

# WILKES

SPRING/SUMMER 2020



#forevercolonel

## Reflecting on a Year as President in a Time Like no Other

As the 2020 spring semester comes to a close, so too will my service to Wilkes as interim president. As I reflect upon the last year, many moments come to mind: welcoming the newest class of Colonels along the Karambelas Gateway during Welcome Weekend, handing diplomas to our students on behalf of my colleagues at our September and January commencements, watching our student-athletes celebrate by ringing the victory bell at Bruggeworth Field and receiving the presidential chain of office from Dan Cardell '79, my longtime friend and our current chair of the Wilkes Board of Trustees, during my installation. These are among the most memorable; however, my interactions with students and colleagues across campus and at our events always remain the highlight of my days.

In the last issue of *Wilkes*, I wrote about having the opportunity to remember the life of Dr. Francis J. Micheline — known affectionately as “Dr. Mike” — who we lost in September 2019. Dr. Mike was president of Wilkes during 1972 when floodwaters that followed Hurricane Agnes ravaged our campus and countless communities in our region. Through his Operation Snapback, Dr. Mike led recovery efforts after the flood, ensuring that Wilkes was able to reopen for the fall semester.

As I write this, we are in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, which has brought unthinkable changes to our lives and left us with more questions than answers. Now, more than ever, I am moved by the patience and resolve displayed by Dr. Mike and his colleagues. They confronted seemingly insurmountable challenges head-on, and worked tirelessly to rebuild our campus so that the mission of Wilkes could continue. During this pandemic, when we are once again challenged as an institution, I am inspired by our sense of community, and the strength and the determination shown by Wilkes students, faculty, staff and alumni throughout these trying times. And, I am confident that this interminable spirit and resilience of Wilkes and its people will raise us from the challenges of the pandemic and have us emerge as a stronger and more effective university.

I hope you all continue to stay well, stay healthy and be Colonel.



Interim President Paul Adams confers with colleagues in the Weckesser Hall board room. PHOTO BY STEVE HUSTED/KNOT JUST ANY DAY

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul S. Adams".

**Paul S. Adams '77 MS '82**  
*Interim President*

### WILKES MAGAZINE

**Interim University President**  
Paul S. Adams '77 MS '82

**Executive Director of Marketing Communications**  
Kim Bower-Spence

**Senior Editor**  
Vicki Mayk MFA '13

**Creative Services**  
Ashleigh Crispell '15

**Executive Director of Communications and Graduate Marketing**  
Gabrielle D'Amico '04, MFA '17

**Web Services**  
Brittany Terpstra  
Cory Burrell

**Communications Specialist**  
Kelly Clisham MFA '16

**Intern**  
Cabrini Rudnicki

**Layout/Design**  
Kara Reid

**Printing**  
Lane Press

### OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

**Chief Development Officer**  
Margaret Steele

**Director of Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving**  
Leigh Ann Jacobson, CFRE

**Associate Director, Office of Alumni Relations**  
Mary Balavage Simmons '10, MBA '16

### ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

**President**  
Ellen Stamer Hall '71

**Vice President**  
Matt Berger '02

**Secretary**  
John Sweeney '13

**Historian**  
Cindy Charnetski '97

*Wilkes* magazine is published two times a year by the Wilkes University Office of Marketing Communications, 84 W. South St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766, wilkesmagazine@wilkes.edu, (570)408-4779. Please send change of address to the above address.

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.



22



28

8

26



# contents



Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the hopeful faces of Wilkes University students and faculty in the online grid of classes held on Zoom and other online platforms are the new normal. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY KARA REID

## FEATURES

### 8 #Forever Colonel

Wilkes University's response to a global pandemic includes maintaining a sense of community.

### 22 All Stars

Individuals, coaches and teams inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame reflect on the experience of being Colonels on playing fields and courts.

### 26 Past Preserved

Gail Wallen '68 shares the stories of Holocaust survivors among members of the military.

### 28 Global Perspective

Marnin Michaels '92 is an internationally recognized wealth management attorney.

## DEPARTMENTS

### 2 On Campus

### 31 Alumni News

### 32 Giving Back

### 34 Class Notes

Have a story idea to share?

Contact us at [wilkesmagazine@wilkes.edu](mailto:wilkesmagazine@wilkes.edu) or *Wilkes* magazine, 84 W. South St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18766.

*Wilkes* magazine is available online at [www.wilkes.edu/wilkesmagazineonline](http://www.wilkes.edu/wilkesmagazineonline)



## Greg Cant Becomes Wilkes' Seventh President in June — With a Head Start Thanks to Campus Visits

Greg Cant was introduced as Wilkes' seventh president at an event in the Sordoni Art Gallery in December 2019. Since that announcement, Cant has made getting to know the University community a priority. Although his official start date is June 15, 2020, he's visited Wilkes several times in the last few months, attending some events and meeting with faculty, staff, students and friends of the University.

He attended board of trustees and alumni association board meetings on March 6, and also met with faculty and was introduced to community leaders at a reception. On other occasions, he saw a play in the Dart Center and attended a Wilkes women's and a men's basketball game at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey. The game was a short drive on the Garden State Parkway from where Cant is completing his time as dean of the Feliciano School of Business at Montclair State University. He even made a quiet visit to the Wilkes campus — dressed in jeans and remaining incognito among other parents — when he accompanied his daughter Eliza to Scholars Day in February. She will be part of Wilkes' first-year class in the fall. His wife, Angela, came with him for some of the visits, enjoying her own introduction to the campus community, including meeting with students. Their son Jackson, a high school student, will be living on campus with them when they move to campus.

"My trips to campus were primarily designed to meet as many people as possible," Cant explains. "Because it was a closed search, these opportunities with faculty, staff and students have been



Greg Cant, dean of the Feliciano School of Business at Montclair State University in New Jersey, will join Wilkes University as its seventh president in June.

important as I continue to explore the environment and culture that makes Wilkes so special. I was especially honored to meet our alumni, both on our board of trustees and in our greater community. Their success is the best endorsement for a Wilkes education. And their continued dedication to our University speaks volumes for the experience they had here."

Cant's appointment follows a national search that began in February 2019. A native of Australia, he has 30 years of experience as an educator and administrator in the United States and abroad. He has served as the dean of the Feliciano School since July 2015. As dean, Cant provided strategic leadership for a business school of more than 3,700 students and 300 faculty and staff members. Under his leadership, the school developed and implemented over two dozen programs that enhanced enrollment and academic quality, leveraged interdisciplinary expertise and addressed critical market needs. During his tenure, the Feliciano School of Business experienced overall enrollment growth of nearly 50 percent, including a graduate population that grew by 115 percent. Prior to his role at Montclair State University, Cant was the dean of the Offutt School of Business at Concordia College in Minnesota. To learn more about Cant, please visit [www.wilkes.edu/incomingpresident](http://www.wilkes.edu/incomingpresident).

His encounters with members of the Wilkes family since accepting the job have confirmed his earliest impressions about the University. Discussing the reasons for his interest in coming to Wilkes, he says, "I was attracted to Wilkes not only because of its stellar reputation, but also because of the way it serves its



During a visit to campus this spring, Greg Cant meets with members of the Alumni Association Board of Directors. PHOTO BY BRIDGET HUSTED

“There is an incredible culture at Wilkes, one that is entirely dedicated to the health and success of our students.”

– Greg Cant



students. Strong academic offerings, an emphasis on small classes and hands-on learning and a commitment to first-generation students are things I care about deeply.”

Cant frequently has spoken with interim President Paul Adams '77 MS '82 after campus closed due to the pandemic. He will be

**PRESIDENTIAL INSTALLATION PLANNED FOR OCTOBER**

As *Wilkes* magazine went to press, the installation of Greg Cant as the University's seventh president is planned for the weekend of Oct. 16-18, 2020 to coincide with the Founders Gala. More details will be announced during the summer.

“There is an incredible culture at Wilkes, one that is entirely dedicated to the health and success of our students. I am honored to become part of a University that cares as deeply as Wilkes does. These are uncertain times and many difficulties lie ahead. That “Be Colonel” spirit is so important as we move into a new reality in higher education. One that will challenge all of us. I am eager to get to campus and get to work.”

**Editor's Note:** The story about the University's presidential search which appeared in the fall 2019 issue omitted the name of Erica Acosta, associate director of diversity affairs, from the list of people serving on the presidential search committee. We apologize for the omission.

## Biology Professor William Terzaghi to Deliver O'Hop Lecture

William Terzaghi, professor of biology, will deliver the 2020 O'Hop Final Word Lecture. His topic will be “Gene Editing: How It Might Improve Human Health and Food Security.” Gene editing, while sometimes controversial, offers the potential for improving treatment of health conditions and improving crops to make them more resistant to disease and pests. Terzaghi's lecture will describe technologies used for gene editing and will examine the pros and cons of gene editing for humans and in agriculture. He also will discuss how gene-editing technologies are used at Wilkes, and ways that they may be used in the future. Ethical dilemmas and the potential repercussions in the general population also will be addressed.

Terzaghi joined the Wilkes biology department in 1995. He also co-directs the synthetic biology track in the University's master's degree program in bioengineering. A plant biologist, he is a member of the American Society of Plant Biologists and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Terzaghi earned his doctorate from the University of Utah. He was the recipient of both a National Science Foundation Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship and completed post-doctoral work at the University of Pennsylvania and the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Terzaghi is widely published in research journals and is the recipient of numerous grants in support of his research, including funding

from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He is a six-time winner of the outstanding faculty award at Wilkes and also has been recognized for innovative and interdisciplinary teaching.

The late Paul O'Hop established the Final Word Lecture to foster the exchange of ideas and dialogue among Wilkes faculty, staff and administrators and to showcase the talents and scholarly abilities at the University. O'Hop retired from Wilkes in 2001 after serving 16 years as vice president of business affairs and auxiliary enterprises. Recently the lecture has concluded the University's research symposium. The date for the 2020 lecture has yet to be determined.



## Rosenn Lecture With National Public Radio's Terry Gross Scheduled for April 25, 2021

The Max Rosenn Lecture in Law and Humanities with National Public Radio's Terry Gross will now be held on April 25, 2021. The lecture was previously scheduled for April 19, 2020. The 2021 event will be held at 2:30 p.m. in the Dorothy Dickson Dart Center for the Performing Arts. Details about registering for the 2021 event will be released at a later date. The lecture is free and open to the public.

The lecture, "All I Did Was Ask: An Afternoon With Terry Gross," will offer a behind-the-mic glimpse of her innovative and hugely popular public radio show, *Fresh Air*. Recounting stories of extremely successful interviews as well as relating entertaining tales of particularly disastrous interviews, Gross will share a side of herself that her listeners rarely get to see.

Terry Gross, host of National Public Radio's *Fresh Air*, will talk about her successful — and not so successful — interviews at Wilkes on April 25, 2021.  
PHOTO BY JESSICA KOURKOUNIS

Gross is National Public Radio's award-winning host and co-executive producer of *Fresh Air*. Gross, who has been host of *Fresh Air* since 1975, when it was broadcast only in greater Philadelphia, is not afraid to ask tough questions. But she sets an atmosphere in which her guests volunteer the answers rather than surrendering them. The *San Francisco Chronicle* calls the unique approach, "a remarkable blend of empathy and warmth, genuine curiosity and sharp intelligence." *Fresh Air* is broadcast on nearly 600 stations and became the first non-drive-time show in public radio history to reach more than five million listeners a week. The broadcast went on to win The Peabody Award in 1994 for its "probing questions, revelatory interviews and unusual insight."



## WILKES INTRODUCES EMERGING LEADER AWARDS FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS

Wilkes University has launched the Colonel Emerging Leader Award, a new pre-scholarship granted to high school juniors who demonstrate high academic and leadership potential. Selected students will be guaranteed a minimum merit award of \$10,000 per year at Wilkes if they enroll at the University after high school graduation.

High school counselors may nominate up to four students from their schools to receive the awards. To qualify, students must have a minimum 3.25 grade-point average on a 4.0 scale or an 85 percent grade average and at least a 1000 SAT, 21 ACT or 900 PSAT score. If students have not yet taken the PSAT, SAT or ACT, they must demonstrate continual, active participation in two extracurricular programs, two community service projects, or a combination of both.



## Esther B. Davidowitz to Receive President's Medal at Founders Gala, Rescheduled on Oct. 17, 2020

Esther B. Davidowitz will be honored with the President's Medal at the Founders Gala on Oct. 17, 2020. Now in its seventh year, the Founders Gala celebrates the University's legacy of educating first-generation college students. The gala will be held at 6 p.m. at the Westmoreland Club, 59 S. Franklin St. in Wilkes-Barre. The University announced in April 2020 that the gala, previously scheduled for June 6, would be postponed until fall.

**“Few people have preserved the history of Wilkes University in the detail and eloquence of Essy Davidowitz.”**

– Interim President Paul S. Adams '77 MS '82

The highlight of the event will be the presentation of the President's Medal to Davidowitz, who is a resident of Kingston, Pa. The President's Medal is bestowed annually on an individual whose personal and professional life reflect the highest aspirations of Wilkes University. It's an appropriate recognition for a woman who has been a dedicated leader and supporter of Wilkes for nearly 50 years.

Davidowitz was a member of the University board of trustees from 1973 through 2006 when she received emerita status. During her tenure on the board, she served as treasurer and secretary, and was the chair of the academic program committee and executive board. Davidowitz has been a close advisor and friend to each of the University's presidents and co-edited the writings of Wilkes' founding president, Eugene S. Farley, in “Essays of an Educator.”

Her decision to contribute her time and leadership to Wilkes grew out of her earliest experiences with the institution. “I made a meaningful choice. When I reflect on life it is important to have goals and I believe those goals must be meaningful,” Davidowitz says. “I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Farley and wanted to carry on his legacy and dreams for Wilkes and our students.”

“Few people have preserved the history of Wilkes University in the detail and eloquence of Essy Davidowitz. She has been a force in our evolution, seeing us through one of the most formative moments in our history when Wilkes College became



Esther B. Davidowitz's nearly half-century of contributions to Wilkes will be celebrated when she receives the President's Medal at the Founders Gala. PHOTO BY STEVE HUSTED/KNOT JUST ANY DAY

Wilkes University in 1990,” said interim President Paul S. Adams '77 MS '82. “As former chair of our academic affairs committee of the board of trustees, Essy had a guiding hand in the academic development of the University. She has always been an advocate for the educational advancement of our students, especially those who are the first in their family to earn a degree. It is our honor to award her with the President's Medal.”

A prominent figure in the Wyoming Valley, Davidowitz received numerous accolades for her professional, civic and community efforts. She was awarded the Distinguished Community Service Award by the Greater Wilkes-Barre Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and was the recipient of the Hannah G. Solomon Award from the National Council of Jewish Women. Davidowitz and her family have also been recognized by the borough of Kingston, Temple Israel and Generation2Generation for their work in the community. Davidowitz is a graduate of Wyoming Seminary, Kingston, Pa., and Simmons College, Boston, Mass.

To become a sponsor of the Founders Gala or to reserve tickets, please visit [www.wilkes.edu/foundersgala](http://www.wilkes.edu/foundersgala).

## Biology Major Emily Russavage Receives NSF Research Fellowship

Emily Russavage '20 has received a prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. Russavage, of Dunmore, Pa., earned a bachelor of science degree in biology in December 2019. The fellowship, which is awarded to early-career scientists, includes a three-year annual stipend of \$34,000 and an annual \$12,000 allowance for tuition and fees that is paid to the graduate institution. Russavage will use the fellowship to enter a doctoral program in entomology at Texas A&M University in fall 2020. While there, she will study pests, their predators and their effect on crops. The Graduate Research



Emily Russavage '20 is seen showing off a discovery made while doing field research with Jeff Stratford, associate professor of biology. PHOTO COURTESY JEFF STRATFORD

Fellowships are the oldest graduate fellowships of their kind. The National Science Foundation notes that the program “has a long history of selecting recipients who achieve high levels of success in their future academic and professional careers.”

Russavage is only the second Wilkes student to apply and receive the research fellowship while she was an undergraduate. Biology alumna Leila Hadj-Chikh '97 also was awarded the fellowship as an undergraduate. Two other Wilkes biology alumni, Andrew Bartlow '10 and Rachel Curtis-Robles '10, each received the graduate research fellowship when they were already enrolled in their doctoral programs. Bartlow received his doctorate from the University of Utah and is now a Director's Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

Curtis-Robles earned her doctorate at Texas A&M and is now an epidemiologist in San Mateo, Calif.

Russavage's selection for the fellowship reflects the significant research experience she accrued while she was a Wilkes student. Such opportunities are a hallmark of a Wilkes education. Her senior research project with Ned Fetcher, coordinator of Wilkes Institute for the Environment, studied the effects of climate change on arctic plants. As a member of the research team of Jeff Stratford, associate professor of biology, she studied the reproductive success of the wood thrush, which is one of the most rapidly declining bird species in Pennsylvania. She and Stratford also have co-authored a paper examining differences in the predatory habits of birds in rural, suburban and urban environments using clay caterpillars. The paper has been submitted for publication to the journal *Urban Ecosystems*.

## Wilkes Earns Grant, Takes Lead With It's On Us Initiative

Wilkes University received a \$30,000 “It's On Us” grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Wilkes was one of 36 colleges and universities to receive funding, which will be used to raise awareness about sexual and intimate-partner violence. This is the third time Wilkes has received the award.

An initiative of Gov. Tom Wolf, “It's On Us PA” is a statewide campaign that invites everyone to play a role in ending sexual assault. The grant will be used to establish and continue programs that educate and train students, faculty and staff on identifying, responding to and reporting sexual violence.

The University also took a leadership role teaming up with the national It's On Us organization to host the first stop on the organization's first-ever national training tour. It's On Us started as a federal initiative created in 2014 dedicated to the prevention of college sexual assault through consent education, bystander intervention, and survivor support. It's On Us is now housed at Civic Nation, a 501c3 nonprofit organization. The organization encourages universities to create student chapters. According to the It's On Us website, there are 250 registered campus chapters in the 2019-2020 school year.

The one-day event held at Wilkes in February focused on college students training their peers in sexual assault prevention, utilizing It's On Us's three core education pillars: sexual assault awareness and consent, bystander intervention, and survivor support. About 120 students from colleges and universities in the region attended. The national organization worked with Wilkes' new student chapter of It's On Us to coordinate the training tour event. Wilkes' student chapter was created in spring 2019 by students Lindsay Becker and Ashley Baker, both criminology majors. Andrew Wilczak, assistant professor of criminology, serves as faculty advisor.

## “Year of the Vote” Celebrates 100th Anniversary of Women’s Voting Rights

The Sordoni Art Gallery is marking the 100-year anniversary of women receiving the right to vote in 2020 through a series of events called “Year of the Vote: Gender, Politics & Power.” The year-long celebration includes thematic lectures delivered by Wilkes professors, discussion groups called “EqualiTEAs,” podcasts and open mic nights.



Each month is centered around a specific theme. Previous themes include an Introduction to the Year of the Vote in January, and Black History Month in February. Although the series was interrupted by the closing of the University for the pandemic, it is expected to continue some time this year. Upcoming themes will include art, education, sports and politics.

A podcast titled “In the Kisser” is also released at the end of every month and is available for streaming on [wilkes.edu/yearofthevote](http://wilkes.edu/yearofthevote). The podcast is produced by Kristen Rock of the Communication Studies Department.

Wilkes faculty who have collaborated on the project include Heather Sincavage, assistant professor and director of the Sordoni Art Gallery; Mia Briceno, associate professor of communication studies; Helen Davis, associate professor of English; Maria Grandinetti, associate professor of nursing; Andreea Maieran, assistant professor of political science; Jennifer Thomas and Ellen Newell, both associate professors of psychology; and Lisa Reynolds, assistant professor of integrative media.

For a complete listing of events, visit [wilkes.edu/yearofthevote](http://wilkes.edu/yearofthevote).

PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES

## Wilkes Appoints Fulbright Program Advisor

Gina Zanolini Morrison, professor of global cultures, has been appointed Fulbright Program advisor for Wilkes University. The advisor serves as the formal link between Wilkes and Fulbright. Run by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to build lasting connections between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.

Although the Fulbright Program recalled its grantees due to the pandemic, the organization is proceeding with reviewing applications for the 2021-2022 academic year. Undergraduate students

and recent graduates apply to the U.S. Student Program. Two types of grants are available under the student program: the English Teaching Assistance awards, which pairs U.S. students with classroom teachers in another country, and research and study awards for those seeking to do specific research or study in other countries. The program expects to award about 2,100 student grants in 2021-2022.

Since its inception in 1946, the Fulbright Program has given more than 380,000 students, scholars, teachers, artists, professionals, and scientists the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas, and contribute to finding solutions to shared interna-



tional concerns. Fulbright alumni have achieved distinction in many fields, including 59 who have been awarded the Nobel Prize, 82 who have received Pulitzer Prizes, and 37 who have served as a head of state or government.



#forever

CAMPUS PHOTO BY STEVE HUSTED/  
KNOT JUST ANY DAY  
INDIVIDUAL PHOTOS COURTESY OF WILKES  
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND FACULTY





# colonel

## WILKES DEALS WITH GLOBAL PANDEMIC AND MAINTAINS A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

**Senior communication studies major Sarah Matarella's tap shoes were still sitting in her room in University Towers at the end of April, awaiting her return. When Wilkes University first transitioned to remote learning on March 13 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Matarella and other students had expected to return on April 6.**

**It was not to be.**

Within days, the number of Americans falling ill from the virus ballooned. The Wilkes campus closed, remote classes were held for the rest of the semester to ensure health and safety and most University employees worked from home. Facilities staff, some food service workers and campus police remained on campus to carry out some essential functions.

Interim President Paul Adams '77 MS '82 continued to travel from McCole House on South River Street to his office in Weckesser Hall, on many days the only figure walking on Fenner Quadrangle.

Like the rest of America, the family of Colonels was dealing with an unprecedented situation in spring 2020. Wilkes had endured floods and threats of floods from the nearby Susquehanna River, but never before had stopped holding classes on campus in the middle of a semester because of a health threat. On these pages, members of the University community talk about how Wilkes continued holding classes remotely, recruited a first-year class and maintained the family feeling that is the basis of the University's culture. They share their own stories of life in quarantine. Through it all, Colonels remained connected. In Zoom classes and meetings, on social media and in music videos and text messages. They reminded one another what it means to be part of the Wilkes family.

Faculty, staff, students and alumni took to heart a message from interim president Adams: "Please remember that none of us has left Wilkes, we are just circling in a larger orbit around it."

# LEADING WILKES DURING THE PANDEMIC: A CONVERSATION WITH INTERIM PRESIDENT PAUL ADAMS '77 MS '82

In this question-and-answer story, interim President Paul Adams '77 MS '82 talks about how the University responded to the pandemic and considers the future of Wilkes in a post-COVID-19 world.

## When did you begin to convene a team to deal with the pandemic and how often did you meet?

The emerging pandemic came on the radar when Justin Kraynack, assistant vice president and chief of operations for risk and compliance management, and Mark Allen, interim vice president of student affairs, put together a team to anticipate a Wilkes response in the latter days of February. They were anticipating some of the challenges that could come with the upcoming spring break trips. The first task force meeting

was on Feb. 26. The travel guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention involved just a few countries at that point — China, Iran, Hong Kong, Italy.

## At what point did you realize that this was a situation unlike any other that Wilkes has faced?

As we grew closer to our spring break, given the travel advisories at the time, we were able to allow our students to travel. I think we had only one student decide not to go on any of our spring break trips because of the virus.

Our students were on break as cases began to surge worldwide and pressures began to build. We received some concerns (just a couple) from a community member and students and

parents that we had travelers returning from Europe from spring break, although none were in any (CDC) level one or two countries. Schools whose breaks were scheduled in the weeks after ours made the decision to extend their spring breaks — pending more information becoming available. Our early spring break, from Feb. 28 to March 8, turned out to be advantageous for our spring athletes because it gave them an opportunity to play some contests that were early on their schedules. What a blessing that timing turned out to be as sports seasons were eventually canceled!

By late afternoon on Wednesday, March 11, I realized we needed to finally make the decision to go to remote learning. We announced to the campus on Thursday morning, March 12.

I have always been struck by how quickly the landscape changed — not by the day, but by the hour. We made decisions based on the best information

## VOICES OF THE PANDEMIC

Here and throughout the rest of these pages, members of the University community share their personal reflections of life in a global pandemic.

To read full versions of Wilkes Voices of the Pandemic, go to [www.wilkes.edu/voices](http://www.wilkes.edu/voices).

**FATIMAH ALTAHER** is a senior biology major and her husband, Hassan Alhodar, is a senior mechanical engineering student. They are from Saudi Arabia and live in Wilkes-Barre with their daughter Shahad and son Abdullah.

First, I hope that whoever reading this is staying safe and healthy. My name is Fatimah, a student at Wilkes University, and I am from Saudi Arabia. I live with my spouse who is also a student of Wilkes, daughter, and son. None of our relatives are nearby us...which is something that we were used to. At the beginning of this pandemic, we as an international family and as students are struggling especially that there is no daycare open, which had been super helpful. In addition, this pandemic, as all of us know, is transferred easily and therefore quarantine is required. However, toddlers will never get that and that is the most difficult part: how to control your child while going outside?

At the same time, how to make them busy at home when you are having homework that's due tomorrow or even an exam that's due at midnight.

As a mother, wife, and a student, every morning I look at the mirror and tell myself that everything is going to be okay! That you will pass this semester with great grades, not good grades! That your family in-country will do okay and none of them will get infected! It's tough when you know that your family (in Saudi Arabia) is also in danger but you are not able to reach them. Although our government has given us permission to go back, we didn't want to because this will increase the probability of being infected. Finally, I would like to thank all of the staff of Wilkes University, especially the international department, who is taking care of us.



FATIMAH ALTAHER



Environmental engineering students Jill Weston and Scott Heffelfinger take advantage of the free Wifi that Wilkes made available in the parking lot behind the University Center on Main for students without internet access. The pair are roommates who chose to remain living near campus after remote classes began.  
PHOTO COURTESY SCOTT HEFFELFINGER '20

we had at the time, and then would find out shortly thereafter that everything we decided was already outdated. We were continuously disappointed to have to make more and more restrictive decisions to protect our campus community.

I am so grateful to all of my colleagues for the support and counsel they have provided me. As impressed as I have always been with them, this experience has only served to raise my admiration for and gratitude to them. We have a bond through this experience we won't forget. We have come to appreciate each other's gifts and the efforts all have made to support each other and our students and colleagues.

**Can you describe the process that you and other senior leadership have used to arrive at key decisions?**

We used four criteria to guide our decision-making:

1. First, we must do all we can to protect the health and safety of students, faculty and staff and their families by sharing resources and information.
2. We need to be certain that we are responsive and proactive in our responses to the changing and urgent needs of the members of our community.
3. We need to support our faculty and staff to deliver high-quality remote education and services to enable our students to make progress toward their degrees. And

4. We need to act to preserve the future of Wilkes by continuing to recruit our incoming class and retain those students who have already chosen us. And, at the same time keep our mission and goals front of mind.

Early on I suppose we were all naïve about the impact and extent of the pandemic and wanted to be optimistic that we would get through this faster than we could. I think we were also sensitive to make decisions that needed to be made to keep everyone safe, but to do so in an incremental way so as not to discourage everyone before they had an opportunity to come to terms with the depth of the crisis on their own.

**Communications have been vitally important as the campus community has worked remotely. Can you talk about the variety of ways you have chosen to communicate?**

I would emphasize how important it was to have a vehicle to communicate with the campus. Establishing the Wilkes coronavirus web page proved invaluable for getting our messages out. The page had a feature that allowed us to answer questions from students, faculty, staff and families.

In addition to that page, it has been important for me and other members of the senior administrative team to provide clear and candid communications about new developments and changing policies impacting our University community. These have taken the form of email



**1/15** Justin Kraynack, Wilkes assistant vice president for operations and compliance, begins actively monitoring the emerging virus.

**1/21** The United States confirms its first case of COVID-19 in Seattle, Wash.

**1/29** White House forms coronavirus task force.

**1/30** World Health Organization (WHO) labels the virus a public health emergency of international concern.

**1/31** U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services declares a public health emergency.

**2/17** Coronavirus web page published on wilkes.edu. The page provides resources and early information about the virus.

**2/26** The first meeting of an expanded Wilkes Coronavirus Task Force held to assess the situation and coordinate the University's response.

**2/28** Communication to campus with travel recommendations related to spring break. CDC had recommended avoiding nonessential travel to China and South Korea.



**2/29** First coronavirus death confirmed in the United States.

**3/3** The U.S. surpasses 100 cases of the virus.

**3/6** Following CDC guidelines, Wilkes suspends travel to China, South Korea, Japan, Italy or Iran. New policies require students to have appointments to visit the health center. Plan developed to deliver classes remotely.

messages from me, our Interim Provost, Terese Wignot, and others. Finally I have found using social media — Facebook and Instagram — are great ways to share informal messages, often with videos, to help maintain our sense of community.

**The decisions that have been required have been especially hard for seniors in the Class of 2020. How difficult has it been for you as president to make decisions impacting that particular group of students?**

I think nothing was as heartbreaking for us than to think about the impact on seniors and their families in their last semester. Our graduating students had worked so hard and achieved so much. And, now these life-altering events took away something that was uniquely theirs — a final semester on campus with their friends, classmates and faculty — celebrating all the milestones and traditions that are attendant to their final semester and graduation. And we lament the loss of all the last athletic contests,

theater performances, or conference trips — all the experiences that are missed.

**What moments stand out for you as faculty, staff and students have dealt with this unprecedented time?**

I think one moment was having to console seniors for the sense of loss they were feeling and not being able to provide any assurance as to when we will be able to have a commencement ceremony to recognize their achievements. (Note: At press time, the commencement ceremony was rescheduled for Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020.) Certainly there have been other difficult moments: learning that students have been exposed through their families after returning home and then contracting the virus themselves; learning that a student lost his father due to complications of the virus; and hearing that one of our undergraduates, who while home was seriously injured in an ATV accident, could not have her family with her because of COVID-19

restrictions, while being treated for the trauma in emergency and the ICU.

Probably the most agonizing decision for me to date was whether or not to send our 90-plus students from Panama home. We chose to keep them on campus.

I have felt so blessed at this time to be living on campus in the McCole House — being able to go to the office every day and “hold down the fort” at Weckesser Hall. With each passing day, fewer and fewer visits to campus were being made by our colleagues. I am always so grateful to see our facilities, public safety, mailroom and dining service staffs who are deemed “essential” and keep all things running. It is, perhaps, the most beautiful time of the year on campus — first the cherry trees, forsythia and daffodils bloomed. Next came the azaleas and tulips — eventually the dogwoods! The campus looks so wonderful and I feel privileged to still be able to enjoy it. There are still some students in the neighborhood apartments. While few people are wandering the

## WILKES UNIVERSITY CORONAVIRUS TASK FORCE

**Mark Allen**, interim vice president for student affairs

**Charles Cary**, executive director of facilities

**Gabrielle D’Amico ’04 MFA ’17**, executive director of communications

**Juli Ann Killian**, coordinator of health and wellness services

**Justin Kraynack**, assistant vice president for operations and compliance

**Diane O’Brien**, director, health and wellness service

**Rocco DiPietro**, CSP, Safety, Health and Environmental Professional, Cocciardi & Associates

In addition to the task force, the President’s Cabinet was consulted and involved in decision-making and communications. Members include vice presidents, the academic deans and representatives of Faculty Advisory Council and University Staff Advisory Council.



Day shift custodian Dave Pickett disinfects common areas in the Henry Student Center after students left campus due to the pandemic. Facilities staff received training on disinfecting procedures and continued to work in the first days after campus was vacated. PHOTO BY STEVE HUSTED/KNOT JUST ANY DAY

## VOICES

**HOLLY FREDERICK '92 MS '93** is an associate professor of environmental engineering. To read this reflection in its entirety, visit [www.wilkes.edu/voices](http://www.wilkes.edu/voices)

Technology does allow us to be productive academically during this time, but I hope we all appreciate the downside of too much reliance on the computer. I have found myself using my phone more for conversation as opposed to Zoom or email. I think that conversation with our colleagues and our students is what we miss most. We can 'get by' with Zoom but it is not the same as a regular conversation with time for updates on what is going on in our lives and the decisions being made about jobs and just the observations about everyday life.

The most challenging part of this 'stay at home' order is the removal from social events and personal interactions. We miss a lot of regular life events that we look forward to: my daughter's high school graduation, prom, senior events,

### HOLLY FREDERICK '92 MS '93



my son's wedding, our (Wilkes) graduation, senior projects presentations, Order of the Engineer banquet. We can tell ourselves that we are staying healthy and keeping others healthy and this will be the benefit, but you really can't get that time back. That is why it is important to appreciate what you can about the time now.

Hope to be back to 'normal' soon. That is, if there is a normal.

sidewalks, it is good to see our students from time to time and be able to check in with them. I've always felt connected to campus, but perhaps never more than now. We feel such responsibility for the well-being of all — campus, students, staff, faculty, alums, neighborhood. It can feel daunting at this unprecedented moment in time, but we never lose sight of the privilege it is!

#### **You have a decades-long association with Wilkes. Can you reflect on what this time is like in contrast to the many other times you have known?**

In all my decades at Wilkes, I've been through some challenging moments — three "near-flood" scares (one of which resulted in us evacuating the campus), student deaths, fires, serious injuries — but none, of course, that touched so many in what will be such a long-lasting and profound way. None of us, yet, can begin to imagine how Wilkes will be impacted for the long-term by the pandemic. I have to believe that the University, just like all of

us, will be transformed by this moment in history. I try and tell everyone with whom I speak, that the Wilkes they left on March 13, won't be the Wilkes they return to when all is safe for the campus to reopen. The uncertainty of when and how this will end makes this challenge so much more confounding and daunting than what we have experienced before. At this point, we have no idea for what we are preparing. We have to plan for the short-, medium- and long-term. We are scenario-planning for several different outcomes.

#### **Much of the decision-making has involved dealing with immediate concerns. What are some long-term issues that you foresee for Wilkes as a result of the pandemic?**

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic disruptions arrive at a time that was already challenging for U.S. higher education. Flat or shrinking enrollments, intense competition over students, increased tuition discounting, rising costs and shifting demand

**3/10** Pennsylvania colleges and universities begin to send students home.

**3/11** WHO redefines the outbreak as a pandemic. Wilkes Interim President Paul Adams announces cancellation of the career and internship fair, saying that all large-group gatherings are being reviewed. Plans for remote learning and for staff to work remotely are progressing.



**3/12** The U.S. has more than 1,200 coronavirus cases. MAC cancels all athletic contests through March 30

**3/13** President Donald Trump declares a national emergency. At Wilkes, face-to-face classes are suspended. A return-to-campus date is set for April 6.

**3/15** First COVID-19 case confirmed in Luzerne County.

**3/16** Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf closes all nonessential businesses in the state. Order includes all colleges and universities.

**3/18** Wilkes staff begin to work remotely. All residence halls close except those housing international students. Less than 100 international students remain. Buildings accessible by swipe access only. Health center and dining hall continue to offer service. All athletic competitions cease for remainder of spring semester.

**3/19** Pennsylvania governor lists stricter guidelines closing all non-life-sustaining businesses. U.S. surpasses 10,000 cases.



Q&A continued on page 16

Dear Students, Colleagues and Families,

In the past few days I've written to you with operational details of how we will move forward with delivery of our curriculum. Today, however, I wanted to write with a more personal message to convey the University's commitment to all of you in this unprecedented moment.

Every day at noon, the carillon in the Burns Bell Tower has played our Alma Mater. In the first verse of our *Alma Mater* are these words: *honor, faith and courage, truth and loyalty*. These have always been guiding words for our experience at Wilkes. At this time of uncertainty, as we plan our short- and long-term response to COVID-19, these seven words have resonance for us as we continue to reach out to you with the latest news from campus.

First, I want you to know that we *honor* the experience you, our students, colleagues and alumni have at Wilkes. We are doing everything we can to assure the continuity of your experience, but we will do so in a way that places your health and safety foremost in our concern.

Second, we have *faith* that this is a temporary situation and we will find our way through this — with patience, resolve and care for one another.

Third, we all need to have the *courage* to face this adversity head-on. While we are unclear how long we will all be away from campus, we won't lose our bearings and we will continue to remember those values that make Wilkes unique and special for all of us. A hallmark of a Wilkes education is that we extract wisdom from our experience. We will capitalize on our past experiences in this moment of challenge, and we will call upon all we know about our students and their families, our colleagues, our alumni and our community to restore the experience at Wilkes that we have come to value.

**Editor's Note:** The campus community received the following letter from Interim President Paul Adams on March 18, 2020

Fourth — *truth*. We are committed to keeping you informed of the latest news from campus and sharing that with you in a timely way. And, we pledge to do that forthrightly and candidly.

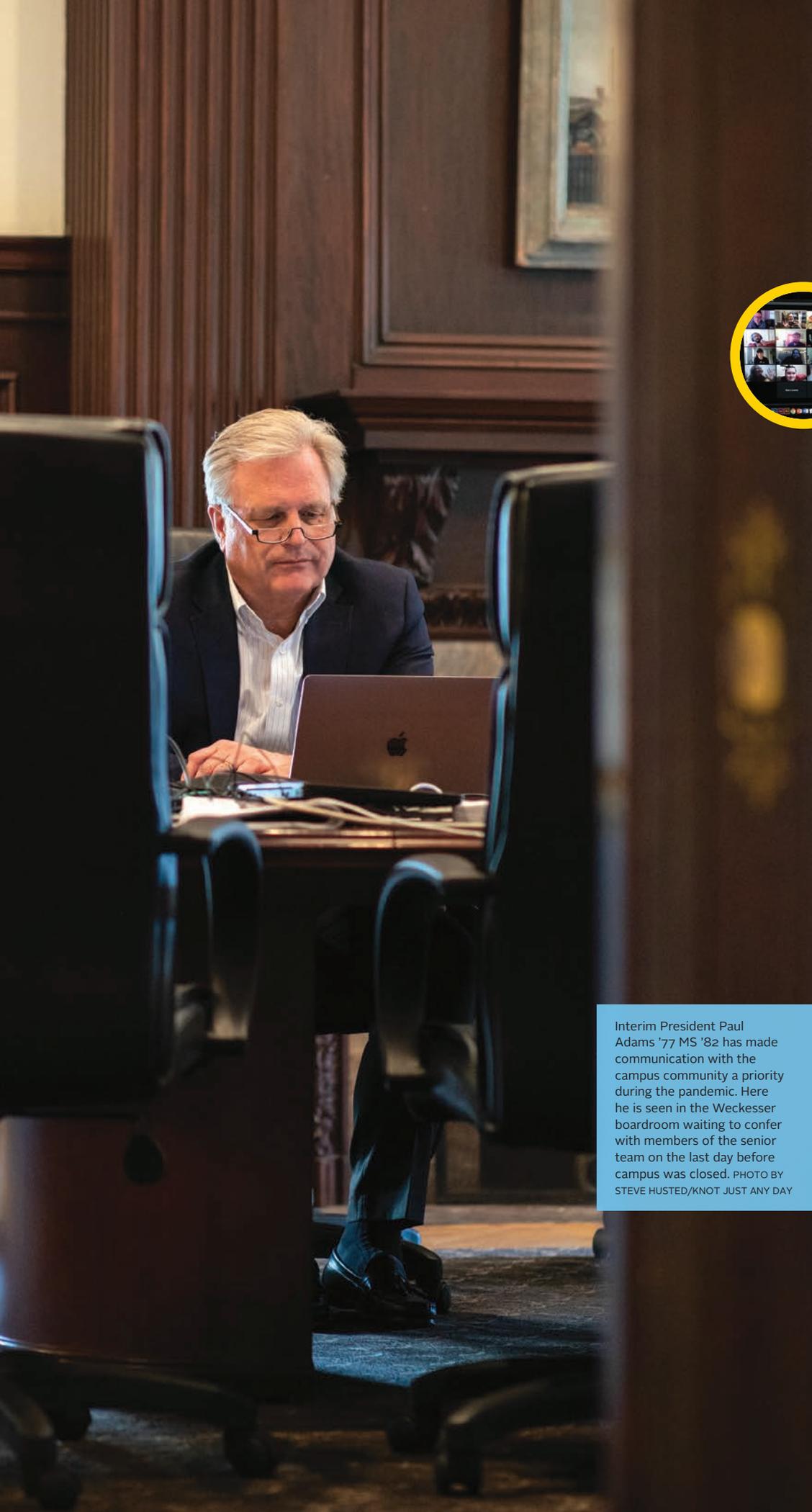
And lastly — *loyalty*. We have been so touched by the responses we've received all across campus from every one of our constituencies who have pulled together to provide support for one another. The loyalty that you demonstrate is the spirit of Wilkes that will carry us through this temporary interruption and dislocation.

One of the truths of this COVID-19 pandemic is that things evolve quickly and that decisions we have made on one day may have to be changed the next based on new guidance from local, state and federal authorities. While you are away from campus, please continue to check your Wilkes email and Wilkes' social media accounts for the latest updates. You can also find the latest information at our Wilkes COVID-19 web page at [www.wilkes.edu/coronavirus](http://www.wilkes.edu/coronavirus). That page also has a resource that allows you to submit your questions to us. We'll work every day to address those questions and post our answers on the website.

Until we are with you again, please stay well and stay informed. And, through all of this — *Be Colonel!*



**Paul S. Adams '77 MS '82**  
Interim President



Interim President Paul Adams '77 MS '82 has made communication with the campus community a priority during the pandemic. Here he is seen in the Weckesser boardroom waiting to confer with members of the senior team on the last day before campus was closed. PHOTO BY STEVE HUSTED/KNOT JUST ANY DAY

**3/20** Campus building access available only for urgent needs with access provided by public safety. Food service available for takeout only. Health services and library close.



**3/25** Wilkes announces classes will continue remotely for the rest of spring semester 2020. Prorated credits and refunds on housing, parking and meal plans to be offered. Staff continue to work remotely.

**3/26** United States reports its first 1,000 deaths. The number doubles in two days.

**3/27** U.S. surpasses 100,000 cases.

**3/28** Wireless access made available for students from the parking lot behind the University Center on Main.

**4/1** The May 2020 commencement ceremony is postponed.

**4/2** The Founders Gala, the University's premier fundraising event, is rescheduled to October 17, 2020.

**4/3** The CDC recommends that all Americans wear face coverings in public.



**4/9** University announces that students will be able to choose a Satisfactory/Pass/Withdrawal option in addition to a 4.0 grading scale for the spring 2020 semester.

**4/20** Wilkes announces commencement ceremonies for the Class of 2020 will be on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020.

Timeline sources: *The New York Times*, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center, *USA Today*

preferences were among the challenges colleges and universities were already managing. Those challenges have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and we do not know what the long-term financial implications will be for Wilkes and other higher education institutions.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, we have had to focus on operational triage. With the most immediate challenges addressed, it is time to contemplate what's next:

1. When will we be able to resume on-campus operations?
2. What will be the pace, scale and depth of action required by the University to respond to the pandemic and all its effects?
3. How will the pandemic impact social norms, our sense of community and how we manage events?
4. Will students in the fall want to return to a residential setting? Will first-year students and new transfer students still be willing to come away to college? Will families impacted financially be able to afford to attend Wilkes? For the foreseeable future, how will the pandemic change how students and their families choose their college or university?
5. How will the experience of remote learning this semester influence student and faculty perceptions of online learning?
6. Where are we most at risk? Where can we be most resilient?
7. What unique opportunities present themselves at this moment in time that may have been out of our reach or seemingly unimaginable?
8. As we adapt to a new normal, how do we keep our eye on continuing to become better, not just surviving?
9. How will our view of working and learning remotely change in the post-viral world?
10. What adjustments will need to be made in programs across the University in the wake of a smaller student population?



Panamanian student Jennifer Yanez enjoys a solitary meal in the Henry Student Center cafeteria. She was at Wilkes on a study abroad experience from Universidad Tecnológica de Panama and returned home soon after this photo was taken. Another 89 students from Panama stayed at Wilkes, unable to return home, during the lockdown. Not long after this photo was taken, food was available only as takeout due to increased social distancing recommendations.  
PHOTO BY STEVE HUSTED/KNOT JUST ANY DAY

**What would you want future generations of Colonels to know about what happened at Wilkes during this time?**

That this was a difficult moment for everyone. We all had to adjust our lives and our plans to safeguard public health and the well-being of all those around us. That everyone worked together to do what was right even though it meant we had to give up those things that we cherished the most.

**VOICES**

**DARREN MARTINEZ** is a junior English major from Hanover Township, Pa.

The strangest thing is how much I thought I hated school. Setting alarms, warming up the car in the morning, pushing my body to stay awake for 8 a.m. news writing classes. I didn't enjoy any of this, but I think I miss it.

The liminal space that is my room is a different kind of pain. Time has ceased to have meaning. I sleep when the birds begin to sing and wake as their babies cry for dinner. My classes and deadlines feel so distant and trivial. I sit at my laptop and attempt to work as the hours melt into nothing. Texting people is exhausting, but I feel like I'd sacrifice the world just to hug someone.

I still work, so it feels like a matter of time before a customer or coworker infects me. And I become culpable to potentially killing someone. I have a hard time telling if my fears are founded because I'm the only one at work that wears a mask. Kids come into the pizza shop in groups, trying to pay separately. The quarantine has

given them a fun chance to hang out. Rioters protest in Harrisburg so more innocent lives can be lost for the sake of economy. Because they miss their haircuts or eating out. And sure, I miss those things (actually if you've seen what I look like you know I don't get haircuts). But a virus doesn't believe in God. It's not living. It doesn't care. Human bodies, capable of so much, become the medium by which death spreads. And frankly, I'm scared! The stupidest people to ever run this country are on TV every day telling us how good things are as innocent people die. Americans are expected to either live on a pittance of \$2,000 or put themselves at risk to earn rent. Health care workers can't interact with their families for fear of spreading the virus. And we're still expected to submit our papers and do our quizzes. I get it! There's no easy alternative. But it's hard, and I truly hope you understand.

**DARREN MARTINEZ**



# OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS TURNS TO ONLINE EXPERIENCES TO RECRUIT INCOMING CLASS

By Kimberly Bower-Spence

The COVID-19 pandemic required a quick pivot by the Office of Admissions.

Besides canceling spring events designed to help high school seniors decide if Wilkes was the right fit for their goals, the closures and economic freefall resulted in many students rethinking not only where they would attend college but if they would attend at all.

Wilkes University responded by offering additional financial assistance, temporarily adapting application requirements, and creating virtual experiences to give students a feel for life at Wilkes.

“We acknowledged the major disruption to the lives of our admitted students and the economic impact on many families,” says Kishan Zuber, vice president for enrollment management and marketing. “We were able to ease the financial burden somewhat, particularly for students who may wish to stay closer to home.”

Economic relief awards of \$1,000 to \$3,000 help local students transferring to Wilkes from another institution for fall 2020 who were impacted financially by COVID-19. These are in addition to merit awards of \$9,000 to \$16,000.

Amy Patton, associate director of transfer admissions, says, “There have been a number of transfer students affected by COVID-19, and they’ve been very appreciative of the economic relief awards.” One lost a summer job, and others suffered financial losses due to family businesses being shut down.

## VOICES

**ANU GHAI**, faculty of practice, finance, accounting, and management, Sidhu School of Business and Leadership

To read this reflection in its entirety, visit [www.wilkes.edu/voices](http://www.wilkes.edu/voices)

...I am amazed by and immensely grateful for the empathy and caring shown by fellow students as they work hard, and continue to finish assignments, ask questions, and support each other through losing friends and family members.

ANU GHAI



Other responses to the crisis included:

- cutting the tuition deposit in half, to \$150;
- extending the deadline for confirming enrollment to June 1;
- temporarily waiving the SAT or ACT score application requirement (excluding pharmacy and nursing applicants) due to test cancellation;
- allowing applicants to submit unofficial transcripts and test scores for evaluation, with an admission decision contingent upon receipt of official documents when available.

The pandemic canceled Accepted Students Day, a signature spring event that introduces admitted students to life at Wilkes. New Colonels normally meet classmates, talk to current students, get to know potential roommates, and attend mini classes with professors in their majors.

“That experience is crucial to helping these students make an informed decision about where they want to invest the next four years of their lives,” says Zuber. “While you can’t replace that in-person experience, our staff quickly created online experiences to engage students and start to build community.”

In just two weeks, the Admissions and Marketing Communications offices launched the Wilkes University Virtual Experience. The webpage, found at [wilkes.edu/experience](http://wilkes.edu/experience), immerses students in blue and gold by curating the virtual tour, numerous student videos, and welcome messages from recent alumni. It allows admitted students to schedule virtual face-to-face meetings with admissions and

financial aid counselors. And it encourages connection to a Facebook group dedicated to the incoming class.

Plus, the webpage features brief online lectures from numerous professors throughout the University, highlighting Wilkes scholarship. For instance, students could check out criminology professor Andrew Wilczak’s talk on “Serial Killers in America” or integrative media faculty member Lisa Reynolds’ insights on “Politics in Design.”

The Office of Admissions hosted Accepted Student Week April 26 to May 1, bringing admitted students together via the web-based online videoconferencing tool Zoom. The week included sessions with faculty, a virtual mixer, and discussions of financial aid, student life, residence life and career development. The week culminated with Blue and Gold Day on May 1.

Ian Schreffler, associate director of admissions, says families thanked him for the extra efforts. “We’ve been very transparent and open with our communication, and we’ve been very available.”

## WILKES ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT

Wilkes Alumni Relations staff launched several initiatives to connect with alumni working on the frontlines of the pandemic and to leverage alumni expertise for webinars. To read more about these efforts, please see page 31.

## VOICES

**MARK ALLEN** is interim vice president of student affairs. To read this reflection in its entirety, visit [www.wilkes.edu/voices](http://www.wilkes.edu/voices)

I have enjoyed a long and fulfilling career in higher education, having spent over 30 years of it at Wilkes.... Nothing has compared to this most recent challenge.... Unlike those past student and institutional challenges, where I could work face-to-face with members of the

**MARK ALLEN**



community, I am confronted with highly relational situations that need to be nuanced and resolved from afar, through a computer screen. On a personal level, there is something inherently lost in emails and Zoom meetings that deal with deeply sensitive issues; however, I am so grateful for

the technology....For the past several weeks I have been extremely impressed with the ability and resolve of our students, staff, and faculty to move into an online world. Having taught online courses in the past, I am aware of the unique differences for both the teachers and students to share knowledge in this virtual setting. I am also impressed with the level of creativity and involvement of so many at the University to offer programs and activities to keep us all bonded together. The COVID-19 crisis has brought new challenges to my professional world but I face them being surrounded by people who have adapted to the worst of circumstances to preserve our special Wilkes community. There is no doubt that as we come out of this crisis the world will be different — so too will the University. However, I have to believe, based on my observations and interactions...over the past several weeks, Wilkes will be a stronger institution, better positioned to educate students in this ever-changing 21st Century world.

## WILKES FACULTY AND STUDENTS PERSEVERE VIA REMOTE LEARNING

By Vicki Mayk MFA '13

Thomas Franko, associate professor of pharmacy practice, says he tries to present class material in a way that is both entertaining and engaging. Maintaining that philosophy was put to the test when classes moved to a remote learning format because of COVID-19.

As Franko delivered video lectures, he still included amusing stories and popular culture references to superheroes and villains from the Marvel film universe. But it's not the same as teaching face-to-face.

"It's delivering a performance without an audience," Franko says.

Many Wilkes faculty shared his experience while teaching online. An initial decision to move to remote learning was made on March 13 with plans to return on April 6. With an

escalating number of COVID-19 cases and the announcement on March 16 that Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf was closing all nonessential businesses — including colleges and universities — it was necessary to finish the semester online.

When classes transitioned to remote formats, the staff in the Office of Technology for Teaching and Learning moved quickly to assist faculty. It was a significant undertaking for a small staff. Associate provost Jonathan Ference PharmD '03 praised their work, saying, "Consider they are a staff of five who support 5,000 online (undergraduate and graduate) students and 200 full-time

faculty. They've done an incredible job." The teaching and learning team provided one-on-one tutorials, webinars and workshops to ensure that faculty had tools to teach in the virtual space.

Resources include the University's multi-faceted online learning platform, Desire2Learn, a video platform called Panopto, Zoom and many other resources. Some faculty met with students in synchronous sessions, holding virtual classes in real time on the hours and days they would have met on campus. Others took an asynchronous approach, recording lectures and providing course materials to be accessed whenever students choose.

Senior biology and secondary education major Seth Platukis studies at the kitchen table in his family's home in Weston, Pa. With the transition of University classes to remote learning, family kitchens, dining rooms and other spaces became classrooms for Wilkes students. PHOTO COURTESY OF SETH PLATUKIS



## CREATIVE SOLUTIONS HELPED TRANSITION CLASSES TO REMOTE FORMATS

Making real-time classes optional was done for practical reasons. Mia Briceno, associate professor of communications studies, says not all of her students have consistent internet access. “My biggest concern was being as fair and humane as possible,” says Briceno.

University Provost Terese Wignot agrees, saying a sensitivity to student needs was at the forefront of many decisions. “On the academic side, students are going to remember how the University treated them at this time. None of us knows what each student is experiencing during the pandemic.”

Wilkes administration knew student access to technology varied. The University loaned laptops, but other students struggled with internet access at home. With social distancing, using public places for available Wifi was not viable. By mid-April, Ference states, “We had deployed upwards of 50 computers. I’ve shipped over 20 hotspots to students. Some days I’m in UPS twice a day shipping hotspots.” Wilkes made wifi available in the parking lot behind the University Center on Main and nearby students parked in cars to access it.

Classes in all academic disciplines were tasked with finding creative solutions for remote learning and fulfilling

academic assignments. Meeting clinical requirements for pharmacy and nursing posed special challenges. For fourth-year pharmacy students, it means they will not complete requirements until late May, more than two weeks after their original planned graduation.

The University’s more than 2,000 full- and part-time graduate students are already familiar with remote learning, since nearly all of the University’s master’s and doctoral programs are offered partly or completely online. Those that include face-to-face residencies, such as the Maslow Family Graduate Program in Creative Writing, adapted, planning virtual residencies. However, graduate students faced new pressures as they worked to complete spring classes. Most are employed and faced the challenges of going to school while working at home and juggling childcare and schooling children at home.

An awareness that students might be feeling economic stresses, dealing with serious illness in their families and working jobs led Wilkes to institute an optional satisfactory/pass/withdrawal grading policy, which students can choose on a course-by-course basis. The policy was developed with input from faculty.

- Science and engineering faculty filmed themselves doing lab demonstrations and required students to make calculations based on results. Others used software packages that included laboratory simulations.
- A portfolio review of the work of digital design and media arts students conducted by design industry professionals, was moved to the virtual space.
- Education students completed student teaching requirements via online platforms. They also created activities to post online or send home in hard copy.
- Engineering students completed senior projects by presenting the work done to date and outlining next steps needed to complete projects face-to-face.
- Pharmacy faculty delivered the Objective Structured Clinical Exam using the Zoom video conferencing platform. The exam for students entering their final pharmacy year includes interacting with 12 different people who role play patients with different health care issues.

## VOICES

**CAROLINE RICKARD**, senior,  
*communication studies, Orwigsburg, Pa.*

One of the main things that went through my mind, starting from when I heard that campus was closed for the rest of the semester, was that it was hard not to make it personal. Why is this happening during my senior year? I only had two months left and those memories that you’re supposed to make in your last months are gone. This would be the last Spring Fling, the last block party, the last moments I’m going to spend with my friends that I made in college.... Students all over the country who are graduating had those memories taken from them....I’ve come to accept that this is serious and that Wilkes is acting in students’ best interest. If anything,

I think Wilkes has made this difficult transition...and has created a new memory. The cohesiveness and the togetherness I’ve felt through the last two weeks from the University through social media, the Web site, just online in general, has been so empowering. This is a fight that you shouldn’t be in alone....And I think Wilkes has done a great job of reminding the community that we’re Colonel and forever Colonel we’ll be. I’ve come to accept it and I’m moving forward because I have this great community at my alma mater, wishing me the best and moving me forward.”

**CAROLINE RICKARD**



# PANDEMICS AND HISTORY: WILKES DEAN OFFERS PERSPECTIVE

By Paul Riggs, dean, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

What can the history of pandemics teach us about our present crisis? As someone whose teaching and research touch on the history of disease, I thought I would share some observations about previous pandemics before offering some personal thoughts.

History demonstrates quite clearly that virgin soil pandemics can be catastrophic. The great plague of the 14th century killed about 40% of western Europe's population between 1348 and 1350. Worse still was the impact after 1492 of Old World diseases on the native people of the Americas, whose population declined by about 90% within two or three generations. In both these cases, the pathogens attacked populations with little or no immunity, and the devastation of these crises explains why public health officials have been so concerned.

In our current crisis, the influenza pandemic of 1918-1920 has attracted a lot of attention. One interesting fact about the "Spanish flu" is that, despite its name, researchers have not reached a consensus on its origin. In recent days (as I write these lines on April 22), the long duration of the 1918-1920 flu has been noted by experts along with the fact that the second and third peaks were much worse than the first.

History also tells us that the road to full understanding is long. We are still discovering important facts about the Black Death, mostly through DNA evidence and the study of medieval birth and death records. Recent research on the 1918-1920 pandemic

## VOICES

**KIMBERLY FERENCE PHARM D '03**, associate professor, pharmacy practice. She has been teaching from her home where she lives with her husband, Jonathan Ference PharmD '03, who is Wilkes' associate provost, and their two children, Jack, 11, and Katie, 8.

To read this reflection in its entirety, visit [www.wilkes.edu/voices](http://www.wilkes.edu/voices)

For me the most difficult aspect has been working at home while taking care of my children. Most of the time the kids are good about recognizing we're working. We're in meetings or class all day and sometimes they need us.

Another challenge was spotty internet access with everyone using the internet. We had to switch providers to avoid interruption in connectivity. I've moved offices three times since this started for ease of connectivity and comfort. We both started off working in the basement but the kids also wanted to use that space making it difficult to work. Next, I moved

to the main floor and now I'm upstairs in our spare bedroom.

As a clinical pharmacist, I've cared for patients for 16 years. I am proud of the work being done by my pharmacy colleagues on the front lines. It has been difficult for me to not be helping patients during this challenging time. In order to overcome the feeling of not being able to help, Jon and I sent close friends and family quarantine packages as well as donated supplies.

**KIMBERLY FERENCE PHARM D '03**



## VOICES

**JONATHAN KUIKEN** is associate professor of global cultures. To read this reflection in its entirety, visit [www.wilkes.edu/voices](http://www.wilkes.edu/voices)

The closure of campus and the switch to online learning has been, to put it mildly, a challenge... While we have been able to continue having a rigorous intellectual experience through recorded lectures, online reading discussions and the like, nothing can truly replace the classroom setting where students and professors can feed off of each other's energy and where an unexpected comment or a question can launch the entire discussion in an unplanned but deeply rewarding direction.... Luckily, I have been able to maintain some of this cooperative spark through digital meetings over Zoom, phone calls and other means of communicating directly with students. But much like a phone call or a digital "face-to-face" chat with a relative who lives a great distance away, these "meetings" only accentuate the richness that is lost by not being able to meet together in person. So, if I am to be honest, I must admit that I deeply miss my students, my colleagues, the staff of the University. The term *universitas* from which we derive the word "university" was used first in the Middle Ages to describe a body of students and scholars who joined together for mutual aid and support. It is that idea of gathering together in the pursuit of scholarship, learning and growth that technology can never replicate.



**JONATHAN KUIKEN**

## VOICES

**GRETCHEN YENINAS MA '07** is associate dean of student affairs. Her husband, Jim, supervises the University mailroom.

Friday the 13th is a scary date if you're a fan of horror movies. Friday, March 13, 2020, will stay with me for a different reason. It's the last day of 2020 that seemed kind of "normal." It's the last day we had a full office of people in Student Affairs and the last day my son, Ethan, spent with his fifth-grade class. The following Monday, I packed up my laptop, a handful of folders and notebooks and went home.

Ethan and I set up the dining room table, his classroom on one side and my office on the other. He worked on packets until his school moved online, I worked to keep track of our students who were adjusting to a virtual semester and coordinated efforts with administration. That first week my husband, Jim, who also works in the University mailroom, still had to go to work in person. His normal schedule changed the following week.

Ethan popped into most of my Zoom meetings that

first week. For him, the novelty of seeing everyone on screen wore off, but I liked seeing other kids (two-legged and four-legged)

**GRETCHEN YENINAS MA '07**



make appearances during meetings. I quickly noticed the extrovert in me was bored sitting at a computer all day. It made me long for the usual student foot traffic in my office and conversations with colleagues. This online world isn't for me.

I realized that life still goes on despite this COVID virus. Our students still face big life issues while trying to do schoolwork. Their loved ones have died because of the virus and for reasons other than the virus and they have experienced the stress that comes with suffering. They have lost jobs that help them pay for school—or conversely, they have been scheduled for so many hours (like at a grocery store) it's impossible to focus on class work. Part of our responsibility in student affairs and our partnering offices is to email, call and text students to ensure they know we're still available to help them succeed. I've been a liaison between students and their faculty to help them finish the semester.

Just over 100 students, mostly from Panama, have continued to live on campus during this closure. I'm proud to say that my family was able to help keep them safe. My mom and sister sewed fabric masks for everybody in just 24 hours!

I've created a new routine of emails, walks, fifth-grade fractions, Zoom meetings, basketball breaks with Ethan and Zoom yoga. I'll be happy to keep some parts of this routine, like the delicious new recipes I've tried, but I can't wait to go back to living my life in person instead of virtually.

has revealed, through analysis of the health records of millions of veterans, the lasting costs of influenza. Men born during the pandemic struggled for the rest of their lives with various negative impacts, including higher rates of incarceration, heart disease, and mental illness. Similar impacts have even been detected from a far less serious flu pandemic in the 1890s.

My personal reflections on the pandemic are probably similar to most people. Amid concern for workers in other circumstances, I feel fortunate to be working remotely and thankful for my own good health so far. I worry about elderly members of my family as well as other family and friends who are still reporting for work. And

I grieve along with those who have experienced losses.

As an educator, I wonder what Wilkes University will look like when this is over. Our immediate future is uncertain, but we all look forward to resuming our work on campus. Imparting knowledge and wisdom to students is a face-to-face business. It takes place in the classroom and lab, at clinical sites, in residence halls, on practice fields, in the TV studio and in the art gallery — in lots of ways that remote instruction (as useful as it has been in meeting this crisis and as important as it is in normal times) struggles to replicate. We have faith in a future that includes a place for residential university education.



The Wilkes campus was uncharacteristically quiet after students left due to the pandemic. PHOTO BY STEVE HUSTED/KNOT JUST ANY DAY



# ALL STARS

## 2019 ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES CELEBRATE WINNING WAYS

THE INDUCTEES TO THE 2019 ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME WERE RECOGNIZED AT A CAMPUS CEREMONY ON FEB. 1, 2020. IN THIS STORY, THEY TALK ABOUT FAVORITE MOMENTS COMPETING AS COLONELS AND CONTEMPLATE THE LONG-TERM IMPACT OF AN ATHLETIC CAREER.



### CHRIS MAYERSKI '08 MBA '10 Baseball



ALL PHOTOS BY STEVE HUSTED/KNOT JUST ANY DAY

**O**ne of the most feared hitters ever to step into the batter's box for Wilkes, Mayerski played six different positions over his career while managing a .336 career batting average. He ranks in the top five in multiple offensive categories, including ranking at the top in career home runs with 36 and most RBI's with 167. Mayerski ranks second in games played with 146, second in at-bats with 518, and second in total bases with 344 while ranking fourth in hits with 173, doubles with 41, triples with 11, and fifth in runs scored with 132. A four-time All-Freedom Conference selection, he also was a 2006 American Baseball Coaches Association Mid-Atlantic All-Region selection. Mayerski was named the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association National Hitter of the Week in April 2006 and was named the conference Player of the Week four times. Mayerski was named Rookie of the Year in 2005, Team MVP in 2006, and was a team captain his junior and senior seasons.

#### WHERE HE IS NOW:

Mayerski is the executive director of undergraduate admissions at Wilkes University.

#### MOST MEMORABLE WILKES MOMENT:

"My most memorable moments were a series of events in the 2007 playoffs. I hit two home runs in a win against King's in a semifinal game and then we went on to beat DeSales the next game to win the conference championship. I also hit a home run in our regional playoff game against TCNJ (The College of New Jersey). This was significant because that home run earned a date with my future wife, Kelly."

#### HOW ATHLETICS INFLUENCED HIS LIFE AFTER COLLEGE:

"Being a student-athlete at Wilkes helped prepare me in many ways for the role I am in today. Leadership, mentorship, collaboration and teamwork are all important aspects of my job here at Wilkes and having the opportunity to be both an athlete and coach at Wilkes was instrumental in my progression as a higher education professional."



**S**abados was an integral part of the first three teams to win a Freedom Conference Championship in the program's current 13-year run of titles. Sabados ranks sixth all-time in both singles wins with 62 and singles winning percentage at .861 (62-10). She went 32-4 at No. 2 singles in her career for an .889 winning percentage. She was a four-time First Team All-Freedom Conference selection, including being named the Rookie of the Year in 2005-2006. In addition, Sabados secured one MAC singles title and two doubles championships.

**ALISON MCDONALD  
SABADOS '09 PHARMD '11**  
Women's Tennis



**WHERE SHE IS NOW:**

Sabados is a clinical pharmacist at WellSpan York Hospital in York, Pa., specializing in critical care. She lives in Duncannon, Pa.

**MOST MEMORABLE WILKES MOMENT:**

"My most memorable moment was winning the conference championship for the first time and advancing to the NCAA playoffs. That season sparked many years of championships to follow!"

**HOW ATHLETICS INFLUENCED HER LIFE AFTER COLLEGE:**

"There are so many lessons from athletics that translate into life skills. Tennis in particular requires teamwork but also independence and self-assessment since there is an individual component. I learned the most from my losses and became mentally tougher as a result. Being a captain also helped me gain leadership skills and I continue to use those skills in my role as a pharmacy preceptor. Also, being a student athlete in pharmacy school helped establish my time management skills which got me through residency and helped me stay on top of projects, meetings, etc."



**S**haffer appeared on both the basketball court and the softball diamond for four years at Wilkes. On the court, Shaffer tied for eleventh for most steals in a single game with seven against King's in January 1989. A 1989 All-MAC Northwest selection at catcher in softball, Shaffer was named the 1987-1988 Wilkes Woman Athlete of the Year and the 1989 Letterwomen president.



**MELISSA KENNEDY  
SHAFFER '89**  
Women's Basketball  
Softball



**WHERE SHE IS NOW:**

Shaffer works as a human resources coordinator and payroll specialist for Little League International in South Williamsport, Pa., where she resides.

**MOST MEMORABLE WILKES MOMENT:**

"Receiving the Female Athlete of the Year Award in 1989."

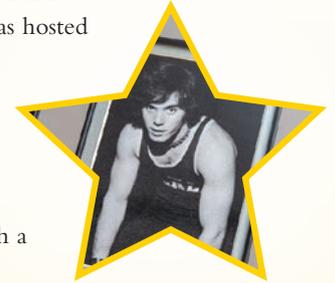
**HOW ATHLETICS INFLUENCED HER LIFE AFTER COLLEGE:**

"The lessons during my four years at Wilkes as an athlete/student had taught me self-discipline in setting and achieving goals both personally and professionally; helped in developing a strong work ethic, collaboration and teamwork and, most importantly, developing and maintaining meaningful relationships."

## ARTHUR TROVEI Wrestling



**O**ne of the most decorated wrestlers ever to hit the mat for the Colonels, Trovei was an integral part of four of the most accomplished wrestling teams under head coach John Reese. Trovei earned national recognition as the sixth national champion in Wilkes wrestling history in 1974 at 142 pounds. He also served as a leader on the team that became 1974 NCAA Division III National Team Champion at the first Division III Championship, which was hosted by Wilkes. A two-time All-American at 142 pounds in 1973 and 1974, Trovei also captured Middle Atlantic Conference Championships in 1972 and 1974. He won an individual championship at 134 pounds at the 1971 Wilkes Open, and was also named to the “Silver Anniversary Team.” Trovei has the 19th-best dual-match winning percentage in program history with a 41-6-3 overall record for an .850 win percentage.



### WHERE HE IS NOW:

Trovei lives in Port Jervis, N.Y., he is still actively involved running the family business Arthur Trovei and Sons, Inc., which specializes in truck, trailer and machinery sales and scrap metal recycling. Trovei enjoys family time with his wife Sue, their four children and their spouses and his five grandchildren.



**D**uring his time as head basketball coach at Wilkes, Rickrode led the Colonels to a 382-191 record, accumulating a winning percentage of .667, among the best all-time in NCAA Division III history for coaches with at least 10 years of experience. Under the guidance of Rickrode, the Colonels posted winning seasons in 20 of his 22 years as head coach, including seven campaigns in which they registered at least 20 wins.

He also holds the Division III record for being the coach to reach the 200-win mark most quickly, achieving it in his first 249 games.

Arriving at Wilkes in 1992, Rickrode led the Colonels to 17 MAC and Freedom Conference playoff appearances, including a run of 10 straight from 1992-2002. He also led the Colonels to five straight NCAA Tournament appearances, including four Sweet Sixteens, three Elite Eights and one Final Four appearance during the most successful run in Wilkes men’s basketball history.

During the 2000-01 season, Rickrode led Wilkes to a 23-3 record, the Freedom Conference championship, and the school’s sixth berth in the NCAA Tournament in seven years. During the 1997-98 campaign, the Colonels posted a 26-5 overall record, won the MAC title, and advanced to the Division III Final Four for the first time in school history. Both the 1995-96 team, which fashioned a 28-2 record, and the 1994-95 team advanced to the Division III Elite Eight. During Rickrode’s tenure, the Colonels were ranked number one in Division III twice.

While at Wilkes, Rickrode coached 38 All-Conference performers, 11 All-ECAC players and six conference Rookies of the Year. Among his most accomplished players was three-time conference Most Valuable Player and the 2000-01 Jostens Division III National Player of the Year, Dave Jannuzzi. Six players and three teams under Rickrode’s guidance have been inducted into the University’s Athletic Hall of Fame, including the 1998-99 team inducted this year.

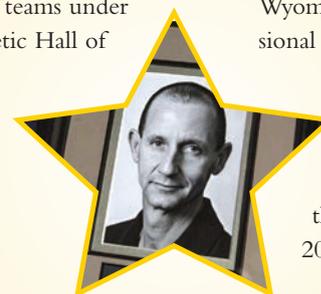
Rickrode was honored by the National Association of Basketball Coaches as their Mid-Atlantic Regional Coach of the Year after the 2000-01, 1998-99, 1997-98 and 1995-96 seasons. Previously, he was named the Freedom Coach of the Year on three occasions, including 2000-01.

## JERRY RICKRODE Head Coach, Men’s Basketball



### WHERE HE IS NOW:

Rickrode is senior gifts officer in the advancement division at Wilkes University. He has returned to coaching basketball as the head coach of the Wyoming Valley Clutch, a men’s professional team in the American Basketball Association. It reunites him with former player Dave Jannuzzi, one of the team’s founders. The team finished the 2019-2020 season undefeated, 20-0.



**T**he 1998-99 Wilkes men's basketball team captured the program's third MAC Championship in four seasons while making the seventh straight appearance in the MAC tournament. After capturing the conference crown, the team advanced to the NCAA Division III Sweet Sixteen.

The team finished the season 25-4 under head coach Jerry Rickrode and assistant coaches Mike Barrouk, Jay Williams, and Dave Clancy. All-Conference players included first team selection and conference most valuable player Dave Jannuzzi along with second team selection Chad Fabian. In addition, Jannuzzi was named First Team All-ECAC, First Team NABC Mid-Atlantic All-Region, and Second Team NABC All-American. Jannuzzi also was named to the MAC Executive Director's All-Academic Team.

Team members include Greg Barrouk, Bernie Brown, Scott Cleveland, Chad Fabian, Mike Ferkler, Bill Gallagher, Artie Gotzmer, Brian Gryboski, Damon Heller, Dave Jannuzzi, Wes Kovach, Brad Sechler, Jason Sheakoski, Kevin Walsh, and T.J. Ziolkowski.

*The team's co-captains, Scott Cleveland and Brian Gryboski, represent the team in this story.*

## **SCOTT CLEVELAND '99** Co-Captain and small forward

### **WHERE HE IS NOW:**

Cleveland lives in McDonald, Pa., near Pittsburgh, and is director of environmental, health, safety and regulatory at Olympus Energy.

### **MOST MEMORABLE WILKES MOMENT:**

Winning the MAC Championship against Lebanon Valley

### **HOW ATHLETICS INFLUENCED HIS LIFE AFTER COLLEGE:**

"Athletics taught me that you don't have to be the most talented on the court or the smartest in your field. If an opportunity is presented to you, give it everything you have and you have a chance to be successful. It also taught me you need a team of people all working together for each other in order to achieve success."

## **BRIAN GRYBOSKI '99** Co-Captain and power forward

### **WHERE HE IS NOW:**

Gryboski lives in Mountain Top, Pa., and is regional business director at Boston Scientific Neuromodulation.

### **MOST MEMORABLE WILKES MOMENT:**

"I have two memorable moments as a member of the 1998-1999 team. First was beating Lebanon Valley on their court for the MAC championship, our third in four years. The second was defeating Franklin and Marshall at home in the second round of the NCAA tournament to win our 31st consecutive home game, a streak that spanned two entire seasons where we didn't lose a single game at the Marts Center."

### **HOW ATHLETICS INFLUENCED HIS LIFE AFTER COLLEGE:**

"As a three-year starter for Coach Rickrode, I had the opportunity to play for not only the best D3 coach of all time, but also the toughest coach. Coach Rickrode helped instill in me a mental and physical toughness that allowed success on the basketball court which I have successfully transferred into the business world as a regional director at Boston Scientific Neuromodulation."



## **1998-1999 MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM**



Some members of the 1998-1999 men's basketball team returned to Wilkes for the team's induction into the Athletics Hall of Fame. Pictured from left at the induction ceremony in February are head coach Jerry Rickrode, Damon Heller '00, assistant coach Jay Williams, Chad Fabian '00, Brad Sechler '03, Greg Barrouk '02, Brian Gryboski '99, Scott Cleveland '99 and T.J. Ziolkowski.



Gail Wallen '68 is a hospital chaplain in Arizona, where she also works to share the stories of Holocaust survivors with military personnel. ALL PHOTOS BY MITCHELL MASILUN, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA BIOCOMMUNICATIONS

# Past PRESERVED

## GAIL WALLEN '68 HELPS HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS SHARE THEIR STORIES

By James Jaskolka '16

Philosopher George Santayana famously said, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

Gail Wallen '68 has embraced that sentiment in nearly 20 years working with survivors of the Holocaust, the systematic persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime in World War II. As the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp by American troops was observed in 2020, Wallen continues her work educating military personnel about that historic event by providing a platform for survivors to share their experiences. It's appropriate work for an alumna who majored in history at Wilkes. Wallen, who is a staff chaplain at Banner - University Medical Center in Tucson, Ariz., has spent much of her life working with Holocaust survivors.

In 2001 when she was director of Holocaust services at Jewish Family and Children's Services in Tucson, a survivor reminded her that the military was responsible for holding Holocaust days of remembrance. Eager to help share the survivors' life experiences, Wallen contacted Fort Huachuca in southeast Arizona to set up a presentation. It was the beginning of an enduring friendship and partnership.

"I think in many ways, the survivors felt validated.... This was the first time that the survivors got to see themselves through the eyes of men and women in uniform and were admired," she says. "This is a generation that grew up surrounded and being hated by people in uniform in Europe."

Wallen was approached by a commander at Fort Huachuca who requested that she and the survivors speak with his troops stationed at other military bases. This led to presentations in other states, including Florida, Texas and New Mexico. She says the survivors see the education as vital, allowing them to both teach and to say thank you.

"The survivors are bound and determined to go out and speak as much as they can because it's a message they're determined to get out," says Wallen. "This is their way of saying thank you to the American military for liberating them as well as honoring their family and friends who died during the Holocaust. Some of the survivors still have nightmares and flashbacks. But they feel it's important for teaching purposes, and also to say thank you for what you're doing today."

Although Wallen's job with Jewish Family and Children's Services ended, her work with Holocaust survivors continues. She dedicates her free time to working with the survivors as an unpaid volunteer. "This is my gift to



Wallen displays two of the commemorative coins that have been given to her in appreciation for the Holocaust programming and the historical presentations she gives to complement the survivors' stories.



THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE SURVIVORS GOT TO SEE THEMSELVES THROUGH THE EYES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM AND WERE ADMIRER.

— Gail Wallen '68

them, my promise that I would continue to work with them in this way."

The most incredible moment for Wallen came in 2003, when she encountered German liaison officers at Fort Huachuca. She says she "took a gamble" and asked if they would like to speak with the survivors. What followed was a long-term partnership with German military liaison personnel stationed there.

"Both sides have moral injuries," says Wallen, who holds both a master's degree in Latin American History and a doctorate in history from the University of Arizona. "The Holocaust survivors have a great deal of guilt about speaking to the German military: are they betraying their murdered families and friends by doing this? The Germans have the legacy of the army that they are part of, and they have the legacy of their parents or grandparents (in World War II), who may have been silent, complacent or played an active part in the Nazi regime."

Wallen stresses that the German military continues its commitment. She and the survivors have spoken at bases in Texas, New Mexico and at the headquarters of the German Armed Forces Command United States and Canada, in Reston, Va. She says the work reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that nothing like the Holocaust ever happens again.

She says sharing the life experiences of survivors becomes paramount in a time when survivors are dying and "the voices of hate are growing louder and louder." She cites hate crimes, such as the 2018 synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, and suggests that we are on an "ugly slope downward" that can only be corrected with first-hand education.

Wallen, who had family murdered during the Holocaust, says now is the time to come together against hate and the "dark side of society."

"We are a nation that's multicultural; we need to embrace and celebrate that and not separate from it," she says. "We need to speak up, to say 'this is not going to happen again.'" As one German military commander in Texas told me, 'never again, means never again.'

"The survivors lived through horrific unimaginable life experiences and had to begin life again. That's a lot of courage. This is important to them, that others know their life experiences, so that this can never happen again. That's their hope and their prayer, and it's mine as well."



A full-length portrait of Marnin J. Michaels '92, a man with glasses, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is standing with his hands in his pockets against a light grey background with abstract colorful lines and dots.

# Global Perspective

Marnin J. Michaels '92  
Practices Law  
Internationally as a  
Leading Wealth  
Management Attorney

By Andrew M. Seder

Marnin Michaels '92 works in Zurich, Switzerland  
for international law firm Baker Mackenzie.  
PHOTOS ON THESE PAGES COURTESY BAKER MACKENZIE



Marnin J. Michaels '92 was a trusts and estates lawyer with the Buffalo, N.Y., Phillips Lytle Law Firm with a view of the Buffalo River and Lake Erie and Canada in the distance. It was 1997, and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was taking off with Canada/United States trade laws becoming a hot topic.

The trade agreement provided an opportunity for Michaels to transition to practicing law in an international arena, trading the New York landscape for life in Zurich, Switzerland, with idyllic views of the Albis Mountains and Lake Zurich. Michaels, who can speak five languages (although he would not say fluently), possessed attributes that would lead top international law firm Baker McKenzie to hire him in 1999. He's been based in Switzerland for 21 years.

"My youth, my ability to speak multiple languages, my location. They all worked in my favor," Michaels recalls. "If NAFTA had not gone through, I would never have developed an interest in international estate planning, which eventually evolved to my representation of financial institutions. I was very lucky. They were looking for someone with international experience, spoke multiple languages, who loved the idea of living overseas."

His hiring by Baker McKenzie — ranked by *The American Lawyer* magazine as the top global law firm — started Michaels down a career path that would lead him to be recognized as one of the world's leading wealth management lawyers. He has been ranked among this elite group by Chambers & Partners, the leading law firm ranking system.

Michaels came to Wilkes in 1989 when his family moved from New York City to Wilkes-Barre as his father became the rabbi at Temple Israel. He entered Wilkes at just 16. It wasn't an easy transition for the newly transplanted teen, but he remembers political science professor Bruce Auerbach fondly, saying he would not allow him to coast in his classes. "He pushed me," Michaels says.

Ken Klemow, Wilkes biology professor, offered motivating words

when they were most needed. "He pumped me up a lot," Michaels says. Klemow remembers his former student, saying, "He stood out to me as somebody who was very intelligent, was very diligent about his work and really wanted to excel."

Michaels finished his Wilkes career by studying abroad at Hebrew University in Jerusalem — an early reflection of his international interests — before entering law school. After he graduated from Wilkes with a political science degree, he earned both a master's degree in international relations and his juris doctorate from Syracuse University. He also earned a Master of Laws degree in estate planning from the University of Miami.

His career accomplishments include playing an integral role in the U.S. Department of Justice initiative to combat offshore tax evasion in



“Every day I pinch myself because half the things I do, I never thought I would. There’s no two days in this career that are the same.”

Switzerland and beyond. In the end, Baker McKenzie acted for 45 banks and the initiative won the *American Lawyer’s* 2015 Litigation Firm of the Year award.

Michaels explains that his work as a wealth management lawyer requires him to understand both the needs of global families and those of financial institutions. He must understand tax, inheritance rules and trust rules in dozens of jurisdictions to represent clients who have assets and relatives in multiple countries. He also must understand regulatory issues impacting global financial institutions.

“Outside of the United States the tax systems are very different. You have to worry about wealth taxes and compulsory share rules, including Shari’s Law,” Michaels says.

He has shared his expertise by authoring two books: “U.S. International Estate Planning” and “International Tax: Withholding,” both published by Thomson Reuters.

He has written extensively and been an advisor on several laws pertaining to international wealth management and banking including the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA),

which requires international institutions to report foreign assets held by U.S. account holders, and the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) which sets a standard for exchanging information regarding bank accounts on a global level, between tax authorities. His book, “International Taxation: Reporting,” is viewed as the leading text on FATCA and CRS.

Jerry B. Chariton of the Wilkes-Barre law firm Chariton, Schwager and Malak includes estate planning among his specialties. He has known Michaels personally and professionally for decades. Chariton notes that many lawyers know Michaels through his writing. “His long list of publications is an indication of the extent to which he is influential within his circle,” Chariton says.

While his published works serve as references for lawyers, he also teaches at multiple universities including the University of Lausanne in Switzerland, the University of Freiburg in Germany, IDC International School in Israel, and Syracuse University College of Law. “Teaching keeps me sharp in a different way that day-to-day work doesn’t,” Michaels says. “It’s also a way to give back.”

He lives an international lifestyle he only dreamt of as a Wilkes student studying abroad. He married his wife Tetiana in 2019 and the pair honeymooned in Antarctica. His wife, an attorney for Credit Suisse, wrote about the trip for *Vogue Ukraine*. Marnin’s sister-in-law, Danielle Flock Michaels ’01, also is a Wilkes alumna.

“Every day I pinch myself because half the things I do, I never thought I would,” says Michaels. “There’s no two days in this career that are the same. That’s phenomenal and fascinating. On the other hand, it’s exhausting. I’m always working. I’m always on a plane. I’m always on someone else’s time zone.”



SAVE THE DATE FOR

**HOMECOMING 2020**

**OCTOBER 2-4!**

Class years ending in 0s and 5s, get ready for your class reunion! Other reunions include Grissom Hall, lacrosse, cheerleaders and the A-List. In coordination with Homecoming weekend, the Third Annual Ralston Memorial Golf Tournament to benefit athletics will be held on Monday, October 5.

★ **Homecoming is currently planned for October 2–4, 2020, and we are considering many options including moving forward with modified reunion celebrations, and/or providing a virtual experience to encourage connections.**

Stay tuned to [www.wilkes.edu/homecoming](http://www.wilkes.edu/homecoming) for updates! For questions, email [alumni@wilkes.edu](mailto:alumni@wilkes.edu).



## Alumni Association Connects with Colonels During Pandemic

The Family of Colonels remained strong during the pandemic. Early in April, the Office of Alumni and Development surveyed alumni with the goal of finding ways for Colonels to support and inspire each other. The survey collected stories of Colonels involved in fighting the pandemic, asked if alumni would like assistance in promoting their businesses and sought alumni experts to offer webinars.

One result was the launch of Wilkes Wednesday Webinars to share the expertise of Wilkes faculty, staff and alumni. Presentations have included faculty such as Ed Schicitano of the Psychology Department offering strategies for beating stress, Jane Blanken-Webb of the Doctor of Education faculty on cybersecurity and Marianne Rexer of the Sidhu School educating on the topic of financial planning. Kirby Scholars from the University's Alan P. Kirby Center for Free Enterprise and Entrepreneurship presented a webinar about marketing businesses.

Alumni Ruth McDermott-Levy '82, associate professor and director for the Center for Global and Public Health at Villanova University, and Chris Woolverton '82, professor of environmental health sciences in Kent State University's College of Public Health, presented a webinar about the virology and public health implications of COVID-19. Jeanie Coomber '90, consultant and executive coach, spoke about "Communicating with Impact," and attorney Wayne Lonstein '82, presented on "Social Media Disinformation and Crime during COVID." Past webinars are available on Wilkes University's YouTube channel.

Other pandemic-related initiatives include the establishment of an alumni business directory, gathering supportive messages from alumni for members of the Class of 2020 and spotlighting alumni on the frontlines on the Alumni Association's social media channels. Look for stories of alumni involvement in the fall 2020 issue of *Wilkes* magazine.

## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OPEN BOARD MEETING

Are you interested in learning more about the Alumni Association? Participate in our open meeting on Friday, June 5, 2020 at 1 p.m. You can call in to the meeting and get a firsthand look at how our board of directors works with its campus partners to provide programs for the alumni community. At the meeting, we'll review our goals and discuss future opportunities for the upcoming fiscal year. If you are interested in participating, please contact the Office of Alumni Relations at [alumni@wilkes.edu](mailto:alumni@wilkes.edu). Stay tuned for the next issue of the magazine to read about our new class of board members and officers!

## It Takes Two – Wilkes and You! Inaugural Giving Day Sets Records for Supporting Wilkes

A record number of Colonels rallied to make Wilkes University's inaugural Giving Day a tremendous success, setting a new record for contributions to University programs made in a single day. The event brought the entire Wilkes community together in the virtual world and turned social media channels blue and gold. Held on 2-20-2020, the day rallied participants around the theme "It Takes Two – Wilkes and You!"

A 24-hour online effort to support initiatives most important to alumni and friends of the University, Giving Day featured stories and videos from deans, coaches, and students. It encouraged all members of the Wilkes community to recognize specific experiences which had a profound impact on their lives — perhaps an academic department, student life, student scholarships, the library, innovations in laboratories and classrooms or one of the 23 athletic teams. Alumni also were encouraged to contribute in honor of someone who had a notable impact on their Wilkes experience, such as a professor, mentor, coach, staff member, or classmate. These stories were passed along to the recipients of those accolades.

Members of the Wilkes community showed their Colonel pride at Giving Day 2020. Pictured above in each frame, from left, are students Nasir Charles and Destiny Herbert; Angela Cant, wife of Wilkes' new president, and Margaret Steele, chief development officer; Scott Stolte, dean of the Nesbitt School of Pharmacy and Cody Morcom PharmD '20; Alumni Association board president Matt Berger '02; Terese Wignot, interim provost, and Jonathan Ference PharmD '03, associate provost. Right, Pitching in to help on Giving Day are three members of the women's soccer team: Lexi Gaetano, Niamh (Neeve) Harkins and Taylor Reiff.

More than 530 members of the Wilkes University community, including alumni, parents, faculty, staff, students and friends, participated raising in excess of \$92,000 in support of dozens of areas of campus. Gifts ranged from \$5 to \$5,000, and each one added to the day's momentum and success. The totals include challenge funds generously donated by loyal alumni. The challenge funds unlocked a total of \$2,020 in each of 10 areas when the goal of donors was met.

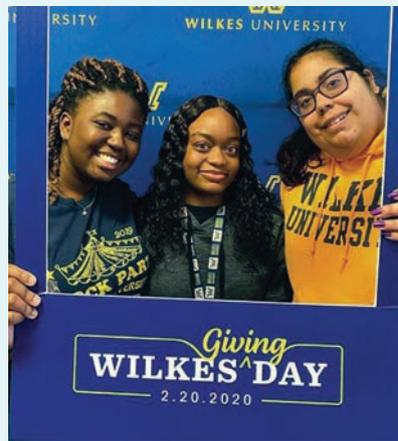


Leilani Hall '68 explains why she chose to be one of the challenge donors. "I chose to be the challenge donor for the Farley Library for several reasons, but mostly for the fond memories of spending so much time in Kirby when it was our library. The silence and accessible resources helped me focus on my studies when my dorm was full of distractions," Hall says.

"After graduation, I found a job in my field — chemistry — and became the one assigned to library research. I've since practiced science librarianship at five universities with my chemistry degree from Wilkes being a door-opener. It served me well when advocating for and supporting teaching faculty in the sciences, making sure the necessary resources were available for their own research and that of their students. Yet, when it comes to fundraising, alumni often support their college or major, not the library. Life-long learning takes place in libraries and they all deserve our support."

**"We are extremely appreciative of the tremendous display of generosity and pride by so many on Giving Day. Clearly we will look forward to the good spirited competition inherent in this one day challenge as we move to make Wilkes Giving Day an annual event."**

— Dr. Paul Adams '77 MS '82, Wilkes interim president



Giving Day 2020 set a new record for giving participation in 24 hours. "We are extremely appreciative of the tremendous display of generosity and pride by so many on Giving Day. Clearly we will look forward to the good spirited competition inherent in this one day challenge as we move to make Wilkes Giving Day an annual event," says Dr. Paul Adams '77 MS '82, interim president.

Athletics topped the leaderboards for number of donors at 217, while student scholarships led in the most dollars raised with \$27,101. The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences surpassed other academic divisions with both the most donors — 51 — and dollars raised with \$6,809. Graduates of the last decade

dominated collectively as donors, with 35% of the total Giving Day donors being graduates from class years of 2000 through 2019.

Wilkes thanks all of its alumni and friends for being a part of the day and embodying its theme, "It Takes Two, Wilkes & You!" Stay tuned for Giving Day 2021.



*Giving*  
**WILKES^DAY**

## Christopher Kropiewnicki '15 Selected for Primary Care Scholars Program at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine

When Christopher Kropiewnicki '15 graduated from Wilkes, his career path as a researcher seemed clear. He entered the University of Kansas to pursue a doctorate in computational biology. But less than a year into his doctoral program, he began to wonder if it was the right choice.

That questioning eventually led Kropiewnicki to leave his doctoral program. Now a second-year medical student at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine in Scranton, Pa., he is among the first group of students admitted to the Geisinger Primary Care Scholars Program. The selected scholars receive a monthly stipend and pay no tuition or fees in exchange for agreeing to work in a primary-care area, such as family medicine, internal medicine or medicine-pediatrics in the Geisinger Health System after completing their degree.

Kropiewnicki says that working as a primary care doctor with its emphasis on building long-term relationships with patients will offer what he felt was missing in research.

"It's very much working in isolation," says Kropiewnicki of computational biology, a branch of research biology that uses computer applications to simulate biological systems and interpret experimental data. "I'd go into the lab, work and not really see anybody. That was my day. It was lacking that interaction with people."

Kropiewnicki, who had also considered medical school while he studied biology at Wilkes, left the doctoral program and earned the master of biomedical science degree offered at Geisinger. He also worked in the office of a primary care physician in his hometown of Nanticoke, Pa. While he was there, he saw that the internal medicine doctor who he shadowed had close relationships with his patients, often asking them about family members and inquiring about their lives. "I can't tell you all the times after appointments that people came up to me and said, 'He's one of the good guys. He saved my life.' I decided I wanted those relationships and that rapport," Kropiewnicki says.



He had considered a career in medicine while at Wilkes and received guidance from Eileen Sharp, who was then the health sciences advisor. His interest in computational biology also was sparked working on research into RNA modeling with former Wilkes biology faculty member Christian Laing. Looking back, he realizes that even when doing research, medicine was his focus. "All the research projects I applied to were all medical in nature."

**"I can't tell you all the times after appointments that people came up to me and said, 'He's one of the good guys. He saved my life.' I decided I wanted those relationships and that rapport."**

– Christopher Kropiewnicki '15

Now he relishes the emphasis on communicating with patients, citing a class in patient-center medicine as one of his favorites. Kropiewnicki has not yet settled on his area of specialization, but says he is considering combining a mental health focus with primary care.

## Undergraduate

### 1969

**Michael Stair** of Mountain Top, Pa., was accepted as a member of the American Society of Music Arrangers and Composers. The organization, with headquarters in Los Angeles, Calif., primarily has members who are active in the film industry on the West Coast. Stair is putting together a staff for the purpose of creating a full studio orchestra in New York City. The orchestra would give arrangers, composers, performers and others an opportunity to try out their works where they otherwise might not be able to do so.

### 1970

**Anne (Aimetti) Thomas** of Plains, Pa., received the Educator of the Year Award on Nov. 13, 2019. The award, given by Wilkes University, recognizes a teacher who is a lifelong learner, reflective practitioner and effective communicator who continues to grow academically and professionally.

### 1974

**Rick Masi** of Delran, N.J., was inducted into the Cinnaminson High School Athletic Hall of Fame. Masi taught at Cinnaminson from 1975 to 2014. Masi also taught business education at Wilkes, coached football, and was the head golf coach from 1987 to 2014.

### 1977

**Charlie Calkins** of York, Pa., an attorney with the CGA Law Firm, received the prestigious William and Catherine Booth

Award from the Salvation Army after 22 years of service with the organization. The William Booth Award is one of the highest awards that may be conferred by The Salvation Army. Nominees are chosen on the basis of dedication to The Salvation Army's goals of service to man and outstanding humanitarian effort within the community. Calkins was recognized for many achievements within the organization including raising money so that each child in the after-school program could have a laptop, ensuring that they could have the same access to educational resources as other children.

**Claire Maziarczyk** of Niskayuna, N.Y., is part of the Legacy Project at the Thomas J. Watson Library in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Thirty patterns of her distinctive decorative paste papers are part of the permanent collection at the museum. Her work will be part of an exhibit including 25 other American decorative paper makers opening September 13, 2022.

### 1975

**David Nieman** of Dallas, Pa., had his art work displayed at the Wyoming Valley Art League's Circle Centre for the Arts. Nieman is a great admirer of the Impressionists and often paints scenes from northeast and central Pennsylvania.



1988

**Andrew Bossard** won the Department of Defense Civilian Ambassador for the Alliance Good Neighbor award. The award recognizes individuals and organizations in the Republic of Korea for exceptional contributions to a better quality of life for United States service and family members and for enhancement of relations between the Republic of Korea and the United States. The awards ceremony was hosted by Gen. Robert V. Abrams, the commander of United States forces in Korea.

### 1978

**Michael Heller** of Marshall, Texas, was ordained as an independent minister by the National Association of Christian Ministers.

### 1984

**Leo Morgan** of Woodbridge, Va., retired on Dec. 13, 2018 after more than 34 years with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

### 1985

**Judith (Kaska Kohl) Fox** is a clinical professor of law at the University of Notre Dame Law School, where she teaches and practices consumer law. Her book, "The Foreclosure Echo: How the Hardest Hit Have Been Left Out Of The Economic Recovery," co-authored with Linda Fisher, was published by the Cambridge University Press in July 2019. Since joining the Notre Dame faculty in

1997, she has taught courses in consumer law, alternative dispute resolution, ethics and domestic violence. Fox also runs the University of Notre Dame Economic Justice Clinic. Her advocacy and research focus on issues of predatory lending, primarily in the housing market. In 2016 she was named for a three-year term to the national Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Consumer Advisory Board. She currently serves on the advisory boards of the Indiana Foreclosure Legal Assistance Program, the predatory lending committee of the Bridges Out of Poverty Initiative and on the executive board of the National Association of Consumer Lawyers.

### 1988

**Helen Brannon** of Westbury, N.Y., was promoted to vice president of the Mount Sinai Health Systems Command Center and Throughput

Operations and to senior vice president for throughput at Mount Sinai Hospital in September 2019.

**1991**

**Kristen Piatkowski and Gary Hoskins** MBA '07, of Columbus, Ohio, were married on Dec. 21, 2019.

**1994**

**Jonny Perloff** of Slatington, Pa., received two new patents for an expandable spinal fixation system. He is a project engineer for Globus Medical, Inc. The patents were issued Nov. 27 and May 22, 2018.

**1995**

**David Hines** of Kingston, Pa., was re-elected to the board of directors of the Keystone State Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), a 10,000 member national organization advancing professionalism in the field of public administration. Hines is director of operations for the City of Pittston in Luzerne County, Pa. He continues to compete in running races — an interest that started on the Wilkes cross country team.

**Timothy Williams** of Las Vegas, Nev., spent part of the summer providing professional development to teachers in the Department of Defense schools in Germany. In addition to being an instructional coach in Las Vegas, he is a curriculum consultant with Delta Education and a national board certified teacher.

**1997**

**Heather Lynn (Howell) Johnson** of Port Richey, Fla., accepted a promotion and is now a registered nurse case manager at Vitas Hospital in Gainesville, Fla.

**1999**

**Lucia Piccolino** of Scranton, Pa., owns multiple companies including Social Victory Media LLC, Autobahn Title and Tag, Autobahn Adventure Travel, Oneway2fun.com and Ricochets Rapid Detail LLC.

**Frank Tomaszewski** of Broomall, Pa., is technical operations manager for NBC10 and Telemundo 62 in Philadelphia.



**1997**

**Christine Pavalkis D'Angelo '97 and Justin D'Angelo '03** were married in December 2019. Although they attended Wilkes several years apart, they were introduced by mutual friends at Wilkes Homecoming 2016. When they were married, several Wilkes friends were in attendance, including matchmakers Kevin Beerman '01 and Donna Talarico-Beerman '07, MFA '10. In February 2020, they were featured as Wilkes Sweethearts on the Colonel Connection alumni web site.

**2000**

**Andres Torres** of Staten Island, N.Y., was promoted to captain in the New York City Fire Department with a ceremony on Nov. 14, 2019.

**2006**

**Peter Mayes** of Bethlehem, Pa., successfully defended his doctoral dissertation in educational leadership at East Stroudsburg University. He is currently the principal of Nitschmann Middle School in Bethlehem, Pa.

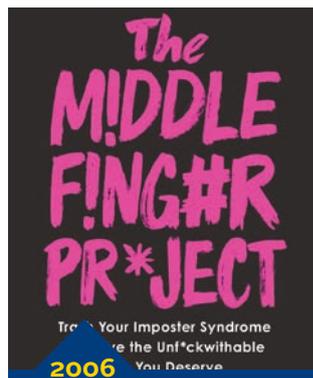
**2009**

**Jessica Berkey MS '18** of Salem, W.Va., created the Bulldog Acts of Random

Kindness (BARK) Club at Doddridge County High School in West Virginia. The club was recognized as West Virginia's representative in the Reader's Digest Nicest Places in America article. Due to her work advising the club and as a Spanish teacher at the school, she was chosen as the 2018/2019 high school teacher of the year.

**2013**

**Aaron Nikles** of Naugatuck, Conn., has been a senior engineer for FedEx Express in Connecticut for almost six years. He recently bought a house in Naugatuck with his girlfriend, where they live with their pets.



**Ashley Ambirge** of Philadelphia, Pa., published a book with Penguin Random House titled "The Middle Finger Project." In the book, she chronicles her journey from growing up in a trailer park to earning her first million dollars as a creative writer doing unconventional business and living an unconventional life. Ambirge notes that the book names Wilkes University as a part of that journey. The book is based on advice given in her online business, The Middle Finger Project, an irreverent media company that helps other women find their voice and teaches them to use it to build their businesses.



**2007**

**Nicholas P. Zmijewski** of Lancaster, Pa., was elected to the top leadership post at ArchivesSpace. ArchivesSpace is the open source archives information management application for managing and providing web access to archives, manuscripts and digital objects. It is built and managed by archivists for archivists in a variety of organizations. Zmijewski is the archivist for the Industrial Library and Archives in Bethlehem, Pa.



2011

**Daniel Kautz** and his wife, Taylor, were married on May 18, 2019, in Indianapolis, Ind., where they now reside. Wilkes University alumni at the wedding are pictured, from left, Trevor Hirsh '11, Christopher Horn '11, Benjamin Andrews '11, John Hawkins '11, Daniel Kautz, Harry Zinskie '12, Justine Zinskie '12 and Jeff Koscil '11 MS '12.



2016

**Olivia Hewison** and **Tyler Sutton** of Philadelphia, Pa., married on Oct. 19, 2019. The wedding took place at Greek Peak Hope Lake Lodge in N.Y.

## 2014

**Christine Lee** is now a reporter at the *Republican-Herald*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning daily newspaper in Pottsville, Pa. She previously served as editor of the *Florham Park Eagle* and reporter for the *Madison Eagle*, which are both weekly papers in the New Jersey Hills Media Group.

## 2015

**Evan Miller** is projects coordinator for the city

of Rehoboth Beach, Del. He received the Delaware Association of Public Administration 2019 Young Professional of the Year award. After graduating from Wilkes, Miller earned his master of public administration degree from the University of Delaware and was an ICMA Local Government Management Fellow for two years. ICMA is the national organization for professional city and county managers.

## 2018

**Corey J. Hauser** has been named editor-in-chief of the Washington and Lee Law Review at Washington and Lee University School of Law. His note on whether federal magistrate judges may dispose of habeas corpus petitions with party consent will be published in the review in 2021. Hauser is a member of the law school's class of 2021.

## Graduate

### 2002

**Sherri Maret M.S.** of Newville, Pa., launched her second book, "The Magician," with Pittsburgh illustrator Pamela Behrend. Her first book was "The Cloud Artist."

### 2005

**Melissa Leedock PharmD**, of Harrisburg, Pa., was promoted to senior director of Medicare pharmacy operations and clinical programs at Capital BlueCross in Harrisburg.

### 2007

**Gary Hoskins MBA** – See undergraduates 1991

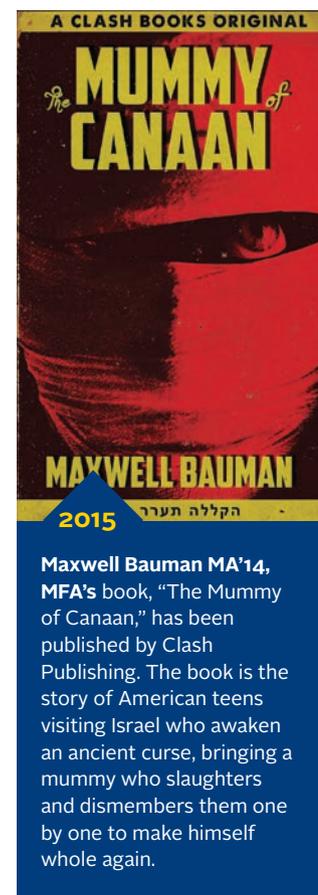
### 2011

**Michelle Schmude Ed.D.** of, Mountain Top, Pa., was recently promoted to associate professor of medicine at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. Schmude has published numerous scholarly works and presented at multiple conferences, including the Drexel University Fifth Annual Assessment Conference,

the Harvard Macy Program for Educators in Health Professions and the 2019 AAMC Health Professions Financial Aid Administrators Conference. She is president of the board of directors of the Northeast Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center.

### 2012

**Mohammed Aburiyaleh MBA** of the United Arab Emirates started the company Baggagement, which uses innovative technology to manage luggage in the travel industry. He credits the experience he gained studying entrepreneurship in the Wilkes master of business administration program with helping him to start the business.



**Maxwell Bauman MA'14**, MFA's book, "The Mummy of Canaan," has been published by Clash Publishing. The book is the story of American teens visiting Israel who awaken an ancient curse, bringing a mummy who slaughters and dismembers them one by one to make himself whole again.

# In Memoriam

## 1946

**Ruth M. Lewis** of Redford, Mo., died on Sept. 12, 2019. She served on many boards and commissions such as the Redford Township Musical Society, Historical Commission, Sister City Commission, Redford Union and Township Board of Canvassers, and Beautification Commission.

## 1949

**Edwin Kosik** of Covington Township, Pa., died on June 13, 2019. As a senior judge for the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, Kosik was the presiding judge in the 2009 “kids for cash” case in which two Luzerne County, Pa., judges were convicted of taking kickbacks for sentencing youth to for-profit detention centers. During World War II, Kosik served as an armored infantry unit commander, eventually retiring as a colonel. After the war, Kosik received his bachelor’s degree at Wilkes College, before earning his law degree at Dickinson School of Law in 1951. He had a private law practice, served as the chairman of the Pennsylvania State Workmen’s Compensation Board, and as judge in the Court of Common Pleas in Lackawanna County. President Ronald Regan nominated him to the federal bench in 1986 and Kosik became a senior judge in 1996.

## 1950

**Robert W. Brodbeck** of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., died on Jan. 19, 2020. He was a U.S. Army veteran who served in World War II. He was a self-employed interior decorator prior to retirement.

**Samuel Owens** of Southfield, Mich., died on Nov. 19, 2019. He enlisted in the Navy and spent three years in the Pacific during World War II. He was an accountant who worked for the Ford Motor Credit Company at the time of his retirement.

## 1951

**Murray R. Horton** of Lancaster, Pa., died on April 23, 2018. He served in the U.S. Navy. He was an electrical engineer with Sylvania Electric, General Electric and RCA Corp. He went on to serve as an auxiliary police officer in Manheim Twp., Pa., before being elected in 1976 as district justice of court of common pleas in Lancaster, Pa.

## 1952

**Mabel-Faye Richards Solomon** of Pompano Beach, Fla, died on Nov. 1, 2020. She was a teacher with the Crestwood School District for 30 years.

## 1953

**David Whitney** of Brown Manor, Wyo., died on Jan. 25, 2020. Whitney was an educator at New Jersey schools. He also served as a counselor and volunteered at the White Haven Center in White Haven, Pa.

## 1954

**Anita (Gordon) Allen** of Southampton, Pa., died in 2019.

**Joseph John Mosier** of Dallas, Texas., died on Feb. 12, 2020. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II in the 99th General Hospital Unit, where he saw action during the Battle of the Bulge. A long-time resident of Exeter, Pa, he had a career as an accountant.

**Ralph B. “Bud” Rozelle** of West Wyoming, Pa., died on Feb. 23, 2020. A professor emeritus and former chair of the chemistry department at Wilkes University, Rozelle served multiple roles during his career at Wilkes, including director of graduate and research programs and chair of the division of natural sciences and mathematics. As director of the health sciences program at Wilkes, he was instrumental in launching the Wilkes-Hahnemann Program, where students would complete their pre-medical requirements in two years at Wilkes and

then continue their medical studies at Hahnemann Medical School in Philadelphia. He also helped to establish numerous other health science partnerships benefiting Wilkes students. As a doctoral student at Alfred University in Alfred, N.Y., his thesis research on fuel cell electrode reactions was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense and NASA, eventually leading to on-board power technologies used in the Gemini and Apollo programs. Prior to joining Wilkes in 1962, Rozelle co-founded Surface Processes, Inc. in Back Mountain, Pa. He was an early pioneer in research into abatement of acid mine damage. He served as chairman of the Board of Nesbitt Memorial Hospital and vice chairman of the Wyoming Valley Health Care System.

## 1957

**John Witinski** of Hanover Twp., Pa., died on Dec. 6, 2019.

## 1959

**William J. Bergstrasser Jr.** of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., died on Nov. 25, 2019. Bergstrasser worked as an accountant.

**1960**

**Ira K. Himmel of Baltimore, Md.**, died on Feb. 4, 2020.

He was a lawyer for 55 years. He worked with LifeBridge Health for over 30 years and served as president of what is currently North West Hospital. He was a board member of the Baltimore Council for Boy Scouts of America and served as its attorney for the last 10 years. He also was an active member of the Family Tree, an organization focused on preventing child abuse.

**1961**

**Howard W. Goeringer of Hanover Twp., Pa.**, died on Jan. 4, 2020. He served in the United States Navy during the Korean War. Goeringer worked as a casework supervisor for the Luzerne County Public Assistance Office.

**Glenn Johnson of North Wales, Pa.**, died on Feb. 8, 2020. He was a business teacher at Coughlin High School and later became business manager of the Shikellamy School District in Sunbury, Pa. In 1971, he joined the administrative staff at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pa., where he held several administrative roles, going on to hold various positions in the field of medical group management. He was a board member of the Danville Area School District and also served as its president.

**Ann (Cotner) McHale of Cleveland, Ohio**, died Oct. 31, 2019. She taught at elementary schools in Wilkes-Barre and at Boggs Elementary School in State College, Pa., where she also served as principal. She is survived by her husband, Vincent McHale '64.

**1962**

**Frank H. Menaker Jr. of Potomac, Md.**, died on Feb. 18, 2020. A lawyer, Menaker served as senior vice president and general counsel for Lockheed Martin Corporation, as well as general counsel for Martin Marietta. He played a key role in the merger of the two organizations to create Lockheed Martin Corp. Menaker also played a key role in the 1986 Defense Industry Initiative when he served as chair of the working group that developed industry standards for accountability, auditing, ethics and self-assessment.

**1963**

**James F. Antonio of Eynon, Pa.**, died on Jan. 7, 2020. Antonio was a computer science teacher at Scranton Tech High School. Later he was employed as an IT director at several facilities, including Penn Security.

**Lynne E. Dente of West Pittston, Pa.**, died on Jan. 18, 2020. She was a teacher in Frenchtown, N.J., and was an active volunteer for many community organizations, including United Methodist

Women, West Pittston Library board and Meals on Wheels of Greater Pittston.

**Paul Edward Gavel of Wyomissing, Pa.**, died Nov. 8, 2019. He was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. He was an entrepreneur in the computer industry for more than 40 years, working for ITT, Honeywell, and started his own successful firm, Palman Systems.

**Mark Sanford Levey of Chicago, Ill**, died on Oct. 30, 2019. Levey worked as a money manager in New York City and Chicago, Ill, and published articles about politics and economics in the *Wall Street Journal* and *Barron's*.

**1971**

**Stephen A. Kaschenbach of Sweet Valley, Pa.**, died on Feb. 11, 2020. Kaschenbach was employed as a teacher in the Dallas School District for 27 years. A former wrestler under legendary Wilkes wrestling coach John Reese, he also coached wrestling as assistant and head coach at Dallas High school. After retiring from teaching, he went on to help establish and operate Lakeway Beverage in Dallas.

**Jean Pierkowski of Wilkes-Barre, Pa.**, died on Dec. 1, 2019. Pierkowski was a substitute teacher and was employed in the business field for the majority of her life. She also was active as a volunteer for multiple

organizations, including the American Red Cross, the Woodward Hill Hose Company, John Heinz, the local SPCA, and multiple long-term nursing homes. She was awarded the Rose Brader Award for Community Service in 2002.

**1973**

**Irv Lebowitz of Kingston, Pa.**, died on Jan. 23, 2020. Lebowitz served six years in the Army Reserves during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He was an athletic director for several organizations, most recently serving in that role for 35 years for the Jewish Community Center in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

**1976**

**Thomas A. Shulde of Lincoln, Neb.**, died on Jan. 24, 2020. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps. from 1965 to 1971. He worked for the Florida Department of Corrections and Pennsylvania Department of Juvenile Justice. He retired as a corrections case manager for the Nebraska Department of Corrections.

**1979**

**Betsy Bell Condron MS of Kingston, Pa.**, died Jan. 10, 2020. She was director of planned giving, development, community relations and special events at Wilkes University from 1979 until her retirement in 1998. She served on the selection board for the Hahnemann Medical College-Wilkes University

program. Condrón received the Wilkes Colonel Award honoring her service. Prior to joining Wilkes, she taught at the Northampton School for Girls and at Wyoming Seminary, where she was the college placement director from 1969–1979. Known for her volunteer work in local, state and national fields of health, education and welfare, she was named a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania in 1975 and later served as the organization's president. She also received the Pennsylvania Medical Society's Benjamin Rush Outstanding Service Award, Luzerne County's Homemaker Service Merit Award and the Pennsylvania Health Department Outstanding Volunteer Award. Her many leadership roles on local, regional and state boards included serving as vice chair of the Commission on the Status of Women under Pennsylvania Gov. William Scranton and serving as a founding board member for Leadership Wilkes-Barre.

**Alison (Miller) Kovalchik** of Shavertown, Pa., died on Dec. 9, 2019. An accomplished artist, Kovalchik was known for combining her Jewish heritage and her love of art through creating Judaica pieces inspired by her many trips to Israel. She also tutored children in Hebrew prior to their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.

### 1980

**Sharon Ann (Knight) Grivner** of Gouldsboro, Pa., died on Jan. 28, 2020. Grivner was an insurance agent and the owner of Allstate Grivner Agency in Pocono Summit, Pa.

### 1981

**Stanley Rajza** of Plains Twp., Pa., died on Nov. 16, 2019. Rajza was employed by Wilkes University in the maintenance department.

### 1986

**Marie Spinosi** of Plains Twp., Pa., died on Jan. 3, 2020. She was employed by Step-by-Step Inc., in Wilkes-Barre as therapeutic staff support.

### 1987

**Anthony Prushinski** of Gilbertsville, Pa., died on Jan. 25, 2020. Prushinski was a branch manager for Automotive Finance Corp.

### 1988

**David Dragon** of Forty Fort, Pa., died on Dec. 11, 2019. Dragon was self-employed as a landscaper and mason.

### 1991

**Laura Mae Reider Novakowski MBA** of Hunlock Creek, died on Dec. 5, 2019. As founder and president of Positive Power Strategies, Novakowski provided leadership and organizational development for individuals, communities, large healthcare systems, Fortune 500 companies and government agencies.

**Patricia (Heffers) Perna** of Taylor, Pa., died on Feb. 6, 2020. For 35 years, Perna was an educator for the Scranton School District.

### 1992

**Christine (Stackalis) Martino** of Wapwallopen, Pa., died on Nov. 23, 2019. Martino was employed by the Department of Human Services in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

### 2005

**Moriah L. Bechtold** of Avoca, Pa., died on Nov. 30, 2019. Bechtold was employed at the Bear Creek Charter School, where she also started the K-Kids Program, an after-school mentorship program. She previously taught at Ridgeview School.

### 2014

**Jill Wujcik MS** of Dallas, Pa., died on Feb. 7, 2020. Wujcik taught special education and general education for the Wilkes-Barre Area School District.

## Faculty

See **Ralph B. "Bud" Rozelle** – 1954

**Wilbur Hayes** professor of biology, died Dec. 10, 2019. He joined Wilkes University's biology department in 1967 and taught biology classes through 2000. He received the Colonel Award from Wilkes in 2004 marking his dedication and contributions to the institution. Hayes earned a bachelor's degree from Colby College and master's and doctoral degrees from Lehigh University. He was a National Institutes of Health postdoctoral fellow at Yale University. Hayes was a member of the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology, the Microscopy Society of America, and Sigma Xi, the scientific research honor society for scientists and engineers.

## Staff

See **Betsy Bell Condrón** – 1979



# Affirm the Future

## SUPPORT THE FIRST GENERATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Wilkes University's rich tradition of educating first generation college students is alive in our newest generation of Colonels. Nearly half of our students are the first in their family to attend college. With the economic and personal challenges posed by a global pandemic, our students need your support now more than ever.

A gift to the First Generation Scholarship Fund affirms that the promise of a Wilkes education will endure for students who seek it in a changing world.

Make your gift today by visiting [www.wilkes.edu/give](http://www.wilkes.edu/give). Affirm the future of a Wilkes education for our students and invite them to be part of a tradition that is Forever Colonel. For more information about making a gift, contact Margaret Steele, chief development officer, at [margaret.steele@wilkes.edu](mailto:margaret.steele@wilkes.edu).

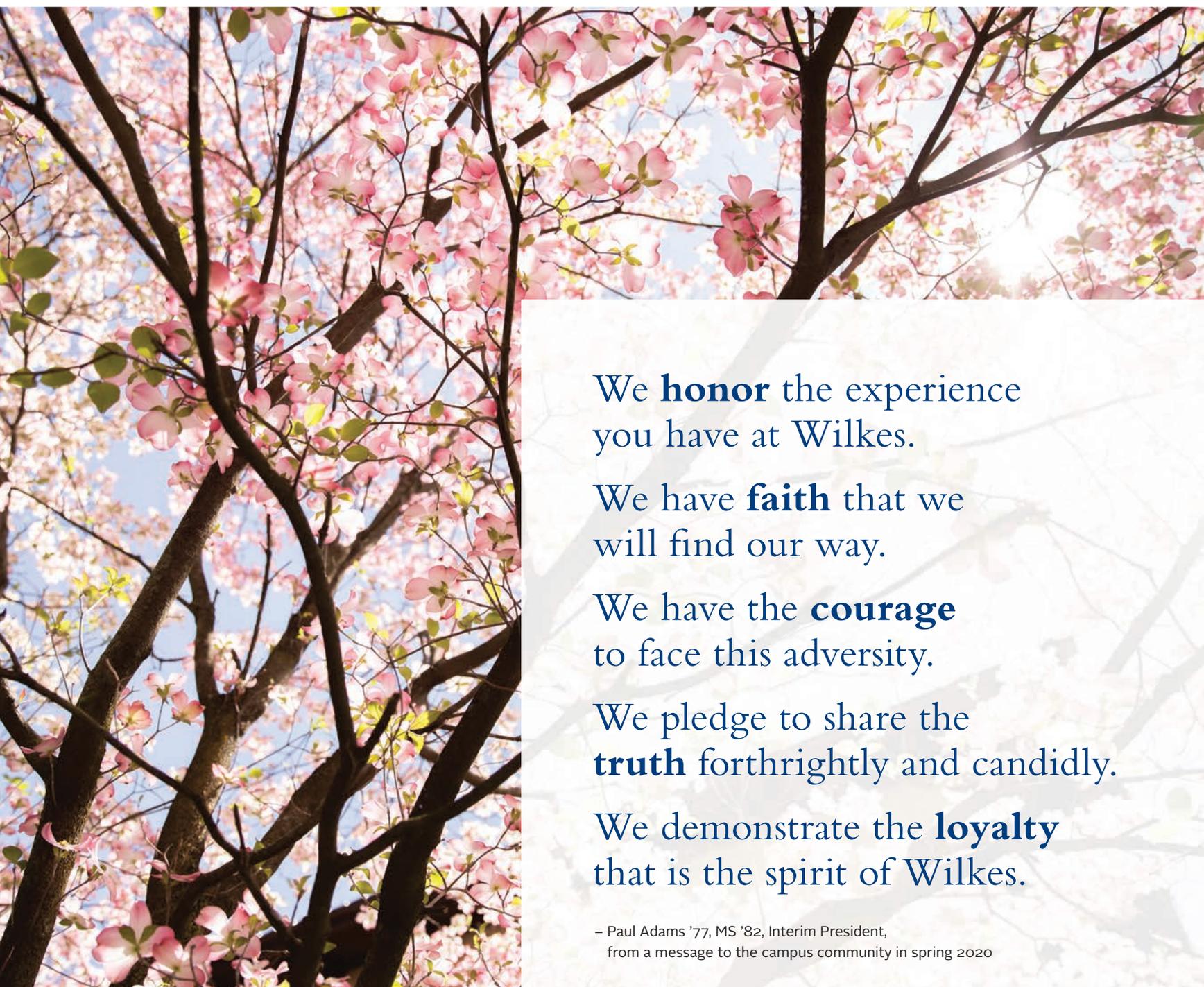


Wilkes  
University



# Wilkes University

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766



We **honor** the experience  
you have at Wilkes.

We have **faith** that we  
will find our way.

We have the **courage**  
to face this adversity.

We pledge to share the  
**truth** forthrightly and candidly.

We demonstrate the **loyalty**  
that is the spirit of Wilkes.

– Paul Adams '77, MS '82, Interim President,  
from a message to the campus community in spring 2020