

# WILKES

FALL 2019

## Woman of the World

SIDHU SCHOOL PROFESSOR WAGIHA TAYLOR  
REFLECTS ON 50 YEARS AT WILKES

*INSIDE: FRANK PASSALACQUA '15 HAS 1.28 MILLION YOUTUBE FOLLOWERS*

## Relationships Built at Wilkes Define the Campus Community

Since becoming interim president in August, I have had the great privilege of celebrating members of the campus community whose contributions have helped shape the University.

As you read through this issue of *Wilkes* magazine, you will see that the campus recently remembered the lives of two University greats – Dr. Umid Nejjib, founding dean of the school of science and engineering, and Dr. Francis J. Michelini, Wilkes College's second president. With the naming of the Dr. Umid Nejjib Flex Lab in the Mark Engineering Center in early October, Dr. Nejjib's legacy became part of the lexicon of the University. The dedication of the Nejjib Flex Lab will remain a highlight of my time in the President's Office, not only because Umid is so deserving of this honor, but also because it was a memorable occasion for my friend and former colleague, Barbara King, who was married to Umid.

Earlier this fall, the Wilkes community lost Dr. Francis Michelini, more commonly known as simply "Dr. Mike." After his passing, a standing-room-only crowd gathered together in Weckesser Hall to celebrate Dr. Mike's life and career. Through memories shared by Dr. Christopher Breiseth, Dr. Thomas Kelly '69 and Lisa Michelini Spengler, Dr. Mike's daughter, we were all reminded of his strength of character and his generosity of spirit.

Also during Homecoming weekend, we celebrated the contributions of Bob Bruggeworth '83 with the official dedication of Bruggeworth Field at the Ralston Athletic Complex. The field is also the home to a new tradition for Wilkes Colonels — the ringing of a victory bell. When the victory bell rang — not once, but twice — on the day of the dedication, we all took great pride in both the successes of our student-

athletes who competed on the field, and in Bob's accomplishments, which made these improvements possible.

Now, with the publication of this edition of *Wilkes*, we recognize Dr. Wagih Taylor and her remarkable 50-year career teaching students at Wilkes about the world of economics and business. As you read her feature, and the others in this issue, you will notice a common theme — relationships built at Wilkes have the power to enhance learning, both on campus and long after commencement.

By recognizing individuals like Umid Nejjib, Francis Michelini, Bob Bruggeworth and Wagih Taylor, we also celebrate their devotion to Wilkes. It is my hope that by doing so, we will inspire the students of Wilkes today to become the leaders and visionaries of tomorrow.



Paul S. Adams '77  
Interim President



Interim President Paul S. Adams '77 led the memorial service held in October for Dr. Francis Michelini, Wilkes' second president. PHOTO BY PATTY DEVIVA

### WILKES MAGAZINE

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Wilkes University is an independent institution of higher education dedicated to academic and intellectual excellence in the liberal arts, sciences and professional programs. The university provides its students with the experience and education necessary for career and intellectual development as well as for personal growth, engenders a sense of values and civic responsibility, and encourages its students to welcome the opportunities and challenges of a diverse and continually changing world. The university enhances the tradition of strong student-faculty interactions in all its programs, attracts and retains outstanding people in every segment of the university, and fosters a spirit of cooperation, community involvement, and individual respect within the entire university.



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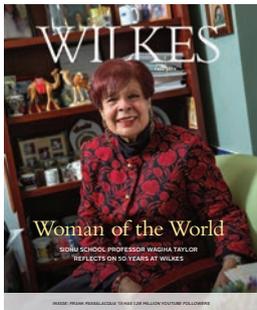
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Wagiha Taylor brings a world view to her business classes in the Sidhu School.  
PHOTO BY KNOT JUST ANY DAY

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## Dedications of Bruggeworth Field and Nejb Flex Lab Highlight Homecoming

Bruggeworth Field at the Ralston Athletic Complex was dedicated on Saturday, Oct. 5, highlighting Homecoming weekend. The nearly \$8 million project includes a multi-purpose turf field that will be used for men's and women's soccer, men's and women's lacrosse and women's field hockey. It also includes a new turf baseball field, a scoreboard, press boxes, and stadium lights for evening competition. The project was made possible by a leadership gift from Bob Bruggeworth '83.

The dedication of the field also marked the start of a new tradition: the ringing of a victory bell for winning Colonel teams at the field. Bruggeworth established the field in honor

of his mother, who rang a bell to call the family together. Bruggeworth, who majored in electrical engineering at Wilkes, is president and chief executive officer of Qorvo, a global communications company headquartered in Greensboro, N.C.

In addition, the engineering flex lab in the Mark Engineering Center was dedicated in honor of the late Umid Nejb. Nejb, the founding dean of the School of Science and Engineering and professor of electrical engineering, joined Wilkes in 1965 and died in July 2002. Later in his career, he laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Nesbitt School of Pharmacy.



Clockwise from left, Bob Bruggeworth '83 and his wife, Michelle, are greeted by Wilkes students before the dedication of Bruggeworth Field. Bruggeworth rings the victory bell for the first time at the new field. Bruggeworth, right, and his father, Bob Bruggeworth Sr., left, unveil the sign at the field. Barbara King '81, wife of the late Umid Nejb and former associate dean of student affairs, greeted guests at the dedication of the Nejb Flex Lab in the Mark Engineering Center. PHOTOS BY KNOT JUST ANY DAY





## Nursing Dean Deborah Zbegner Keynotes International Conference

Deborah Zbegner, dean of the Passan School of Nursing, was a keynote speaker at the World Congress on Nursing and Healthcare, held in July in Rome, Italy. Zbegner's presentation, "A Dean's Journey: Revitalizing a School of Nursing," reviewed innovations and improvements that she has spearheaded since becoming dean in 2015. The conference theme explored innovations in nursing and health care. The event drew more than 300 attendees and included five keynote speakers and more than 60 other speakers, educational sessions and workshops.

## College of Science and Engineering Receives National Science Foundation Grant

Wilkes University's College of Science and Engineering has been awarded a major research instrumentation award from the National Science Foundation. Totalling over \$486,000, the award will help Wilkes acquire a high-performance computer cluster, a state-of-the-art tool that supports student-faculty research across a variety of science, engineering and mathematics disciplines.

Acquiring the high-performance computer cluster will position Wilkes as the only institution in the region with such advanced computational facilities.

The instrument will allow faculty and students to perform high-caliber research on the most demanding of computational problems, including climate and earthquake prediction, genomic analysis, artificial intelligence and drug design. Additionally, the equipment will allow melding of real-time modeling and simulation with classroom instruction, providing a more impactful student learning experience. The award will also support Wilkes in its outreach to high school students, promoting science to young people and instilling an interest in research and discovery.

"On the heels of being ranked a national university by *U.S. News and World Report*, this is just another example of the talent and breadth of Wilkes University's faculty," said interim President Paul S. Adams.



The proposal was crafted by a multidisciplinary team of faculty members from the College of Science and Engineering with a common goal of integrating computational technology with teaching and research. The team was led by Henry J. Castejon, professor and chair of mechanical engineering, and included Del Lucent '03, associate professor of physics; Caroline Fortunato, assistant professor of biology; Bobak Karimi, assistant professor of environmental engineering and earth science; Sofya Chepushtanova, assistant professor of math and computer science and Abas Sabouni, associate professor of electrical engineering.

"Interdisciplinary learning prepares our students for fulfilling careers while helping to advance scientific discovery," said interim Senior Vice President and Provost Terese Wignot. "This award will continue our educational emphasis on mentoring and hands-on learning."

## Search Proceeding for Wilkes' Seventh President

The search for Wilkes' seventh president is continuing, with the goal of having a new president in place by the start of fall semester 2020. Dan Cardell '79, chairman of the University's board of trustees and chair of the presidential search committee, updated the campus community in September about the status of the search.

The firm Park Square Executive Search, which has been engaged to assist with the search, created a position description that captured the necessary qualities and characteristics for Wilkes' next president. The description was based on meetings it held with the campus community in spring 2019 and on feedback from the presidential search committee.

Park Square then engaged in an extensive national search to identify and recruit a diverse pool of candidates. In addition, members of the campus community nominated individuals who they felt would be a good fit for the position. In July and August, the search committee evaluated the entire list of qualified, interested candidates and narrowed the pool by identifying the candidates with the highest potential for success at Wilkes. Based on the advice of Park Square, a confidential search is being conducted to attract the best talent to Wilkes.

During the fall semester, semifinalists participated in interviews with the search committee. "From this group, we anticipate asking two to three of these candidates to join us on campus as finalists for the position," Cardell says. "While on campus, finalists will have the opportunity to meet with the presidential search committee, as well as leaders from various areas of campus, during confidential meetings."

Although the process will be confidential, it will still be participative. Select members of the Wilkes community, representing various campus constituencies, will be asked to meet with finalists and then share their feedback with the search committee. Final recommendations will be made by the committee to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.

Members of the presidential search committee are faculty members Karim Medico Letwinsky, assistant professor and chair of the doctor of education program, and Eric Ruggiero, associate professor and chair of digital design and media arts; senior administrators Jonathan Ference PharmD '03, associate provost, and Janet Kobylski, assistant vice president of finance and treasurer; students Hunter Hughes and Caroline Rickard; and board of trustee members Laura Cardinale '72, Chuck Cohen and Bill Miller '81.

## Kishan Zuber Named Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing



Kishan Zuber has joined Wilkes as the vice president of enrollment management and marketing. Zuber oversees undergraduate and graduate admissions offices, enrollment services, financial aid and marketing. With her leadership, Wilkes will continue to advance its overall enrollment strategy, creating one of the finest doctoral universities in the country.

Prior to joining Wilkes, Zuber was the vice president of enrollment services at Wells College in Aurora, N.Y. At Wells, she developed a comprehensive recruiting strategy that consistently increased the number of first-year students and more than doubled the international student population. She previously served as the assistant dean of the graduate school at Binghamton University, State University of New York, where she grew graduate and international applicants and enhanced the academic profile of prospective students in more than 90 academic programs.

"I am excited and grateful to join a nationally ranked institution known for its scholarly work, faculty-student research and civic responsibility," said Zuber. "Wilkes University's footprint extends well beyond the northeast region, educating students from across the country and around the world with premier undergraduate, professional and online programs. I'm proud to help promote Wilkes nationally and internationally."

Zuber earned her bachelor's degree in environmental studies and her master's degree in student affairs and diversity from Binghamton University, State University of New York.



President Barack Obama enjoys a personal moment with his wife, Michelle, under the watchful eyes of Secret Service members. The photo by presidential photographer Pete Souza is featured in the Sordoni Art Gallery exhibit.

## White House Photographer Pete Souza Visits Campus Launching Sordoni Exhibit

Legendary White House photographer Pete Souza spoke about his career as a chronicler of Presidents Barack Obama and Ronald Reagan in an Oct. 15 lecture at Wilkes. The speech was a prelude to the exhibition of his work, *Two Presidents, One Photographer*, which continues through Dec. 8 in the University's Sordoni Art Gallery. It showcases 56 of Souza's photographs and favorite images taken during his tenure as chief official White House photographer for the two presidents.

Souza is a freelance photographer based in the Washington, D.C., area and is the former director of the White House Photography Office. He previously was a national photographer for the *Chicago Tribune* and a freelancer for *National Geographic*. He is the author of six photography books, including, "Obama: An Intimate Portrait," which debuted at Number 1 on *The New York Times* bestseller list. It is one of the bestselling photography books of all time. His new book, "Shade: A Tale of Two Presidents," was published in October 2018.

The Sordoni Art Gallery is open Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit [www.wilkes.edu/sordoniartgallery](http://www.wilkes.edu/sordoniartgallery)

## WILKES WELCOMES THE CLASS OF 2023

Wilkes welcomed the Class of 2023 during Welcome Weekend, the kickoff to the fall 2019 semester.

# 560

FIRST-TIME, FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS



WOMEN: 296



MEN: 263

\*One student chose not to identify gender.

# 68

TOP 10 PERCENT OF THEIR HIGH SCHOOL CLASS

VALEDICTORIANS



SALUTATORIANS



# 12

FOREIGN COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

# 43.54%

FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS\*

# 26%

OF THE ENTERING CLASS

STUDENT ATHLETES

\*First in their family to attend a four-year college

## Student Pharmacist Alexis Nicholson Named PQA CVS Scholar

Wilkes University fourth-year student pharmacist Alexis Nicholson of Breinigsville, Pa., was accepted in the national Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA) and CVS Health Foundation scholars program. Nicholson is one of just 15 student pharmacists across the nation to be accepted into the program based upon their research proposal.

Mentored by Nicole Pezzino, director of community outreach in the Nesbitt School of Pharmacy, Nicholson's research focuses on how pharmacists can best communicate with prescribers after identifying high-risk drug therapy problems (such as drug interactions and fall risk in the elderly). Since the national response rate is 33 percent, Nicholson's goal is to learn how to increase that response.

As a PQA-CVS scholar, Nicholson receives funding to attend two national conferences and access to national mentors to assist in her research. PQA and the CVS Health Foundation provide a \$1,250 stipend to each student within the mentor-mentee pair to support their expenses to attend and actively participate in up to two PQA live meetings. Nicholson also will present a poster detailing her project results and present it at the PQA annual meeting in May 2020.

Student pharmacist Alexis Nicholson was one of 15 student pharmacists in the country named to the Pharmacy Quality Alliance and CVS Health Foundation scholars program. PHOTO BY SARAH BEDFORD '17 MA '19



### NEWS@WILKES OFFERS UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES ON UNIVERSITY LIFE



Take an insider's tour of Wilkes interim President Paul Adams' Weckesser Hall office. Get introduced to the Dogs of Wilkes — the canine companions of Wilkes' faculty, staff and students. Grab a closer look at a campus head-shaving event that raised money for breast cancer research. These stories — and more — are featured on News@Wilkes, the official news site of the University. Check it out at [news.wilkes.edu](http://news.wilkes.edu)



### NEW TRUSTEES WELCOMED

The Wilkes University Board of Trustees welcomed three new trustees at the October 4 meeting. Pictured from left to right are Paul S. Adams, interim president, new trustees William Hanbury '72, Tara Mugford Wilson and Lisa Isbitski Golden '90, and Dan Cardell, chair of the board of trustees.

## Bierly Fellowships Fund International Health Care Experiences for Pre-Med Students

Students who study abroad in Greece might talk about visiting a historic site like the Parthenon as a highlight of their trip. When Wilkes junior Jason DeBoard talks about the time he spent in the Mediterranean country, he remembers observing open-heart surgery, plastic surgery and more. DeBoard was able to get an international health care perspective through his participation in the Atlantis Fellowship. The fellowship is an intensive program abroad for American pre-med students. Fellows experience global health care through hospital shadowing rotations and prepare for medical school applications through reflective hospital observation, volunteering and medical humanities research.

Another Wilkes pre-med student, senior Amina Mustafa, also gained valuable experience examining international health care issues through her study-abroad experience in Amman, Jordan. Mustafa spent seven weeks in the Middle Eastern country in the School for International Training’s program examining refugees, health and humanitarian issues. While staying in Jordan, she lived with a host family, enhancing her experience.



Wilkes junior Jason DeBoard, pictured above fourth in the second row, earned a Bierly Fellowship at Wilkes to study health care in Greece in summer 2019. PHOTO COURTESY JASON DEBOARD

Mustafa completed two weeks of classes that examined topics related to Syrian refugees in Jordan. Her last five weeks were spent in an internship with the Eastern Medical Public Health Network, also known as EMPHNET. She helped to analyze data from a survey assessing women’s knowledge of health care issues, such as breast cancer. The data, which was shared with UNICEF on completion of her assignment, will be used to determine what health education programs and services may be needed for a vulnerable population.

“It was such an invaluable experience,” Mustafa says of the internship. “There’s no way I would have learned what I learned in a classroom.” The experience has influenced her career plans. Mustafa is considering programs combining study to become a medical doctor with a master’s degree in public health.

Both DeBoard and Mustafa received the Bierly Fellowship to fund their study abroad experiences. The Bierly Fellowship is open to full-time undergraduate Wilkes students in any major. Students may receive the one-time award to fund study abroad in their sophomore, junior or senior year.

**“It was such an invaluable experience. There’s no way I would have learned what I learned in a classroom.”** – Amina Mustafa



Wilkes senior Amina Mustafa looks back from her perch on a camel during a summer study abroad trip examining health care issues in Jordan. PHOTO COURTESY AMINA MUSTAFA



# Influencer

**Frank Passalacqua '15**  
has 1.28 million  
**YouTube Followers**

By James Jaskolka '16

## Frank Passalacqua '15 still isn't used to meeting his fans.

"It's such a bizarre experience," he says. "I've probably met 20 or so people, just randomly, who recognized me from my videos."

Passalacqua has gained massive popularity with his YouTube channel, RandomFrankP, where he uploads tech reviews and videos and guides fans on room tours of impressive video gaming setups. His channel currently has 1.28 million subscribers. Producing its content is his full-time job.

Like many millennials, Passalacqua, who earned his degree in communication studies, grew up with YouTube and social media still in its infancy. He understood the way the medium encouraged user-generated content and developed an interest in video production.

"I saw the potential for it, and I always wanted to have a viral video," he says, citing comedy skits he would upload with his friends as a teenager. "There's always been a part of me that wanted to be in that space."

As he grew up and his interests developed, Passalacqua's YouTube channel became devoted to video games. His videos featured gameplay commentary and helpful hints for popular games. He posted infrequently but began to develop a small following.

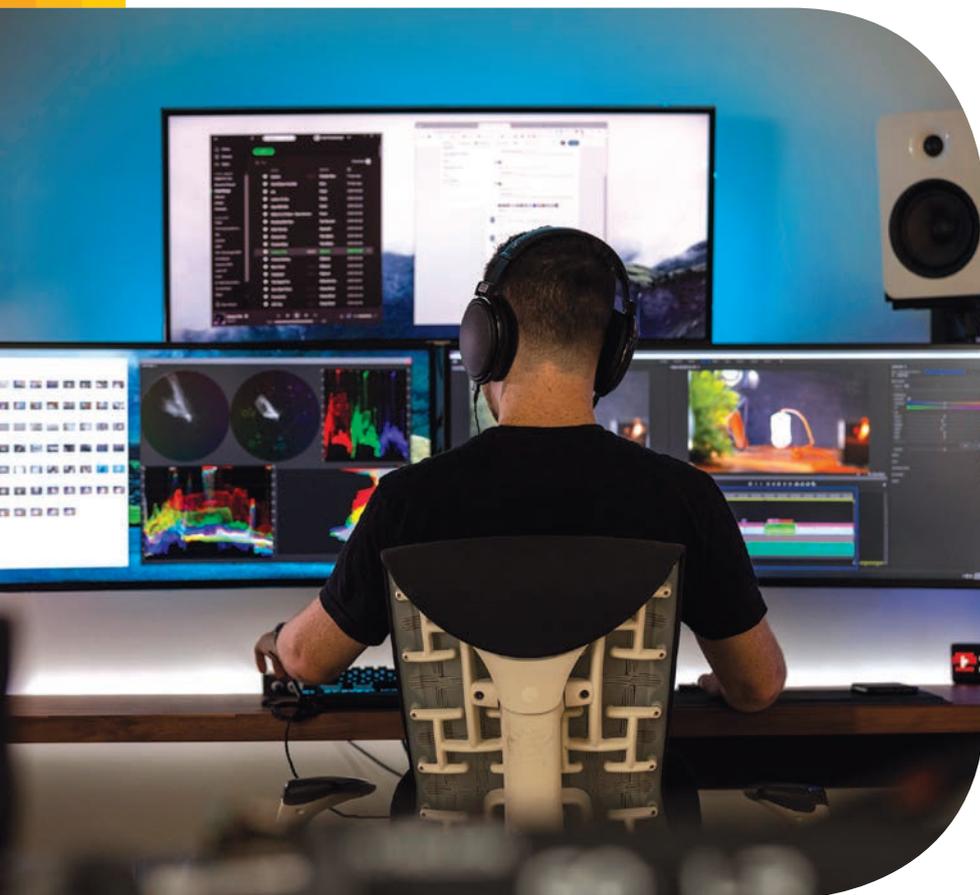
Things changed the first time he went viral.



Opposite, Frank Passalacqua '15 has built his YouTube channel, RandomFrankP, into a successful business.

Above, surrounded by the tools used to create his videos, Passalacqua works in his studio, located in his Avondale, Pa., home. ALL PHOTOS BY DAN Z. JOHNSON

Passalacqua, seen editing one of his videos, can spend five days completing one.



“... I figured I could take that summer off and work on the channel, treating it like a full-time job, doing everything I could to grow it and see where I was at....

**I doubled my subscriber count in those two or three months alone.”**

– Frank Passalacqua '15

One 2013 video, a rather profanity-laced clip of Passalacqua getting penalized in-game for cursing on a headset in the popular basketball game “NBA 2K14,” gained notoriety quickly. The clip was picked up by ESPN and Howard Stern, and received over a million views in only 48 hours.

“It exploded overnight,” he recalls.

With more eyes than ever on his channel, he began to post videos more frequently. Eventually, he realized there was a niche not being filled within the community: reviews for gaming accessories and peripherals, like wireless headsets and gaming keyboards. So, in an effort to give potential buyers information he wished he’d had, he began to post reviews of these items.

“Before I’d buy something, I always looked at reviews, and there weren’t too many...so I would buy things that I wanted and review them myself. I noticed those videos started to do a lot better,” he says. “Once I saw that there was immediate interest in those peripherals in PC gaming, I figured I would start to do that more often.”

One video, a comparison between two high-tech gaming keyboards, became incredibly popular, amassing more than 6 million views since its upload five years ago. Passalacqua saw the interest and knew he was on the right track.

As Passalacqua continued to make videos, his channel grew in popularity, gathering advertisers and sponsors, and reaching 40,000 subscribers in a few months. With graduation quickly approaching, he knew he had a choice to make.

“As I was applying for jobs, I looked at starting salaries in public relations and compared them to what I was making [from the channel] at that time. There was still a huge gap,” he recalls. “But I figured I could take that summer off and work on the channel, treating it like a full-time job, doing everything I could to grow it and see where I was at.... I doubled my subscriber count in those two or three months alone.”

Since then, Passalacqua, who lives in Avondale, Pa., has turned his YouTube channel into a full-fledged career. This is made possible through a partnership he made with BroadbandTV, a multichannel network, or MCN. Similar to booking agents or management companies, MCNs will sell space in their clients’ videos to advertisers, provide them with music libraries for their videos, assist with strategies for audience growth and retention, pay for travel expenses and provide other services. This has allowed Passalacqua to receive a monthly payment from his videos.

Passalacqua says he has gained income from sources other than his YouTube channel. He frequently creates marketing

materials for companies he's reviewed products for, like LG and Corsair. He makes videos and takes photos for these companies but never releases them on his channel, instead allowing the company to use them in product rollouts.

Though it might be his dream job, Passalacqua emphasizes that it still is a job — and one that takes quite a bit of work, considering he remains a one-man operation.

“There are no days off. I'm constantly checking emails or thinking of new video ideas, ways to try to get ahead of the curve,” he explains.

Most of his work happens behind the scenes: writing, studio setup, filming and editing. Even the shortest videos require serious effort.

“Someone will see an eight-minute video and think ‘Oh, this video took eight minutes to make’...but this one video I'm working on now, I've probably put in five 12-hour days already, and it's a video that might not even perform well,” he says, laughing.

Passalacqua credits his time at Wilkes for developing and fostering many of the skills he uses today. His coursework in journalism and public relations trained him to break down company press releases and formulate scripts quickly. His logo, now iconic to more than a million people, was originally sketched in an integrative media class with instructor Steve Husted.

The biggest help, Passalacqua says, came from his time in Zebra Communications, Wilkes' student-run public relations firm, with former professor of communication studies Jane Elmes-Crahall.

“Zebra definitely helped me big-time, getting that real-world experience talking to companies to learn what they want,” he

says. “When I'm doing sponsored or branded content on my channel, it's gonna be all about the company in the end, and when I make a product review, I need something that'll appeal to the audience but also make the company happy.”

Elmes-Crahall remembers her former student's time as a board member for Zebra. She says his online persona differs from the off-screen student she knew.

“He stood out immediately for two reasons: his tech savvy and his extremely strong analytical and team-building skills,” Elmes-Crahall says. “What might be most surprising considering his current YouTube following is that Frank was often quiet and thoughtful when faced with a question. But when he spoke, he had thought through many perspectives and offered great insights.”

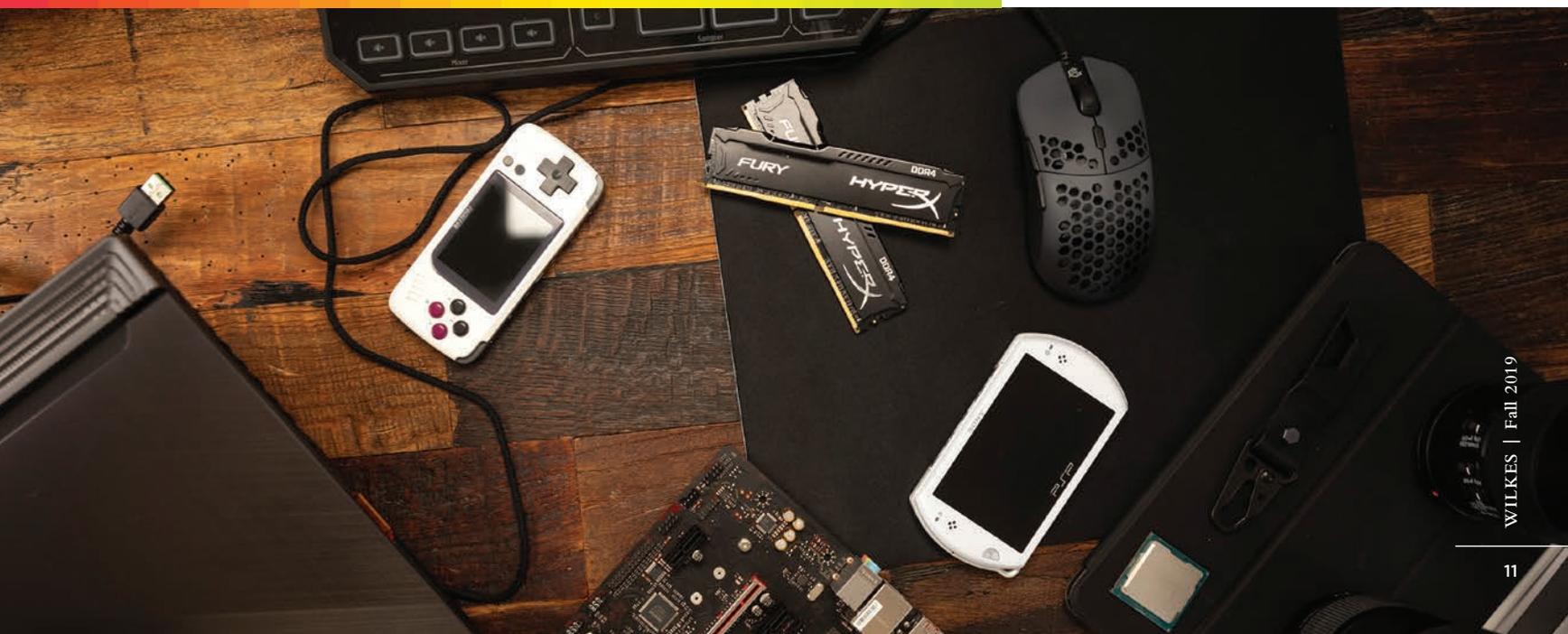
Having high-quality content and staying as up-to-date as possible have kept Passalacqua in the spotlight, but he credits consistency as the biggest factor in his success. He posts videos three times a week, usually on weekends, to best reach his target demographic. Most importantly, he committed to consistency when it mattered most.

“If it wasn't for me taking the time off at the end of college and treating it like a full-time job, who knows how far it may have gone, or how little it would have grown?” he said.

“I knew that if I took a nine-to-five with 40,000 subscribers and didn't focus on that, or learn what would become of it, I'd always wonder ‘What if?’ I think I'm a lot happier now than I would have been working a job I didn't like,” he says. “It was just a matter of taking that leap and hoping it all went well, and, thankfully, it did!”



Passalacqua's studio is filled with tech toys and tools used in creating his YouTube channel.



# Literary Citizen



## Donna Talarico Writes Her Own Story as a Publisher

By Vicki Mayk MFA '13

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Donna Talarico '05 MA'09 MFA'10 MA'14 remembers exactly when she came up with the name for her online literary magazine. She was sitting with members of her cohort in the Maslow Family Graduate Program in Creative Writing, brainstorming project ideas when it came to her.

*Hippocampus.*



Donna Talarico is the publisher of *Hippocampus Magazine* and Books by Hippocampus, and also leads the nonfiction writing conference HippoCamp.  
ALL PHOTOS BY ERIC FORBERGER

The hippocampus is the tiny, seahorse-shaped part of the brain associated with memory. It was the perfect name for a publication that would showcase creative nonfiction — a genre which often focuses on work based on memory.

Nearly a decade later, *Hippocampus Magazine* (www.hippocampusmagazine.com) draws between 20,000 and 30,000 visitors to its site each month to read essays, book reviews and craft articles, all focusing on creative nonfiction. There are 9,000 subscribers to its email list that announces when issues go live and trumpets calls for submission. While the internet has spawned a proliferation of online journals, the bimonthly *Hippocampus* has emerged as one that has caught the attention of readers and writers. In 2020, the publication will celebrate a decade of publishing new and established writers. It has since spawned HippoCamp, an annual literary conference, and a small press, Books by HippoCampus, which has published six volumes.

“The first time it hit me that we might have something people were paying attention to was when I heard someone say, ‘*Hippocampus* published me!’ I know we’re not top tier like *The Sun*,” Talarico says, citing one of the literary world’s most respected publications. “But someone was proud to be in our magazine.”

Allison K. Williams, a writer and editor based in Dubai, says the publication fills a niche. “There aren’t a lot of lit mags that are respected but not impossible to get into,” Williams says. “It’s important to have a magazine like *Hippocampus* with quality writing that’s still able to accept submissions from writers without agents or big-deal reputations.”

Talarico leveraged the magazine’s growing audience to start HippoCamp, a nonfiction writing conference, in 2015. Held at the Lancaster County Convention Center in the Pennsylvania city where Talarico lives, it draws more than 250 attendees from 29 states and four foreign countries. A list of keynote speakers at the conference includes Lee Gutkind, founder of *Creative Nonfiction* magazine, Mary Karr, author of the “The Liar’s Club,” and Tobias Wolff, author of “This Boy’s Life,” among others. At the conference’s heart is a team of dedicated volunteers and more than 40 sessions presented by writers at all levels of experience.

Veteran New Jersey writer Lisa Romeo, author of the memoir “Starting with Goodbye,” is a frequent presenter at HippoCamp. She finds it unique among conferences. Romeo says, “From the very first day of HippoCamp conference, everyone was treated the same and felt valued. Everyone is part of the community there. This is because of Donna. It’s how she set this conference up. You very much have a feeling that the participants are coproducing the conferences.”

Community is the word that comes up over and over again when people talk about Talarico. The other words most frequently used to describe her are “literary citizen” and “nice.”

“She’s one of the kindest people I’ve ever met,” says Wilkes creative writing classmate and HippoCamp volunteer Angela Eckhart MFA ’10. Eckhart says Talarico’s success is a combination of perseverance, networking and an online platform that she has skillfully nurtured.

Talarico, who also works as a freelance writer and content marketing consultant, took a few detours on her way to

publishing success. She entered Wilkes as an undergraduate in 1996, but took time off to work full-time as a promotion director for a Wilkes-Barre radio station. A gig as an admissions representative for a trade school followed.

She returned to Wilkes five years later to finish her bachelor’s degree in communication studies, and cites faculty Jane Elmes-Crahall and Andrea Frantz as influences. She returned to Wilkes in 2008 to earn her creative writing master’s degree while at the same time working at e-commerce firm Solid Cactus. The latter job proved invaluable since knowing how to establish and nurture an online presence has been integral to *Hippocampus*’s success.



Talarico, seated at the book sale table at the HippoCamp conference, began publishing books in 2018.

Talarico takes a moment to chat with an attendee at the nonfiction writing conference, HippoCamp, that she runs in Lancaster, Pa.



“The common thread in my career was that I was always there when something was going to change. I got into e-commerce when it was just starting,” she says. “It has always helped that I’ve been an early adopter and been able to have a skill that others didn’t have at that time.”

Talarico says that early experiences hinted that writing and nurturing other writers would become her life’s work. She wrote for *The Beacon* at Wilkes and freelanced for local newspapers in Wilkes-Barre. She tried her hand at starting an entertainment Web site, NEPA nights.net, and self-published an anthology, “Kids, Have You Seen My Backpack?,” a collection of essays about people who went back to school as adults.

After earning creative writing degrees, she became director of integrated communications at Elizabethtown College. While there, she reconnected with Kevin Beerman ’01, who she first met when they were Wilkes undergraduates. They married in 2012 and he’s familiar to attendees at HippoCamp, working the registration desk and troubleshooting technical problems.

Talarico left her college job in 2015 to concentrate on her own writing, her literary endeavors and to do freelance consulting. She earned another Wilkes master’s degree — this time in publishing — in 2014 as she prepared to launch her independent publishing company, Books at Hippocampus. The first book published under the Hippocampus banner was “Selected Memories: Five Years of Hippocampus Magazine.” Two other anthologies, “Air,” a collection of essays about radio, and “Dine,” an homage to diners, have followed.

The first books Talarico has published by solo authors are “Dig: A Personal Prehistoric Journey” by Sam Chiarelli ’08 MFA ’14 and “By the Forces of Gravity,” an illustrated memoir by Rebecca Fish Ewan. Both writers affirm that publishing with a smaller publisher is a writer’s dream come true.

“I feel so grateful that my manuscript was published through Hippocampus,” Fish Ewan states. “I hear a lot of horror stories about working with heavy-handed editors or publishing houses that see writers as small cogs in the big business machine of bookmaking. Donna took my manuscript and brought it into publication with tender care and as I had created it.”

Some colleagues were surprised by Talarico’s decision to publish books in print. “That might be where the ‘guts’ comes in,” she says, referencing the fact that some say the era of publishing books in print is past. “We’re seeing book publishing moving in the direction of audio books and ebooks and online. People have asked me ‘Why are you publishing books?’ If I had money, *Hippocampus* would have been a print magazine. I always imagined we’d do an annual print edition or anthology.”

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**“From the very first day of HippoCamp conference, everyone was treated the same and felt valued. Everyone is part of the community there. This is because of Donna.”**

– Lisa Romeo, author of “Starting with Goodbye”

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What might seem like risk-taking actually has been a measured strategy. Talarico introduced the writing conference five years after the magazine started. She announced her book publishing endeavor at the first conference, where she had a built-in audience for the first anthology. She likens building her business to the time she watched a friend’s family open a restaurant in the Poconos. The restaurant was almost-but-not-quite finished, when it opened. “They weren’t trying to be perfect. They just tried to grow as they were doing it,” she says.

Slow but steady progress has been her mantra. She remembers an interview with country singer Kenny Chesney, who had his first big hit after having minor success with earlier albums. The singer noted the value of those more modest beginnings, saying it’s sometimes better to start slow. “He said, ‘Take off like a rocket, fizzle like a rocket,’” Talarico says. “It always stuck with me.”





CAMPERS  
TO  
COLONELS



Women Empowered By Science Camp  
Launches Science Careers

By Sarah Bedford '17, MA '19



Squeals and giggles erupt from room 219 of the Cohen Science Center. Inside the “You Be the Vet” lab, Wilkes senior Morgan Tarnalicki lifts her two furry lab assistants, white rats Fish and Chips, from their cage.

Tarnalicki and Wilkes senior Bridget Regan, both biology majors, are running the veterinary lab, hoping to inspire the attendees at the Women Empowered By Science Camp to share their interest in veterinary science. Using the long-tailed critters and two pups named Bo and Derby is working: The elementary-aged girls can’t don their stethoscopes fast enough.

Commonly referred to as WEBS, the program gives female students entering seventh and eighth grades the opportunity to investigate many areas of science through hands-on laboratories and activities. Now in its eighteenth year, the program has expanded to offer opportunities for high school girls.

Two WEBS campers, Dallas School District seventh graders Adriana Kopalek and Gina Pugliese, affirm the program’s success. The two first-time campers hope to return. “I find science really interesting,” Pugliese says. “There are so many types of science and ways you can learn it. It’s just really fun to do.” With their yellow draw-string bags filled with worksheets, lab goggles and snacks, the students-turned-scientists attended

labs like “Wizards of Physics,” “Rainbow Density” and “Neuroscience: Brain Cake and Icing.”

WEBS provides both an opportunity to explore the many fields of science and an introduction to Wilkes University.

“I first heard of WEBS in sixth grade when Deb Chapman (faculty of practice in biology) came to my elementary school,” sophomore Holly Jones explains. Jones has participated in WEBS as both a camper and volunteer. “Deb heard that I was coming to Wilkes and asked me if I would be interested in becoming the student coordinator.”

Her answer was an enthusiastic yes. “I had the job before I completed any college credits,” the biology major says laughing. She has been able to relive her WEBS experience when her niece, Raine Coury, a seventh grader at Schuylkill Haven Middle School, decided to attend the camp. “It’s really cool because we get to talk about it,” Jones says.

Although the emphasis on hands-on labs has stayed the same, WEBS has grown and transformed since it began some 18 years ago.



Above, WEBS campers Persayis Horvath and Jevahnie Hernandez share a laugh with their four-legged lab instructor. PHOTO BY SARAH BEDFORD '17 MA '19

Right, seen from left, Wilkes senior Kierstin Parricelli is coached by Megan Bucher Ruhmel '09, senior research technician at ExxonMobil, in a lab with campers Julia Godfrey and Tessa Kopetchny. PHOTO BY CURTIS SALONICK

Far right, Dallas School District seventh graders Adriana Kopalek and Gina Pugliese test their coding skills during the robotics lab in Stark Learning Center. PHOTO BY SARAH BEDFORD '17 MA '19





## First WEBS Are Spun

In 2001, a parent approached Les Turoczy, former Wilkes biology department chair, to find ways to involve local middle school girls in science laboratory activities at the University. That conversation spawned the WEBS after-school program, which is still held in the fall and spring semesters. Fifty girls from participating school districts come to campus once a month to do labs covering various fields of science. Chapman estimates that 1,800 students have participated after school since its inception.

Chapman and Professor of Biology Michael Steele saw the need to expand the program because of research showing that young women are often deterred from the sciences. According

to a study by Microsoft that included a sample of more than 6,000 females from ages 10 to 30, over 75 percent of girls who participate in hands-on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) activities outside the classroom feel a sense of empowerment. That finding drops to under 50 percent for those who only experience STEM activities in the classroom.

To offer more opportunities, the first WEBS summer camp began in 2009 with the support of a Howard Hughes Medical Institute grant. WEBS was just one element funded by the \$1 million grant, which allowed Wilkes to launch new initiatives to creatively engage students in biological sciences.

“It allowed faculty and students to offer this outreach program for middle school-aged girls,” Steele says, who was the primary author on the grant.



“Several of the campers entering 11th and 12th grade are considering Wilkes for their undergrad degrees. Those students are interested in pre-med, chemistry, engineering and environmental science.”

– Shealyn Marino, research assistant in biology



From left to right, campers Robin Stitzer, Avery Kozerski, Jamie Timlin, Kiley Kondraski and Lily Shymanski introduce themselves to white rat lab assistants Fish and Chips.

Campers Khristian Banks, Ava Putnam, Megan Ruhmel and Shariah Yearwood test the law of gravity during a lab.

Camper Avery Kozerski checks lab assistant Bo's heart rate during the "You Be The Vet" lab.

Deb Chapman, faculty of practice in biology and director of the WEBS program, addresses the campers during the opening session of the weeklong camp.

PHOTOS BY SARAH BEDFORD '17, MA'19 AND CURTIS SALONICK



Since then, the support of community sponsors such as UGI and internal funding from Wilkes Student Government has supported WEBS' growth. Twenty girls attended the first WEBS summer camp. Eleven years later, the number was capped at 132 in 2019 when lab capacity was met.

## WEBS 2.0 and 3.0

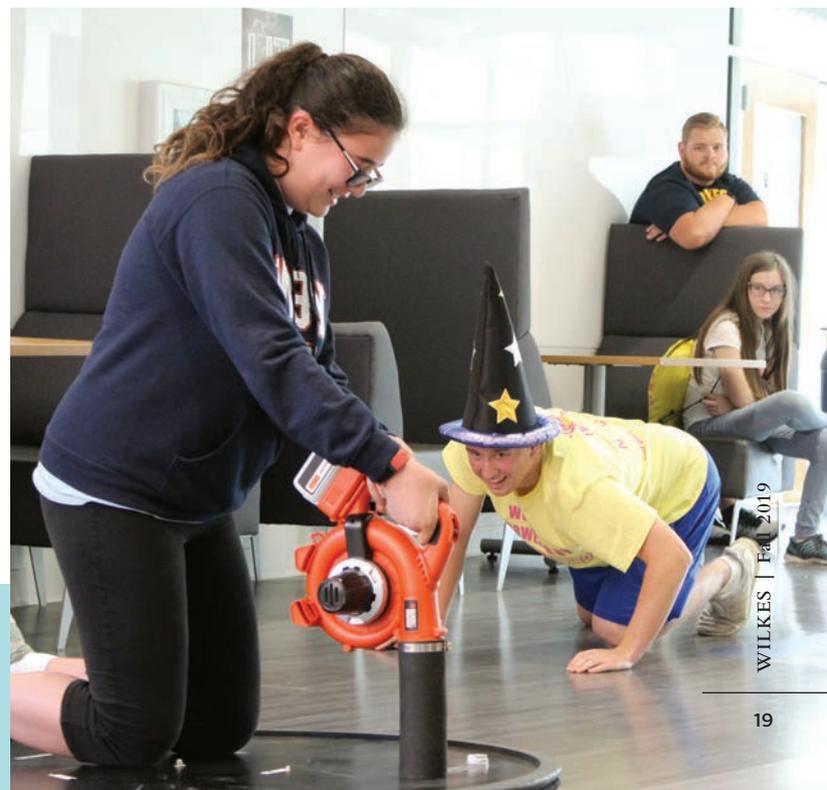
Chapman never thought WEBS would grow in such a way. "When we first started, it was just supposed to be a one-year camp," Chapman says. Soon girls were asking how they could remain involved once they completed middle school.

The solution was WEBS 2.0, which targets rising ninth-grade girls who have successfully completed two years of WEBS Camp and wanted to return to assist current campers. WEBS 3.0, which launched in summer 2019, has been established for rising high school sophomores through seniors.

Shealyn Marino, research assistant in biology, had been tasked with creating programming for WEBS 3.0, including new lab activities for the older girls.

"Several of the campers entering 11th and 12th grade are considering Wilkes for their undergrad degrees," Marino explains. "Those students are interested in pre-med, chemistry, engineering and environmental science."

Sophomore biology major Neha Metgud worked as a student coordinator with Jones focusing on community outreach and donations. She started her WEBS journey as a camper in seventh grade and hasn't left. She acknowledges the long-term benefits of the program — including a renewable WEBS scholarship to study sciences at Wilkes. Students who have participated for two years as campers and one year as a volunteer and then pursue a degree in nursing or science are eligible for the scholarship.



Opposite page, inset, creating an oil spill and learning best practices of clean-up was the goal for campers Maia Costagliola and Kaitlynn Keller during the "Oil Spill" lab.

Right, Tatiana Schlifka tries levitation during the "Wizards of Physics" lab.

PHOTOS BY SARAH BEDFORD '17, MA'19



Top photo, from left to right Elizaveta Graydus, Chloe DeGraffenreid and Raine Coury do an inventory of the skeletal system during the "Bone Hunt" lab.

Middle, camper Kaylee Shaw and Wilkes Associate Professor of Biology Valerie Kalter rearrange bones to form the skeleton during the "Bone Hunt" lab. TOP PHOTOS BY SARAH BEDFORD '17, MA '19

Bottom right, WEBS keynote speaker Megan Bucher Ruhmel '09, center, blue shirt, poses with all the campers and counselor.

PHOTO BY CURTIS SALONICK



“The WEBS camp has completely changed my life. Working for the program made me love Wilkes... and I was able to form lasting connections with all professors, students and faculty at the University.”

– Margaret Galatioto '18

### Life After WEBS

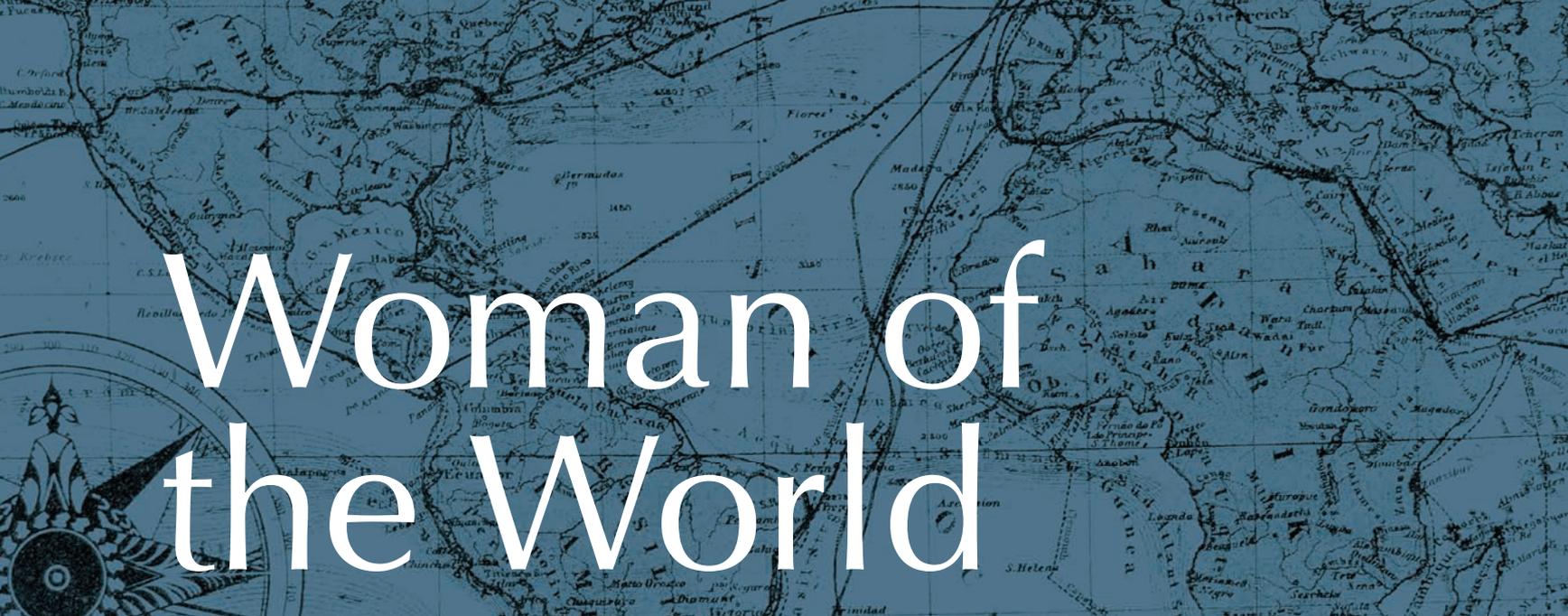
Chapman knows that the camp does wonders for the girls who attend. But student leaders from Wilkes also benefit. She says, “When group leaders that have been with me in the past interview for medical and professional schools or jobs, they are asked, ‘What’s WEBS camp?’”

Ashley Wojciechowski '19 served as a student coordinator for WEBS — something she thinks has put her ahead of her peers. “Not many college students can speak to having managerial experience before graduating,” Wojciechowski says. Now she’s employed as chief scribe by the emergency department at Geisinger Wyoming Valley.

Margaret Galatioto '18 agrees. Galatioto has recently completed her master’s degree in physiology and biophysics from Stony Brook University and is applying to medical school. She became involved in the camp as a first-year Wilkes student and was student coordinator. She continues to offer assistance in any way she can. “The WEBS camp has completely changed my life,” Galatioto says. “Working for the program made me love Wilkes... and I was able to form lasting connections with all professors, students and faculty at the University,” she says.

Such comments reflect the program’s impact. WEBS students of the past, present and future experience the vast world of science on the Wilkes campus, Steele says. “Deb Chapman has created one thing after another to build this lineage, exposing young women to science from middle school to beginning college.”





# Woman of the World

## Wagiha Taylor is Wilkes' Longest Serving Faculty Member

By Andrew Seder



Sidhu School Professor Wagiha Taylor teaches international business and is known for taking students on her annual spring break trip to Europe.  
ALL PHOTOS BY KNOT JUST ANY DAY



Wagiha Taylor, Ph.D., Wilkes University's longest serving full-time faculty member, marked her golden anniversary this year and shows no signs of slowing down. She bristles when someone dares mention the dreaded "R Word."

"I will never retire," Taylor says. "I could never survive sitting around."

Her husband, Merlin Gene Taylor, retired years ago after teaching physics at several universities, including American University in Cairo, Egypt, Wilkes and Bloomsburg University.

"He never asks me to retire," Taylor says with a smile. "He knows better."

The Egyptian-born Taylor still loves what she does and her passion for, as she calls it, "molding brains" is as strong as ever, perhaps even stronger.

Abel Femi Adekola, dean of the Sidhu School of Business and Leadership, called Taylor "Wilkes University's treasure." He says she has served as a role model for not only students but colleagues, himself included. Some faculty have returned to teach after retiring, but only Taylor has remained so long as full-time faculty.

While some criticize members of Generation X or Y, Taylor appreciates them and believes that, thanks to social media, globalization and involvement in politics, today's college student has a "broad-mindedness" she admires. When she first started teaching, students had a very local mindset. There was little diversity among students in the classroom or their professors. But, as that has changed and students have become accustomed to interacting with those of different religions, ethnicities and nationalities, she believes a stronger student has emerged, more ready to tackle the ever-changing world of business and economics.

Taylor, who has taught economics since 1969, jokes that she has taught so many local bankers that her husband tells her she could never rob a bank. "They could all identify me. They all know me."

While some might get bored teaching at the same university for five decades, Taylor, a mother of three who drives a bright blue Porsche and is known for wearing large, opulent, dangling earrings, says she never loses interest in her job. Assuming new roles and new responsibilities has helped. In addition to teaching, she has served as dean of graduate studies, assistant dean of the School of Business and Economics, associate dean of the School of Business, Society, and Public Policy and more.

"Change is good for the mind. You can be in the same place but doing completely different things every few years is important," Taylor says.

Wagiha Taylor's office in the University Center on Main is filled with five decades of mementos from her career and her travels.





**TOUR PROFESSOR WAGIHA TAYLOR'S OFFICE ON NEWS@WILKES**

Posters and prints from around the world, seen left, are part of the colorful collection in Sidhu Professor Taylor's office. Visit her space and see her collection in the "Office Visits" feature online at [news.wilkes.edu](http://news.wilkes.edu).

**"Change is good for the mind. You can be in the same place but doing completely different things every few years is important."**

— Wagiha Taylor, Ph.D.

One of her former students, Bernard K. "Buck" Mallan '71, was a business administration major who credits Taylor and his Wilkes education for his successful career as a commercial insurance salesman, from which he retired in 2010.

"Little did I realize as I sat in her classroom so many years ago that her subject material would be so relevant in my business career," says Mallan, who lives in upstate New York and Jupiter, Fla. The two caught up at Homecoming 2018.

"I was overwhelmed when I saw Dr. Taylor at homecoming. So many years had gone by and yet here I was talking to one of my profs from my college days and she was still part of the faculty. I was blown away," he says.

Mallan missed out on what Taylor considers her pride and joy, an annual spring break international trip that draws 50 students for a three-credit course called the "International Business Experience." After trying to start the class in 2000, she was determined to offer students this potentially life-altering experience and found success relaunching it in 2004. While classroom learning is important, the real-world education the students get for those 10 days is invaluable. Students have visited the United Kingdom and various European countries.

"We're not living in the United States only anymore. It's an international culture now. International business has changed.

The world has changed. And students are eager to see the world. Twenty-five years ago they were not. They were too local-oriented," Taylor says.

If anyone has a worldly view, it's Taylor.

As a girl growing up in Cairo, she learned English and thought about being an ambassador to the United States. Her father, Mohamed Saleh Abdel-Gawad, a judge, and her mother, Nasima

Abdel-Gawad, a homemaker, encouraged her. As a college student, she enrolled in a program that would bring the best of the best to America to further their education.

"The U.S. government used to give scholarships to prospective bright young students overseas and I won one," Taylor recalls.

She came to America and earned her master's degree in economics at Brown University and a Ph.D. in economics at Clarke University. She met and married her husband and eight years after she first arrived in America, they headed to Egypt to see her parents.

"I went back with a Ph.D. in one hand and a husband in the other," Taylor says.

Her husband took a teaching job at American University in Cairo but they soon returned to the States, where he took a job at Wilkes. A few months later, she did too. He left but she remained.

She's served under six — soon to be seven — Wilkes presidents and nine United States presidents have occupied the White House since she came to Wilkes. She likes presidents and politics. She has pins on her desk from the Clinton/Gore campaign and also one from Trump/Pence. She proudly has pictures of herself with former Egyptian presidents Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak.

Her office in the University Center on Main is adorned with posters depicting Paris, Moscow and Rome. She also has a bookshelf filled with mugs, glasses and other mementos from her international travel.

"I have been very lucky," Taylor says. "I have lived a very good life."

Of her many accomplishments, one stands out. In addition to being, at one point, the only female full professor at Wilkes, she's also had the honor of being the only female to carry the university mace at graduation ceremonies. It's an honor that goes to the University's longest serving and highest ranked faculty member. For 15 years, she has been that person.

"There's something to be said about experience. There really is," Taylor says.



# Saving





# History

Wilkes Alumni Build  
Careers Preserving  
the Past

By Rachel Luann  
Strayer MFA '12

Opposite page, Natalie Baur '06 works as an archivist in Mexico City, which she first visited as a Fulbright Fellow.  
PHOTO BY JACKIE RUSSO

This page, Nick Zmijewski '07, pictured in front of the remnants of Bethlehem Steel's blast furnaces, works as an archivist for the Industrial Archives and Library.  
PHOTO BY DAN Z. JOHNSON

**I**f Natalie Baur '06 and Nicholas Zmijewski '07 have one thing in common, it's that history is a part of their past. "I was always into old stuff," says Baur, recounting trips to estate sales and antique shops with her mother growing up. She even did Civil War reenactments, though the authentic clothing held more interest for her than the battles themselves. "I liked looking at history in a creative and artistic way."

Zmijewski also got his introduction to antiquities through a parent. "My father was an amateur photographer," he says, "so I got dragged around to coal mines, steel mills, railroad yards." This led to Zmijewski's own involvement in photography, and through it, his fascination with old photographs. "It's a large part of what drew me to become an archivist."

Both Baur and Zmijewski are proud of their roles in preserving history for future generations. Here's a glimpse at the lives of two Wilkes graduates who turned their fascination with the past into careers for the future.

## Natalie Baur '06

### PRESERVING INCREDIBLE LIVES

When Natalie Baur first came to Wilkes, the only records she planned to keep were medical ones. "Wilkes had an excellent pharmacy program," she says. "And my family wanted me to do something practical."

But Baur wondered if her love for history, writing and cultural exploration could be a career instead of a hobby. Baur switched to a history major, adding minors in English and anthropology under the guidance of professors Diane Wenger and John Hepp.

"It's not so different from pharmacy," Baur laughs. "I'm just cataloguing different things."

Baur's path has been as diverse as the history she preserves. A semester-long internship at the Howell Living History Farm in New Jersey led to a relationship that took her to Ecuador for two years, where she became fluent in Spanish. After completing a master's degree in history from the University of Delaware and a master of library science degree from the University of Maryland, Baur was offered her first job as an archivist with the Cuban Heritage Collection at the University of Miami. Four years later, she received a Fulbright Fellowship to study digital preservation in Latin America, specifically in Mexico.

While researching in Mexico, Baur was offered a position with El Colegio de México, as their first digital preservation librarian. But it was a horseback ride through the woods that would lead to the next twist in her career.



At home in Mexico City where she is surrounded by historic architecture, Baur says that archival work combines her love for history, writing and cultural exploration. PHOTO BY JACKIE RUSSO

Friends on that ride told Baur about a local man with a film archive she might find interesting. At the time, Baur had no idea that the man in question was Carlos Martínez Suárez, an award-winning documentary filmmaker who had recorded sociopolitical issues in Mexico since the 1980s. His primary collection of raw footage documented Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vicente, also known as Subcomandante Marcos, and the Zapatista National Liberation Army's 1994 rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico. Suárez was the official cameraman of the movement, recording interviews from both sides of the conflict.

Baur approached the project with urgency. "The longer something like that sits on a hard drive, the more likely it is to break down," she explains. She was able to acquire copies for El Colegio de México, effectively preserving the historic footage.

"That was a turning point," she says. According to Baur, the Suárez project allowed the university to secure grants and funding for further digital preservation and storage, which can sometimes be difficult. "If the money dries up, the files might not be updated and the data could be lost," Baur says.

While she is still a consultant on the Suárez project, Baur left her position in August to pursue another new adventure: teaching. She now works for Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía, teaching in the Master of Archival Management Program. She also designs and teaches online classes in digital preservation for Library Juice Academy.

Baur is also exploring new ways to preserve history. Recently she served on the advisory board of DocNow, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving content posted on social media. She hopes the next generation will prioritize digital preservation as well.

“It’s something I like on a personal level,” she says, “being close to people who made history or witnessed it. People who lived incredible lives.”

## Nicholas Zmijewski '07

### A PERSONAL CONNECTION

Nicholas Zmijewski always knew he wanted a degree in history, but he had no idea where it might take him. Fortunately, he had Wilkes mentors John Hepp and Joel Berlatzky to set him on the right track.

“It was Dr. Hepp who helped me get the internship,” Zmijewski says, referring to his summer at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg, Pa., after which he was hired as a tour guide.

It was Zmijewski’s experience scanning and digitizing negatives as a staff photographer and photo editor for Wilkes’ student newspaper, *The Beacon*, that prepared him for his next career step. When the museum’s nonprofit branch, Friends of the Railroad, received a grant to digitize 2,600 photographic negatives, Zmijewski was a natural fit for the job. Under the grant, he preserved closer to 7,600 negatives. Zmijewski was then hired full time.

One of his favorite experiences at the museum was finding a negative of a photo taken by his father. “I called my dad and

asked him, ‘What were you doing in Philadelphia on August 3, 1966?’” His father responded, “I wasn’t in Philly that day.” Zmijewski enjoyed telling him that he had photographic evidence to prove otherwise.

Zmijewski only works sporadically with the Railroad Museum these days but he still lives in Lancaster with his wife, Allison Zell M.S. '16, and their 11-month-old twins, Zoe and Logan. Three days a week he drives to Bethlehem, where he works for Industrial Archives and Library. The organization’s mission is to collect, organize, conserve and preserve industrial records and to make them available for education and research to historians, scholars and the public

Some of the artifacts he’s worked with include original reports from Bethlehem Steel’s first chairman, Charles Schwab, as well as building plans for a bridge he used to drive past in his hometown of Cranford, N.J.

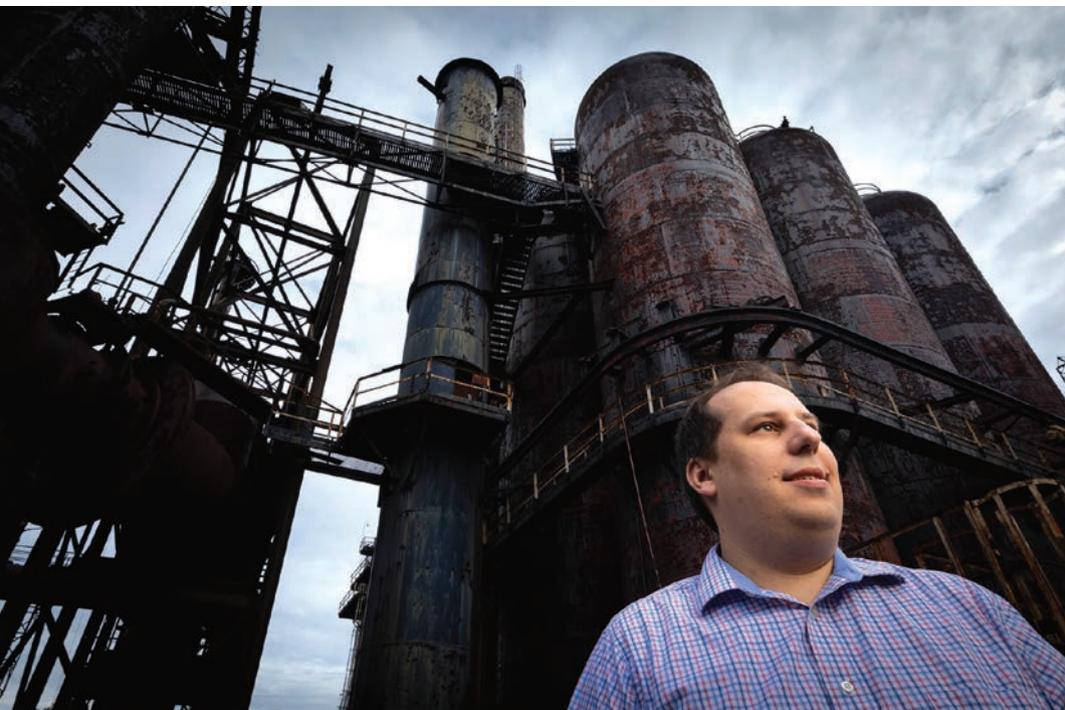
“There are a lot of personal connections,” he says. “I’m doing something I would have done as a hobby anyway.”

Just like Baur, Zmijewski has diversified his experience by furthering his education and getting involved in numerous organizations. He is pursuing a master’s degree in archives and records administration from San Jose State University and is a member of the Society of American Archivists, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference and vice chair of the board of governors for ArchivesSpace. He has been published in Railroad Museum’s magazine, *Milepost*, and the popular hobby magazine *Railfan and Railroad*.

Zmijewski says starting out at a small institution is valuable for someone entering the archival field. “You learn how to do everything,” he says, “and you learn how to do it on the cheap.” He notes that technology has impacted his field, just as it has changed many others. He goes on to explain that 50 years ago,

archivists were only working with paper and film. Now an archivist should expect to work with all types of digital materials as well. “There are a lot more opportunities if you know how to handle a lot of different materials.”

That personal connection comes in handy too. “You do a better job if you’re interested in what you’re doing.” 



With Bethlehem Steel’s blast furnace soaring behind him, Zmijewski says he feels a personal connection to the history he preserves.

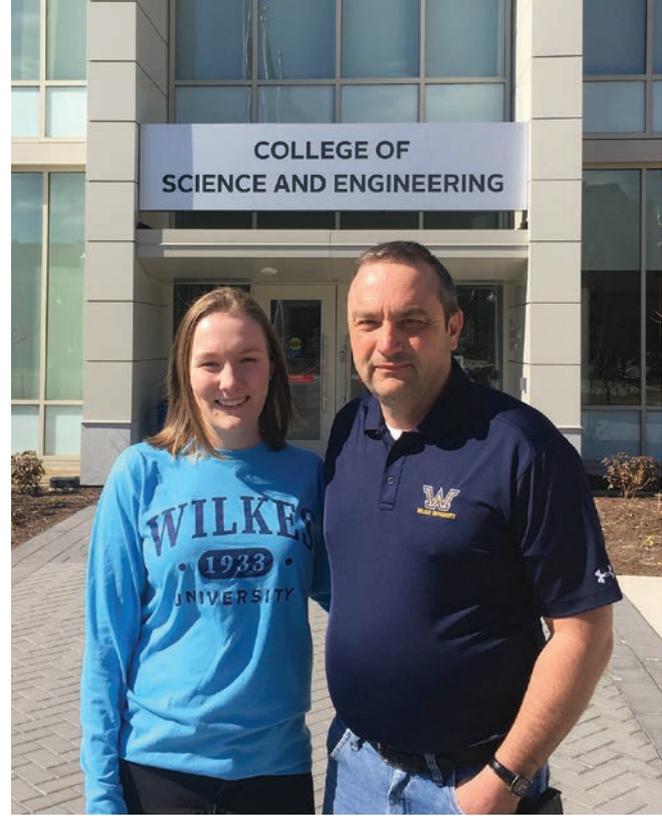
PHOTO BY DAN Z. JOHNSON

## 2019-2020 Alumni Scholarship Recipient: Lacey Bradshaw '20

This year's Alumni Association Scholarship recipient is Lacey Bradshaw '20, an electrical engineering major with a minor in physics. Lacey's dad, Mark Bradshaw '96, attended Wilkes and encouraged her to look more closely at his alma mater.

"From the moment I stepped onto Wilkes' campus I knew that it was the school for me. After only being here for a few months, I convinced my sister to apply to go to Wilkes too. Now she is a sophomore in the pharmacy program," says Lacey, who is expected to graduate in May 2020.

On campus, Lacey is involved in Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and Society of Women Engineers. She's also worked in the Admissions Office, the Disabilities Support Services Department, and as a teaching assistant in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Physics.



### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT WILKES?

The friendly atmosphere on campus. It's amazing how many people I wave hello to in one day.

### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST REWARDING OPPORTUNITY HERE AT WILKES?

The engineering department allows students to take small lab classes and to use equipment while learning. This is a huge opportunity that has prepared me for my future career field. I have been grateful to have this small class-size setting.

The Alumni Association Scholarship is awarded annually to a current Wilkes undergraduate student (freshman, sophomore or junior) who has had a parent or grandparent attend Wilkes and has at least a 3.0 GPA. Applicants must have a FAFSA on file.

### WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

I like to explore nature by hiking and kayaking when the weather permits. On bad weather days, I love to read and bake.

### WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

My future plans involve achieving my degree from Wilkes and later becoming a licensed professional engineer. I hope to work in a technology-driven career that will be based off of my studies at Wilkes.

### DO YOU HAVE A ROLE MODEL?

There are a lot of high-achieving people in my life that I look up to, but my main role model has been my dad. He is an engineer and has a great work ethic.

### HOW DOES RECEIVING THE ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP HELP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?

This scholarship will allow me to have a significantly smaller financial burden in the coming year. I will be able to focus more on my studies because I will not have to work as much to finance school.

### WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU WOULD GIVE TO UNDERCLASSMEN?

I would suggest that every student at Wilkes find what they are passionate about and pursue it. Wilkes offers so many opportunities that not every student knows about.



### LEIGH ANN M. JACOBSON, CFRE JOINS ADVANCEMENT TEAM

Leigh Ann Jacobson joined the Wilkes Alumni and Development team this summer to serve as director of alumni engagement and annual giving. Jacobson is a certified fund raising executive (CFRE) with 20 years of fund development experience. In her role, she will develop and manage programs to engage alumni in meaningful ways to deepen their relationship with Wilkes and to grow alumni philanthropic support. Jacobson can be reached at [Leighann.Jacobson@wilkes.edu](mailto:Leighann.Jacobson@wilkes.edu) or (570) 408-4608.

## The Class of 1969 Makes an Impact in 2019

The class of 1969 celebrated its 50th Reunion during Homecoming 2019. The Office of Alumni Relations recruited a committee of six class members, representing a range of majors and interests, to help plan a reunion event that would create unique and lasting memories for the Golden Colonels. Pat Burke '69, George Pawlush '69, MS '76, Bob Catina '69, Nancy Wanczyk Stinger '69, Bob Zeglarski '69, and Mike Glancey '69 were members of the Class of 1969 50th Reunion Committee. Throughout the Homecoming and reunion planning process, committee members are asked to join calls periodically where they'll learn about the plans for the reunion, and reach out to their classmates to encourage participation. The group reflected on their time at Wilkes and what it means to be a member of the committee.

Glancey says the opportunity to join the committee is a good way to "help catch up with friends, both old and new, in a relaxed and positive atmosphere."

"The more input there is, the better the chances there are for great results," he says.

The committee members agreed that the same opportunities they had in 1969 should be available to today's Wilkes students. To help support current Wilkes students and the progress at the University, the group fundraised around the occasion of their 50th Reunion. Gifts made between June 1, 2019, to

December 31, 2019, of any amount, to any area of Wilkes, count as part of the Class of 1969 reunion campaign.

Stinger, a first-generation college student, says that staying involved in the Wilkes community is important. "If you were fortunate enough to receive assistance from Wilkes, you should consider giving back. It's also a way to help others succeed and achieve their goals."

Glancey added that, "Opportunities like the Wilkes experience do not happen by accident. The experience should be continued and shared."

Having fond memories of their time at Wilkes encourages graduates to participate as alumni. Burke, Catina and Zeglarski all look back fondly on their time at Wilkes and reminisce about things that impacted their lives.

Burke, also a first-generation college student, says, "My professors made a lasting impression for more than 50 years and serving on this committee is a way to say thank you to Wilkes."

Catina, a retired educator, says that the liberal arts education received at Wilkes is so important. "My exposure to many things at Wilkes that I had never been exposed to before in my life made me a better educator and a better professional. Wilkes epitomizes what it means to get a liberal arts education."

"Well, I don't have any great memories of studying for my history exam," jokes Zeglarski, recalling the challenges of academics.

"I dormed with my classmates in tight quarters before the new men's dorm was built, and that made for some great, long-lasting memories and friendships."

Pawlush, who is also a member of the University's Board of Trustees, is grateful for Wilkes and attributes his successful career in health care marketing and public relations to his Wilkes education. "I am grateful to the faculty and administrators who mentored me and the experiences gained from my involvement in extra-curricular activities. I feel that I was well-prepared to meet the many challenges during my career," Pawlush says.

More than 20 alumni from the Class of 1969 returned to campus to celebrate their Golden Anniversary in Weckesser Hall on Saturday, Oct. 5. The event was made possible through the involvement of members of the 50th Reunion Committee. PHOTO BY KNOT JUST ANY DAY



**Do you have a reunion coming up in 2020?**

Get involved by contacting the Office of Alumni Relations. Email: [alumni@wilkes.edu](mailto:alumni@wilkes.edu), Phone: 570-408-7787.

## Megan Bucher Ruhmel '09 Researches Fuels of the Future for ExxonMobil

If biofuels derived from algae ever replace diesel in our trucks, Wilkes alumna Megan Bucher Ruhmel '09 might have a hand in making it happen. Ruhmel is a senior research technician at ExxonMobil, where her days consist of testing and analyzing the productivity of algae for the company's Algae Biofuels Program.

She and her research colleagues are working to find ways to dial down the protein and dial up the fat in algae through protein and genetic work.

"Remember," Ruhmel says. "Oil is fat." The normal strains of algae have a lot of protein. Algae biology is very challenging so researchers are working to develop and apply genetic tools to engineer algae strains that can one day be scaled up. The eventual goal is to take this science from the lab, to the greenhouse, to producing 10,000 barrels a day.

"I'm in the lab every day doing some sort of test," says Ruhmel. "The algae don't sleep. They grow like crazy."

Exxon worked to publicize this program by creating YouTube videos and Ruhmel, who comes equipped with an energetic and bubbly personality, even starred in one. She was interviewed by a 6-year-old girl and explains the work she does. It sounds complicated, but as Ruhmel explains to her interviewer, Farrah,

it's relatively simple and algae could be a better source of fuel for future generations. In the video, Ruhmel explains that this program is trying to find the most productive strain of algae that produces enough oil to create fuel. (To view the video, log on to YouTube and search School of ExxonMobil/algae)



**"I'm in the lab every day doing some sort of test. The algae don't sleep. They grow like crazy."**

- Megan Bucher Ruhmel '09

Above, Megan Bucher Ruhmel '09, a biofuels researcher for ExxonMobil, returned to campus this summer to speak at the Women Empowered By Science Camp.

Below, Ruhmel shares her passion for science with girls in one of the camp's labs.

PHOTOS BY CURTIS SALONICK



Ruhmel, who was the keynote speaker of the Women Empowered By Science (WEBS) Camp in July 2019, can't remember a time when she was not fascinated by science. When visiting her grandmother's house, her first stop was the bottom bookshelf to pick up where she left off in the science book collection. As a child, her favorite question was "Why?"

"I would always be asking questions: Why is the sky blue? Why, when you put these magnets together, they attract each other, but when you turn them around, they repel each other? Why does the ocean look blue but when you get in, it's clear?"

While at Wilkes, she fell in love with the laboratory setting and the faculty helped her to facilitate her energy, and prepare her for stepping out into the real world. She names Wilkes biology faculty Debra Chapman, Valerie Kalter, Kenneth Klemow, Jeffrey Stratford and Michael Steele as influences.

Ruhmel's path to ExxonMobil was not a direct one. "A lot of people just assume that you graduate and you get your dream job, and that's just not the case." She worked at three different companies before being recruited by ExxonMobil, which was looking for qualified candidates with genetics experience.

Ruhmel has also faced some challenges as a woman in science, but she encourages other women in STEM fields to keep challenging themselves and pushing their way into the room by asking, "Why can't women do what men can do?"

- By Jacki Lukas Eovitch '11

## Undergraduate

**1951**

**Nicholas Heineman** of Palm Coast, Fla., recently celebrated his 90th birthday. He has been retired for 15 years.

**1965**

**Steven Paradise** and **Jane Paradise '66** have moved to Canal Walk in Somerset, N.J. They have both retired.

**1966**

**Jane Paradise**, see Steven Paradise 1965.

**1972**

**Catherine Chandler-Oliveira** of Saint Lazare, Quebec, recently won the Richard Wilbur Award for her fourth book of poetry, "The Frangible Hour" (University of Evansville Press). Her first book, "Lines of Flight" (Able Muse Press) was shortlisted for the Poets Prize. Her fifth book, "Pointing Home," will be published later this year by Kelsay Books. Her website is [cathychandler.blogspot.com](http://cathychandler.blogspot.com).

**1979**

**Joseph P. Lavelle** of Washington, D.C., was recognized by The Best Lawyers in America, a peer-reviewed ranking recognizing lawyers for their professional excellence across the United States. He has more than 25 years of experience litigating patent cases and is currently employed by DLA Piper, a global law firm.

**1981**

**Elizabeth DeCosmo Dean '82, MBA '85**, formerly of Occoquan, Va., has relocated to the Wilkes-Barre area and been named executive director of the Irem Temple Restoration Project. She previously served as board chair of the Prince William Chamber of Commerce. Dean has been recognized with various awards including "Influential Woman of Virginia" and the Ethel Georges Labor of Love Award.

**1982**

**Andrew Bloschichak** of Harrisburg, Pa., was appointed by Gov. Tom Wolf to serve a three-year term on the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Health Policy Board. As a board appointee, he will serve as an advisor on regulations and other health-related issues. Bloschichak currently serves as the senior medical director for Capital Blue Cross.

**Alvin Bauman** of Carlisle, Pa., has retired as senior policy analyst from the Department of Veterans Affairs. He is now performing acoustic music at local venues near his residence. He posts updates on his performances on his FaceBook page, [JustAlvinsMusic](http://JustAlvinsMusic).

**1983**

**Amy Elias** of Knoxville, Tenn., is the recipient of a named fund, the Amy J. Elias Founders Award, awarded by The Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present. The association is an international



**1976**

**Mary Ellen (Dwyer) Jolley MA '94** of Nanticoke, Pa., was recognized by the League for Innovation at Luzerne County Community College. She was involved in the project, College Ready Math Program, which was recognized as the 2018 Innovation of the Year Award winner for the community college. The program was developed to help high school students enhance their college-ready math skills. Pictured from left are Rosana Reyes, a current Wilkes doctor of education candidate and vice president, enrollment management and student development; Mary Ellen Jolley '76, MA '94, off-campus programs specialist; and Nicole (Layaou) Saporito '94, professor and chair, mathematics and engineering at the community college.



**1981**

**Peter Steve** of Plymouth, Pa., was selected as the Northeast Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Advertising Federation's Silver Medal Award recipient recognizing his lifetime of achievement within the marketing and advertising community. The award was presented on March 1, 2019 at the Westmoreland Club, Wilkes-Barre. Steve is the owner and chief creative officer of Ideaworks Marketing in Wyoming, Pa.

scholarly arts organization started by Elias in 2009. The organization's scholarly journal, published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, was founded by Elias in 2016 and has won three national awards.

In 2017, Elias was appointed director of the humanities center at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and also continues her faculty appointment as professor in the English department.

**1991**

**Shelley (Umbra) Pearce** of Los Angeles, Calif., presented at an international tele-summit in March 2019. Entitled “Dharma and the Evolution of Conflict,” the five-day symposium highlighted renowned teachers, authors, religious educators, and psychologists presenting their unique views on conflict, compassion, and healing our divides including integral theory founder, Ken Wilber.

**1993**

**Jason Langdon** is now a senior vice president in the enrollment division of Ruffalo Noel Levitz. He previously worked at the College Board.



**2000**

**Jason Evans** of Lahaina, Hawaii, is the producer of Xploration Awesome Planet. The program was nominated for a daytime Emmy award in the category of outstanding educational or informational series. Evans has been the producer of Awesome Planet for all five seasons its run. This is his third year with an Emmy nomination and fourth Emmy nomination over the past 5 years. The photo, taken by Evans, is from a 2018 shoot about shark conservation in Fiji. In the shot is the host, Philippe Cousteau, an underwater camera person, and the dive safety team.



**1992**

**Lee Morrell** was recently named manager, advertising and public relations for Mercury Insurance, a provider of home, auto and business insurance. In his role, Morrell will work with the company's multiple external agencies to craft messages that position the company within the competitive insurance space. Under Morrell, those agencies manage public relations, marketing, social media, advertising and video creation. He also will work with the company's multiple sports marketing and entertainment initiatives to ensure these relationships continue to draw traffic and new customers. Morrell joins Mercury following four years as public information officer for the Saugus Union School District, a 15 school, elementary-only district in northern Los Angeles County. He lives in Saugus, Calif., with his wife LeeAnn and daughter Sydney, as well as a menagerie of three cats and two dogs. He is pictured cherry picking with his wife and daughter in Leona, Calif.

**1994**

**Nicole (Layaou) Saporito**  
– see 1976

**Debbie Yendrick** is beginning her 21st year teaching at Lincoln-Hubbard School in Summit, N.J. After being a classroom teacher for 20 years, she will be a basic skills teacher for reading and math. In May 2012, she was named Lincoln-Hubbard's Teacher of the Year.

**1998**

**Phillip Torres** of Elk Grove, Calif., is now a registered respiratory therapist at Sutter Medical Center in Sacramento, Calif.

**1999**

**Lucia Piccolino** of Scranton, Pa., recently started her own business, AutoBahn Title and Tag, in June 2018.

**2001**

**Angelina Cardoso** of Bridgeport, Conn., accepted a position as the director of curriculum development and implementation at Great Oaks Charter School in Bridgeport. Previously, Cardoso was an educator for the Diocese of Bridgeport for 14 years. More recently she was a math teacher and curriculum enthusiast at a charter school in Bridgeport.

**Katie (Pearson) Desiderio** MBA '03 of Allentown, Pa., was recently honored at the Lehigh Valley Business Forty Under 40 Awards Ceremony, as one of the Greater Lehigh Valley's most accomplished young business professionals. She is an associate professor of management at Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pa., where she also is executive director of graduate business programs.

**Matthew Reitnour** of Kenmore, N.Y., was recently promoted to associate athletic director for communications at Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y. Reitnour, who has served as the college's lead athletic department spokesman since 2006, is entering his 19th year at the institution.

#### 2004

**Nicolle Nyzio** of Media, Pa., published an opinion article in the *Daily Times* in Delaware County about the importance of encouraging STEM education for girls. She is the corporate environmental, health and safety coordinator for Heraeus for the Americas region, including sites in Yardley and West Conshohocken, Pa.

#### 2006

**Lauren Pluskey McLain** MBA '10 has been named associate vice president for institutional advancement and senior director of development and campaign at King's College in Wilkes-Barre. She previously was managing director and director of development for the F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts.

#### 2008

**Stacie Gogo** of Rockaway, N.J., performed at the National Theatre in Washington, D.C. with the Pushcart Players in "Stone Soup and other Stories." Gogo appeared

Off-Broadway as a Kit Kat Girl in "Cabaret" at The Players Theatre, as Penny Pingleton in "Hairspray" at the Westchester Broadway Theatre, in the ensemble of "Grease!" at the Surfflight Theatre and in international tours.



2002

**Stefanie Taylor** and husband, Andrew, welcomed their third child on March 6, 2019. His name is Alexander Joseph Stephen and he has two big sisters, Mackenzey and Ellyson.



2009

**Heather (Chulick) Gogas** of Wilkes-Barre, married Matthew Gogas '10 on May 25, 2019. The ceremony was held at Firwood United Methodist Church with a reception held at The Mary Stegmaier Mansion.

## Morgan Evans Serpico '14 is Activist for Suicide Awareness

When Morgan Evans Serpico '14 thinks back to her Wilkes graduation, her memories are different than most graduates. Instead of simply recalling it as a day of celebration, she also remembers that it happened barely a month after her brother David, a high school student, died by suicide.

While her classmates celebrated, Serpico felt alone.

"Everyone was in a happy space. No one understood my loss," says Serpico, who works as a regional manager for Suntan City tanning salons.



**"If I can be that one person for somebody, it would mean everything to me."**

- Morgan Evans Serpico '14

Morgan Evans Serpico '14 and her husband, Sandro Serpico '15 participate in northeast Pennsylvania's Out of the Darkness Walk in memory of her brother, David. The walk was the most improved in the nation in 2018, raising \$94,381. PHOTO COURTESY MORGAN EVANS SERPICO

Five years later, Serpico and her mother, Dawn Loftus Evans, have used their loss as the impetus for working to raise awareness and educate others about suicide prevention. Serpico is a volunteer to the board of the Northeast Pennsylvania chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and her mother, Dawn Loftus Evans, serves as board president. Their volunteerism is actively supported by Serpico's father, David A. Evans '84, and her husband, Sandro Serpico '15, who also participate in many events. The chapter recently was merged with the Lehigh Valley chapter to become the Eastern Pennsylvania chapter.

Serpico and her family played an integral role in growing the chapter's major fundraising event, the annual Greater Northeast Pennsylvania Out of the Darkness Community Walk. In January 2019, the event was honored as the most improved community walk at the national organization's 14th Annual Chapter Leadership Conference in Dallas, Texas. The 2018 walk raised \$94,381 and had 1,300 participants. It is the third largest walk in the state, behind Philadelphia and Harrisburg.

Morgan Serpico says she and her family want to help provide resources that were not available to them at the time of her brother's death. The subject of suicide has long been treated as taboo in American society and is seldom discussed openly. And as a person who lost a sibling, Serpico found it especially difficult. No resources focused on the death of a brother or sister by suicide.

"Nobody has a book that tells you what to do," she says.

After participating in a glow walk held at Wilkes that benefited the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Serpico and her family found the organization provided helpful resources and support. They began volunteering for the group. In addition to chairing the regional board, Serpico's mother, Dawn, delivers educational programs to schools, businesses and community groups, to raise awareness about suicide. Both mother and daughter have been trained to facilitate support groups for those affected by suicide loss. Both women staff informational tables at community events throughout the year.

Serpico plans to continue her volunteerism to raise awareness about an issue that affects many. Each year suicide claims more lives than war, murders and natural disasters combined, yet funding for research and education about it lags behind many other issues. Serpico is determined to make a difference.

"If one person had been able to save my brother, I would be so grateful to that person," Serpico says. "If I can be that one person for somebody, it would mean everything to me."

- By Vicki Mayk MFA '13



2009

**Jamie Gwynn** of Philadelphia, Pa., and his wife, Erica, had a baby girl, Olivia.

2010

**Jason Woloski** of Wilkes-Barre was one of 42 physicians in Pennsylvania recognized as a “Top Physician Under 40” by the Pennsylvania Medical Society. Honorees are nominated by colleagues and selected by a committee of Pennsylvania Medical Society member physicians. Woloski is a family physician with Geisinger Wilkes Barre-Community Medicine and also is an assistant program director with the Geisinger Kistler Family Medicine Residency Program in Wilkes-Barre. He serves on the board of trustees for both the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians and the Luzerne County Medical Society. Woloski also is a participant in the Pennsylvania Medical Society’s 2019 Year-Round Leadership Academy.



2010

**Megan Grim** of Lewisberry, Pa., was promoted to manager at Brown Schultz Sheridan & Fritz. Grim has over eight years of experience in public accounting. She provides tax services to small for-profit and nonprofit entities in a variety of industries, and specializes in employee benefit plans.

2011

**Allison Roth** of Denver, Colo., along with her mother, Elizabeth Eron Roth, and uncle, Joseph B. Eron, are publishing a book, “Ted Eron Designed That,” in November 2019. The book chronicles the iconic work of Roth’s grandfather, a package designer for some of the most iconic supermarket brands in the 1950s and 1960s. Roth served as the photographer of products, paintings and original sketches for the book.



2013

**Jessica (Short) Frazier MS '15** of Scranton, Pa., was married on May 25, 2019. Pictured are Wilkes alumni in attendance at the wedding: Kevin Ruitenbergh '13, Brian Palmiter '13, Anthony Cooper '14, Lauren Machell '15, Samantha Lindo '14, Joseph Pugliese '13, Jessica Short-Frazier '13, John Sweeney '13, Lindsey Coval-Cooper '15, Ashley Mehall '14, Bethany Sharpless-Chalk '15 and Dawn DiMaria '14.

2013

**Brian Palmiter** of Wilkes-Barre was named the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers 2019 Young Engineer of the Year. He has been promoted in his role of civil designer in the water and municipal service center at Borton-Lawson. Palmiter is actively involved in community organizations and activities including the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers, the United Way of Wyoming Valley and his alma mater, Wilkes University. Palmiter also serves as a mentor to younger engineers.

**Alexandra Roman** of San Diego, Calif., was accepted into the International Education Management program at the Middlebury Institute.

2017

**John Stoner** of Carlisle, Pa., was promoted to senior associate at SEK, CPAs & Advisors.

2018

**Joseph Ungvarsky** of Wilkes-Barre, is employed as a registered nurse at First Hospital in Kingston and is currently enrolled in Wilkes University’s psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner program. He will be starting a new job at the University as a clinical instructor for the undergraduate nursing program for psychiatric nursing.

## Graduate

### 1985

Elizabeth DeCosmo  
Dean '82 MBA – see  
undergraduates 1982

### 1994

Mary Ellen (Dwyer)  
Jolley MA '94 – see  
undergraduates 1976

### 2000

Susan Robel MHA of  
Salt Lake City, Utah, was  
named senior vice president  
of clinical operations and  
chief nursing executive for  
Intermountain Healthcare.  
During her 34-year career at  
Geisinger, Robel led efforts to  
standardize nursing practices  
and developed the Geisinger  
Nursing Institute. She also  
helped guide the organization's  
move toward value-based  
care, which is a major focus at  
Intermountain.

### 2003

Katie Desiderio MBA – See  
Undergraduates 2001

### 2006

Marlon James MA's book  
"Black Leopard, Red Wolf"  
is a finalist for the National  
Book Award in fiction. The  
winner will be announced  
on November 20, 2019.  
Described as an African  
"Game of Thrones," the book  
received critical acclaim when  
it was published in February  
2019. Film rights for the  
novel have been optioned by  
Michael B. Jordan's Outlier  
Society and Warner Bros.

### 2010

Lauren Pluskey  
McLain MBA – See  
undergraduates 2006

Dania Ramos MA of  
Bloomfield, N.J., is the series  
creator of "Timestorm," a  
fiction podcast about twelve-  
year-old twins from Newark  
who travel through time to  
preserve Puerto Rico's true  
history. The series relaunched  
on Aug. 1, 2019. Ramos is the  
author of the middle-grade  
mystery books "Ignacio in the  
Dark" and "Who's Ju?"



2006

John Bednarz MA of  
Shavertown, Pa., has been  
selected a Pennsylvania  
Super Lawyer for 2019. This  
is the eleventh consecutive  
year Bednarz has been  
named a super lawyer.

### 2015

Jessica (Short) Frazier MS –  
See undergraduates 2013

### 2016

Mona Nashman EdD  
of Alberta, Canada,  
was recognized with a  
Distinguished Alumni Award  
from the University of  
Alberta Alumni Association  
for leadership in international  
education. Nashman was  
honored at one of the highest  
levels when Queen Elizabeth  
made her a member of the  
Most Excellent Order of the  
British Empire in 2016.



2013

David Tirado of Lancaster,  
Pa., has been named  
director of information  
technology at Saxton &  
Stump, LLC, a full-service  
law firm. Previously,  
he worked at multiple  
school districts in central  
Pennsylvania in positions  
ranging from network and  
PC specialist to director  
of information technology  
and services. Tirado has  
worked for over a decade in  
the IT industry at multiple  
companies in the Lancaster  
area, including as the  
system administrator for  
Cardinal Technologies and  
the network administrator  
for Miller & Miller CPAs.

### PICTURE PERFECT: GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING PHOTOS FOR CLASS NOTES

*Wilkes* magazine accepts photos of  
alumni weddings and to accompany  
class notes reporting achievements and  
milestones. To ensure that we can use  
the photos submitted, please follow  
these requirements:

1. Email jpeg or tif files to [wilkesmagazine@wilkes.edu](mailto:wilkesmagazine@wilkes.edu) or upload as  
an online class note submission on the alumni website at  
[www.wilkes.edu/alumni](http://www.wilkes.edu/alumni).
2. Digital photos must be at least 4 by 6 inches at 300 dpi or 1200  
pixels by 1800 pixels. If you are sending a photo from your smart  
phone, choose full size or the largest size when prompted to specify  
the size you wish to send.
3. Please identify everyone in the photo, starting from left to right.  
Identify both alumni and non-alumni in submitted photos. Include  
class years for alumni.

## In Memoriam

### Remembering Francis J. Michelini, Wilkes University's Second President

The sign in Michelini Hall proclaims “We’re all in this boat together.” It quotes Francis J. Michelini, Wilkes’ second president and the man for whom the residence hall is named. For Michelini — known as “Dr. Mike” — the quote was especially apt. He was the president who helped to ensure Wilkes’ survival in 1972 in the aftermath of the devastating flood that enveloped campus following Hurricane Agnes. When his passing was announced on Sept. 12, 2019, many remembered that he quite literally set out in a boat to help with flood rescue operations.

Michelini was the first Wilkes president to ascend from the academic ranks when he succeeded founding president Eugene Farley in 1970. When he first joined what was then Wilkes College in 1955, he was the third full-time faculty member in the biology department. In 1963, he became Wilkes’ dean of academic affairs, where he left his mark developing programs and majors.

Two years after becoming president, he was the driving force behind what was known as “Operation Snapback” following the Agnes flood. Dr. Mike brought together the campus community to assist in recovery efforts and ensure that campus was ready for classes in fall 1972.

Speaking at a campus memorial service held in October, Thomas F. Kelly ’69, retired vice president of external affairs at Binghamton University, recalled that many wondered whether Wilkes would survive. “Dr. Mike assured us that we could do it — that saving Wilkes was a noble and worthy task,” Kelly recalls. Kelly also says that Michelini asserted that “good education takes place when you have good faculty and good students interacting.” Those things remained after the flood.

Kelly accompanied Dr. Mike on visits to organizations asked to donate money to Wilkes’ flood recovery efforts. He said they were invariably impressed with him. “They saw a charismatic



Francis J. Michelini, Wilkes’ second president, is seen at the 2015 dedication of Michelini Hall, a residence hall named in his honor.

leader with great energy and a great strategic plan for restoring Wilkes,” Kelly states. “When Wilkes needed a hero, Dr. Michelini was there and Wilkes can be forever grateful.”

He left Wilkes in 1975 to serve as the president of the Commission of Independent Colleges and Universities, an organization supported by 80 independent colleges in Pennsylvania created to represent the public policy interests of those institutions and their students.

In November 2015, Wilkes dedicated the residence hall at 80 West River Street in his honor. The Michelini Greenhouse on the roof of the Cohen Science Center also is named for him.

Michelini’s undergraduate career at New Jersey’s Seton Hall College was interrupted when he served in the Army Air Corps during World War II.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Seton Hall, a master’s degree in biology from the University of Delaware, and his doctorate in biological sciences from the University of Pennsylvania.

Over the years, he frequently returned to Wilkes from his home in Mechanicsburg, Pa., arriving in his bright red sports car. Recently he participated in regular gatherings with other former Wilkes presidents — Christopher Breiseth, Joseph “Tim” Gilmour and Patrick F. Leahy — to compile an oral history of the institution.

**1947**

**Victor Swinski** of Hunlock Creek, Pa., died on April 8, 2019. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. Prior to retiring, he was employed as a draftsman for American Car Foundry in Berwick and Milton.

**1950**

**Bernice Perloff Fierman** of Kingston, Pa., died on March 20, 2019. She was a life member of Temple Israel and served as president of the temple sisterhood and as regional president of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America.

**1951**

**Arthur Bloom** of Groton, Vt., died on Feb. 7, 2019. He served in the U.S. Army for two years as a sergeant.

**Patricia (Patty) Boyd**

**Thomas Brady** of Hanover, Pa., died on June 5, 2019. She was a teacher at Frederick High School in Frederick, Md., and also taught English literature and honors English at California Area High School in western Pennsylvania. After her retirement, she continued substitute teaching in Hanover and later taught English as a second language to families in the area.

**Joseph Donald Stephens**

of Hobe Sound, Fla., died on May 21, 2019. Stephens was a dentist with practices in Randallstown, Md., and Eldersburg, Md., for 40 years. He was a veteran and served in the U.S. Air Force. Stephens supported the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Maryland

and was recognized as the 1965 Jaycee of the year. In 1966, he was honored as the world's 5960 Junior Chamber International Senator. He was a member of the American Dental Association and professionally honored as a Fellow in the Academy of General Dentistry. A former president of the Wilkes University Alumni Association, the Dr. Joseph Donald Stephens, DDS Global Scholars Award at Wilkes was established in his honor. His survivors include his daughter, Deborah Stephens Kalaritis '78, and her husband, Panos Kalaritis '77, and his son, Joseph Stephens Jr. '79.

**Burl Updyke** of Sweet Valley, Pa., died on Sept. 3, 2019.

Updyke was employed as television engineer at WBRE. He then went on to publish a weekly newspaper, "Country Impressions," in Sweet Valley for 20 years. He founded and built two Christian radio stations, WRGN FM. in Pennsylvania and a mission outreach, WIVH, FM. in St. Croix, U. S. Virgin Islands. He operated both stations 30 years until his retirement.

**1953**

**Anne Markovich Kish** of Avoca, Pa., died on June 11, 2019. During World War II, Kish was stationed at the U.S. Marine Corps training facility on Parris Island, S.C., where she was a truck driver. She was an assistant professor of literature and an English scholar at Wilkes College for 20 years. She was active as a volunteer in veterans affairs in the Wilkes-Barre and Scranton areas for many years.

**Frank Radaszewski** of Wilkes-Barre died on March 21, 2019. Radaszewski was a veteran of the U.S. Army. Before retiring in 1995, he was an executive director of human resources at RCA in Scranton, Pa.

**1955**

**Robert Dymond** of Bethel Park, Pa., died on Feb. 21, 2019.

**John Finn** of Forty Fort, Pa., died in July 2019. Finn earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Bucknell University. He served in the U.S. Army from 1949 to 1952, where he was stationed in Europe. Finn was employed by Martin Aircraft in Baltimore as a design engineer. In 1957, he began working for PennDOT and was part of the team that built the interstate highway system throughout northeastern Pennsylvania. He later was a PennDOT district engineer for a seven-county region. During his tenure as district engineer, he oversaw the construction of the Cross Valley Expressway in Luzerne County. He later established his own engineering consulting practice.

**1958**

**Thomas Myers** of Bear Creek Twp., died on March 16, 2019. He served in the U.S. Navy.

**Joseph Oliver** of York, S.C., died on Aug. 26, 2018. He was a retired teacher from Northern Burlington County Regional High

School in New Jersey and also served 12 years on the Willingboro, N.J. board of education, with five years as president.

**1959**

**Bernard Dancheck** of Mountain Top, Pa., died on April 2, 2019. He served in the U.S. Army Reserves.

**Frank Gazda** of Naples, Fla., died on March 6, 2019. A former Wilkes-Barre resident, he was an optometrist in northeast Pennsylvania for 56 years. He was a Korean War veteran serving in the U.S. Air Force. Gazda was the past president of the Northeastern Optometric Society, a member of the Pennsylvania and American Optometric associations, an original staff member at the Low Vision Clinic of Allied Services for the Handicapped and a past president and member of the Plymouth Kiwanis Club.

**Edward Mikolaitis** of

Hanover Green, Pa., died on May 31, 2019. He was an airman in the U.S. Air Force. Before retiring in 1993, he taught English and history and subsequently was an administrator with the Perkiomen Valley School District in Montgomery County, Pa.

**1962**

**William Ackerman** of Bear Creek Twp., Pa., died on March 19, 2019. He served with the U.S. Army in Germany as a medic and retired from Wilkes-Barre General Hospital after 34 years.

**William Greytock** of Wilkes-Barre died on May 8, 2019. Greytock served for two years in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Salem. Until his retirement, he was a bookkeeper for Apex Building Products Co. of Edwardsville, Pa.

**Leo T. Morgan Jr.**, of Pittston, Pa., died on Nov. 24, 2017. He served in the U.S. Navy. Morgan was a certified public accountant and worked at Lavanthol Kreckstein. Later he worked for Dupont Anthracite as an accountant and auditor.

### 1963

**Douglas Bennington** of Old Tappan, N.J., died on July 6, 2016. Bennington was a social studies supervisor at Bergenfield High School for more than 33 years. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1953 to 1956 and was a member of the National Railway Historical Society.

**Gerald A. Moffatt** of Naples, Fla., died on March 24, 2019. Moffatt served on Wilkes' Board of Trustees.

**Barbara Soyka** of Exeter, Pa., died on March 23, 2019. Soyka was as an English teacher at Coughlin High School for 38 years.

### 1964

**William Shaner** of Dallas, Pa., died on March 6, 2019. Prior to retirement, Shaner worked for Commonwealth Telephone Company. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge, the Telephone Pioneers and was on the board of the Boy Scouts of America.

**Richard Shemo** of Shavertown, Pa., died on July 29, 2019. Shemo served in the U.S. Army at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. He later became an insurance adjuster with Aetna Life and Casualty. He later worked at the law firm Hourigan, Kluger and Quinn as a litigation specialist, retiring after 25 years with the firm in 2005.

### 1968

**Mary (Sokash) Challenger** of Dillsburg, Pa., died on April 18, 2019. She worked as a senior computer programmer analyst for 26 years at Mechanicsburg Naval Supply Depot.

### 1969

**Lillian (Geida) Dzwilefsky** of Yulee, Fla., died on Aug. 23, 2018.

**Linda Esopi** of Allentown, Pa., died on April 3, 2019. She was a registered nurse in the Allentown School District until her retirement.

**Michael Gryszkowiec** of Chocowinity, N.C., died on Sept. 29, 2018. He served in the U.S. Army Reserves. Gryszkowiec retired as director of planning with the General Accountability Office in Washington, D.C. after 37 years of service. He later worked part time with FEMA, helping with disaster recovery.

**Charles Morgan Sr.** of Warminster, Pa., died on March 15, 2019. He was the owner and operator of Penn Locksmith of Warminster for 35 years.

**Howard Weinberg** of Salisbury, Md., died on April 19, 2019. Weinberg began his career teaching in the Interboro School District in Delaware County, later becoming chair of the business department. He served as president and chief negotiator of the Interboro Education Association.

### 1970

**Frances (Rosato) Liva** of Mountain Top, Pa., died on July 11, 2019. Liva worked in recreational services at Retreat State Mental Hospital until its closing. She later was a licensed real estate agent, working for Tom Heart Realty company.

**William Tarbart** of Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., died on Dec. 5, 2016. He was a management consulting professional. In 2011, he received the Ancestral Colonel Trophy award at Wilkes. He served as the Wilkes Alumni Board president from 2004–2007.

**Alvin Ullman** of Reading, Pa., died on June 28, 2019. Ullman studied at Dickinson School of Law before serving in the U.S. Army Jewish Chaplaincy at Fort Mead, Md. After his military service, he worked in advertising sales before starting Area Directory Publishers Inc., a suburban telephone directory company.

### 1972

**Anthony Calore** of Oak Ridge, N.C., died on Feb. 4, 2019. As a member of the U.S. Marine Corps, Calore was stationed in Biloxi, Miss., Santa Ana, Calif., Korea and

Japan. He retired as a logistics manager after 39 years with Standard Brands, now RJR Nabisco.

### 1973

**John J. Fetch III** of Blakeslee, Pa., died on Aug. 2, 2019. He was a sales consultant in the construction industry.

**Richard Murosky** of Redlands, Calif., died on Feb. 2, 2017.

**Delphine Opet** of Miami, Fla., died on Aug. 18, 2019. She taught English at the Dade County High School for more than 35 years.

### 1974

**Janice Margaret Reindel** of Bear Creek Twp., Pa., died on Aug. 14, 2019. Reindel was employed for 30 years at Luzerne County Children and Youth Services. Most recently, she led its independent living unit, receiving a prestigious state-wide award for her service in June 2018.

### 1975

**William Lee** of Hanover Twp., Pa., died on March 16, 2019. Lee served in the U.S. Air Force as a jet engine mechanic during the Korean War. Lee and his family were the owners of the Sans Souci Mobile Home Court along with the Sans Souci Amusement Park. Hanover Township's Lee Park was named after his family.

**Robert Schoner** of Spring, Texas, died on June 19, 2019. He served in the U.S. Army with the 17th Infantry Regiment of the 7th Infantry

Division. He was employed by Allegheny Airlines and Anthracite Marble and Tile.

### 1976

**John Norce** of Hallandale Beach, Fla., died on Aug. 12, 2016.

**Rita Loftus** of Wilkes-Barre died on May 11, 2019. Loftus taught in the Dodson and Palmer schools in the Wilkes-Barre Area School District and also taught math at the district's Kistler Elementary School.

### 1980

**Joseph Blizman** of Wilkes-Barre died on June 9, 2019. Blizman was a science teacher at the former Sacred Heart of Jesus Slovak Parochial School in Wilkes-Barre. He later taught at several other parochial schools in the Diocese of Scranton.

**Joseph McFadden** of Doylestown Pa., died on Aug. 24, 2019.

### 1986

**Katherine (Farrell) Hines** of Mountain Top, Pa., died on Aug. 23, 2019. Hines was employed by SmithKline Beecham before joining Sallie Mae in 1990. For the past 19 years, she worked as a job coach with life skills students through Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18.

### 1991

**Janice (Miller) Browning** of Peckville, Pa., died on July 24, 2017. She was a registered nurse and a certified pediatric nurse.

### 1993

**Mariclare Stinson** of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., died on April 23, 2019.

### 1994

**Niki Corba Wallace** of Wilkes-Barre died on Sept. 6, 2019. A wife and mother, she was a talented artist, who also enjoyed playing golf and the outdoors.

### 1997

**Paul "PJ" Crawford** of Huntington Mills, Pa., died on March 14, 2019. Crawford served in the U.S. Army for four years during the Gulf War era and earned the rank of sergeant. He was a design engineer for Commonwealth Telephone Company before becoming a police officer for the City of Wilkes-Barre in 2008.

### 2005

**Harry Aultz** of Lewistown, Pa., died on Jan. 28, 2019. Aultz was a history teacher at the Mifflin County Junior High School and he was also a junior high and varsity football coach.

### 2008

**Jonathan Miller** of Scranton, Pa., died on July 7, 2019. He was a roofer for Garvin Construction, Scranton.

## Graduate

### 1986

**Mary Ann (Koshatzky) Keirans MBA** of Mountain Top, Pa., died on Aug. 2, 2019. Until her retirement, Keirans was the administrator for the former Visiting Nurses Association. Prior to that, she worked in New York City as a public health nurse. She was the

recipient of the Athena Award for women's business leadership skills in Luzerne County.

### 2000

**Lisa Marie Kliamovich-Tomchik MS** of Hunlock Creek, Pa., died on April 16, 2019. She was employed for several years as a vocational rehabilitation counselor in Wilkes-Barre before earning a teaching certificate in elementary education from King's College and a master's degree from Wilkes University.

## Faculty

**Mahmoud H. Fahmy**, of Dallas, Pa., died on Sept. 23, 2019. Fahmy taught at Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pa., and Wilkes University, where he had an accomplished 30-year career as an academic and administrator. He was professor emeritus of education at Wilkes. He completed his undergraduate education at Alexandria University, Alexandria, Egypt. He left his birth country of Egypt to come to America in 1958 to study at Columbia University in New York City, where he earned his master's degree in education and history. He earned a doctorate at Syracuse University. He quickly became a naturalized U.S. citizen and his favorite saying was, "I am an American by choice." Fahmy devoted time volunteering on various boards and community organizations in Luzerne County. He was often called upon by the community for his expertise and knowledge of global affairs and Middle East politics, providing media

commentary and lectures. He strongly believed in interfaith cooperation, and led one of the first interfaith delegations to Egypt and Israel after the Camp David Accords were signed in 1978. His survivors include his wife of 60 years, Irandukht Vahidi Fahmy, and children, Roya Fahmy '83 of Scranton, Pa., Raef Fahmy '84 of Newburyport, Mass., and Randa Fahmy '86 of Washington, D.C.

## Friends of Wilkes

**Stanley Davies** of Mechanicsburg, Pa., died on Aug. 5, 2019. He was a U.S. Navy veteran and later served multiple roles at Royer Industries in Kingston, including machine assembly, design, general manager and president. His wife, Pattie S. Davies, is a Wilkes trustee emerita.

**Arthur L. Piccone** of Wilkes-Barre died Aug. 4, 2019. An accomplished lawyer in Luzerne County, Pa., he was the first assistant district attorney and special counsel to the Department of Labor. He was a workers' compensation judge and also served as solicitor for the Borough of Forty Fort, Luzerne Borough and Luzerne Borough Sewer Authority. He was president of the Luzerne County Bar Association and president of the County Conference of Bar Leaders. He served as the 100th president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, as well as president of the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation.



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# Wilkes University

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766

## calendar of events



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### November

- 14-16 "Nine," University Theatre production, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 8 p.m.
- 16-17 "Nine," University Theatre production, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 2 p.m.
- 1-Dec. 8 Pete Souza, "Two Presidents, One Photographer," Sordoni Art Gallery
- 24 Chorus and Chamber Singers Concert, First Presbyterian Church, 3 p.m.

### December

- 5 Jazz Orchestra, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 8 p.m.
- 7 Flute Ensemble, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 8 p.m.
- 8 Civic Band, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 3 p.m.
- 9 Chamber Orchestra, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 8 p.m.
- 9 Classes End
- 23 Winter Intersession begins

### January

- 5-9 Maslow Foundation Salon Reading Series, 7 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 5, Bares and Noble, Public Square, Wilkes-Barre; 7 p.m., Jan. 6-9, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center

10 Winter Intersession ends

13 Classes Begin

14-Feb. 28 Nancy Crow, "Material Pulses: Seven Viewpoints," Sordoni Art Gallery

18 Martin Luther King Day Recess

19 Winter Commencement

### February

- 1 Athletics Hall of Fame Ceremony, Arnaud C. Marts Center
- 12 Alice Sola Kim, author, Allan Hamilton Dickson Spring Writers Series, 7 p.m. Salon, Kirby Hall
- 20-22 "The Spitfire Grill," University Theatre production, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 8 p.m.
- 22-23 "The Spitfire Grill," University Theatre production, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 2 p.m.
- 29 Spring Recess

### March

- 9 Classes Resume
- 18 Poupeh Missaghi, author, Allan Hamilton Dickson Spring Writers Series, 7 p.m., Salon, Kirby Hall
- 21-May 17 "Drawn to Abstraction, Marks on Paper from the 60s and 70s," Sordoni Art Gallery

### April

- 2-4 "The Tragedy of Julius Caesar," University Theatre production, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 8 p.m.
- 4-5 "The Tragedy of Julius Caesar," University Theatre production, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 2 p.m.
- 18 Choreographer's Concert, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 3 p.m.
- 18 Spring Dance Concert, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 8 p.m.
- 19 Terry Gross, host of National Public Radio's *Fresh Air*, Max Rosenn Lecture in Law and Humanities, 2 p.m., Dorothy Dickson Darte Center
- 25 Civic Band Concert, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts, 7:30 p.m.
- 29 Classes End

### May

- 16 Spring Commencement