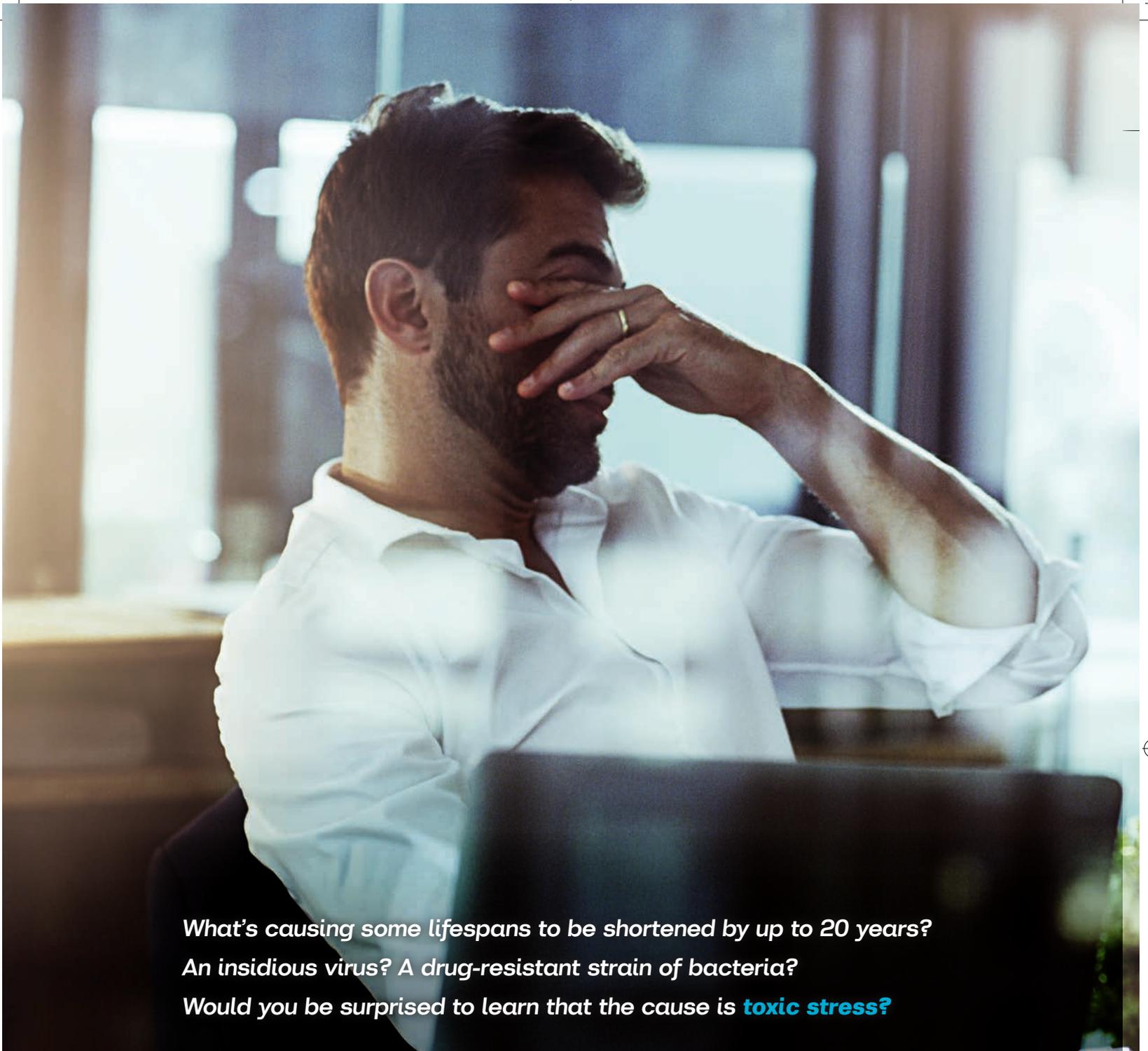
# BEGINNINGS

Content provided by Curtis Harkin, AIA, Homsey Architects



This is a recent photo of the rear and east side of the building.

The exterior brick walls are completed, and glazing work is ongoing. The cornice has been waterproofed, and the cornice cover, which will be white, will soon be installed.



*What's causing some lifespans to be shortened by up to 20 years?  
An insidious virus? A drug-resistant strain of bacteria?  
Would you be surprised to learn that the cause is **toxic stress**?*

# Why Trauma-Informed Approaches Matter

| BY LORI SITLER |



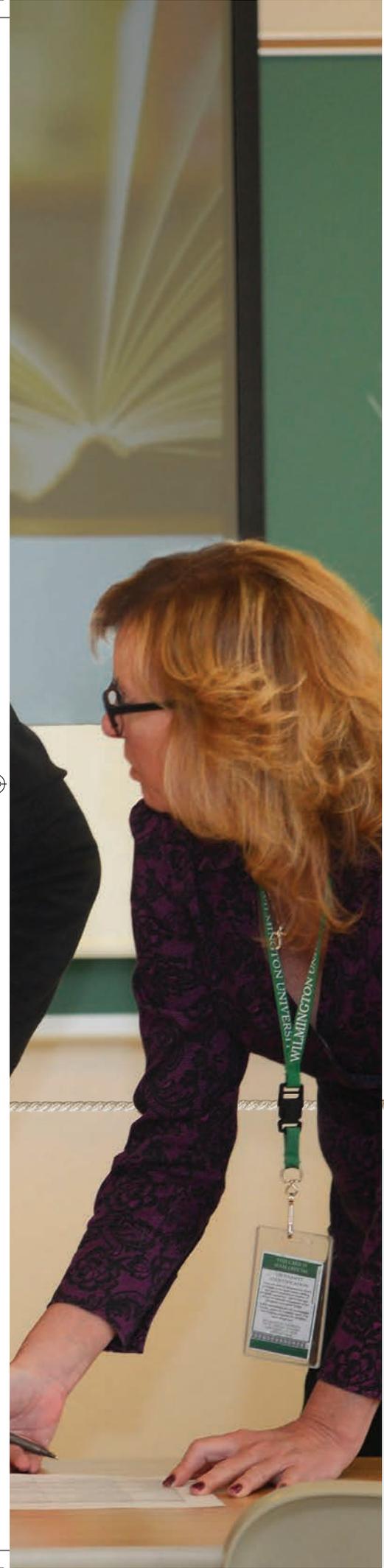
**We all experience stress in our daily lives.** Some stress, like work or school deadlines, can help us develop and make us productive. But toxic stress is robust, frequent or prolonged. Exposure to this type of stress through adverse childhood experiences like suffering abuse, living in a home with a caretaker who experiences domestic violence, mental illness and addiction issues, or living in a violent neighborhood can increase the risk of stress-related physical and mental illness in adulthood.

FACE CLASS  
5<sup>TH</sup>, 2018

WILMINGTON  
UNIVERSITY™

Marilyn Siebold, Dr. Debra Berke and Kim Newell discuss how best to “train” trainers for the Trauma-Informed Approach Initiative.





Wilmington University is partnering with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) on a unique workforce development project to explore the issue. The yearlong Trauma-Informed Approach Initiative will educate DHSS staff about the impact of cumulative stress and traumatic experiences in their clients' lives so they can better assess and address client needs. The training will also help DHSS staff recognize and prevent trauma fatigue, the emotional toll experienced by those in the helping professions. Twenty-six supervisors and trainers from three units within DHSS — Division of State Service Centers, Division of Social Services, and Division of Child Support Services — engaged in a nine-week training course from January through March. The 54-hour blended learning training presented half of the material in a face-to-face format at the New Castle campus and half online using WilmU's learning management system. Dr. Debra Berke, associate professor and director of Psychology programs, and Marilyn Siebold, an adjunct professor in the Psychology program, led the training.

Dr. Berke explains the trauma-informed approach as one that takes a holistic view, asking, "What happened to this person?" instead of the traditional approach of, "What's wrong with this person?"

Siebold describes the core values of a trauma-informed system as those that provide clients safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment. "Understanding the prevalence and impact of trauma is the first step for building capacity," she tells the DHSS staff. "You have the ability to provide clients with knowledge, tools and skills to help them unleash their power and use their strengths to make choices for their lives."

Intern Kristen Flynn, an undergraduate Psychology major who helped identify resources for the training and helped design assessments of participants' learning, assisted the leaders. "It was a remarkable experience to see training participants understand, conceptualize and use the trauma-informed lens in a real-world application," she says. (Flynn completed the Trauma-Informed Approaches Certificate as part of her undergraduate studies.)

Trauma-informed approaches are based on the findings of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) study conducted by the Kaiser Permanente health system and the Centers for Disease Control. One of the most extensive investigations of childhood maltreatment and lifelong health and well-being, the study sampled 17,500 study subjects with private health insurance and utilized childhood exposures to abuse and household dysfunction

---

**Siebold describes the *core values* of a trauma-informed system as one that provides clients safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment. "Understanding the prevalence and impact of trauma is the first step for building capacity," she tells the DHSS staff.**



DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker

— like substance abuse or domestic violence — for its analysis. Adverse childhood experiences were strongly related to one another and researchers concluded that persons with childhood exposure to these experiences were likely to have multiple health risk factors later in life that resulted in shortened lifespans due to causes like heart disease and cancer. The magnitude of the reported ACES scores was staggering: Adults who had experienced four or more categories of childhood exposure compared to those who had experienced none had significantly high and increased risks for alcoholism, drug abuse, depression and suicide attempts. There were also significant increases in smoking and morbid obesity.

DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker, a Delaware native and board-certified family physician, spoke to her staff at one of the training sessions about the social challenges and effects of trauma on our communities. Her history of working with underserved neighborhoods gives her a perspective on the multiple challenges facing patients, families and neighborhoods.

“We have to talk about trauma,” says Dr. Odom Walker. “Based on our clients’ zip codes, we know the health challenges they face. From evidence-based research, we understand the tie between trauma — including exposure to adverse childhood experiences — and health outcomes.”

*Dr. Odom Walker learned the importance of getting to know people as well as their life experiences. **Positive, supportive relationships** have been identified as the primary path to assisting those affected by trauma. “We need to give young people the promise of the future. Through our one-on-one interactions with people, we can build trusting relationships.”*

As a family medicine practitioner, Dr. Odom Walker learned the importance of getting to know people as well as their life experiences. Positive, supportive relationships have been identified as the primary path to assisting those affected by trauma. “We need to



Marilyn Siebold

give young people the promise of the future,” she told training class attendees. “Through our one-on-one interactions with people, we can build trusting relationships.”

“Now is the right time to transform our culture,” says RN Renee Beaman, director of the Division of State Services Centers who completed the nine-week training session with her DHSS colleagues. She says the training will be a long-term initiative that will be offered to additional divisions of DHSS in the coming years. “The role of trauma has been ignored or misunderstood in the lives of people who are most in need of understanding,” Beaman says. “By better understanding our clients and their experiences, we can provide better services.”

Based on a “train the trainer” model, the initial training course utilizes content from Wilmington University’s popular Trauma-Informed Approaches undergraduate

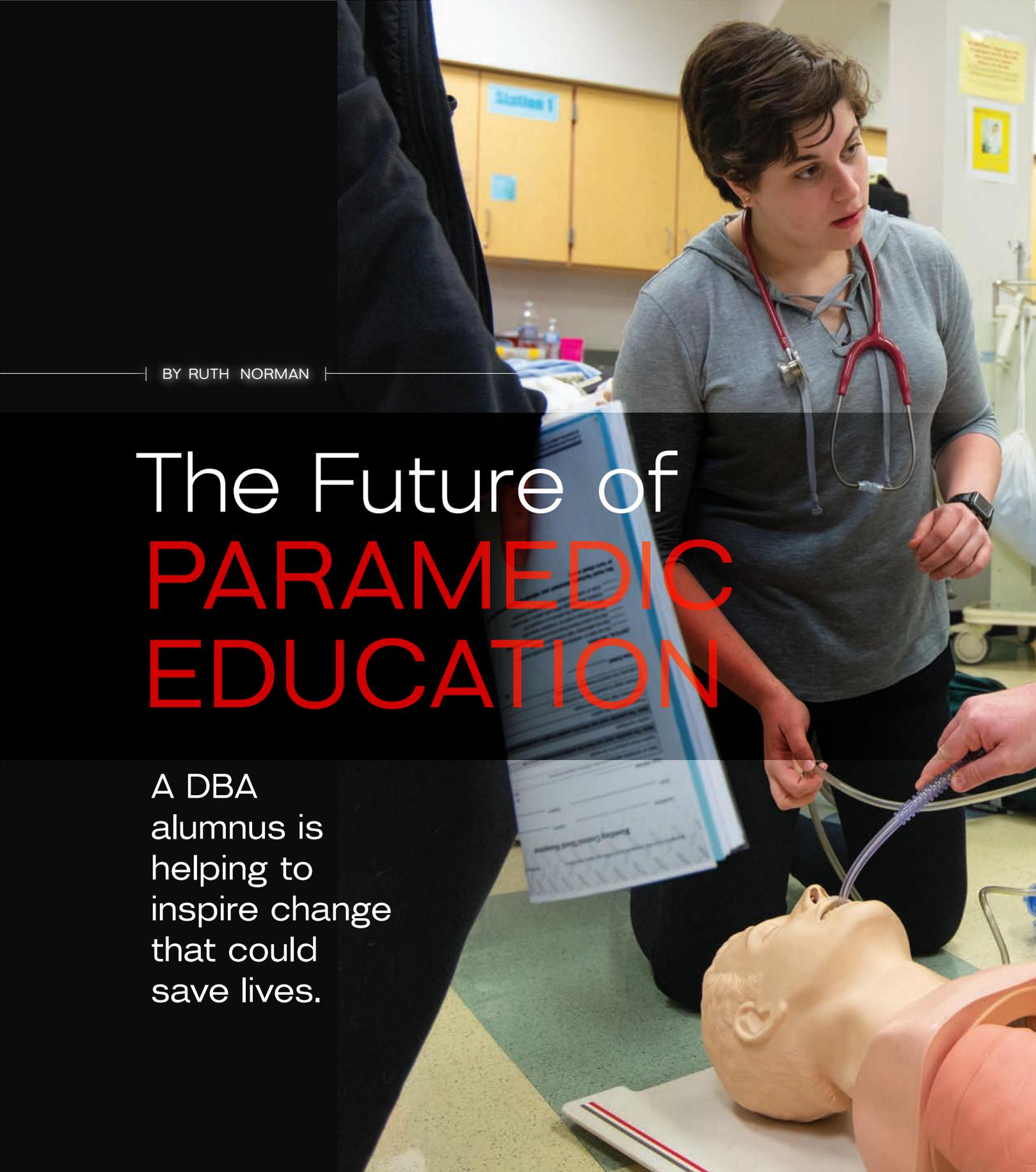
certificate. The DHSS staff that attended this first phase helped develop a 12.5-hour training module they plan to roll out this year to about 1,000 employees across its three divisions. Beaman appreciates the partnership with WilmU because the faculty recognizes the importance this issue is for the community. “They created training that is specialized for our needs,” she says.

“This partnership with DHSS is one example of how Wilmington University is investing in the lives of Delawareans,” says Dr. Berke. “We are enhancing organizational capacity and resources with the ultimate goals of promoting health and well-being and preventing adverse outcomes for individuals, families, communities and society.” **WU**

*To learn more about the Trauma-Informed Approaches Certificate, visit <http://www.wilmu.edu/behavioralscience/trauma-informed-certificate.aspx>*



Louis Pettigrew and Pamela Grimes, both of DHSS



| BY RUTH NORMAN |

# The Future of **PARAMEDIC EDUCATION**

A DBA  
alumnus is  
helping to  
inspire change  
that could  
save lives.

*Dr. Christopher Boyer works in paramedic education at Pennsylvania College of Technology.*



**D**r. Christopher Boyer admits that public service is in his genes. Many of his relatives are firefighters, so it just seemed natural for him to follow the tradition and become a first responder. In 2003, he earned an A.A.S. in Paramedic Technology at the Pennsylvania College of Technology. He continued his passion for learning by earning degrees in Health Care Administration and Public Administration. Dr. Boyer

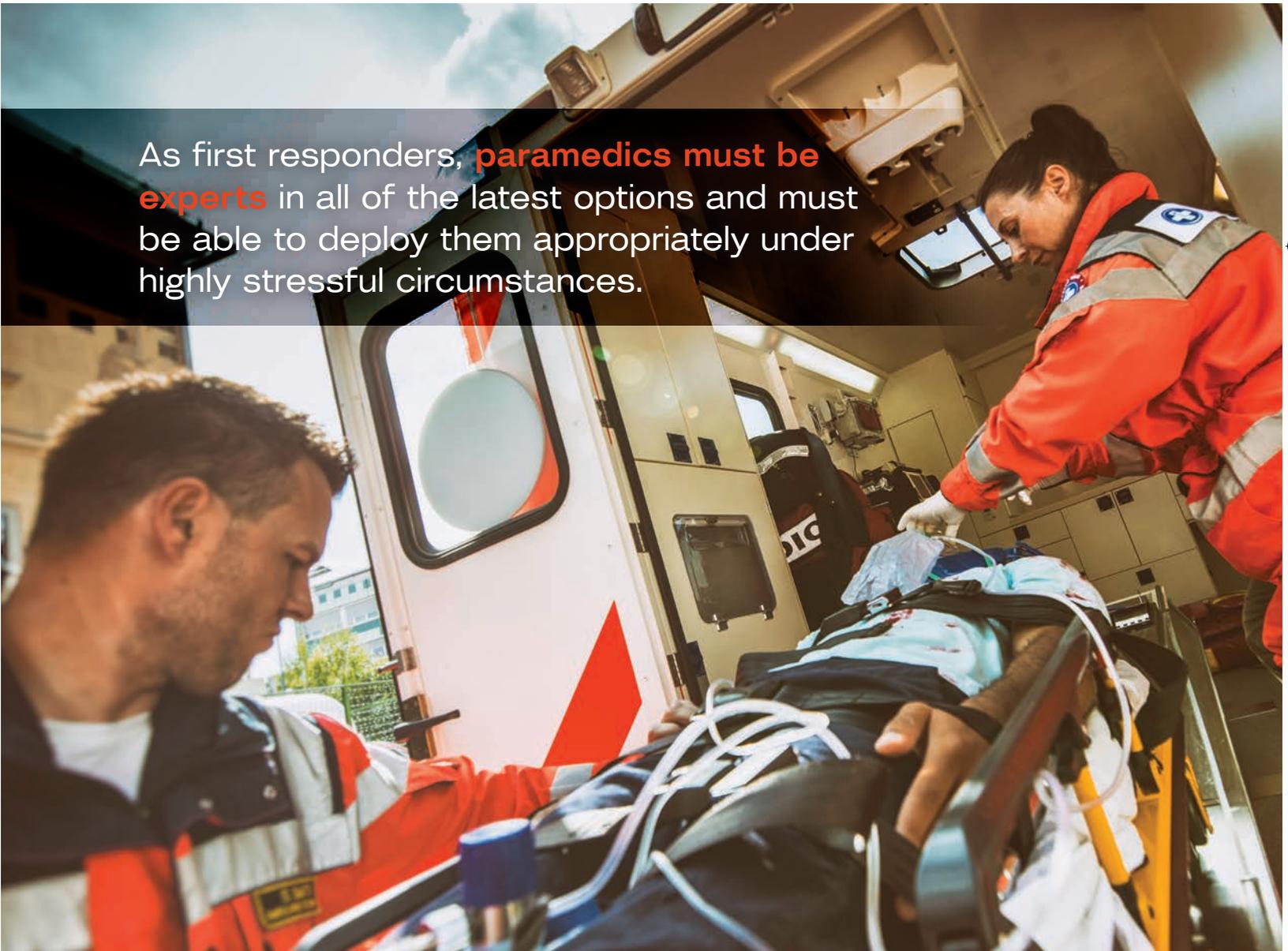
further honed his skills by serving as a critical care flight paramedic, director of Emergency Medical Services at St. Francis Hospital in Wilmington, and faculty member in the Paramedic Program at Delaware Technical Community College.

Meanwhile, he dreamed of taking on a leadership role in improving paramedic education: to train highly skilled technicians who not only understand theory but are able to make wise life and death decisions under pressure. But taking on an academic leadership role would require a doctoral degree

and additional business management skills. And Wilmington University's Doctor of Business Administration program provided the perfect solution for addressing those needs.

Leadership and management skills are particularly critical now in designing paramedic education because there are so many technical and financial challenges. Health care is a dynamic field, with new approaches and equipment constantly being developed. As first responders, paramedics must be experts in all of the latest options and must be able to deploy them appropriately under

As first responders, **paramedics must be experts** in all of the latest options and must be able to deploy them appropriately under highly stressful circumstances.



highly stressful circumstances. So it's essential that paramedic education covers both theory and practice as effectively as possible. Traditionally, classroom training focused mostly on theory. Although there was isolated task training, it did not fully prepare students for their fieldwork. Paramedic students who had little practical experience were treating some patients.

High fidelity simulation instruction offers a promising option to address this problem. However, simulators are expensive, ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000 per unit, with multiple units required to handle a classroom

of students, along with instructor training and ancillary expenses. While previous research had shown student improvements on examinations after using simulation, no research had demonstrated improved outcomes with real patients. It was unclear whether the considerable expense could be justified.

Fortunately, in his doctoral research, Dr. Boyer was able to demonstrate that students who used high fidelity simulators required 19 percent fewer patient contacts to fully demonstrate mastery compared to those not using such simulators. When you consider the possible negative outcomes for patients who don't receive optimal emergency care, the importance of this improvement is huge.

After earning his DBA, Dr. Boyer accepted an exciting opportunity to serve as director of Paramedic Technology Programs at his alma mater, the Pennsylvania College of Technology, an affiliate of Penn State. He will now be able to have a significant impact because paramedic education is undergoing a major redesign throughout the U.S. Current curriculum guidelines that were developed in the 1990s are outdated. Therefore, a major initiative, EMS Agenda 2050, is underway to develop a new and collaborative instructional vision. Dr. Boyer will be empowered to set the stage for paramedic education at his college for years to come. Of course, he expects high fidelity simulators to play an important role in the classroom and in field training, and real time data will be used to provide immediate feedback.

Dr. Boyer's commitment to public service continues to guide him as he leads paramedic education to a higher level. Thanks to him and other leaders in the field, tomorrow's paramedic students will be better prepared for their critical role. **WU**



*Dr. Christopher Boyer is fitted with doctoral regalia by Dr. Rob Rescigno.*

PHOTO BY SUSAN L. GREGG

## The **DBA:** Strengthening Management and Strategic Thinking Skills

Wilmington University's Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program is designed to help promising leaders like Dr. Christopher Boyer achieve their career goals. Mid-career professionals from many fields, including academia, financial, manufacturing, healthcare, government, military, and nonprofits, have found the part-time DBA program to be a practical and affordable solution for strengthening management and strategic thinking skills. The program, which is accredited by IACBE and available in both fully online and hybrid formats, attracts international students as well as those closer at hand. The diversity of the student body contributes to rich and lively discussions in webinars and classes. **WU**

Learn more about the DBA program at [dba@wilmu.edu](mailto:dba@wilmu.edu) or by calling (302) 356-2460.



# SPORTS

## Dr. Stefanie Whitby Relishes New Role in Athletics

**W**ith more than 20 years of athletic experience, including being a student-athlete, coach and official, **DR. STEFANIE WHITBY** has been reunited with the athletics community and was named the new director of Athletics this past spring.

She has been a part of the Wildcat family since 2009, first coming to Wilmington as a recruiter. She served as the senior director of Alumni Relations for several years before being appointed as the senior director of the University Partnership Center in 2016. But athletics has always been in her heart.

“The truth of the matter is that almost 10 years ago, I came to Wilmington University to meet with then-Athletic Director Frank Aiello because I was so impressed with the program he had created and wanted to ask how I could become an athletic director,” Dr. Whitby says. “He bled green and white and I was wishing I could follow in his footsteps.”

Dr. Whitby arrived at WilmU after four years as the head Men’s and Women’s Track and Field coach at Temple University. (She became the first woman to serve as a head coach for a men’s sport in Temple’s 113-year history in 2004.) She helped lead the track programs to new heights during her tenure, and revived the men’s cross-country program after a 20-year hiatus.

“As a former collegiate student-athlete at Villanova and head coach for track and field, she understands the joys and challenges of participating in athletics at the college level,” Wilmington University Vice President

of Student Affairs and Alumni Relations Dr. Tina Barksdale says. “Dr. Whitby is passionate about athletics and believes it is an integral part of the University. With all this experience, she is the ideal person to fill this position and will be instrumental in helping athletics with continued success. I’m confident she will be able to take the department to another level.”

Dr. Whitby was a member of the women’s Track and Field team at Villanova University under legendary Philadelphia-area Head Coach Marty Stern. She was a member of the All-Big East Distance Medley team on the 1988 Indoor Track and Field season, placing second at the conference meet. She earned her degree in Psychology from Villanova in 1990.

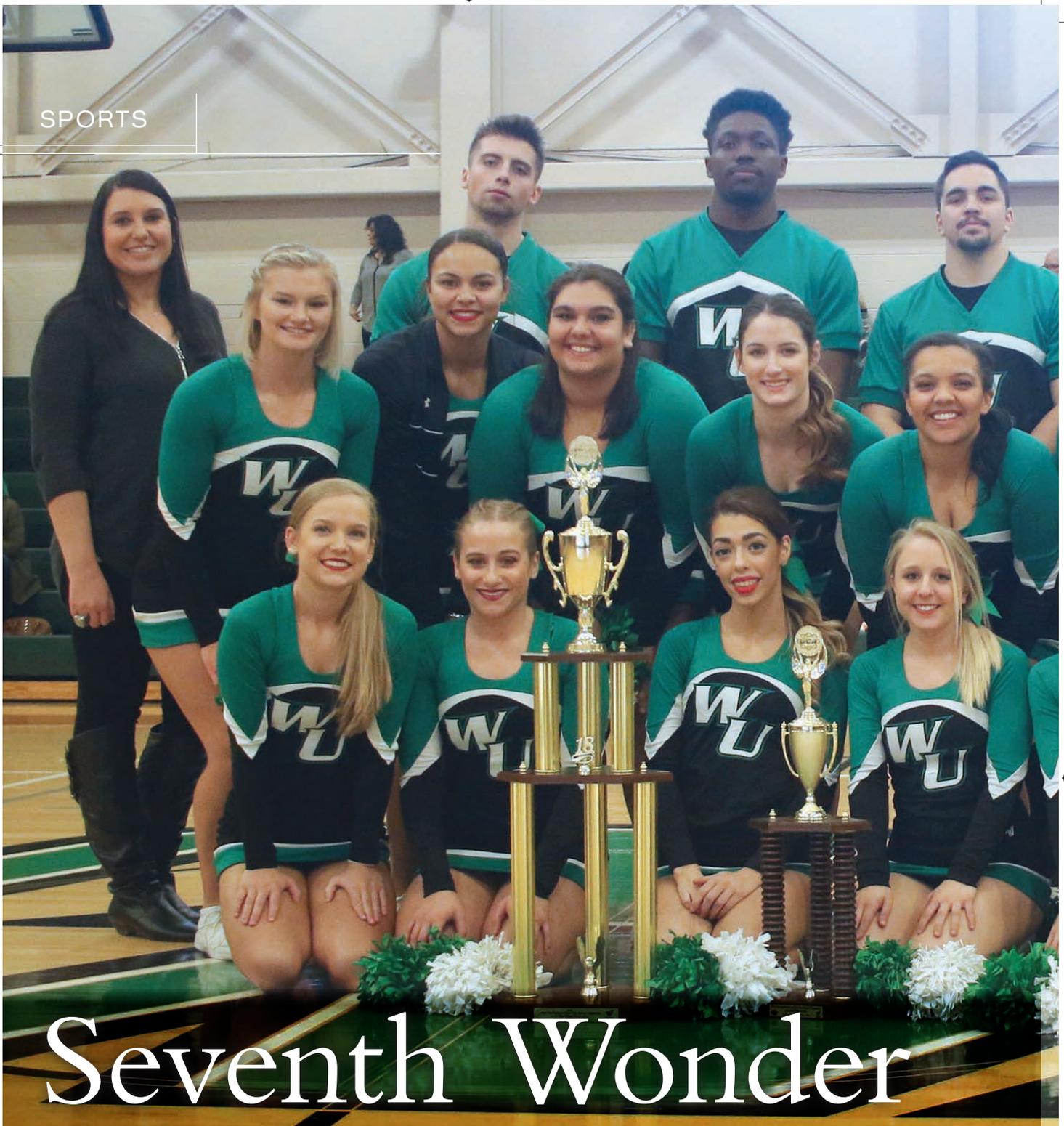
“When I heard that the director of Athletics position was going to open, it was as though my journey at WilmU was coming full circle,” Dr. Whitby says of her initial meeting with Frank Aiello. “I am excited and honored to take this already very successful department that many before me created and to continue to support the coaches and student-athletes in achieving a high level of academic and athletic success. I know that President Dr. Harmon and Dr. Barksdale are tremendous supporters of athletics and I am lucky to have the chance to instill the mission of the University in all of our athletic teams and staff. Being surrounded again by the spirit of competition and the passion to excel on the field, the court, and classroom makes me feel like I am home.” **WU**



**“I am excited and honored** to take this already very successful department that many before me created and to continue to support the coaches and student-athletes in achieving a high level of academic and athletic success.”



1984-85 - St. Thomas Aquinas	1992-93 - St. Thomas Aquinas
1986-87 - The King's College	2006-07 - Philadelphia / Georgian Court
1987-88 - St. Thomas Aquinas	2007-08 - Georgian Court University
1988-89 - Georgian Court / St. Thomas Aquinas	2008-09 - Philadelphia University
1989-90 - St. Thomas Aquinas	2009-10 - Philadelphia University
1991-92 - Georgian Court College	2010-11 - Dominican College



# Seventh Wonder

**Cheerleaders  
continue streak  
as UCA Small  
Coed Division II  
national champs**

**T**he streak is alive and well for Wilmington University's cheerleaders. They captured their seventh consecutive national championship on Jan. 13 after competing in the 2018 Universal Cheerleading Association (UCA) Small Coed Division II competition at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando, Florida.

The Wildcats first won a national championship in 2012 and haven't lost since. For the second consecutive year, they needed to advance through a preliminary round and place in the top six teams before performing their routine again for the national championship.

It wasn't an issue. The defending champions defeated Drury University, Kutztown University, St. Edward's University, San Francisco State University and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.



The competition started as a pair of stunt groups qualified to compete at the national championships as well. The partner stunt duo of **WENDY MAYERSON** and **JONA MARRERO** qualified as one of 15 pairs to earn invitations. They finished 12th overall, and teams from Sam Houston State University, Texas Tech University and the University of Central Florida finished first, second and third, respectively.

After their entry tapes were reviewed, the stunt group of **KRISTEN BASQUILL**, **MARANDA MORELAND**, **MAKAYLA MORELAND** and **CIANA PEREZ** qualified seventh overall out of the 12 groups invited. Two teams from the University of West Georgia finished first and second, while a group from the University of Louisville finished third in the all-girls stunt group event.

A review of the 2018 Universal Cheerleading Association and Universal Dance Association's national championships was aired on ESPN. **WU** —Dan Lauletta

*The Wildcats first won a national championship in 2012 and haven't lost since.*

*Geneva Fonda*



# ALUMNI

## GENEVA FONDA: Embracing the Journey

“Grateful and blessed,” Geneva Fonda has achieved multiple milestones while extolling the virtues of WilmU — “my school.” **By Bob Yearick**

**T**he last year-and-a-half has been a blur of activity and achievement for alumna **GENEVA FONDA** (B.S. in Finance, 2008; Master’s in Marketing Management, 2018). Here’s a brief timeline:

**FEBRUARY 2017:** She was accepted into an online course offered by the prestigious Harvard Business School — in near record time. Fonda explains that while doing WilmU homework and needing a source to cite, she came across a link to online courses offered by the school. “Since I already had a background and degree in Finance, along with a background and soon-to-be MBA in Marketing, I applied for the Disruptive Strategy program to round out my qualifications,” she says. (Disruptive Strategy addresses how an organization can remain relevant in its respective industry and provides frameworks and strategies to

do that.)

Fonda says that processing an application, which includes essay questions, usually takes two to three weeks. “But,” she says, “two days after applying, I got this message: ‘We are thrilled to accept you to Harvard Business School.’” Her reaction: “The first in my family to get into an Ivy League school and I wasn’t even looking for it! Grateful, grateful!”

**SEPTEMBER 2017:** The Wilmington YWCA asked her to create a workshop. Fonda, who lives in Bear, Delaware, had been serving as a coach for the YW’s weekly “Mind Your Business” program. She and other entrepreneurs provided feedback to program participants who aspired to be entrepreneurs. As a result, Troy Farmer, a director at the YWCA, asked her to develop a workshop, “Blogging to Boost Your Business.”

Never one for half measures,

Fonda was determined to provide real, actionable value, “So I gave the workshop my all.” She started by creating a 10-page workbook, then provided post-workshop support through a 30-day progress check-in for attendees, complimentary blog setup sessions for four winners of a Q&A pop-up round, and a 20-page post-workshop “Powerbook” of supplemental information.

ALSO IN SEPTEMBER: She participated in the VIP grand opening of the Route 9 Library and Innovation Center in New Castle. She was invited to attend by a friend, Jessica Gibson, who oversaw the project as part of her role as a special advisor to New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer.

“Though I was not one of the speakers, I was asked to provide my thoughts on the gorgeous library,” says Fonda. “I completely forgot about it until months later when someone told me they saw me on local TV. I did a search and learned ‘my thoughts’ became part of New Castle County’s official commercial for the library. I was sandwiched between (State) Sen. Margaret Rose Henry and County Councilman Jae Street.”

OCTOBER 2017: Based on what she had learned from its program on Disruptive Strategy, the Harvard Business School asked her to contribute to a special research initiative that focuses on the economy’s effects on the workplace and also serves as insight for a forthcoming book by Dr. Clayton Christensen, professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School.

DECEMBER 2017: The Huffington Post, a news and opinion website and blog, published several essays by Fonda. The Huffington connection

originated several years ago when Fonda attended a talk by Arianna Huffington at the Hotel du Pont. “I met with her backstage, and we had a great conversation about life, my being a proud New York City girl living in a quiet Mid-Atlantic world, and living as healthy as possible. Though she’d encouraged the audience to write for HuffPost, and repeatedly invited me to write during our conversation, I thought she was being polite. When I followed up much later, I included our picture, a snippet of our conversation, and several topic overviews I would write about. She sent credentials immediately. One of the articles I’m most proud of is in my email signature: ‘From Human to Human with Gratitude.’”

JANUARY 2018: Delaware Business Times published her story and photos about a young mother of an autistic child who opened a care center for autistic children. Fonda had met Rob Martinelli, CEO and president of Today Media, publisher of Delaware Business Times, at a Best of Delaware Party several years ago. She subsequently pitched some stories to him, and the article on the Newark care center resulted.

ALSO IN JANUARY: She was appointed to the Fresh Start Scholarship Foundation Board of Directors as the nonprofit’s vice president of Marketing and Communication. “This came about after several members separately asked me to join the board and consider mentoring its scholars,” she says.

And, finally, on Jan. 28, she received her MBA from Wilmington University.

In an email, Fonda commented on two of the January events: “DBT and MBA: To state that I’m grateful

to and for these is an understatement! Blessed!”

“Grateful” and “blessed” are words she uses often. A spiritual, empathetic person with a big, engaging personality, Fonda is an enthusiastic networker (and hugger), all of which led to some of the milestones listed above. She also has multiple skills: She’s been a freelance photographer, an accomplished writer and a skilled marketer.

She came relatively late to some of these achievements, especially her college degrees. One of the articles she wrote for the Huffington Post, “Why Being a Motherless Mother Can Make You an Awesome Mom,” hints at how difficult her journey was.

The second of six children, Fonda was raised by a single mother in Brooklyn, where she graduated in 1986 from Clara Barton High School for Health Professionals. A couple of life-altering events — or, more accurately, non-events — followed immediately. First, her mother refused to sign the permission papers allowing Fonda to join the Marines (“I wanted to see the world,” she says). Later, she learned that because she was 18, she could have enlisted without parental permission. College was another option for a good student like Fonda, but her mother couldn’t afford it.

Then, a year later, life delivered a one-two punch: Her mother died suddenly — when Fonda was pregnant with her first child. She gave her mother’s eulogy, then, a single mother, she set off to support her daughter, Jade. She pounded the streets of New York City, distributing her résumé, and after a brief stint at Kinney Shoes as a typist, landed a job at a diamond wholesaling company, where she started as what she calls “a girl Friday,” fetching coffee, signing

Fonda has been a devotee of WilmU since her first days as an undergrad. **“All of my professors were incredibly supportive,”** she says. She singles out her first advisor, Cynthia Healey, Dr. Clinton Robertson, Assistant Dean of the College of Business-Graduate, and Dr. Maria Hess, then an adjunct professor teaching Marketing Communications.

for packages and doing clerical work. She soon earned a promotion and learned bookkeeping, sparking an interest in finance.

She spent eight years in the jewelry industry, then moved on to get some valuable experience at a public relations firm, where she honed her innate writing skills.

She got married in 1997, and a year later, her husband — a federal government employee — applied for and was granted a transfer to Charlottesville, Virginia. “We wanted to get away from the city, and Money Magazine rated Charlottesville the best place to raise a family,” says Fonda, who by then had a second daughter, Jordana.

It was in Charlottesville, at the age of 30, that Fonda got her first taste of higher education by attending Piedmont Virginia Community College. That whetted her appetite for learning, but raising a family and holding down a full-time job would mean that her progress up the academic ladder came in small increments over two decades.

Another transfer brought the family to Newark, Delaware. After landing a job in Wilmington at JP Morgan Chase and enrolling her girls in school, Fonda did an online search of area colleges. After one semester at Delaware Technical Community College, she found what she calls “my school for the rest of my life” — what was then Wilmington College.

She received an Associate degree in May of 2004, and then almost immediately entered the Bachelor’s program, and she got that degree in January 2006.

The diploma helped her earn a promotion, but she wanted more, both professionally and academically, and in 2008 she enrolled in the Marketing Management Master’s program. That same year, she gave birth to a son, Juaquin. (Now divorced, she also has a 9-year-old granddaughter and a 7-year-old grandson).

In January of this year, 10-year-old Juaquin and the rest of her family — including her ex-husband — were at the Chase Center to watch Fonda participate in graduation ceremonies.

Fonda has been a devotee of WilmU since her first days as an undergrad. “All of my professors were incredibly supportive,” she says. She singles out her first advisor, Cynthia Healey (“awesome”), Dr. Clinton Robertson, Assistant Dean of the College of Business-Graduate (“He was just like Cindy Healey — he had a genuine interest in me”), and Dr. Maria Hess, then an adjunct professor teaching Marketing Communications (“Magnetic; we all loved her”).

For his part, Dr. Robertson remembers Fonda as “an accomplished writer with a very happy and exuberant personality.”

“In the community at large,” says

Fonda, “I always speak highly of my school.”

With her degrees in Finance and Marketing, coupled with her Disruptive Strategy credentials from Harvard, Fonda believes she has “the perfect trifecta to offer organizations and corporations.” Meanwhile, her hunger for education continues: She’s scheduled to begin pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree — at WilmU, of course — this fall.

Fonda keeps a busy schedule, freelancing as a writer and marketer, and serving on the board of the Fresh Start Scholarship Fund. She’s also working on a book she started several years ago, planning to self-publish it later this year. Tentatively titled “The Purging Season,” it includes her musings during difficult times in her life. “My divorce was amicable,” she says, “but post-divorce was horrific, and each time I was going through something like tragedies, or re-entering the dating scene, I would write it out. I would write my thoughts to stay sane and healthy.”

There’s another milestone that came this month: She turned 50, and in typical Geneva Fonda fashion, she is embracing the event. In April, she was tentatively planning to hold the celebration at a New Castle hotel, with a guest list that could range from 50 to 100. Promises Fonda: “It will be an *epic party.*” **WU**



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAITLYN ECKLES

*Clean Juice founders Caitlyn and Landon Eckles with their five children at their Charlotte home*



## A HEALTHY FAMILY BUSINESS

After an overnight move from Pennsylvania to Charlotte, alumna Caitlyn Eckles formed what is now a thriving franchising enterprise. **By Bob Yearick**

**C**AITLYN “KAT” ECKLES is into — *way* into — healthy eating, and her favorite juice drink, a half-banana, half-avocado mixture, is “The Intense One.” Which seems appropriate, since “intense” seems the perfect adjective for Eckles’ general approach to life. Consider: She is a 32-year-old Wilmington University graduate and mother of five who operates, with her husband, a highly successful franchising operation and who, four years ago, moved from Southeastern Pennsylvania to Charlotte, North Carolina — deciding on and executing the move *in one day!*

That somewhat impulsive act was admittedly a bit of a change from what until that point had been an ordered and upwardly-mobile corporate career track for the then-growing Eckles clan. The family, which then included only two children, had moved to West Chester after her husband, Landon, was named manager for his company’s Philadelphia District. Kat, meanwhile, was content — sort of — to be a stay-at-home mom who supported her husband’s career.

Then, one day in July 2014, they were on their boat on Blue Marsh Lake, near Reading, Pennsylvania, and the talk turned to careers, lifestyle and the weather. Landon had just come home from a long trip and, after spending years traveling internationally, he was ready for a career change, something that would allow more time with his growing family.

Kat, who was pregnant with their third child, had been a

tomboy in her youth. She enjoyed the outdoors and she had captained the lacrosse team and played soccer in high school. That led to an interest in wellness and healthy eating. The birth of her first child, a daughter, in 2007, ramped up her interest in nutrition and the benefits of an organic, plant-heavy diet. What's more, while taking WilmU courses in Psychology, the self-described former Taco Bell addict had begun studying for a health coach certification from the Institute of Integrative Nutrition.

Why not, the couple wondered, combine Landon's business background with Kat's passion for lean eating and organic juicing? Thus was Clean Juice, their now very successful franchising operation, conceived.

As the boat drifted lazily on the lake, the discussion turned to a location for their new venture. Kat, who was adopted, had grown up in Pennsylvania and northern New Jersey, and Landon had spent his high school and college years in the Keystone State. They met while both were attending Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Despite this shared geographical history, neither had really come to terms with the cold and snow of the Northeast. "And we got *feet* of snow that year," remembers Kat.

They were somewhat familiar with Charlotte, North Carolina, since some of Landon's family had lived there. They knew the cost of living there was lower than the Philadelphia area, and the weather — ah, the weather. Average annual snowfall for the Tar Heel State's largest city: a measly 2.4 inches. Comfort index: 64 — 10 points above the national average. It also has a vibrant economy and population, attracting many millennials.

What's more, as devout Christians, the Eckleses were attracted to the non-denominational Elevation Church, which has nine locations in the Charlotte area. So, it was decided: they would start their new business in Charlotte.

The decisions to change careers and locations made, the couple turned the boat to shore, headed home and packed up that evening. *The next day* they moved to Charlotte, bought a house on Lake Norman, and immediately got down to business. They opened their first Clean Juice location, in Birkdale Village, an open-air shopping center in Huntersville, North Carolina, on their eighth wedding anniversary — June 5, 2015. One year later, they began franchising the locations. Today, there are more than 100 units in 15 states.

Kat Eckles explains that many of their franchisees are millennials. "We get a lot of couples," she says, "and there's one that's owned by three women who are best friends."

The Eckleses and their management team select the sites, negotiate leases, and give the new franchise owners the juice recipes. That's followed by "Clean Juice University" — a three-week course in company products and philosophy.

Clean Juice uses only all-organic produce and whole food sweeteners such as honey, dates and pure maple syrup. The menu includes fruit and vegetable smoothies, protein smoothies, acai bowls and cold-pressed juices. The idea behind incorporating fresh juice into one's diet, Kat explains, is to flood the body with vitamins and minerals from organic produce. She says that using non-organic produce would be counterproductive because that would add potentially harmful chemicals into the body's system.

For people who aren't fond of fruits and vegetables, she says, the juices are a great way to introduce more of those nutrients into their diets. And, she says, those who try Clean Juice products get fast results. "It's amazing how people will start drinking one of our juices every morning and feel a great difference right away," she says.

Clean Juice also offers juice cleanse plans for those who want to rid their bodies of toxins. Eckles says a quarterly juice cleanse with the right balance of produce can be a natural reset for the body.

Beth Ellis is among the more enthusiastic of Clean Juice's franchisees. She and her husband were among the first to sign on, and they now have two stores, in Greensboro and Chapel Hill, and hope to open a third in Raleigh sometime this year.

"I was attracted to the business after hearing about Kat's journey in opening the stores, and the organic certification," Ellis says. "And the Clean Juice blueprint is laid out and Kat and her team support and encourage you on the journey," Ellis says.

She too has a young family, but like Eckles, she seems to revel in her busy schedule. "I absolutely love being in my stores, interacting with guests and employees, and the organized chaos that comes with owning two stores and raising three daughters," she says.

Clean Juice is diversifying, recently adding a lifestyle website, Well, Happy & Kind, which addresses those three subjects through products and guest editorials. There are now 22 corporate employees (including Kat's brother, Brennan Kerr, who is director of real estate) in Charlotte and 100 in-store corporate employees.

"We have a great team who are super passionate," says Kat. The



COURTESY OF CLEAN JUICE

The couple opened their first Clean Juice location in 2015. One year later, they began franchising the locations. Today, there are more than 100 units in 15 states.

company promotes an ethos of body, mind and spirit, employing Bible verses in much of their corporate literature. The Clean Juice motto comes from 3 John 1:2: “Dear Friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are healthy in body as you are strong in spirit.”

Corporate employees also receive free gym memberships. “We find that they enjoy going to the gym before or after going to work,” Kat says, “because it helps them relieve stress.”

No matter how demanding the business is, Kat’s children are a priority. The Eckles brood now includes three girls and two boys, ranging in age from 1 to 11. “I make sure I drop the kids off at their schools in the morning, and I pick them up three days a week,” she says.

Sometimes they accompany her to work. “Our 10- and 11-year-olds come often, especially in the summer,” she says. “And I occasionally will bring one of my toddlers if they are really wanting to be with mom that day. My 1-year-old came with me from two weeks to about three months. Our home office staff is really close to our

kids, so that helps.”

At night, she pops in an exercise DVD and gets a quick workout. Then, she says, “I pack lunches, lay out clothes — including my own — and set the coffee maker to start automatically in the morning. After the kids are in bed, I also tie up any loose ends for work so that I don’t feel like I have to rush to get on email first thing in the morning.”

She credits Wilmington University for much of her skill in multi-tasking. Taking most of her courses online, she completed credits for a degree in Psychology in 2009. Why Psychology? “It’s something you can utilize in business and really throughout your life,” she says.

“I loved Wilmington University,” she adds. “It was a great experience. I learned a lot and I was able to stay at home and support my husband’s career while getting a degree.”

Says Dr. Eileen Donnelly, the University’s vice president of Enrollment Management: “Kat mentions her Wilmington University education in her profiles and when she shares how she prepared for

leading a very successful business. The University provides great flexibility when offering academic programs, and this convenience enabled Kat to continue her learning and development while raising her children.”

The entire Eckles family is ecstatic in their new southern home, and the word “love” pops up often when Kat talks about Charlotte. “We absolutely love everything about the area,” she says. “We love our church. We love going out on Lake Norman on the weekends. We also love what a young, entrepreneurial city Charlotte is. The people of the community really embrace fresh ideas and support people that are following their dreams.”

While the number of Clean Juice franchises continues to grow, Kat isn’t quite ready to make a lifetime commitment to the business. “Who knows? We may do something else eventually,” she says. “We love what we’re doing, but we’re still young.”

And, of course, there are those leisurely, thought-provoking cruises on Lake Norman. [WU](#)



# STAY INVOLVED WITH YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.

## 1998



**RICHARD MACLENNAN**, Ed.D., of McHenry, Maryland, has been appointed to the board of directors for the National

Association for Community College Entrepreneurship. He has served as president of North Idaho College since 2016.

## 2000



**LISA SAXTON**, B.S. in Accounting, of Elkton, Maryland, has been named the new Director of Finance for the Cecil County

Executive and County Council. She has held many positions in the county, including accountant, accounting manager and deputy director of Finance.

## 2007



**LEE TROTT**, B.S. in General Studies, of Fall River, Massachusetts, is the new executive of the Veterans Association of Bristol County,

Massachusetts. The Veterans Association offers services to veterans, such as a food pantry, help finding jobs, assistance with Veterans Administration paperwork and securing educational benefits.

## 2007



**LORI ECONOMOS**, MSN, of Newark, Delaware, has been named District Nurse of the Year for the Christina School District. Economos has worked as a district nurse since 1998.

## 2007

**LORNA MALAWI**, M.S. in Human Resources, of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, has been appointed administrator of Phoebe Berks Health Care Center. She will be responsible for the operations of the 102-bed skilled nursing center that offers short-term rehabilitation, memory support and long-term care.

## 2009



**KAREN HOLLAND**, M.Ed. in Elementary and Secondary School Counseling, of Bishopville, Maryland, is Worcester County's 2018 Teacher of the Year. Holland is a teacher at Cedar Chapel Special School.



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

## 2017

**PATRICIA BENSON**, Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership, of Smyrna, Delaware, had an article published in the Pennsylvania CPA Journal. She is the vice president of Finance and Operations for Harcum College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

## 2017



**MAMIE CHAREST**, MBA, of Dover, Delaware, is the new executive director of People's Place. Charest has been employed

by People's Place for more than 13 years, and has held several administrative and management roles. People's Place is a nonprofit mental health and human services organization serving the people of Delaware.

## 2017



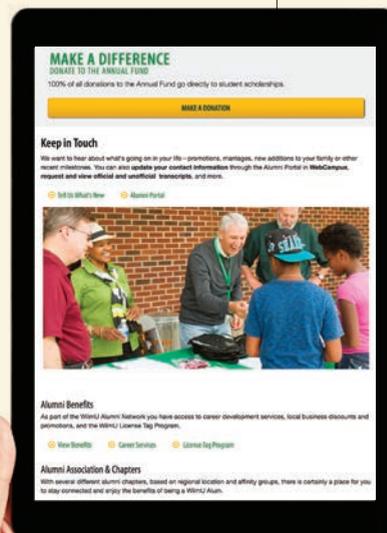
**DANIELLE HUGHES**, MSN, of Sewell, New Jersey, has been honored by Cumberland County College

as one of 2018's Distinguished Alumni. She has achieved the title of oncology certified nurse, and is currently working at MD Anderson Cancer Center as a lead clinical practice nurse in medical Hematology and Oncology.

## 2017



**DEVIN LAYTON**, Ed.D., of Springfield, Pennsylvania, was named assistant principal for Springton Lake Middle School. Previously, Layton was an assistant principal for the Unionville-Chadds Ford School District.



# UPDATES



*Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Jim Wilson discusses the day with participants.*

# University Celebrates 'FABULOUS FACULTY'

Intense workshops, faculty awards and promotions and student testimonials were all part of Wilmington University's Spring Faculty Development Day on March 10.

Themed "Celebrating Fabulous Faculty," the day was a collaboration between the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and the Faculty Senate Development Committee. Highlights included workshops for all adjuncts and a ceremony in which 13 received promotions, and six others received years of service awards.

The workshops focused on the

Pathway to Instructional Excellence professional learning program, which was created by the CTE and Educational Technology.

"It was a very successful day," says CTE Director **DR. PATRICIA RAMONE**. "There were over 400 participants, both online and on-campus."

During the morning session, years of service awards went to adjunct professors Dr. Anthony DiGiacomo (37 years), Dr. James McFadden (39), Dr. James VanSciver (31), William Post (36), and adjunct faculty Maurice Egnor (16) and Jessica Blackwelder (18).

Student testimonials and music



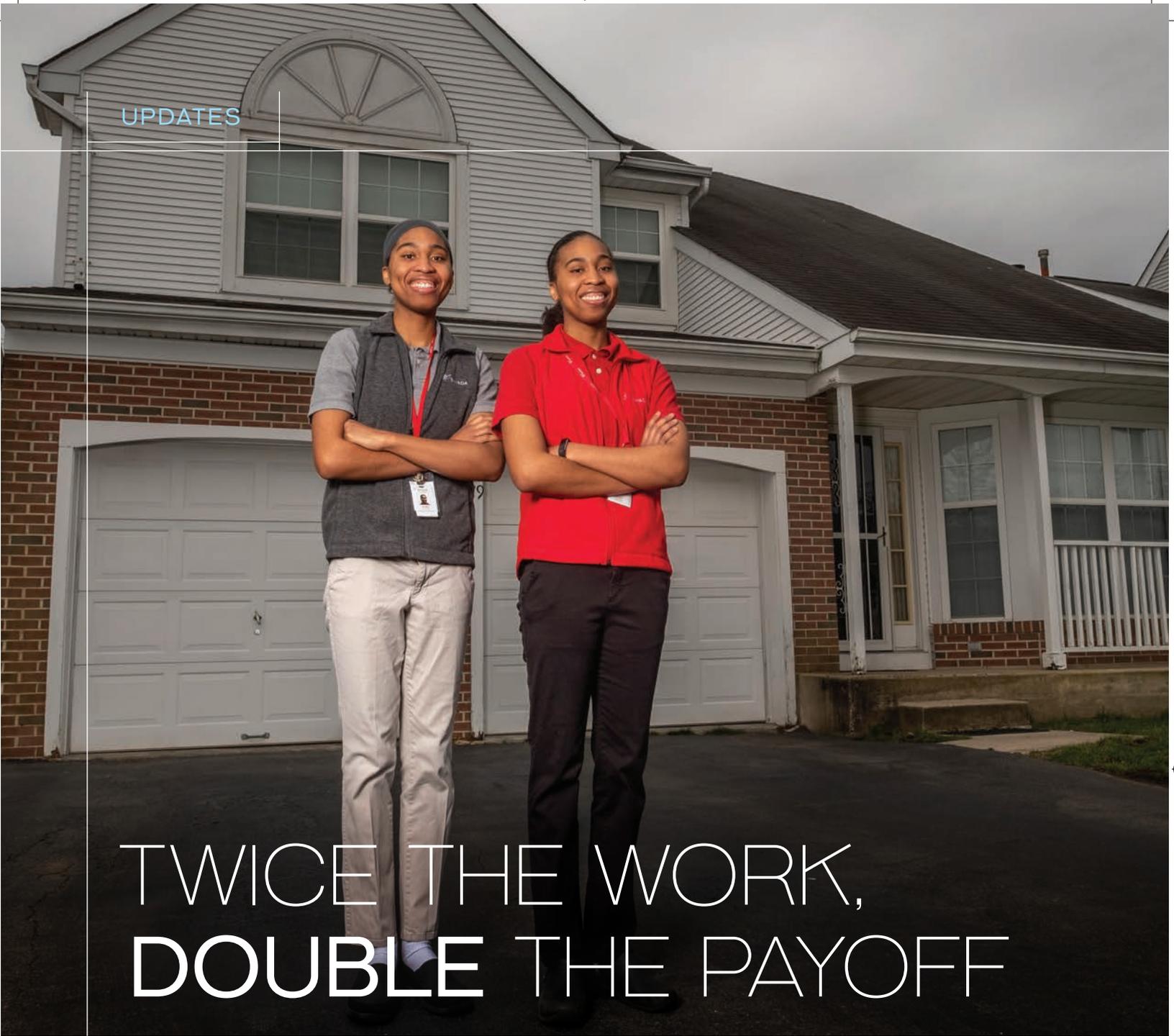
*Assistant Professor Tasha Jackson*

were part of the lunchtime celebration, during which these adjuncts were promoted to professor: Dr. Jennifer Bennett, Dr. Holly Briel, Dr. Jacqueline Burgos-Cousin, Jeff Cousin, Barbara Danley, Dr. Carlos Escudero, Dr. Rebecca Richmond, Mary Ann Scarborough, Dr. David Silverman, Elizabeth Simonsen, Sherry Strobel, Scott Walton and Sharon Weaver.

"Our faculty is comprised of talented practitioners with a passion for sharing their knowledge and skills," Dr. Ramone says. "Individually and as a whole, they are committed to being transformative teachers and leaders who care deeply about their students and believe every student can succeed. This day was an opportunity for the University to honor these talented, creative and enthusiastic individuals." **WU**

*Left: Honored instructors Dr. Jennifer Bennett, Sharon Weaver, Dr. Jacqueline Burgos-Cousin, Sherri Strobel and Dr. Carlos Escudero*





# TWICE THE WORK, DOUBLE THE PAYOFF

**T**win sisters **BRIANNA** and **BRITTNY EADDY** didn't take long to celebrate their January graduations from the BSN program before they went back to school for pre-med courses. At 22, they are laser-focused on achieving their goal of becoming doctors.

The sisters attended Rowan College at Burlington County for

their associate degrees and took full advantage of the seamless, integrated transfer to the BSN program at WilmU.

"We knew we wanted to go to WilmU to complete our degrees because the online courses fit best in our crazy schedules," says Brianna. As nurses, the two are used to long overnight shifts and overtime.

During those shifts at Acuity Specialty Hospital of Southern

New Jersey, the duo would often confuse their patients when working back-to-back shifts. Today, they are back in school and working for BAYADA Home Health Care, a job they love because they get to spend more time with patients.

Brianna thinks the best part about working with her sister is the encouragement she provides. "When I'm overwhelmed and emotions are running high, Brittny is



*Brianna and Brittany Eaddy at their home in Burlington, New Jersey*

always right there with words of wisdom," she says.

They go to work, gyms, malls, movies — you name it — as a team, so it's no surprise that they plan to take on med school together.

"We know it will be difficult," says Brittany, "but we'll be great as long as we work together and keep each other focused." **WU**

—Britney Gullede

# The CUPPIES!

According to its website, CUPRAP (**COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA**) is a voluntary organization of communications professionals from colleges, universities and independent schools dedicated to advancing the understanding of higher education and enhancing the professional development of its members. CUPRAP members, who include WilmU staffers, work in public relations, media relations, marketing, publications, sports information, web and graphic design, and more. Its CUPPIE Awards recognize excellence in those fields.

On March 16, Wilmington University took home four CUPPIES from the 2018 CUPRAP awards ceremony. Held at the Lancaster County Convention Center, the conference hosted colleges and universities from Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. A total of 495 projects were entered and 126 winners were chosen. WilmU's University Relations team took home the four prizes listed below. Congratulations to all. **WU**

-  **GOLD** (*Radio Advertising*) — Spring Registration Radio Spots
-  **SILVER** (*Print Communications*) — Personalized Inquiry Brochure
-  **SILVER** (*Short-Form Writing*) — "Carlos Cotto: Higher (and Higher) Education" (WilmU Magazine)
-  **BRONZE** (*Print Advertising*) — Campaign: You are Different, So Are We.

*Graphic Designer Johan Way represented WilmU at the 2018 CUPRAP conference.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAN Z. JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY

# It's All Business with New Dean

**D**R. **KATHY KENNEDY-RATAJACK** was recently named dean of Wilmington University's College of Business. She has served WilmU as an adjunct faculty member for more than 10 years and as an assistant professor and chair of its DBA program. Dr. Kennedy-Ratajack brings a wealth of business experience to

this new position, considering her extensive work at institutions like the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, and the Department of Corrections. She earned her A.A.S. in Computer Engineering from Delaware Technical Community College, then three degrees from WilmU: a B.S. in Human Resource Management, as well as an MBA and DBA. **WU**

*Dr. Kathy Kennedy-Ratajack*



James Terry, training administrator at the Department of Human Resources



## PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES WILMU CREDITS FOR STATE EMPLOYEES

**T**he office of Statewide Training and Organizational Development for Delaware offers educational opportunities to state employees through rigorous certification programs in Human Resources, Management Development and Supervisory Development. Thanks to a partnership between the state and Wilmington University, government employees can receive undergraduate credits for completing these statewide

certificate programs.

The self-paced programs allow participants up to five years to complete all requirements to be awarded certificates. “After reviewing the programs, Wilmington University partnered with our office to officially approve awarding undergraduate credits to state employees who graduate from these programs,” says **JAMES TERRY**, training administrator at the Department of Human Resources.

At the October graduation ceremony at the Terry Campus of

Delaware Technical Community College, 15 state employees received the Supervisory Development Certificate and three received the statewide Human Resources Certification. The keynote speaker was Shawn Garvin, secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. Representing WilmU was Dr. Stefanie Whitby, then the senior director of University Partnerships. (Dr. Whitby is now athletics director.)

“The program is especially popular with our employees,” says Terry, “because it not only gives them a leg up in their career development, but it also saves them a considerable amount of money in tuition fees as they progress toward a degree.”

Says Dr. Whitby: “We encourage employers to think of the University as a resource that can help to support their organizations in so many ways. Providing credit for a rigorous program similar to the Statewide Training Certificates is one of many services that we offer and it aligns with our mission. Workplace learning and experience should be considered for university credit when it can be proven that critical course objectives have been taught and successfully mastered. I applaud James Terry and his leadership team for initiating the partnership with WilmU.” **WU**



Jennifer Painter

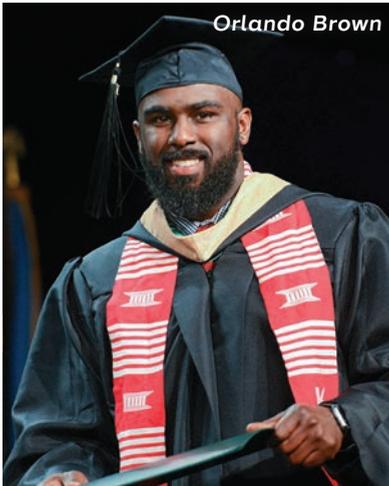
# Commencement: Winter and Spring 2018



Georgetown ceremony



Gary Mayo



Orlando Brown



Husband and wife Marcel and Nakiya Tate

4,348

Number of students who **graduated**

2,733

Number who **walked** in commencement ceremonies

669

Number who **completed** degree programs solely online

19

Age of the **youngest** graduate

71

Age of the **most mature** graduate

COMPILED BY DANA SANTORO



Shariq Mohammad



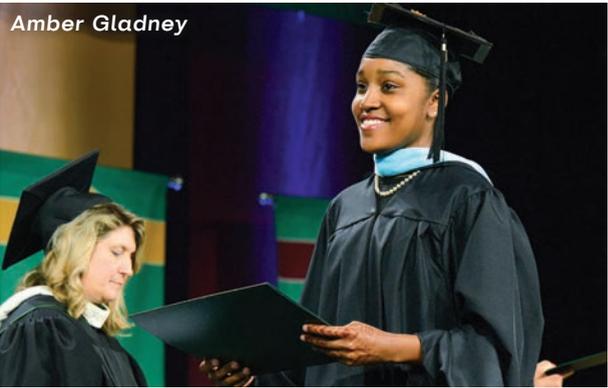
Jaileen Santana



Alissa Quinlan



Jacob Pitman



Amber Gladney



Boulos Booban



Lori Schaffer

## EVENTS

Want your event listed in the winter 2018 issue? Please send your information to **BRITNEY GULLEDGE AT BRITNEY.J.GULLEDGE@WILMU.EDU**. Deadline is **Aug. 15, 2018**.

### SEPT. 29



# University Events

### July 23–27

#### 2018 DELAWARE US CYBER CHALLENGE SUMMER CAMP

Join this year's Delaware US Cyber Challenge Summer Camp for real-world, hands-on projects comprising cyber security workshops, labs and competitions. The day camp will focus on topics like intrusion detection, penetration testing and forensics.

For more information visit [https://digiknow.dti.delaware.gov/pages/cybersecurity\\_challenge/](https://digiknow.dti.delaware.gov/pages/cybersecurity_challenge/).  
(Contact: [mark.j.hufe@wilmu.edu](mailto:mark.j.hufe@wilmu.edu))

### Aug. 9

#### 3RD ANNUAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS SYMPOSIUM

According to the U.S. State Department, 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year. WilmU's College of Social and

Behavioral Sciences presents this symposium to provide training and education about human trafficking, including raising awareness and learning how to recognize and respond to suspected cases of trafficking.

Registration is required. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.  
(Contact: [johanna.p.bishop@wilmu.edu](mailto:johanna.p.bishop@wilmu.edu))

### Sept. 7, 8

#### WILDCAT REGIONAL INVITATIONAL FOR VOLLEYBALL

Come out and watch the Wildcats serve and attack in a two-day regional volleyball invitational at WilmU's Athletics Complex.

(Contact: [daniel.j.lauletta@wilmu.edu](mailto:daniel.j.lauletta@wilmu.edu))

### Sept. 30, Oct. 1

#### CACC GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS

Fore! We're heading to the green with the men's golf team for the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference Championships at the Deerfield Golf Club in Newark.

(Contact: [daniel.j.lauletta@wilmu.edu](mailto:daniel.j.lauletta@wilmu.edu))

### Oct. 19

#### HOOPFEST

Experience WilmU's largest athletic event: Hoopfest.

Enjoy a showcase by the University athletic teams and student activities

complete with games, contests, refreshments and lots of Wildcat pride.

(Contact: [daniel.j.lauletta@wilmu.edu](mailto:daniel.j.lauletta@wilmu.edu))



# Alumni Events

July 27

## MARYLAND CHAPTER CRAB FEAST

There's no better way to celebrate summer than with seafood and a cool river breeze. Join your WilmU friends for the 4th annual Crab Feast at The Wellwood (523 Water St, Charlestown, Maryland). Cost is \$40 per person. Registration is required: [wilmu.edu/CrabFeast](http://wilmu.edu/CrabFeast). (Contact: [donna.j.hardy@wilmu.edu](mailto:donna.j.hardy@wilmu.edu))



s'mores? The Alumni Relations and Student Life departments collaborate on this family-friendly event featuring a bonfire, hayride, corn maze, hot dogs and apple cider. Yum! Cost is \$5. Advance registration is requested.

(Contact: [brandi.d.purcell@wilmu.edu](mailto:brandi.d.purcell@wilmu.edu))

Oct. 27

## THE GREEN & WHITE SCHOLARSHIP BALL



Celebrate WilmU's commitment to accessible education at the 10th annual Green & White Scholarship Ball. At this black-tie masquerade party, the Doberstein Admissions Center transforms into an exciting tour around the globe with themed rooms and food. Proceeds go to scholarships and other benefits for students of Wilmington University.

(Contact: [brandi.d.purcell@wilmu.edu](mailto:brandi.d.purcell@wilmu.edu))

Nov. 3

## KENT & SUSSEX ALUMNI CHAPTER WINE TASTING

Join us at Harvest Ridge Winery for an afternoon of networking over a glass of red or white.

(Contact: [donna.j.hardy@wilmu.edu](mailto:donna.j.hardy@wilmu.edu))



Oct. 11

## WILMU FALL FESTIVAL AT RAMSEY FARM

Did someone say fall leaves, warm sweaters and



# Admissions Events

Aug. 8, Oct. 24

## OPEN HOUSES

Encourage friends and families to experience the WilmU difference by attending an Open House. Join us to learn about WilmU's:

- Career-focused degree programs
- Seamless credit transfer policy
- Low tuition
- Flexible course options

The Georgetown campus will host an Open House Aug. 8; the New Castle, Dover and Georgetown campuses will host Open Houses Oct. 24.

For more information, visit [wilmu.edu/OpenHouse](http://wilmu.edu/OpenHouse).

On-going

## INFORMATION SESSIONS

Information sessions are your opportunity to learn about new WilmU programs and other topics. Sessions are available online and in-person.

For more information, visit [wilmu.edu/VisitUs](http://wilmu.edu/VisitUs), or call the University Information Center at (877) 967-5464.

# NEW AT WILMU



## Working Upstream!

*The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences announces a new Doctor of Social Science in Prevention Science.*

A parable known as “The River Story” or “The Upstream Story” has often been used as a common way to describe the prevention of social or health issues before they occur. Here’s one version:

Writer, educator and clinical epidemiologist Dr. W. Sumner Davis wrote: “Imagine a large river with a high waterfall. At the bottom of this waterfall hundreds of people are working frantically trying to save those who have fallen into the river and have fallen down the waterfall, many of them drowning. As the people along the shore are trying to rescue as many as possible, one rescuer looks up and sees a seemingly never-ending stream of people falling down the waterfall and begins to run upstream. One of the other rescuers yells, ‘Where are you going? There are so many people that need help here.’ To which he replies, ‘I’m going upstream to find out why so many people are falling into the river.’”

There have been variations of this story but all highlight the need to address the root causes of problems and keep individuals, families and communities from continually “falling in or being pushed in the river.”

The Doctor of Social Science in

Prevention Science is designed to do just that. This degree focuses on the interdisciplinary applications of the social and health sciences to complex, real-world problems of direct concern to individuals, families, organizations, communities and society. There are many key areas where prevention science can be beneficial to individuals, families, peers, communities and society, including sexual health and teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, obesity, diet/nutrition, exercise, chronic illness, substance misuse, violence, accidents, suicide, mental illness and delinquency.

Prevention scientists get to the root causes of issues by examining risk and protective factors. In “The River Story,” the risk factors could be lack of protective barriers at the top of the waterfall or lack of knowledge about how to swim. Protective factors could include putting up adequate barriers and teaching individuals to swim. Prevention scientists would also evaluate existing programs, policies and practices. Perhaps individuals are learning how to swim, but the education isn’t adequate or doesn’t match their learning styles — or the

protective barrier exists but isn’t sturdy or tall enough.

Based on the results, prevention scientists then make recommendations for new policy or practices or improving existing programs. Do we need to build stronger, higher protective barriers or revise the way we teach how to swim? Prevention scientists also create new evidence-based/evidence-informed prevention programs, practices and policies when warranted. They might ask questions like “Why were individuals falling into the water? Were there mental health or substance use issues?”

Some people choose to address problems of delinquency and crime, mental health or poverty by working downstream; good people are needed at all points in the process. But can you picture yourself as someone checking upstream and asking, “Why is this happening? Why does it keep occurring? How might we prevent this from continuing?” If so, prevention science is the field for you! **WU**

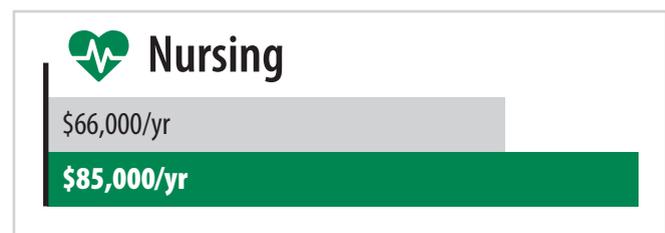
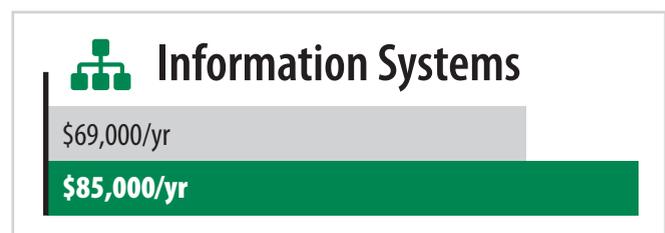
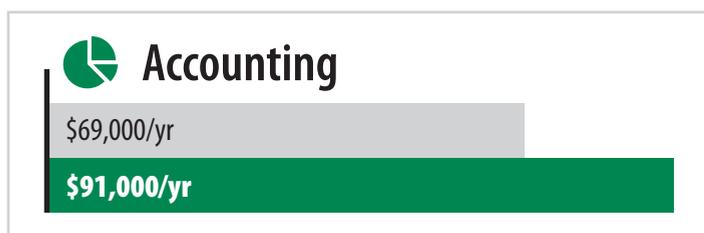
—Debra Berke

For more information, visit [www.wilmu.edu/behavioralscience](http://www.wilmu.edu/behavioralscience)

# A Graduate Degree is a **Smart Investment**

Compare These **Average Annual Salaries:**

Bachelor's Degree Holder
  Master's Degree Holder



Earn Your Master's Degree at **WilmU.**

**#1** most affordable private, nonprofit institution\* in the region

**60%** of Master's degrees earned in Delaware came from WilmU.

**70+** graduate degree programs

**100%** online options



Apply for **Free** with code: **WilmU2018**

Learn more at [wilmu.edu/StartNow](http://wilmu.edu/StartNow)

\* Based on published 2016-17 tuition rates | Sources: Delaware Department of Labor | National Center for Education Statistics



OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT  
WILSON GRADUATE CENTER  
31 READS WAY  
NEW CASTLE, DE 19720

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit #683  
Wilmington DE 19850



These twins attended Rowan College at Burlington County for their associate degrees then seamlessly transferred to WilmU to complete their BSN programs.

*Find out where they're headed next on page 60.*

PHOTO BY MAT BOYLE