

*Beyond the Bones*  
*A Finger on the*  
*Pulse of Wall Street*  
*'Politics is a Space*  
*for You'*

# RUTGERS CAMDEN

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2018

## How Science Changes the World

A rising generation  
of Rutgers-Camden  
scientists are researching  
innovative solutions to  
complex problems





# RUTGEĒS CAMDEN

*Rutgers-Camden Magazine* Vol.1, No.2 Spring 2018



Moises Urena, left, and Marcellus Hill share a moment in the Paul Robeson Library at Rutgers University Camden. Both graduated this year, completing the Rutgers Future Scholars program that they began as eighth graders. The pre-college scholarship program, which launched in 2008, annually serves 250 academically promising students from the Camden City School District, providing support and guidance on the path to and through college. Urena earned a degree in computer science and Hill earned a degree in health sciences.



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*We welcome your feedback on this issue of Rutgers–Camden Magazine. If you have questions or comments, please contact Sam Starnes at [sstarnes@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:sstarnes@camden.rutgers.edu) or 856-225-6857.*

# CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE

The 2017-2018 academic year has been a true milestone in the history of Rutgers University–Camden. For the first time, the university's enrollment surpassed the 7,000-student mark. We expect this growth to continue, with an anticipated enrollment to reach 9,000 only two years from now. This surge reflects the ever-strengthening demand for a Rutgers–Camden degree that is rooted in the excellence of our faculty, our top-notch learning experiences, and our dynamic approach to financial aid that ensures access to education for all.

To accommodate this growth, we are expanding our facilities, most notably with the fall opening of our beautiful Nursing and Science Building, but also with a groundbreaking for the collaborative Joint Health Sciences Center. To further build out the “eds and meds” corridor that stretches from the main campus into downtown Camden, we are in the architectural planning stage of a new home for our School of Business. In the near future, you will see this 100,000-square-foot building rise across Fifth Street from Camden City Hall.

I'm also very happy to report that we received outstanding support from donors, most notably alumni, this year. Two transformative gifts, one from Sandy Stewart—a biotechnology pioneer whose career is built on the foundation of his Rutgers–Camden education—and another from the estate of the late Marilyn and Herman Wissman—alumni who met on campus and married in 1960—are helping the university to excel in the fields of science, economics, and languages.

You can read about these and many more of the exciting happenings in our vibrant community in this second issue of *Rutgers–Camden Magazine*. With the growth of our student body, the expansion of our presence in the city of Camden and throughout the region, and unwavering support from loyal alumni, Rutgers–Camden will continue to rise.



*Phoebe A. Haddon*

Chancellor Phoebe A. Haddon, J.D., LL.M.

## THE BIG NUMBERS

7,000+

STUDENTS ENROLLED  
(A NEW HIGH)

9,000+

STUDENT ENROLLMENT  
EXPECTED BY 2020

#14

NATIONAL MASTER'S  
LEVEL UNIVERSITY

–*Washington Monthly*

\$15,147

AVERAGE UNDERGRADUATE  
FINANCIAL AID AWARD

38

UNDERGRADUATE  
MAJORS

#44

BEST PART-TIME M.B.A.  
PROGRAMS

–*U.S. News & World Report*

## ON THE COVER



Morgan Dwyer CCAS'18 conducting biology research in a Rutgers University–Camden laboratory. She held a fellowship funded by Sandy Stewart, an alumnus who recently announced an additional gift of \$2.5 million. Read more starting on page 12.



New Leaders on Campus

New administrators at Rutgers University–Camden include a dean of nursing, a vice chancellor for institutional advancement, and a vice chancellor for student academic success. In addition, a search has begun for a new dean for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Donna Nickitas, a noted health policy scholar and nursing educator, will become dean of the School of Nursing–Camden on July 1. A professor at City University of New York’s Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing and The Graduate Center, she has served as the executive officer of the university’s nursing science Ph.D. program and as specialty coordinator of the dual degree in nursing administration/public administration. In both capacities, she has played a critical role in growing enrollment and enhancing the national profile of the Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing.

In January, Philip Ellmore became vice chancellor for institutional advancement and vice president for advancement–Camden for the Rutgers University Foundation. Ellmore, who previously served as chief development officer and



NICKITAS



ELLMORE



RIVERA

executive director of the Stockton University Foundation, oversees efforts to attract greater revenue from institutional and individual donors, increase student and alumni engagement, and promote the Rutgers–Camden brand.

Jason Rivera joined the university in January as the new vice chancellor for student academic success. Rivera, who recently served as director of the Intercultural Center and dean of the sophomore class at Swarthmore College, leads Rutgers–Camden’s efforts to promote successful academic outcomes for undergraduate students.

Kriste Lindenmeyer, who has served as dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences since 2011, has chosen to return to the faculty in January 2019. “Dean Lindenmeyer’s leadership has been truly transformative and its impact is felt across the campus,” said Chancellor Phoebe A. Haddon, adding that Lindenmeyer has hired approximately half of all the faculty on the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. A national search is underway to replace Lindenmeyer.

Student Heroes

When a fire on Cooper Street engulfed a brownstone across from Rutgers University–Camden housing in March, six students came to the rescue. They alerted authorities, banged on windows, and broke the front door to gain access. Before firefighters arrived, three students went inside the burning home, awakening a 90-year-old man who lived on the second floor and guiding him out. They were unable to rescue the man’s 63-year-old son on the third floor due to the intensity of the flames, but their actions are credited with saving the man’s father. The Philadelphia 76ers, whose practice facility is based in Camden, honored the students before a game on March 28.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PHILADELPHIA 76ERS

Pictured, from left, are Corey Zytko, Tammy Meneses, Vanessa Solis-Palma, Sehwan “Ricky” Park, and Matteo Resanovic. Another student who helped in the efforts, Jonathan Perez-Gaytan, is not pictured.

RESEARCH

Depression Doesn’t Have to Run in the Family

*Nursing professor’s research is focused on preventing depression for women in urban areas*

For mothers suffering from depression and living in poverty, getting help is no easy matter. “A lot of them have no way of dealing with mental and emotional problems,” said Rahshida Atkins, an assistant professor in the Rutgers School of Nursing–Camden.

Atkins, who earned her bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees on the Rutgers–Newark campus, taught at Rutgers–Camden in 2013 and returned as a full-time faculty member in fall 2017. Her dissertation research focused on depression in single black mothers, but Atkins expanded her focus during her postdoctoral fellowship with the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing and now at Rutgers–Camden. She is exploring the relationship between depression and physical activity, with the goal of identifying and preventing depression in socioeconomically disadvantaged mothers of all ethnicities.

“If we can help moms identify and manage their depressive symptoms, they are better able to parent their children and remain productive members of society,” said Atkins, who frequently publishes research papers on the topic in academic journals.



ATKINS

One effective strategy to prevent depression, said Atkins, is exercise. “Even small increases in physical activity can reduce depressive symptoms,” she said. “My goal is to get disadvantaged women, who are at risk for depression, physically active. We are tackling mental health disorders via prevention rather than a limited focus on treatment alone.”

While completing her postdoctoral fellowship, Atkins conducted several focus

groups with urban residents who received substantial mental health benefits due to the positive social environment, enhancement in self-confidence, and the social engagement that physical activity participation provided. Atkins is extending this research to the Camden area by conducting individual interviews at community organizations and agencies. “We have to focus on the community voices and what their needs are,” Atkins said.

Rutgers’ Role in Landmark Decision

Fifteen years after Bolivian soldiers killed 60 people and injured hundreds more when they fired on protestors opposed to a natural gas pipeline, Beth Stephens, a distinguished professor at Rutgers Law School in Camden, has helped a team of attorneys for nine victims’ families win a groundbreaking human rights case and \$10 million in damages. Stephens, also an attorney for the Center for Constitutional Rights, had assistance on the case from law students and faculty in Camden. The verdict against Bolivia’s former president and defense minister—

both of whom had fled to the United States was awarded in U.S. District Court. “We are very excited that the defendants have been held accountable for their actions,” Stephens said.



Stephens with plaintiffs in Bolivia.



THE ARTS



Pianist Debra Lew Harder, left, with Joseph C. Schiavo, artistic director of the Mallery Series.

PHOTO BY MARY ANDERSON

# A Musical Tradition

By Sam Starnes

Classical pianist Debra Lew Harder has performed in concert halls nationwide and in Europe, but she also enjoys playing in Rutgers University–Camden’s Mallery Concert Series, a musical tradition on campus that dates back more than three decades. “It’s a wonderful series with a beautiful piano,” said Harder, sitting at the shiny, black Bösendorfer Imperial concert grand in the Mallery Room in the Fine Arts Building. “I love the richness of its sound.”

Harder, who also hosts a Saturday morning show on Philadelphia radio station WRTI-FM, has appeared twice

in the free series held most Wednesday mornings during the spring, summer, and fall semesters. Performances feature solo pianists, such as Harder—who played selections from Beethoven, Mozart, and Chopin, among others—but also chamber music groups featuring strings, vocalists, brass, and woodwinds, as well as jazz bands.

Steve Kawajiri, a retired Rutgers–Camden alumnus, attended a performance by the Copeland Quintet that featured three violins, a cello, and piano. “I have a chance to come to these regularly,” said Kawajiri SBC’81, ’85. “I very much enjoy the music.”

The series was started by the late Fine Arts Music Professor W. Davis “Jerry” Jerome in 1986. After a gift to the music program from the Grand Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star of New Jersey in honor of organist Dorothy Mallery, the series was renamed in her honor.

The gift has funded decades of scholarships for Rutgers–Camden music students. Joseph C. Schiavo, associate dean for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, was the first Mallery Scholarship recipient. “I was thrilled to death because I was on the way to grad school and I really needed the extra money,” said Schiavo, who earned his undergraduate degree at Rutgers–Camden in 1982 before going on to earn his master’s and doctoral degrees at Rutgers–New Brunswick.

Schiavo, a full-time faculty member at Rutgers–Camden since 1991, has served as the Mallery Series artistic director since 2008. “We are looking forward to many more years of this series,” he said. “Having a nice, quiet place to listen to beautiful music on a weekly basis really adds value to what we offer here at Rutgers University–Camden.”

*The Mallery Concert Series performances begin at 11:20 a.m. on Wednesdays and are free and open to the public. For more information, visit [finearts.camden.rutgers.edu/music-program/mallery-concert-series](http://finearts.camden.rutgers.edu/music-program/mallery-concert-series). For a video about the series, visit [magazine.camden.rutgers.edu/mallery](http://magazine.camden.rutgers.edu/mallery).*

**For all Rutgers–Camden arts and entertainment listings, visit [camden.rutgers.edu/arts-events](http://camden.rutgers.edu/arts-events).**

ATHLETICS



# ON THE FAST TRACK

## Sprinting to a National Ranking

By Maggie Montalto CCAS’18

Despite finishing his junior year as a nationally ranked sprinter for Rutgers University–Camden, running track and attending college was not always the plan Cameron Dobbins had in mind. After graduating from Williamstown High School in 2015, he had plans to join the Marines, but with guidance and encouragement from his mother, he decided to become a Scarlet Raptor.

Although Dobbins tried basketball and football at an early age, he didn’t find his passion for sports until he discovered his love for sprinting. “In eighth grade, I started seeing my times go down and I realized I could do this,” he said.

Since starting his career at Rutgers–Camden, Dobbins has broken records and earned numerous awards in his first three years. He was named Rutgers–Camden’s 2017 male athlete of the year, and earned NJAC first-team honors his first year. He also earned two New Jersey Athletic

Conference first-team honors and was voted NJAC Men’s Indoor Outstanding Track Athlete during the 2018 winter season.

Dobbins finished this year’s indoor track season ranked 14th in the nation in NCAA Division III for his 60-meter dash time, and just missed qualifying for the 200-meter dash, being ranked 19th.

After recovering from a leg injury, Dobbins started the outdoor track season in late March, finishing second out of 30 sprinters in the 100-meter dash at the Stockton Invitational. He was expected to have a strong finish to the season.

Even with all of his success, he makes sure to remember to focus on each meet as it comes. “At the end of the day it’s just a race and you have to go in with that mindset,” he said. “You can’t worry about what other people did before.”

When he’s not training, Dobbins puts in just as much hard work off the track as he does on it. Math is another one of his passions, and as an accounting major, he has aspirations to attend graduate school to earn an M.B.A.

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*Maggie Montalto is a Rutgers–Camden Honors College graduate who earned a degree in English and digital studies in May.*



## Two-Sport Standout

After completing her career with her name in the Rutgers University–Camden women’s basketball record books, Cara Racobaldo could have rested on her laurels. Instead, the nursing major from nearby Pennsauken turned her talents to lacrosse. Racobaldo—the basketball team’s all-time leader with 503 assists—played defense for the Scarlet Raptors lacrosse team in the spring. “I always enjoyed playing lacrosse in high school,” she said. “The games are really fun and I wasn’t ready to be done playing sports.”





ALL PHOTOS BY MARY ANDERSON, UNLESS NOTED

# BEYOND THE BONES

By Tom McLaughlin

When construction workers in Old City Philadelphia unearthed human bones at a burial site dating back to colonial times, Kimberlee Moran, an associate teaching professor of forensics at Rutgers University–Camden, read about it in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. And then she started digging.

She and the curator of the Mütter Museum, an associate of Moran’s, contacted the developer, who allowed a team to visit the site at 218 Arch Street. Moran suspected many more bones would turn up at what had been the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia cemetery, which dated back to 1707, establishing it as one of the city’s earliest burial grounds. Contractors gave them a box of bones for research, but did not allow them to search further.

Moran thought it would be a small, intriguing project to research and use with students.

But a month later, after more excavation where developers were building a 25-unit residential complex and parking deck, the team was called back. “Bones were all over the ground,” Moran said. “They were sticking out of the pile of back dirt, and in the wall of the remaining dirt were two clearly visible gaps—coffins with long bones inside of them.”

Research revealed that plans in 1860 to exhume the coffins and relocate the remains had never or only partially happened. In the intervening 157 years, the location above the abandoned remains had been the site of a hat factory, a car repair shop, and a parking lot.

Moran and fellow researchers from local institutions and universities kicked into high gear, excavating and cataloging remains, which were stored in a Rutgers–Camden lab, and as the quantity grew, in a lab in Burlington, New Jersey.

Even after their efforts found remains of more than 300 people, additional discoveries continued. “Just as we were finishing up the coffins from our excavation, new coffins were arriving on a daily basis,” Moran said. In total, remains of almost 500 individuals have been documented in the massive effort that has become known as the Arch Street Project. The long-term plan is to record the project’s findings and then reinter the remains in Mount Moriah Cemetery in Southwest Philadelphia, treating the deceased with “as much respect as possible,” Moran said.

More than 30 Rutgers–Camden students have participated in the research, and that number is expected to increase. Samantha Muller, a Rutgers–Camden graduate student in public history who

earned undergraduate degrees in history and anthropology in 2016, said her involvement “has been an amazing opportunity to be there when excavations are actually happening, when material cultures are being gathered. When you go into an archive later, you’ll have a real frame of reference to who these people were.”

Muller assisted Moran and other researchers in January, when in the final excavation of the project, an intact coffin was opened. The coffin belonged to Benjamin Britton, a man believed to be a baker and a bolter (one who mills flour) who died in the 1780s. Because of a nameplate on his coffin, he is the only individual identified by name thus far. “I can not only read about Benjamin, but I have actually met him,” Muller said. **R**

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*Mary Anderson contributed to this article.*

*To see a video about Benjamin Britton’s excavation, check out the “What Can Bones Tell Us?” video produced by Rutgers–Camden videographer Mary Anderson at [magazine.camden.rutgers.edu/bones](http://magazine.camden.rutgers.edu/bones).*

*For more about the Arch Street Project, visit [archstbones.org](http://archstbones.org), which includes articles about the project by Moran and her students.*



▲ THE SKULL OF BENJAMIN BRITTON, A PHILADELPHIAN WHO DIED IN THE 1780S.

◀ KIMBERLEE MORAN, AN ASSOCIATE TEACHING PROFESSOR OF FORENSICS, INITIATED THE EXCAVATION OF ALMOST 500 INDIVIDUAL HUMAN REMAINS.

▶ RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT BRITTON HAD 13 SETS OF RIBS, ONE MORE THAN USUAL.



◀ BRITTON, A BAKER AND A BOLTER (ONE WHO MILLS FLOUR), WAS IDENTIFIED BY A NAMEPLATE ON HIS COFFIN.

▶ THE CONSTRUCTION SITE ON ARCH STREET HAD BEEN A CHURCH GRAVEYARD UNTIL 1860. SINCE THEN, A HAT FACTORY, CAR REPAIR SHOP, AND PARKING LOT HAD BEEN ABOVE THE REMAINS.

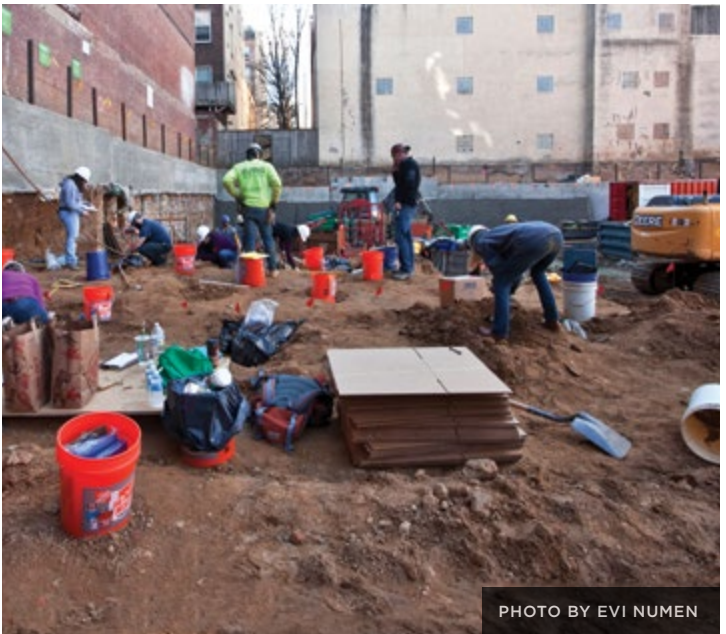


PHOTO BY EVI NUMEN



# A Finger on the Pulse of Wall Street

## CONNECTING TO THE FINANCIAL MARKETS

By Jen A. Miller GSC'04

When Michael Williams started his internship at a Big Four accounting firm in Philadelphia, he already knew how to use a Bloomberg terminal featuring real-time stock market data used by professional Wall Street traders. A rising senior in the Rutgers School of Business–Camden, he'd been introduced to it years before in his first semester and had sharpened his skills in the school's Financial Markets Lab and Center for Investment Management.

That knowledge didn't just give Williams, a double major in finance and accounting, a head start on other interns. It put him ahead of some employees too. "They've already been out in the field, whereas here, I'm a college student," Williams said. "A lot of people are just learning how to use it, and I can help them."

It's just one of many ways the Rutgers–Camden business school prepares students for careers in finance by interweaving academics and real-world experience.

Richard A. Michelfelder, a clinical associate professor, said the Financial Markets Lab, which has 16 Bloomberg Professional Service terminals plus TraderEx software and LED stock tickers, allows students to learn the ways of Wall Street. "Instead of just talking about financial theory and economy theory, what we've done is develop a room where students can simulate trading and obtain macroeconomic data in real time," said Michelfelder, who has won numerous awards for his teaching. "It gives the students the opportunity to sit in the type of room, with all the technology around them, that they would have if they were to work in an actual trading environment."

With architectural plans for a new building for the School of Business–Camden underway, faculty and administrators anticipate an expanded Financial Markets Lab and Center for Investment Management to serve students. The new lab will be a featured part of the 100,000-square-foot building on the corner

of Fifth and Market Streets across from Camden City Hall and one block from Rutgers–Camden's Nursing and Science Building. "Our new home will give us a world-class facility where we can build on our rich history of outstanding faculty research and hands-on classroom education that prepares our graduates for jobs on Wall Street and beyond," said Jaishankar Ganesh, dean of the School of Business–Camden.

In addition to campus opportunities, the School of Business sponsors a Road to Wall Street Club that takes students on field trips to introduce them to different parts of the financial world. Williams went on the club's recent field trip to New York that included stops at Bloomberg's headquarters and the New York Stock Exchange. "We got to talk to one of the market makers down on the actual trading floor," Williams said. "It was a great experience because a lot of times you see it on TV, but you don't get to have that connection of being there."

The school's commitment to preparing students doesn't just lean on technology and field trips, though, said James P. McCarthy SBC'86, who before retiring was the managing director and co-head of Liquidity Solutions with Goldman Sachs Asset Management. "It's a campus that provides an environment that fosters innovative learning," said McCarthy, who serves as a guest professor and a member of Dean Ganesh's leadership council.

McCarthy has spoken at Road to Wall Street Club meetings, which he sees as an excellent opportunity for students. He also sees the school's leading-edge knowledge coming from experienced faculty. "A lot are professionals actively working in their field, so it's not just someone who's teaching you from an academic standpoint," McCarthy said. "They're bringing their experience into the classroom."

Bill Booz SBC'13 came to the School of Business–Camden after successfully running his own business. "The college degree was a

**"Instead of just talking about financial theory and economy theory, what we've done is develop a room where students can simulate trading and obtain macro-economic data in real time."**

—Richard A. Michelfelder, clinical associate professor

major missing component in my life," he said. "It was one of the best decisions I've made."

He chose Rutgers–Camden because many of its students had returned to college after working professionally, as he had. His degree launched a new career in finance, and he is now a portfolio manager at Vanguard. He said his experiences in college helped him to leap into that job and set him on the path to a Certified Financial Planning certification, and that it also put him on equal footing with high net worth investors. "They understand a little more of these concepts, more so than the average investor," Booz said. "Rutgers has given me the tools to educate high net worth investors about the fundamentals of their investments." **R**

Jen. A. Miller is a widely published writer and the author of three books who holds an M.A. in English from Rutgers–Camden.



Richard A. Michelfelder, clinical associate professor, analyzing financial data with students, including Michael Williams at the far left.



# HOW SCIENCE CHANGES THE WORLD

Answering big questions, one step at a time

**FINDING SOLUTIONS IN FUNGUS** Morgan Dwyer has worked with Associate Professor Kwangwon Lee to use fungi to research ways of stopping the spread of disease.

*By Sam Starnes*

Improving drugs that help fight addictions. Enhancing the quality of sleep. Identifying DNA at crime scenes. Stopping the spread of diseases. Preserving the planet in the face of global changes. Fighting the pervasiveness of cancer.

Rutgers University–Camden faculty and students are working every day on these complex goals. Students conduct significant scientific research with faculty while working on bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees. Their professors in biology, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, physics, and other science fields collaborate across disciplines to address worldwide concerns. “We are creating a new generation of scientists,” said Nir Yakoby, an associate professor of biology and director of the Rutgers–Camden Center for Computational and Integrative Biology.

Yakoby’s groundbreaking research on the fruit fly, which focuses on tissue development, has implications that may aid in the fight against cancer. His work has been widely published and awarded several notable grants. A trademark of his research involves partnering with mathematicians and computer scientists, an approach shared by many science faculty at Rutgers–Camden. “The core of what we are doing is breaking boundaries and bringing fresh ideas and solutions to biological problems,” Yakoby said.

Through the recent addition of the Nursing and Science Building with advanced science laboratories, and a recent commitment of a \$2.5 million gift from biotechnology industry pioneer Sandy Stewart, a 1981 Rutgers–Camden



**CREATING A NEW GENERATION OF SCIENTISTS** Nir Yakoby, center, is director of the Rutgers–Camden Center for Computational and Integrative Biology

biology graduate who earned a master’s degree in 1987, the university is positioned to expand its far-reaching research and to educate students in STEM fields who go on to careers that have impact around the world.

Stewart, who made his first of many discoveries and published his first science paper as an undergraduate almost 40 years ago, said student and faculty research contributes to the major questions of science. “The big picture of science comes from a lot of little pictures,” said Stewart, who also funds an endowment for undergraduate student research. “One person and one project don’t

answer a big question. The big questions are answered from a lot of work done by a lot of people done over a lot of time. All of that work pieces together a large picture and can answer a large question.”

## In-Depth Research

When Morgan Dwyer transferred to Rutgers–Camden for her sophomore year, the biology major from Maple Shade, New Jersey, took Associate Professor Kwangwon Lee’s course Exploring Careers in Biology. “That was super eye-opening,” Dwyer said. “I saw that people were making a living out of research.”





**UNDERSTANDING CHANGING ECOSYSTEMS**  
Karina DeWitt, at right, works closely with Assistant Professor Angélica González on the goal of understanding how ecosystems respond to global environmental changes.

Dwyer went on to do summer internships in Lee’s lab, helping with his research using fungus to study circadian rhythms with the ultimate goal of helping to enhance the quality of human sleep. She also initiated a project of her own to study the underlying genetics of fungi that transmit diseases to both plants and humans. The larger goal of Dwyer’s research is to make discoveries that could help produce medicines that stop the spread of diseases.

Dwyer’s efforts earned her a fellowship funded by Stewart that supported her research during her senior year. She met Stewart and had an “encouraging conversation” with him that helped cement her decision to go on to graduate school. Dwyer, who graduated in May, will begin a Ph.D. program in Thomas Jefferson University’s College of Biomedical Sciences and wants to work in the pharmaceutical or biotechnology industries. “I love research and want to be involved in projects related to human health,” Dwyer said.

**An Ecological Worldview**  
Katrina DeWitt, another undergraduate student who benefitted from a Stewart fellowship in her senior year, is seeking ecological answers for how plants and animals will respond to global environmental changes. DeWitt, an Elk Township, New Jersey, resident who in May earned her bachelor’s degree in biology only three years after finishing high school, works closely with Angélica González, an assistant professor of biology whose Rutgers–Camden laboratory focuses on the study of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. DeWitt’s senior project involved studying insects and other invertebrates such as mosquitoes and mites, living inside pitcher plants. “The ultimate goal will be to determine how organisms will respond to changes in climate and nutrient pollution,” DeWitt said.

DeWitt plans to continue her research in the Rutgers–Camden master’s program in biology, and she will spend the summer doing field research in the New Jersey

Pinelands. She has already done much field work as an undergraduate, including a project in 2016 when she traveled to Poland with González to study air pollution and how chemical pollutants are captured by spider webs.

González, a native of Chile, said the goal of her lab is to predict how ecosystems will respond to environmental change, as well as guiding ecosystem management and conservation strategies. “What we learn from surveying and doing experiments in our study systems can be applied to other aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems worldwide,” González said.

DeWitt, who aspires to earn a Ph.D. in agricultural ecology, said she is pursuing a love that grew from working on a vegetable farm near her home for the past five years. By combining her experience in the field, classroom, and the laboratory, she has long-term goals of making a difference. “My understanding of ecology will enable me to go into fields and increase crop yields and look at plant diseases,” DeWitt said.

# A Discovery that Still Resonates

## Gift by Alumnus Has Roots in His Undergraduate Research

Although Sandy Stewart grew up in Point Pleasant, New Jersey, he attended high school on a small island off the Virginia coast where his family moved in the ’70s. He returned to New Jersey to attend Rutgers–Camden, but said he was a mediocre student during his first two years. “I was certainly lacking in self-confidence, but I knew I wanted to go into immunology,” he said.

He asked Professor Henry Stempen, whose immunology class he had taken, if he could work in his lab. “I told him I’d wash glassware. I’d do anything. He finally relented and said I could come in over winter break. He didn’t know I actually lived in Virginia. I pretty much gave up my Christmas at home.”

Stewart, who lived at the time in the Tau Epsilon Phi fraternity house, continued a project working with antibodies—proteins that fight diseases—that had begun in Stempen’s class. “I cleaned up the lab and he said, ‘Why don’t you start playing around with the antibodies that you made?’ I did. On my fourth day there, I made a discovery that no one had ever seen before.”

His discovery of a transparent covering that allowed a fungus to attach to the leaves of corn plants led to a paper he and Stempen published in an academic journal. “All of a sudden I became a star student,” he said. “That changed my life. That’s why I started the



STEWART

undergraduate research endowment. I want other students to be able to have that opportunity to do research.”

Stewart’s support of undergraduate research dates to 2009 and funds research by three students annually. His new \$2.5 million bequest intention announced in April, the Sandy J. Stewart Endowed Equipment and Instruments Fund, will purchase the kind of equipment used at leading science laboratories. He said experience with equipment such as mass spectrometers, gene sequencers, and flow cytometers—equipment that can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars—will give graduates an advantage in the job market. “Students are going to have advanced experiences that they wouldn’t otherwise have,” he said.

After Stewart finished his master’s at Rutgers–Camden, his storied career began at the pharmaceutical company Novartis in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. He went on to co-found several biotechnology companies, including Immunovation and Paradigm

Genetics (now Cogenics Icoria Inc.). He was one of the first in the world to greatly advance the technology of biochemical profiling, now known as metabolomics, at Paradigm Genetics and recently continued his work at Metabolon Inc. He has earned many awards, published numerous papers, and holds several biotechnology patents. He also has worked with the American Red Cross and the United Nations on HIV research and with Prionics AG on research related to “mad cow disease.”

He lives in North Carolina, and has been active on Rutgers boards since 2006. He serves as chair of the Rutgers Board of Governors and is the first Rutgers–Camden graduate to lead the university-wide governing body. He said his devotion is rooted in the fondness he feels for the university. “I got a great education,” he said. “Maybe I’ll help change somebody else’s life the way that my research opportunities at Rutgers–Camden changed mine.”





The Science of Crime Scenes

Another arena where science has led to significant strides is in crime scene investigations. Rutgers–Camden is home to the Laboratory for Forensic Technology Development and Integration, which aims to improve the science behind identifying individual DNA contributors when a sample from a crime scene—often blood, skin cells, or saliva—delivered to a crime lab contains a mixture of samples from different people. “Crime scenes are very messy,” said Catherine Grgicak, the Henry Rutgers Chair and associate professor of chemistry who is one of two team leaders for the lab. “The crux of the problem is that we don’t know much about the sample that comes into the laboratory.” This focus on separating DNA samples and analyzing single cells fascinates master’s student Amanda Gonzalez, a former crime scene technician with the Camden County Police Department. Gonzalez, who earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and biology at Rutgers–Camden in 2013, has witnessed many a crime scene, including one from a shooting that spread over four

blocks. “That crime scene took two days to process,” she said. A mother of three who also served in the U.S. Air Force and was deployed to Iraq twice, Gonzalez hopes to work as a DNA analyst in a laboratory where she said the way in which DNA evidence is interpreted can have tremendous implications. “It can possibly lead to wrongful convictions, but also freeing someone who potentially committed a crime,” she said. “What we do as research professionals is pave the way for fellow forensic scientists to develop ways to do things with more certainty.”

**Groundbreaking Research**

After Sruthi Murlidaran earned her bachelor’s degree in biotechnology in her native India in 2012, she sought a program that allowed her to combine her interest in the field with computer science. That search landed her as a doctoral student in Rutgers–Camden’s computational and integrative biology degree program, from which she graduated in May. Her research has focused on a key neuroreceptor and proteins in the brain that are responsible for the beneficial

effects of drugs for epilepsy, anxiety, insomnia, and anesthesia, but also are related to many addictions. “The big surprise is that we don’t completely understand how this receptor works,” she said. Her work, in which she compares her computer modeling results with experiments conducted by other researchers, is indicative of much work being done by the 25 Ph.D. students in the Center for Computational and Integrative Biology. Grace Brannigan, associate professor of physics and graduate program director for the center, has directed Murlidaran’s work. She said Murlidaran’s use of physics-based computer modeling gives a perspective on the brain that otherwise is not possible. “It’s a window into a system you can’t visualize,” Brannigan said. Murlidaran has published seven peer-reviewed papers as a student at Rutgers–Camden. The primary goal of her work is to provide findings that will lead to better drug designs and an understanding of why people react differently to anesthetics. “Any small information I find out adds a puzzle piece to the big picture,” she said.

A Community of Science Scholars

Rutgers–Camden undergraduate students in biology, chemistry, computer science, math, and physics benefit from a wide range of support through Q-STEP, an on-campus mentoring program that began in 2009 as part of the National Science Foundation’s STEM Talent Expansion Program (STEP). “A major aim of the project is to create a community of scholars in the quantitative sciences,” said Joseph Martin, professor and associate dean for science, mathematics, technology, and health sciences. “The big picture is to try to increase the number of students who go into STEM fields and to grow the talent pool.”

Mario Rivera, who earned a bachelor’s degree in biology in May, served as vice president of Q-STEP his senior year. He said when he started at Rutgers–Camden in 2016 as a transfer student from Camden County College that Q-STEP was an enormous help. “I got to meet a lot of people with similar goals,” he said.



Rivera, a first-generation college student from Camden, benefitted from tutoring by senior students in the Q-STEP program. As a senior, he returned the favor by tutoring younger students studying in

the sciences. He hopes to attend medical school and become a pediatrician. “I want to be able to help people—especially little kids,” Rivera said.

The Road to Medical School

About 75 percent of biology students begin their first year with plans to go to medical school, but often change career plans as they learn of other options within the major. However, quite a few from Rutgers–Camden, such as 2017 graduate Michael Bamimore, stay on the path to becoming physicians. A student finishing his first year at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Bamimore won several awards for his undergraduate biological research.



His interest in becoming a doctor began as a young boy in Nigeria, where he lived with his grandparents from the age of 6 to 13 and witnessed many in his

community die from diseases that were preventable and treatable. After becoming a surgeon, his long-range plan is to return to Nigeria and improve the country’s health-care system. “Bringing a change to Nigeria’s health-care system is not just about giving back,” Bamimore said. “It is about providing the most basic human need to the ones who need it the most.” Bamimore said his Rutgers–Camden education helped him to succeed in his first year of medical school. “I feel like I’ve had a big advantage over other students,” he said.



Clockwise,  
from top left:  
Assistant Professor  
Kelly Dittmar,  
Ashly Estevez Perez,  
Assistant Professor  
Shauna Shames,  
Miranda Stafford,  
and Tooba Hussain.

# ‘POLITICS IS A SPACE FOR YOU’

Rutgers–Camden faculty and students are at the forefront of a watershed moment in which record numbers of women are running for political office

By Shelby Vittek GSC’16

In her hometown of Waterford Township—located in the rural stretch between Camden and Atlantic City—Miranda Stafford watched as many of her working-class neighbors faced the burdens of economic hardship. She wanted to take action, to do something that would help uplift her community. So last year—at the age of 19—Stafford ran for town committee. “It was such a jump into the deep end,” said Stafford, a Rutgers University–Camden rising senior majoring in political science, “but I was definitely able to navigate it.”

She didn’t make it beyond the primary election, but Stafford said the experience didn’t deter her from a future career in politics. In fact, it made her want to pursue one even more. “It was so informative to my understanding of what your responsibilities are in public office,” she said. “I saw what you can do and bring to the table while also understanding the people you’re representing.”

Women across America are feeling a similar sense of urgency to run for office. Since the 2016 presidential election, there has been a rise in the number of female

candidates running at the local, state, and federal levels. According to current predictions, the number of female candidates for Congress in 2018 will be nearly double the amount who ran in 2016.

At Rutgers–Camden, two political science professors are studying this phenomenon, conducting research about women’s political underrepresentation and the role of gender in political campaigning, while encouraging female political science students who are looking toward futures in politics.

**K**elly Dittmar, who researches gender and American political institutions with a particular interest in how gender informs campaigns, is watching this year’s elections very closely. “It’s pretty unprecedented in terms of the degree of increase in women’s candidacies,” said Dittmar, a Rutgers–Camden assistant professor of political science and scholar at the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University–New Brunswick.

Dittmar authored the book, *Navigating Gendered Terrain: Stereotypes and Strategy in Statewide Races*, in

which she looked at strategic decisions, messaging, and tactics used during political races, as well as how men and women negotiate gender and gender stereotypes while campaigning.

Her next book will be based on the report, “Representation Matters: Women in the U.S. Congress,” of which she was the lead writer. With fellow CAWP scholars, she interviewed 83 of the 108 women in the 114th Congress between 2015 through 2017. The report detailed the significance of women serving in Congress, examined diverse perspectives in the policymaking process, and explored the achievements women made despite gender-based challenges. “Women were excluded from formal politics when this country began and since have been marginalized by parties and political power brokers,” Dittmar said. “Historically, they have had to prove they’re man enough for the job, but not go so far as to violate expectations or norms of their gender.”

From April 2015 to December 2016, Dittmar led a project called Presidential Gender Watch, which tracked and analyzed gender dynamics in the 2016 presidential election. With the 2018



elections on the horizon, Dittmar’s attention is again focused on female candidates and their campaigns. In March, Dittmar launched Gender Watch 2018, a nonpartisan project that will study races across the country to glean ways in which gender shapes political campaigns and campaigning. She also will monitor the elections in real time with students at Rutgers–Camden in a special honors seminar about campaign elections she will teach this fall. “What I value most is the ability to bring empirical research to the public dialogue of gender in this election,” said Dittmar. “When we rely simply on anecdotes and feelings about what is happening nationally, sometimes we get the story wrong, or we miss key parts of the story.”

Dittmar pointed out that though we’ve seen an increase in women running for office, men also have increased in

their number of candidacies. “Women are still highly underrepresented in the candidate pool,” she said. At the start of this year, women were just 23 percent of all the likely congressional candidates, far from equal representation. At the same point in 2016, about 19 percent of likely congressional candidates were women.

While there’s certainly been a rise in women gearing up to run for office, the push for women’s political power is a long game, Dittmar said. This is a point she raises while teaching her Women and Politics class, in which she encourages students to analyze politics and political institutions with a gender lens, as well as an intersectional lens.

While enrolled in the class last spring, a light bulb went off for urban studies major Ashly Estevez Perez, a rising junior at Rutgers–Camden. For her civic engagement project, she taught

what she had learned in class about intersectionality in politics to students in an AP history class at Camden Academy Charter High School, her alma mater. “The class opened me up to things I didn’t yet know about politics in regards to race, economics, and class,” said Estevez Perez, a resident of Camden.

**S**hauna Shames, an assistant professor in political science at Rutgers–Camden, is also deeply involved in her research about race and gender in American politics, and intensely dedicated to helping advance her students’ futures.

In her first book, *Out of the Running: Why Millennials Reject Political Careers and Why It Matters*, Shames studied the reasons why people felt compelled to run for office, as well as the reasons they didn’t. She surveyed young people



**MARKENZIE JOHNSON** A 2018 graduate in political science and Africana studies, she was selected for the New Leadership National Network New Jersey program and won the Robert Packard Memorial Award in Political Science and the Chancellor’s Award for Civic Engagement.

who were interested in politics yet wary of running for public office. One of the questions that helped determine their political ambitions was: Do you think politics can solve important problems? “Less than half of all men thought that was true,” Shames said. “But only a third of all women—and even less for women of color—thought that was true.”

Shames makes it a priority to convey to her students that getting involved in politics is a way to solve problems. “There are things that only government can do,” Shames said. “I love seeing students feel inspired to act rather than just feel angry.”

As the faculty adviser for the Political Science Society, a nonpartisan student-run club at Rutgers–Camden, Shames has helped recruit undergraduates, serving as a role model for students interested in political science, but especially to those who are women. “It’s helpful to female students if I’m the one saying, ‘It’s okay, politics is a space for you,’” Shames said. “You have to kind of give permission.”

Three out of five members of the student club’s executive board are women—president Tooba Hussain, vice

president Miranda Stafford, and projects chair Markenzie Johnson—a shift from the mostly male board in the previous year.

Their mission is simple: to educate and involve people on campus in the political environment. The organization works to convey that politics is relevant and important in everyone’s lives, not just to those studying political science. The club has hosted events and panels related to issues such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Black History Month, mass incarceration, the American health-care system, gentrification, and more.

Markenzie Johnson came to Rutgers–Camden as a marketing major, but as a sophomore, felt pulled by another field. She’s now a recent political science/ Africana studies graduate who believes in the merit of politics. “There is no change if there’s not a policy change,” said Johnson. “Professor Shames helped me realize that. She’s always stressed the importance of getting involved, however you can, in something that means something to you.”

Political Science Society President Tooba Hussain, a 2018 Rutgers–Camden political science/urban studies graduate, is grateful to have found a place where

she felt she belonged on campus. “My experience in the PSS has allowed me to exist in so many different capacities,” she said. “I’m not just a Muslim. I’m not just a woman. I’m not just what I’m politically inclined to. I’m all of those.”

Shames is extremely encouraged by the students. “The fact that we have this crop of students who are so active and good at getting the campus mobilized to think about politics just makes me so proud,” said Shames.

Earlier this year, Shames edited the book, *The Right Women: Republican Party Activists, Candidates, and Legislators*, which examines the role of women in the Republican Party. Shames is editing another book, *Good Reasons to Run: Women as Political Candidates*, that is due out in 2019. In it, Shames and others explore candidate training programs for women, which existed long before the 2016 presidential election, but have since popped up all over the country. These include programs like Ready to Run at Rutgers–New Brunswick; EMILY’s List; Emerge; She Should Run; and IGNITE, all of which have “grown like gangbusters,” Shames said. “These programs were overwhelmed and inundated with calls and emails from women wanting to run. There has been a surge of women running for office—more than we have ever seen. It’s a kind of watershed moment.”

And the impact these two professors have had on their students is clear. This summer, Miranda Stafford is heading down to Washington, D.C., as one of seven recipients of the Rutgers–Eagleton Washington Internship Award Program. It is just the beginning for a young woman interested in politics. “I definitely want to run for public office again,” Stafford said. “Not only do I care about the people in my town, but they’ve worked hard for me. After getting my education here, it’s time for me to work hard for them.”

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*Shelby Vittek, associate editor at New Jersey Monthly magazine, holds an M.F.A. from Rutgers–Camden.*



**KELLY DITTMAR** authored the 2015 book *Navigating Gendered Terrain: Stereotypes and Strategy in Political Campaigns*, as well as multiple book chapters on gender and American politics. She is project director for Gender Watch 2018 and lead author on *A Seat at the Table: Congresswomen’s Perspectives on Why Their Representation Matters*, to be published this fall.



**SHAUNA SHAMES** co-edited *The Right Women: Republican Party Activists, Candidates, and Legislators*, published in January, and authored the 2017 book, *Out of the Running: Why Millennials Reject Political Career and Why It Matters*. She has two forthcoming books: *Dystopian States: Bad Government and How to Resist, in Fact and Fiction*, set for this year, and *Good Reasons to Run: Women as Political Candidates*, for 2019.



**MIRANDA STAFFORD** Rising senior, recipient of a Rutgers–Eagleton Washington Internship Award, will spend the summer working in the Capitol.



**ASHLY ESTEVEZ PEREZ** A Civic Scholar and rising junior, she is teaching what she has learned in her former Camden high school.



**TOOBA HUSSAIN** Served as president of Political Science Society and Student Government Association while earning a political science/urban studies degree.





A Gift of Art

By Sam Starnes

When Fran and Ellen Zinni attended their first art auction of work on paper in Philadelphia 25 years ago, they were surprised to see affordable drawings by well-known artists. “There were interesting pieces you could get for a reasonable price,” Fran Zinni said.

Fran, a native of Camden, earned a degree in psychology and sociology from Rutgers University–Camden in 1966 before going on to a 35-year career with the U.S. Department of Labor. He and Ellen, a retired materials manager for a rehabilitation hospital, married in 1989. They didn’t have many shared hobbies, “but we both liked artwork,” Fran said.

Soon collecting would become their passion. At that first show in 1993, they bought a drawing by noted American artist Frank Benson, a landscape etching titled *The Ipswich River*. They started attending shows of works on paper in New York and buying a few pieces each year. “If you buy two or three pieces a year, over 20 years, you accumulate a lot of things,” Fran said.

They ultimately built up a collection of 150 small pieces on paper that includes works by artists in collections everywhere from the Louvre in Paris to the Metro-

politan Museum in New York City to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The works they acquired were hung salon-style in the Zinnis’ home, filling almost every inch of wall space in their South Jersey condominium. “Our artwork does not coordinate with our furniture,” Ellen said, with a laugh. “This isn’t a museum. It’s where we live.” Fran added, “The walls look like Swiss cheese if you take everything down.”

The Zinnis are in the process of donating about a third of their collection to the Rutgers–Camden Collection of Art, managed by the Stedman Gallery. They’ve turned over to the gallery pieces by prominent European painters, including Eugène Delacroix, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, and they plan to give works by iconic American artists Norman Rockwell and John Abbot McNeil Whistler. Thus far, they have donated 20 pieces with plans to give about 30 more over the next three years. Cyril Reade, director of the Rutgers–Camden Center for the Arts and an associate professor of art history, said the gift is a tremendous addition to the university’s art holdings. “The Zinni collection is a jewel,” he said. “It’s a big gift that represents the Zinnis’ 25-year

dedication to building this collection, and it is given in a spirit of generosity to art students and art lovers in perpetuity.”

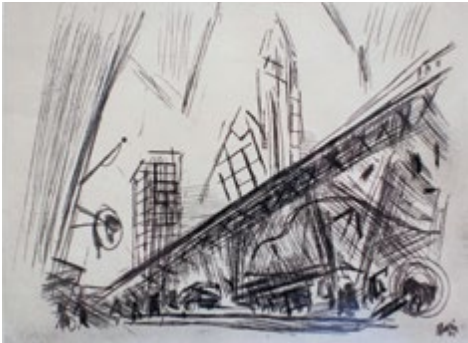
Although many pieces in their collection have increased dramatically in value, the Zinnis have sold only one of their artworks—an oil painting Ellen did not like that a collector wanted to buy. The Zinnis are excited that much of the artwork they collected will have a permanent home and be accessible to art students and lovers for years to come. “We’re both happy and thankful to have a legacy at Rutgers–Camden of things we did together,” Fran said.

Fran’s connections to Camden and Rutgers run deep. He grew up in the city, and his younger sister, Ricki Sablove, graduated from Rutgers–Camden in 1970 and five years ago earned a doctorate in art history from Rutgers–New Brunswick. Her husband, Herb Sablove, earned his law degree from Rutgers Law School in Camden in 1973 and teaches for the school as an adjunct faculty member.

The Zinnis also are involved with many Camden organizations that they support. “I really love the city,” Fran said. “We are very happy that Rutgers is growing and becoming such a force in Camden.”



Jean-François Millet  
*Winnowing Basket, Rake, and Pail*  
Circa 1848



John Marin  
*Downtown, the EL*  
1921



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec  
*Le Marchand de Marrons*  
1897



Above left, Fran CCAS’66 and Ellen Zinni with *Figures in a Landscape* by Henri-Joseph Harpignies, one of about 50 pieces they are giving to the Stedman Gallery. Below, with Associate Professor Cyril Reade, director of the Rutgers–Camden Center for the Arts.





JACKSON



BROWN

# REMEMBERING VETS IN THE ‘FORGOTTEN WAR’

## VETERANS OF KOREAN CONFLICT FOUND A HOME ON RUTGERS-CAMDEN CAMPUS

By Jason Nark CCAS’00

When U.S. Army Capt. Andrew Thomas Jackson enrolled in Rutgers College of South Jersey, as Rutgers University–Camden was known in 1954, he’d already faced his greatest test a year earlier while hunkered down on a Korean ridge some 7,000 miles away. “When you were getting shelled in a bunker it wasn’t easy, because you never knew if you’d come out alive,” said Jackson CCAS’58.

Details of the Korean War—often called “America’s forgotten war” because it fell between World War II and Vietnam—remain vivid for Jackson 65 years later. “When you get involved with a situation that’s life or death, it never leaves you,” the 87-year-old Cherry Hill resident said. “I sure was an adult when I came home.”

After the Korean Armistice Agreement ended the three-year war with a ceasefire in July 1953, Jackson’s journey back to South Jersey began with one goal. “I figured I’d get down to Rutgers and get myself into college,” he said.

Once enrolled and focused on getting a degree in economics, Jackson



**Capt. Andrew Thomas Jackson CCAS’58 speaking at the Veterans Day luncheon on campus in 2017. Frank A. Brown Sr. CCAS’79 is second from the right. Other veterans who served in Korea pictured, from left in rear, are Robert Musser, Richard Daucunas, Stan Levin, Carl C. Letizia, and George R. Ulmer.**

found his life experience was far different than that of most of his classmates. He bonded with fellow veterans at the school. “We were coming from the military, where everything is structured and set out for you,” said Jackson, who worked for 50 years as a controller and senior accountant. “The life is so different.”

Rutgers–Camden, like colleges across the nation, saw an influx of veterans enroll after World War II, thanks to the G.I. Bill that assisted with education expenses. Numbers rose again after the Iraq War began in 2003, and Rutgers–Camden now has more than 400 student-veterans in undergraduate and graduate programs.

But the university hasn’t forgotten veterans of the Korean War, as well as

others who served in the military in Korea. Fred Davis, the founding campus director for the Rutgers–Camden Office of Military and Veterans Affairs since it opened in 2009, has reached out. “My message to the Korean War veterans was that I wanted them to know that all Americans recognize that many of you have not only fought for this country, but your generation of veterans also fought here at home to make sure that future veterans don’t have the same experience after their service as you did,” Davis said.

At the annual Veterans Day luncheon on campus in November 2017, the university honored seven veterans who served in the military in Korea. Some, like Jackson, served during the period

considered the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, while others served on the Korean Peninsula during other tense times.

U.S. Army Maj. Frank A. Brown Sr. CCAS’79 is one who served later, having been deployed from 1966 to 1968. “I was over in Korea when the Tet Offensive took place in Vietnam,” said Brown, who lives in Atco, New Jersey. “The Vietnam War had all the media attention, but we had guys getting killed all the time up there.”

Brown, 72, spent 27 years in the Army and later worked as an investigator for the New Jersey Department of Human Services. He now serves as a VFW liaison to Rutgers–Camden and makes frequent visits to the campus to help students, including a recent session where he helped student-veterans with their income taxes. His son, Frank A. Brown Jr., is also a veteran and working on a master’s degree in social work at Rutgers.

Brown and Jackson didn’t meet until after their time at Rutgers–Camden, but they are friends from years working together in various regional Korean War groups. Looking back over the decades, Jackson said he still cherishes the people of Rutgers–Camden for helping him transition from soldier to student. “It’s not the buildings or the pretty looking lawn—it’s the professors and the students who make the place special to me.”

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*Jason Nark, a staff writer for the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News, holds a bachelor’s degree in English with a minor in journalism and film studies from Rutgers–Camden.*

# Marketing Manicotti



PHOTO BY DAN HANSON

## Alumna on the Rise at Pasta Maker

By Dan Hanson

During a shift change at the Severino Pasta Company, white-smocked employees dart to and fro in a show of coordinated anarchy, but Angelica Diodato negotiates this bustling beehive with the deftness of one who has done it thousands of times. “My sister and I both started working here packaging pasta and doing some catering side jobs,” said Diodato SBC’14, who joined the company in her hometown of Westmont, New Jersey, when she was only 15. “I moved up to making pasta and then to the retail counter all through high school. I’ve had my hands in every aspect of the company. I even packed a few pallets in my day.”

Diodato continued to work for Severino Pasta while earning her marketing degree from the Rutgers School of Business–Camden. Now 26, she has risen in only four years after her graduation to be the company’s marketing and data director. Her role includes managing the company’s website and social media platforms, coordinating

special events and sales promotions, crunching sales numbers, and serving as a liaison to restaurants. She has been coordinating the company’s national partnership with Whole Foods and working with the chain to sell Severino pasta through Amazon, which recently purchased Whole Foods—a major opportunity for the company that began as an artisanal pasta shop. “I’m thankful to the Severino family for everything they’ve taught me and the opportunities they’ve given me,” Diodato said. “Every day is exciting here, seeing it grow and reach its potential.”

Diodato, whose twin brother Francis also earned a marketing degree from Rutgers–Camden, has recruited interns from the School of Business–Camden and recently hired 2017 graduate Courtney Brill to the full-time position of customer vendor compliance administrator. Diodato is grateful to faculty who helped her develop her business skills, particularly Professor Carol Kaufman-Scarborough. “She taught me to set my goals and never give up,” Diodato said.



## NURSING ALUMNA LEADING THE WAY IN OPIOID PREVENTION

### Graduate Student Research Developed Guidelines for Opioid Overdose Training

By Jeanne Leong

When psychiatric nurse practitioner Serena Natal saw the increasing devastation caused by the opioid epidemic, she knew she had to take action. “Every week I encountered someone who was affected by an opioid overdose some way or somehow—whether it was a client of mine, the family member of a client, or a staff member’s family member,” said Natal GSNC’17, whose career reaches back almost 20 years.

Natal, who earned a doctorate in nursing practice from Rutgers School of Nursing–Camden, used her graduate school work as an opportunity to



research and create an educational intervention program on implementing opioid overdose management training in substance abuse treatment facilities. The guide she created is being used at some halfway houses, residential treatment facilities, and outpatient treatment facilities that serve Camden County residents. The manual provides

information about opioid overdose management and how to incorporate the education into treatment for clients with an opioid use disorder, as well as information ranging from how an overdose occurs to instructions on how to administer Narcan, the medication that reverses the effects of opioids. “Every life saved through overdose prevention interventions provides another opportunity for someone with an opioid use disorder to continue fighting their disease of addiction,” she said.

Natal’s path to earning her doctorate started in 2003 when she began taking classes at Camden County College, earning an associate’s degree. A resident of Sicklerville, New Jersey, she went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Delaware, and a master’s degree in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania.

Now that Natal has earned her doctorate, she continues to work at A Step Ahead Partial Hospitalization Program at Inspira Health Network in Bridgeton, a behavioral health program for children from 3 to 17 years old. In addition, she owns and operates LifeSpan Psychiatry, providing community and outpatient psychiatric treatment and services across the developmental lifespan.

## A Champion for Burn Victims

By Shelby Vittek GSC’16

Since graduating from Rutgers Law School in Camden, Samuel Davis has represented thousands of clients over the course of his career as a civil trial lawyer, but he hasn’t forgotten his first case—a young girl who suffered serious burns after a waitress spilled hot tea on her chest and shoulder. Davis RLAW’77 won the case, but two years later he learned the girl was still hurting. “She had become isolated and depressed,” Davis said.

Davis recognized that litigation could provide financial resources for medical care and economic needs of burn survivors, but their psychosocial needs were not always met. He also witnessed caretakers of pediatric burn victims suffer an emotional toll. Eager to help, he began taking his burn clients to camps—known as “burn camps”—which offered support that transformed them in the presence of other young burn survivors.

Davis lives in Tenaflly, New Jersey, and maintains an active case list at the

law firm Davis, Saperstein & Salomon, where he is an original founding partner. In 2008, he founded the Burn Advocates Network (BAN), a nonprofit that supports burn survivors and operates three pediatric burn camps. The first, Camp Sababa, was founded in Israel in 2009, making it the first and only burn camp in the Middle East. More recently, BAN opened Camp Karma in India and Camp Samba in Brazil, and has ambitions to expand to other countries. This fall, BAN plans to open the Israel Pediatric Aesthetic & Reconstruction Laser Surgery (I-PEARLS) Center where children attending Camp Sababa can receive laser treatment to aid in healing their burn scars. “Our mission is to restore the spirit and heal the scars of these children,” said Davis, who dedicates his personal time to visiting burn survivors at the camps, where the children affectionately call him Uncle Sam. “We want to turn burn victims into burn survivors. It’s tremendously satisfying work and now I understand suffering in a different way.”



## A Long-Lasting Legacy

Gift of \$3 million from estates of alumni couple supports language and economic programs



Graduation portraits of Herman Wissman CCAS’62 and Marilyn Maguire Wissman CCAS’60.

Although Marilyn Maguire Wissman and Herman Wissman first met as students at Rutgers University–Camden about 60 years ago, the legacy of the late alumni couple resonates powerfully on campus today in the programs from which they graduated.

Marilyn CCAS’60, a double major in German and Spanish, and Herman CCAS’62, an economics major, married only four days before Marilyn earned her undergraduate degree in 1960. Herman, who passed away in 2010, worked as a financial advisor for many years and was vice president for Wells Fargo Advisors

at the time of his death. Marilyn, who passed away in 2014, enjoyed a long career in education, retiring as guidance director from Edgewood Regional High School in Winslow Township. The South Jersey residents had long been avid supporters of their alma mater. “They attributed their successful work endeavors to the wonderful educations that they received at Rutgers,” said Marian Wissman, Herman’s sister.

Marian, a retired vice president of human resources at eResearch Technology Inc., and the sole trustee of Herman and Marilyn’s estates, was determined to

fulfill their wishes with a gift to Rutgers–Camden. She established the endowed Herman L. and Marilyn M. Wissman Chair in Economics and also created an endowed \$50,000 scholarship in the Department of World Languages.

Marilyn—whose sisters Patricia and Margaret graduated in 1956 and 1961 from Rutgers–Camden with degrees in science and history—was honored in 2010 as a Golden Raptor, a program honoring select alumni celebrating the 50th anniversary of their graduation.

### ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES!

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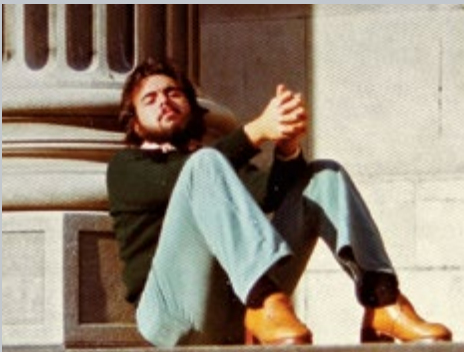


## A Walking History of Campus

By Sam Starnes

There was a time, Cal Maradonna says, when cars on Fourth Street emerged from the tunnel under the footings of the Ben Franklin Bridge and drove right past the steps of the Paul Robeson Library, which had opened a few years earlier in 1970. Maradonna SBC’74, GSBC’79, who arrived as a first-year student in 1969 and joined the university in 1974 as coordinator of student activities, has served on staff for most of the years since. “It’s amazing how much campus has changed,” says Maradonna, who has held several positions, including his current role as director of an off-campus bachelor’s degree program for the School of Business–Camden, where he also teaches.

He began giving campus tours in the ’80s and continues to do so when asked, pointing out details such as where sections of Fourth and Penn streets—both of which ran through what is now the campus quad—have long since closed



and been converted to green space and walkways. He shows you the grassy spot adjacent to the Ayer Mansion—the historic stone-faced building that for years was the business office and now houses Admissions—where a stable house stood that had been converted into a bookstore. And up Lawrence Street, he points to the site of a long-gone bar called The Grill. His starting point for his tour is perhaps his favorite spot on campus: Johnson Park, the university’s lovely garden-like setting that has been restored in recent years around the one hundred-year-old

Cooper Branch Free Public Library building. He tells you that the park is home to one of only seven castings in the world—and the only one in the United States—of a *Peter Pan* statue commissioned by the story’s author, J.M. Barrie.

Maradonna’s campus tour now includes many new developments, such as the new Nursing and Science Building across Federal Street from Camden City Hall, and the site on the corner of Fifth and Market where a new home for the School of Business will rise in future years. “This is not the same campus it was in 1969,” Maradonna says. “It’s ever-changing.”

**Clockwise, from top left: The intersection of Penn and Fourth streets by the Paul Robeson Library in the mid-to-late ’70s next to a picture of the same spot today—with Cal Maradonna on the right. Maradonna on the steps of the Johnson Park Library Building in 1975.**



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–Lizbeth Peña-Bonseñor CCAS'20

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