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Chemistry major Melinda Proulx discusses her research with Dr. Ali Sezer during the 2017 Strike-A-Spark Conference. This year's conference is set for 9 a.m.-4 p.m. April 25 in the Convocation Center.



All Welcome to Strike-A-Spark

Hard work on research, scholarship and creativity is about to be revealed.

The University community and public are encouraged to attend the fourth annual Strike-A-Spark Conference, set for 9 a.m.-4 p.m. April 25 in the Convocation Center.

The event — which showcases work from faculty and students — is presented by the Center for Undergraduate Research and the Faculty Professional Development Center. It will feature live performances, visual artwork, ceramics, costume design, oral presentations in a variety of disciplines, and more than a hundred poster presentations.

"Cal U is again pleased to put on this conference, and those who have attended Strike-A-Spark in the past can attest to the positive energy of the event," said

Dr. Greg Gould, director of the Center for Undergraduate Research.

Students who participate in regional and national conferences are very marketable upon graduation, Gould said. Strike-A-Spark is step one.

"Participation in a local campus event like Strike-A-Spark provides these students with a natural entry point into RSCA (research, scholarship and creative activity), which can carry them to those regional and national conferences as they move into their junior and senior years."

"Faculty members recognize the value of student RSCA projects because they engage students more deeply in disciplinary content," Gould said.

Dr. Stephanie Wallach, assistant vice provost for Undergraduate Education at Carnegie Mellon University, will

deliver the conference's keynote address, "Connecting the Dots: Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry," at 11 a.m. April 25 in the south conference wing of the Convocation Center.

Wallach oversees CMU's Undergraduate Research Office, which funds student research throughout the calendar year. It also organizes the undergraduate research symposium "Meeting of the Minds," which draws more than 600 students from all disciplines.

Immediately following the keynote address, the winners of the Serene Leadership Institute Essay Contest will be announced. This year's essays by Cal U students provide a critical reflection of the influence of gender in leadership.

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Cal U Student Honored by SKAL

Errika Watkins enjoys scoring the daylights out of people.

Each fall for the past seven years, Watkins has worked as a special effects makeup artist and actor during Phantom Fright Nights at Kenwood amusement park, ranked by a national publication as the fifth-best Halloween theme park event in America.

"I try to be scary, but what's emphasized is being entertaining, because it is all about giving the customers an experience," said Watkins, who will graduate in December 2018 with a degree in geography and a concentration in tourism studies. Her minor is in parks and recreation management.

She wants to manage a park one day — her dream job is to manage a "haunt" — but she doesn't rule out traditional attractions such as HersheyPark in Pennsylvania and Dollywood's DreamMore Resort in Tennessee.

A recent tourism and hospitality scholarship will help her follow those dreams.

Watkins was one of four recipients awarded the SKAL International Pittsburgh Tourism and Hospitality Management Scholarship on April 17. SKAL International Pittsburgh is the local chapter of SKAL, an

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Charlemagne Headlines Hip-hop Conference



Charlemagne the God

National radio, TV and social media personality Charlemagne the God will discuss "Hip-hop, Race and Social Activism" when Cal U presents its 13th annual Hip-hop Conference.

Charlemagne will join Pittsburgh social activist Leon Ford for a keynote presentation at 3 p.m. April 27 in the Morgan Hall Learning Resource Center.

Prior to the keynote, Cal U students and local artists will engage in a roundtable discussion, "Pursuing My Artistry or Going to College." The discussion starts at 2 p.m., also in the Morgan Hall auditorium.

About the speakers

Charlemagne the God, aka Lenard McKelvey, is co-host of the nationally syndicated iHeartRadio program The Breakfast Club and author of the New York Times bestseller *Black Privilege: Opportunity Comes to Those Who Create It* (Touchstone, 2017). He is the founder and executive producer of the production company CThaGod World LLC and co-host

of the popular Brilliant Idiots podcast.

As a radio and MTV2 television host, Charlemagne is well known for his sometimes-confrontational celebrity interviews, and his outspoken views are widely shared on social media. The *New York Times* described his book as "a street-smart self-help guide," filled with candid advice for getting ahead.

Ford became a social activist after he was shot by Pittsburgh police during a traffic stop in 2012. He is paralyzed and uses a wheelchair. In January, the city agreed to pay \$5.5 million to settle a lawsuit over the case.

Since the shooting, Ford has traveled the country to share his story and speak out on topics including police-community relations, affordable housing and accessibility. In 2017, *Pittsburgh City Paper* named Ford its first Pittsburgher of the Year.

About the conference

Cal U's annual Hip-hop Conference is organized by Dr. Kelson Edmonds, a

professor in the Department of History, Politics, Society and Law. Edmonds is a former director of the Frederick Douglass Institute at Cal U and program coordinator for the University's new minor in African American studies.

Each year the conference brings well-known hip-hop artists to campus to explore the significance of rap and hip-hop culture from a fresh angle. Past topics have included hip-hop history and the genre's evolution, the criminal justice system; and sports, hip-hop and race.

Sponsors this year are Cal U's new African American studies minor; the Black Student Union; Cal U Women United; the Frederick Douglass Institute; the Office of Social Equity; the Department of History, Politics, Society and Law; and the College of Education and Human Services.

Join us

Admission to Cal U's Hip-Hop Conference is free; the public may attend. Metered parking for visitors is available in lots 10 and 17 on campus.



Leon Ford

Alumna Tells Scholars: 'Best is yet to Come'

Blayre Holmes Davis '12 had a message for Cal U's 2018 Presidential Scholars: "You've already achieved great things, but keep going!"

The director of community partnerships and program development at Adagio Health, Holmes-Davis addressed the University's top scholars at the 2018 Honors Convocation, held April 7 at the Convocation Center.

Presidential Scholars carry an undergraduate grade-point average of 3.25 or higher; graduate students must have a GPA of 3.75 or higher.

"Remember, you are already living your greatness, and the best is yet to come," said Holmes-Davis. "I found myself asking 'What's next?' during my entire college career and realized it was finding my greatness."

Graduating senior Mariah Howze, who is majoring in psychology with a minor in business, was inspired by her fellow Presidential Scholars.

"Seeing so many other people being honored is rewarding in itself, because you know they have worked just as hard as you and pushed through obstacles to get here," Howze said.

"Scholars, you have the knowledge and talent to achieve incredible things," University President Geraldine M. Jones told the nearly 300 graduate and undergraduate students who were recognized.

"If you can realize the full measure of your abilities, you will change the lives of the people around you — and I have no doubt that you will change things for the better."

In her role at Adagio, Holmes-Davis works with the community to ensure that rural residents of western Pennsylvania have access to reproductive healthcare, wellness education and nutrition. Adagio provides services to more than 150,000 women and their families each year, with a focus on those in need.

Activism and community engagement have always figured prominently for Holmes-Davis, even as a student.

A member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Davis spent two years as an AmeriCorps community service leader, creating community partnerships and planning events.



Above, guest speaker Blayne Holmes-Davis delivers her address to the Presidential Scholars at Honors Convocation. Right, University President Geraldine M. Jones congratulates Presidential Scholar and senior Devon Bates.

Today, Holmes-Davis serves on the boards for Dress for Success Pittsburgh, YWCA Young Leaders Board of Greater Pittsburgh, and Emerge PA, which encourages political engagement and trains women to run for and hold public office. She was recognized in the inaugural Who's Who in Black Pittsburgh and Young Black Pittsburgh publications.

She recalled overcoming struggles during her undergraduate days. "There are people who will tell you greatness is not unattainable for everyone, and I completely disagree with that," she said. "Do not let other people's doubts stop your progress."

She cited Bayard Rustin, an African civil rights leader and chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

"Most people say that if MLK (Martin Luther King Jr.) was the star of the civil rights movement, then Bayard Rustin was the director," she said.



"Greatness is not one size fits all and is not about always having the spotlight."

Along with recognizing her parents and family, Holmes-Davis praised her alma mater.

"Cal U has been great to me," she said. "Today we celebrate your greatness, 2018 Presidential Scholars."

Before Holmes-Davis's address, President Jones recognized the three Distinguished Merit Award recipients — faculty members Dr. Carol Bocetti, honored for excellence in teaching; Professor Barbara Hess, recognized for service; and Dr. Mark Tebbitt, honored for research.



Cal U student Abby Ross prepares a pot for this spring's pottery sale.

Pottery Sale May 1-3

The spring student pottery sale will be held from 10 a.m.-8 p.m. May 1 and from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. May 2-3 in the Ceramics Studio, near Vulcan Hall. Providing an ideal gift opportunity for Mother's Day on May 13, the sale features an array of fully functional stoneware pottery. Members of the Student Pottery Club create all the handmade items.

The sale is open to the public, and complimentary refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact Professor Richard "Duke" Miecznikowski at 724-938-4083 or miecznikowski@calu.edu.

Cal U to Strike-A-Spark

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A student performance by the Department of Music and Theatre on this subject will conclude the morning session.

Oral and poster presentations will continue following a lunch break. At 3 p.m., additional live performances will take place in the south wing, along with closing remarks from Gould and Wallach.

Student presentations may consist of individual or class projects, capstone experiences, or senior/graduate theses. A panel of judges will evaluate the students' presentations, and prizes will be awarded for outstanding work.

Faculty presentations may focus on innovations in their scholarship presented for a broader audience, or they may spotlight pedagogical and/or educational innovations, including the application

of high-impact practices in teaching and learning.

Dr. Bruce Barnhart, provost and senior vice president for Academic

Affairs, believes the conference serves many purposes.

"It's really important that we recognize and celebrate the wonderful teaching and learning that takes place here every day," he said.

"Undergraduate research is considered a high-impact practice, which has a very positive effect on retention and on student achievement."

"This conference also gives students even more one-to-one interaction with expert faculty in their field. You just can't duplicate that."

To learn about this year's conference and the featured speaker, visit calu.edu/strikespark. Questions about the conference can be directed to Dr. Gregg Gould at gould@calu.edu or Dr. Louise Nicholson at nicholson@calu.edu.



Dr. Stephanie Wallach

Zonta Club Honors Avid Volunteer

Julie Kingsley's exemplary volunteer work, particularly community service activities focused on cancer prevention, is being noticed.

Kingsley, who has worked at Cal U for more than 30 years, is a clerical supervisor in the Department of University Printing Services. This summer she will receive a Rose Day Award for Volunteerism from the Zonta Club of Washington County.

Kingsley will be one of six honorees at the Zonta Washington Club's 33rd Anniversary and Rose Day Celebration Luncheon, set for 1 p.m. June 3 at the Lone Pine Country Club, in Washington, Pa.

Founded in 2000, Zonta is an international service organization dedicated to advancing the status of women.

The annual Zonta Rose Day awards honor women who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and service in the spheres of business, community service, nonprofit work, education, volunteerism, health services and government.

Kingsley lost her mother, Patsy, to colon cancer in 2000.

"At the end of her time with us she did not want us, as she said, 'wallowing in grief,'" Kingsley recalled. "She wanted us to do something good, and (my service in) the years to follow has been in her memory."

Kingsley initially became involved with South Hills Interfaith Movement. She organized family and friends to crochet more than 250 hats and scarves. She soon began collecting and donating clothing for Goodwill Industries, churches and several school districts through the "Back to School" program.



Julie Kingsley, a clerical supervisor in the Department of University Printing Services, will receive a Rose Day Award for Volunteerism from the Zonta Club of Washington County June 3.

For many years she has been active with the American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days event, with considerable support from Cal U employees.

This spring she is helping to collect gently used bras and camisoles for the Cal U's women's studies program "Free the Girls," an initiative to fight human trafficking.

Her many on-campus activities include serving as a mentor, organizing office food drives for the Cal U Cupboard food pantry, and serving on the President's Commission for the Status of Women.

"Working at Cal U has helped to educate me about diversity and be very accepting of people," Kingsley said. "I can make a difference by doing one small gesture at a time. I am giving my voice — not only for myself, but for

others, by leading by example."

Kingsley is a two-time Cal U Women's Center WOW (Women on Wednesday) recipient, an honor that recognizes the work of women on campus who share a commitment to service and social justice issues.

"If you thought about who on this campus deserves recognition for the work they do above and beyond, Julie is the first person who comes to mind," said Nancy Skobet, associate dean for Student Affairs and director of the Cal U Women's Center.

"It is amazing, even shocking, how much unsung work she does day in and day out to support and empower women."

Kingsley and her sister, Judy Lupori, design and make key wristlets and fobs, with proceeds benefiting Monongahela

Valley Hospital's Lois Orange Ducoeur Breast Cancer Walk. Kingsley joined that walk's planning committee in 2013 and for four years held a "Kingsley Family Walk" at California's Rotary Park to raise money for the American Cancer Society.

Since 2012 her team has participated in the Peters Township Relay for Life, raising more than \$13,000. She also participates in Friends of the Jefferson Hills Library events.

Sara Schumacher and Melissa Marion, who are the vice president and director of fund development, respectively, at Monongahela Valley Hospital, nominated Kingsley for the Rose Day Award. They first met her when planning for the Ducoeur walk in 2013.

Schumacher praised Kingsley for her work on behalf of the prevention, early detection and treatment of breast cancer.

"Julie is a special person ... whom we are proud to have as a volunteer at Monongahela Valley Hospital," Schumacher said. "We are grateful for her dedication and commitment. ... She is making an impact on the lives of our patients through her efforts."

Cheryl Hopper, co-chair of Zonta Club of Washington County, said the organization takes the awards and selection process very seriously. "Julie's information stood out and was very impressive," she said. "The fact that Mon Valley Hospital nominated someone who does not work for them shows the impact Julie has made."

Those interested in attending the luncheon must register by May 20; contact Hopper at 724-747-0220 or email worldhoppercheryl@aol.com. Cost is \$40.

Cal U Student Honored by SKAL

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international organization that brings together all sectors of the travel and tourism industry.

SKAL's Scholarship awards \$1,500 to students who demonstrate the potential to achieve a managerial position in the hospitality and/or tourism field. Academic performance, attendance, cooperation, communication skills, and general spirit of hospitality and goodwill toward others are taken into account.

Dr. Susan Ryan, coordinator for Cal U's tourism studies program and a professor in the Department of Earth Sciences, nominated Watkins.

"Erka fits the criteria perfectly," Ryan said of the scholarship. "She is a perfect example of what the industry refers to as the personification of the 'hospitality spirit.' Erka is extremely hard-working, and I am confident she will be rewarded through a successful career in tourism and hospitality."

Watkins is a Presidential Scholar, which requires an undergraduate grade-point average of at least 3.25. She's hoping to work this year at Seven Springs Mountain Resort's Summer Adventures Program, where she would help guests navigate the resort's recreational areas.

"SKAL is all about giving people opportunities and bettering themselves, so it does not surprise me at all that



Erka Watkins' commitment to academics and hospitable spirit have helped her land a SKAL International Pittsburgh Tourism and Hospitality Management Scholarship.

Dr. Ryan is affiliated with them," said Watkins. "Since I came here, she has been so welcoming and helpful."

Watkins, a native of Homestead, Pa., transferred to Cal U five years after attending Community College of Allegheny County.

"Even after that gap, Cal U took all of my credits, which really helped," said Watkins, 28.

"No one seemed fazed or treated me differently (even though I'm) an older student. And there's a building that has my last name on it."

"All of this I find pretty cool."

Campus BRIEFS

Dance Concert Explores Distortions

The Department of Music and Theatre concludes its spring season with a dance concert featuring innovative choreography by faculty and students.

Dancers will explore the communicative aspects of the body when they perform *Cognitive Distortions: Spring Dance Concert 2018* at 7 p.m. May 3-5 in Steele Hall Mainstage Theatre.

The concert celebrates the physical expression of emotion, be it joy, sadness or anger. Performers also strive to express the essence of a physical or mental limitation through dance.

The production is open to the public. Ticket price is \$12 for adults, seniors and children. Cal U students with valid CalCards pay 50 cents, plus a \$5 deposit that is refunded at the show.

For ticket information, or to charge tickets by phone, call the Steele Hall Box Office at 724-938-5943.

Students, Families Visit April 28

On April 28, Cal U welcomes students and their families to the last spring Open House. Registration begins at 8 a.m. on the third floor of the Natoli Student Center.

The program is designed to

introduce prospective undergraduates to Cal U and to give students who have been accepted a chance to explore and experience the campus.

Students and families can learn about programs of study, financial aid and scholarship opportunities, housing, and student life.

They can talk with Cal U students and admissions counselors, meet faculty members, tour campus and visit Vulcan Village.

Find more information online at calu.edu/visit or register online at calu.edu/visit/register. Prospective students may contact the Office of Admissions at 724-938-4404 or email admissions@calu.edu.

International Dinner Set for April 29

Cal U will celebrate the diversity of its students at the 2018 International Dinner, 6 p.m. April 29 at the Performance Center inside the Natoli Student Center.

This year's event will have a Mexican theme. Dancing and other activities are planned.

Cost is \$5 for students, \$10 for the public. Doors open at 5 p.m. Sponsors are the Office of the President and the International Club. Tickets can be purchased at the door or in advance by emailing Nichole.Hogan@calu.edu, International Club vice president, at hog9991@calu.edu.

Mon Valley Author Rekindles Memories

Author Paul Hertney delivered practical writing advice to Cal U students and discussed the area's heyday in the steel industry during a lecture on March 29.

In his book *Rust Belt Boy: Stories of an American Childhood*, Hertney writes about growing up in Ambridge, Pa., as the industry peaked and declined.

Approximately 6 million baby boomers, like the narrator, fled the Rust Belt. Another 6 million remained, and stories of their youth, struggles, and aspirations echo throughout the book.

In a five-year stretch in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Pittsburgh area lost 300,000 jobs.

"I wanted to tell a story but first needed to do research, which leads to more research, and this kind of seismic change cast me forward," Hertney said. "The process of research is ultimately rewarded when you find those starting facts, and then a narrative begins."

Event coordinator Dr. Christina Fisanick, associate professor of English at Cal U, said Hertney's book was an ideal way to introduce her Honors Composition II students to the men and women of the Mon Valley — and to the steel industry. She said the book also helped her further appreciate her



Paul Hertney, author of *'Rust Belt Boy: Stories of an American Childhood'*, makes a point to students during his talk on March 29.

own father, a Rust Belt steel worker.

"When you're growing up, you don't really get to know your parents, and I had taken for granted his labor," she said. "Reading Paul's book helped me understand and learn who he is as a man and a person who sacrificed his physical and psychological health

every day to put food on our table."

With his book Hertney wanted to reach his not only his literary peers, but also the steel workers of the region. So he trimmed 600 pages of research to 223 pages, seeking to streamline his book and not simplify it.

"Being a journalist is tough, everyday,

blue-collar work," he said. "Just like an artist, you must practice some of the aspects of your heart, and part of that is making choices — what to gather, what to keep and what to cut loose."

First-year student Maggie Cave, a communication studies major from Boyertown, Pa., appreciated Hertney's insights.

"I did not know anything about the steel industry before reading this book," she said. "I liked how he shortened his book, because that can be overwhelming. Each chapter was kind of its own story."

Hertney's talk rekindled memories for a local author and lifelong Mon Valley resident Ralph Stone '77, who earned his master's degree at Cal U. A retired teacher he wrote *Diary of a First Street Rambler*, a book about growing up in Monessen. Stone worked part time in the steel mills before joining the Army.

"I enjoyed his presentation because it's also what happened here," said the 84-year-old Stone. "Times were tough, people worked hard, but I believe I grew up in a time and place that was wonderful."

"Everything he said certainly reminded me of those times, and that's why I came."

Kamara Scores Hall of Fame Honor

Editor's Note: Cal U held its 23rd annual Athletic Hall of Fame dinner April 21 at the Performance Center, inside the Nittali Student Center. The Journal is profiling each of the three 2018 inductees.

When Ishmeal Kamara joined Cal U's men's basketball program in 1999, the Vulcans were defending PSAC champions who had made eight NCAA Division II Tournament appearances in the past 12 years.

"The competition was serious and at a high level, so I knew right away that I really needed to focus on my game to just even get on the floor," Kamara said. "It was extremely challenging but an exciting time that brought out everyone's best."

He rose to the occasion and became a three-year starter and all-conference guard.

Playing under head coach Bill Brown, Kamara helped the Vulcans compile an 88-31 overall record and 35-13 PSAC-West mark during his four-year career.

During this stretch, Cal U won three PSAC-West titles with consecutive conference championship game appearances in 2002 and 2003.

Kamara is the second athlete recruited by Brown — who coached the Vulcans to 365 wins over 20 seasons before he retired — to be inducted into Cal U's Hall of Fame. Brown also recruited 2013 inductee Seth Martin '02.

"I was and still am in total disbelief," said Kamara, after Brown phoned him about making the Hall of Fame.

"Coach Brown is one of the easiest people to get along with, and he allowed us to grow, learn from our mistakes and become men. It was an absolute pleasure to play with him, and this honor is a reflection of the job he did putting our team

together and the opportunity he gave me."

Kamara finished his stellar career with 1,421 points, which ranks 11th in school history. He also shot 78.4 percent from the foul line (326-416) and produced 354 rebounds, 213 assists and 80 steals.

Originally from Dublin, Ohio, Kamara was selected as the 2003 PSAC-West Player of the Year.

A dean's list student as a secondary education major, he also was active with the Black Student Union and was a student worker in the health center.

"You don't realize it when you're going through it, but looking back, it was so much fun," Kamara said about his time at Cal U. "I enjoyed everything about being at Cal."

After his collegiate career, Kamara competed for five years in the Continental Basketball Association and International Basketball League.

Brown called him a special player and even better person.

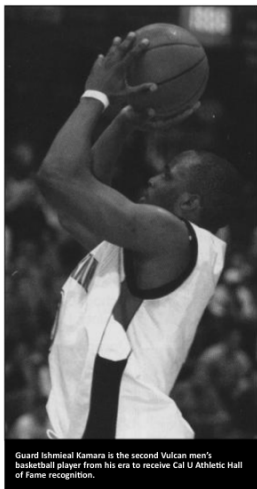
"Ish is a guy who was very respectful of others and was a great teammate," Brown said. "He was so low key, but he let his actions speak for his play."

"He never let his individual accomplishments affect who he was as a player or a person, and we knew if we needed a bucket, he would get one for us."

For nearly a decade, Kamara has owned and served as a personal trainer and fitness instructor for MyLife in the Washington, D.C., area. He runs a series of wellness programs and clinics for companies, as well as fitness projects for several schools.

Kamara lives in Laurel, Md., and always looks forward to returning to campus.

"As much as the campus and buildings have changed, when I come back to campus it still has that nice 'Cal' feel to it, which is amazing," he said. "That's why Cal U is so special."



Guard Ishmeal Kamara is the second Vulcan men's basketball player from his era to receive Cal U Athletic Hall of Fame recognition.

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