

# CLARION

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

FALL 2020



## FEATURES

### 12 A Whole New World

Despite the pandemic, Clarion continues its mission with remote learning, covered faces and physical distancing.

### 14 Mentorship: A Banner Idea

Lindsay Banner's idea for a program to match students with professionals has launched a suite of mentorship programs.

### 20 Success Trifecta

Golden Eagle Ron Lofton created golden opportunities in his community under the Golden Arches.

### 26 Ryan

A culture of mentorship is helps Golden Eagles soar in the world of corporate tax services.

## DEPARTMENTS

### 4 Clarion Digest

The Walking for Fitness class donates candy to medical workers; students score in business-related competitions; Clarion chosen as Greenways Partner of the Year; Oberlander is first female Republican Caucus whip; alumna's college dream comes true 43 years after high school; new Office of Diversity, Equity and Multicultural Affairs will advance social justice; Price leads education back to college status.

### 10 Honoring the past, planning for the future

### 32 Sports Roundup

A changing world hasn't changed the big picture much for coaches from the 1960s to 2020; Golden Eagle athletes soar above pandemic challenge with strong academics.

### 40 Class Notes

### 48 #WINGSUP

Time will tell where Christopher Tate's career will go, but his first short film is getting attention.



**Eric Frye** came to Clarion University in 2012 as a transfer student from Seton Hill University in Greensburg. Having grown up in a high-crime neighborhood in Pittsburgh, Frye saw Clarion University as an opportunity for a new experience.

He played football and graduated with a degree in business in 2016. However, it was his sports experience, and particularly his experiences coaching youth sports, that really shaped his future.

"I've always liked working with youth, and I wanted to become a role model," he noted.

Frye's "Secure the Kid" project began as an after-school program, offering tutoring, mentoring, healthy snacks, special activities and opportunities for students to visit college campuses.

"A lot of these kids want to be better, but they just need someone to believe in them," Frye said. "It's good for them to see someone like me, a person who looks like them and grew up in the same area, because not a lot of people who come from where I was raised become successful. Success in a lot of people's eyes here is graduating high school. Graduating college - it's like you're almost a hero, and definitely a role model."

**CLICK HERE  
to read more.**



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Clarion University Magazine is published by the Division for University Advancement for alumni, families of current students and friends of Clarion University. Alumni information is also located at [www.clarion.edu/alumni](http://www.clarion.edu/alumni).

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings Golden Eagle Family,

I hope you and your loved ones are keeping a positive attitude, a bit of humor, a concerned sense of health and safety, and, above all, a caring heart.

Like each of you, we are navigating our way through this pandemic. Last spring, COVID-19 necessitated sending most residential students home and pivoting to remote delivery of classes for the remainder of the semester. One-third of Clarion's student population attends online, so they were mostly unaffected.

We formed our COVID Response Team (CRT) with representation from all areas of campus. Our planning group worked to decide first, if we could return our students to campus for the fall semester, and second, how that could happen while keeping safe our students, faculty and staff.

At the core of our decisions are two constants: Continue to deliver our educational mission to the citizens of the commonwealth; maximize the safety of our campus community and those we serve.

Based on the herculean efforts of the CRT and our ever-ready campus community, by late June resuming face-to-face operations for fall seemed possible. We created plans for physical distancing, providing face coverings, sanitizing spaces and providing remote education for those with underlying health concerns. We adjusted our academic calendar to bring students to campus earlier and allow them to leave by Thanksgiving, thus minimizing interaction after holiday gatherings.

We were ready. We were set. Then, just two weeks before move-in day, the pandemic worsened, and our "Go!" meant opening remotely for fall.

Because of Clarion's strength and experience in remote learning, we are able – as we did last spring – to make the transition expeditiously. Our excellent faculty deliver a full academic experience to students, and our bright and nimble students continue to make progress toward graduation and their academic dreams.

Because of our proven expertise in online education, the State System has asked us to partner with California University to stand up a low-cost, high-quality online undergraduate degree and degree-completion program that is not currently available in the commonwealth. Details of the partnership are under development, but it sets up the two universities to lead the entire State System of Higher Education – and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania – in online, degree-attaining education.

Make no mistake: Clarion University will maintain our own identity, compete in our own athletics, and continue to offer our strong, traditional on-the-ground education programs.

Normally, I would end by saying "see you at Homecoming," but our hallmark events will be delayed until next year. We know that our alumni still want to reconnect and celebrate, so we are excited to announce a reimagined Homecoming with virtual and remote alumni experiences. These will include campus tours, thought-provoking discussions, opportunities to hear from leading faculty, chances to reconnect with alumni, faculty and staff from your time at Clarion, and more. Visit [www.clarion.edu/homecoming](http://www.clarion.edu/homecoming) for details.

On our campuses, we remain busy. Fresh signage marks new and legacy buildings, beautiful stone accents our Main Campus sign, Tippin shines, Moore (Music Hall) and Stevens are undergoing renovations, Egbert overhaul plans are underway, Hart Chapel doors have been lovingly repaired, and our grounds blend sustainable grasslands with native plantings. We are 150 years proud and going strong.

I am honored to serve as your president and am so pleased to be part of the Clarion Family.

Always, keep your WINGS UP!

Dr. Dale



**WALKING FOR FITNESS CLASS GIVES SWEET TREAT TO HOSPITAL WORKERS**

After coronavirus forced classes to go online during the spring 2020 semester, members of the Walking for Fitness class gave up the candy they had at home. When they submitted their final journals, they also sent the candy leftovers – which totaled two full boxes – to donate to workers at Clarion Hospital.

Dave Katis, assistant professor in the department of nutrition, fitness, sport sciences and athletic training, leads the hour-and-15-minute-class, which meets twice a week. The group walks to various places, including Clarion Cemetery, where Katis talks about important people in Clarion University history, such as Waldo Tippin, Dana Still, Gail Grejda, Gene Sobolewski and Dick Pae, as they pass their headstones.

**KRUPA APPOINTED AS STUDENT TRUSTEE**



Pa. Gov. Tom Wolf has appointed Kaitlyn Krupa of Drifting, a senior nursing major with a double minor in psychology and women and gender studies, as student trustee for Clarion University. She will serve until her May 2021 graduation.

Krupa serves on Student Senate and is a tutor for the nursing department. She is a member of the Nursing Club, Interhall Council and the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. She founded the CU Menstrual Fund and is a member of the CU Engaged Coalition and the Resource Room Task Force.

The Council of Trustees is responsible for making recommendations, evaluating, reviewing, approving and participating in planning efforts for personnel, fiscal affairs, academic policy, strategic planning, student affairs and facilities management. The governor appoints all trustees, including the student trustee.

**FLICKINGER, WASILKO SHINE IN FINANCIAL PLANNING COMPETITION**

Matt Flickinger, a May 2020 graduate of Clarion University with a bachelor's degree in personal finance, won \$1,000 in the CFA Society of Pittsburgh's 2019-20 Collegiate Personal Financial Planning competition. Will Wasilko, also a May 2020 personal finance graduate, placed 10th to win \$250.

Students from two- and four-year academic institutions submitted a four- to five-page financial plan for one-year, three-year and five-year horizons.

Flickinger, of Mt. Jewett, and Wasilko, of Duncansville, competed in a field of nearly 200 students from western Pennsylvania schools, including the University of Pittsburgh, Allegheny College and Grove City College. A committee of volunteers from the CFA Society independently reviewed and ranked the top 15 plans.



**SCHLAK, HOWARD, MAHAN WIN STARTUP FUNDS IN CHALLENGE COMPETITION**

Three Clarion students won business startup funds in the 2019-2020 State System Startup Challenge finals April 22, held virtually via Zoom.

Formerly known as the Business Plan Competition, the challenge welcomes individual students or teams from the 14 Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education universities to submit plans to launch or grow their own businesses.

Samantha Schlak of Fairfield, a 2019 graduate with a bachelor's degree in accounting and corporate finance, placed third with her business model for The Sassy Girl Project, receiving \$2,500. The Sassy Girl Project helps women find and pursue their passions by providing tools that help

them dig deep, feel supported and be more efficient.

Nick Howard of Venus, a junior accounting major, submitted his business model for Nick's Buffalo Chicken Dip. Nick placed fifth in the competition, receiving \$500 to use as seed money. Nick's Buffalo Chicken Dip will be a pre-made dip that consumers can purchase and heat up in their microwave or oven.

Taylor Mahan of Chagrin Falls, Ohio, a senior accounting major, placed as a semi-finalist with her submission of TNT Silicon. She gave a one-minute pitch for viewer's choice and won first place, receiving \$350. TNT Silicon will manufacture and install solar awnings to both the commercial and residential markets.



**'06 GRAD WINS EMMY FOR WORK ON 'THE PRICE IS RIGHT'**

**La-Aja Wiggins Hernandez '06** won a Daytime Emmy for Outstanding Live & Direct to Tape Sound Mixing on 'The Price is Right' during the 47th Daytime Emmy Awards, presented June 26 on CBS.

"Winning an Emmy is not an easy feat. There are so many great shows we compete against," Hernandez said. "The team at 'The Price is Right' and I are uber proud to have won the Daytime Emmy in the category Sound Mixing, especially because it's our first win after our audio leader, Ed Greene, passed away. He was the one who recognized how much audio work the editors did and recommended we be added to the nomination."



**OBERLANDER IS PA'S FIRST FEMALE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS WHIP**

Pennsylvania Rep. **Donna Oberlander '91**, a member of Clarion University Board of Trustees, is the first woman to serve as Republican Caucus whip. As majority whip, Oberlander (R-Clarion/Armstrong/Forest) will be responsible for tracking House votes and informing her other 109 Republican colleagues on upcoming issues and legislation. She is the first state representative from the 63rd District to ascend to the position, which is considered the third highest in the House Republican Caucus.

"As I have done as majority Policy Committee chairman, the residents of 63rd District remain my top priority in the House, and this elevated leadership position allows me to ensure that their hometown values and principles are heard when major policy and budget decisions are made in the Pennsylvania General Assembly," Oberlander said.

This is Oberlander's third role in House Republican leadership. She was elected as caucus secretary in 2014 and majority Policy Committee chairman in 2018, a position she has most recently held.



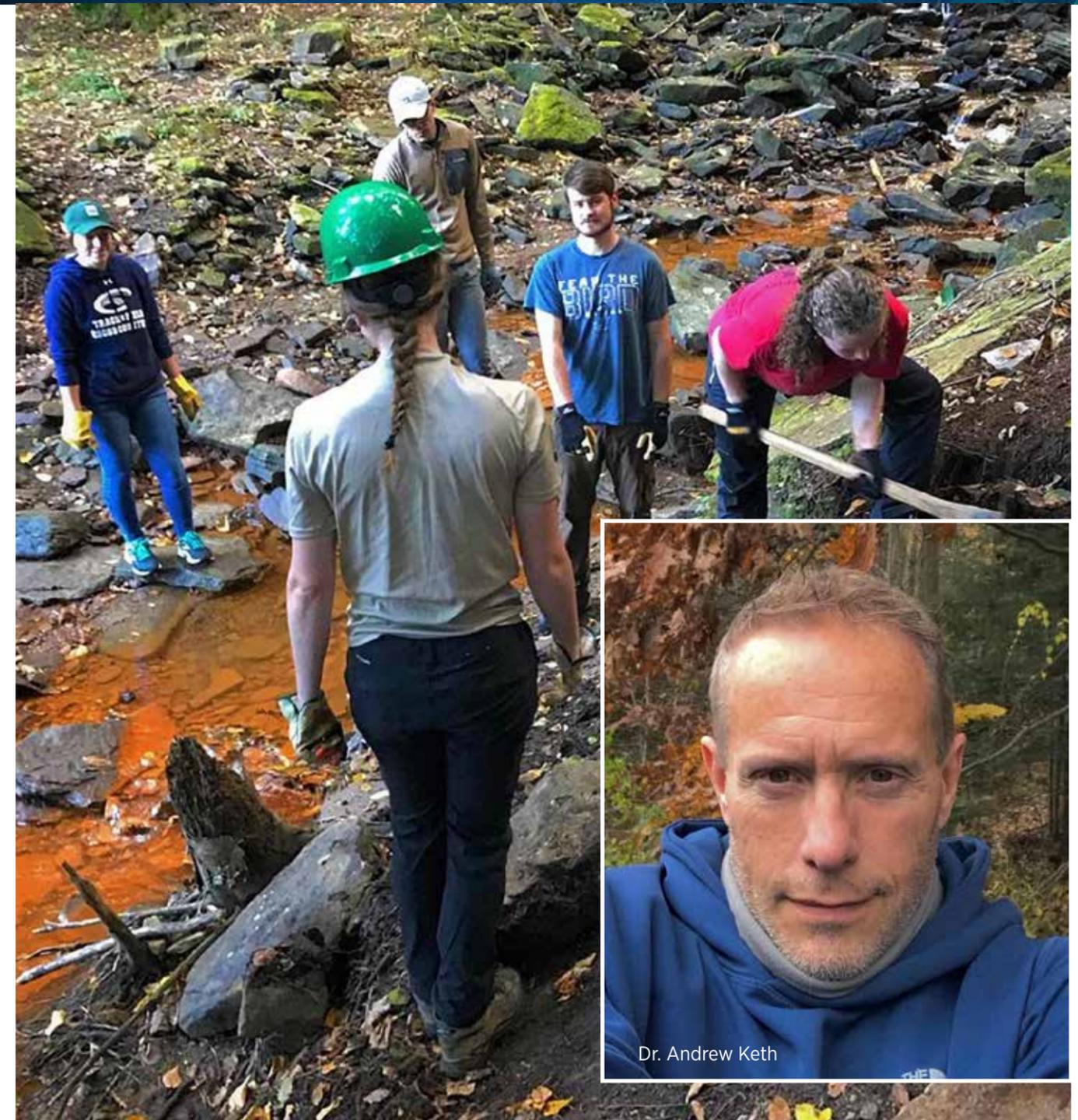
**HIGH SCHOOL-TO-COLLEGE JOURNEY IS 43 YEARS LONG FOR ALUMNA**

**Teresa Sedoris-Palmer '20** dreamed of going to college after she graduated from high school in 1977, but she couldn't afford tuition.

When her daughter graduated college in 2006, Sedoris-Palmer's dream of a college education for herself was resuscitated. While her son was finishing his degree, she decided she would be next. In 2010, at age 50, she enrolled in online classes at Clarion.

"My normal day involved getting up at 3 a.m. to get ready for work, driving an hour to work, working 10 to 12 hours, then driving an hour back home," Sedoris-Palmer said. "A quick dinner, then I would do schoolwork most nights."

In May, 43 years after completing high school, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in business management. Nineteen days later she was offered and accepted a management position with a local company.



**CLARION CHOSEN AS GREENWAYS PARTNER OF THE YEAR**

Clarion University was selected as the 2020 Thomas J. Allen Greenways Partner of the Year, an award given to an individual, company or organization that donated support, resources and/ or expertise to assist the Council on Greenways and Trails during the prior five years.

The selection is based on the work and contributions of Dr. Andrew Keth and the university's Western PA Chapter

Society for Conservation Biology, which Keth advises. North Country Trail Association nominated Clarion for the award.

Chapter members care for the Clarion Loop Trail, including repairs and cleanup of downed trees. A future project is to build bridges on the trail using funds from a Community Fellows Grant from the university.

Dr. Andrew Keth

OFFICE WILL **ADVANCE** DIVERSITY, SOCIAL EQUITY, MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION



A new Office of Diversity, Equity and Multicultural Affairs will join professionals who will work together to develop policies and procedures to advance student and employee equity, diversity, inclusion, multicultural and international education, and social justice.

It will include Rogers Laugand III, who moves from director of minority student services to director of multicultural affairs and diversity education; Amy Salsgiver, director

of social equity; and Marcy Schlueter, international student advisor and study abroad coordinator.

Laugand will advise the President's Executive Council on issues related to students of color.

"Hearing the voice of students through the lens of diversity is critical to better support of progress, retention and graduation," President Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson said.

CLARION, CAL U EXPLORING INTEGRATION OF **ONLINE PROGRAMS**

As Clarion University continues to lead the region in on-the-ground undergraduate residential education, an integration of online programs with California University is being explored. The Board of Governors for the State System authorized the review as part of ongoing System Redesign, which seeks to ensure financial sustainability for the 14 individual universities and for the State System as a whole. The proposal aligns with Clarion's Financial Sustainability Advisory Taskforce recommendation to leverage the

strength of Clarion's online delivery and to develop new programs and partnerships.

Such a partnership would build upon the online program strengths of both Clarion and CalU and would stand up a low-cost, high-quality, fully online undergraduate degree and degree-completion program, something that is not currently available in Pennsylvania.



PRICE'S **LEADERSHIP** RE-ESTABLISHES COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Clarion's School of Education returned to college status as part of the newly formed College of Education, Health and Human Services. Dr. Gwyneth Price is dean of the college.

"Clarion University was established as a normal school over 150 years ago. With such a long tradition of preparing teachers, it is only right to elevate the School of Education back to college status," Price said. "Since my arrival as director in 2017, I have been working toward this goal. With the forward thinking of Dr. Pehrsson and (provost) Dr. Pam Gent, that goal has been realized."

Price was director of the School of Education before being named dean of the school a year ago. The renewed vigor of the education program under her leadership warrants the elevation from school to college.

Price and Gent agree that merging the School of Education with the College of Health Sciences and Human Services has the potential to open new doors for students in the helping professions.



New signs adorn the buildings while green space and native plantings highlight the beauty of the Clarion campus.

Work is in progress to bring Stevens and Moore halls into ADA compliance. The doors of Hart Chapel have been refreshed, and the renovated Tippin is being gently broken in with limited use by athletes.





# MASK UP! WINGS UP!

Since last March, when coronavirus began to spread in Pennsylvania, the priority at Clarion University has been protecting the university community while continuing to serve the mission.

After sending students home in the middle of the spring 2020 semester, President Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson established a team whose initial purpose was to support students, faculty and staff. That included providing technical and academic support to students who, overnight, became distance learners; helping faculty transition courses that were designed for face-to-face instruction; guiding staff as they navigated their work-from-home arrangements; and continuing to serve the handful of students who received were granted exemption to remain in university housing.

**GOLDEN EAGLES**  
HAVE A  
**WING SPAN**  
OF  
**6 FEET**

**CLARION**  
**UNIVERSITY**

## PLANNING FOR RETURN OF STUDENTS

When the spring semester ended, the team's focus turned to planning for the fall semester. Until late July, a return of face-to-face classes was anticipated. As the planning committee continued to monitor news about COVID-19, the group determined the safest course of action was to move the majority of classes to remote delivery for fall 2020.

Although classes are remote, more than 500 students opted to live in campus housing. Those students are required to wear a face covering except when eating or in their own rooms, and they are required to maintain physical distance of six feet from others. Campus services are open with modifications.

Decisions have not been made regarding December commencement or the spring 2021 semester. For the most up-to-date information about Clarion University's response to the pandemic, please visit [www.clarion.edu/fall2020](http://www.clarion.edu/fall2020).

## IF A PROFESSOR TEACHES IN AN EMPTY CLASSROOM, DOES ANYBODY HEAR?

"I am still able to ask questions of students and have them respond directly, as I would in any class," said Dr. Jamie Phillips, philosophy professor. "In some ways, this is better than normal class as the computer mics make it easier for everyone to hear both me and the students, especially compared to what transpires in a large lecture hall."

Phillips said there is a continuous chat going on where students can throw out questions for him or other students without really interrupting the flow of lecture.

"There are also individual chatrooms you can put groups of students into, and then the professor can virtually walk around these chatrooms to check on progress, answer questions and clarify course material," he said. "It's a different way to teach, but it has a high ceiling for functionality."



Dr. Jamie Phillips



# MENTORSHIP: A BANNER IDEA

As a noun it means advisor, trainer, tutor or teacher.

As a verb it means to coach, counsel, guide or instruct.

When someone of greater experience guides someone of lesser experience, particularly in an educational or professional setting, that relationship is called mentoring. It's a tried-and-true practice, the value of which has been proven time and again.

Ask any person who has achieved success in any area of life – as a student, a parent, an employee – and chances are high that the same person can talk about the role of mentorship in that success.

The practice is common at Clarion University through academic experiential learning opportunities such as student teaching, clinicals and internships, and through social opportunities such as student organizations. Many relationships grow organically among students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community, but the proven benefits of mentorship have resulted in an upsurge of programs that assist in establishing and fostering the connection.

## CU MENTOR

**Lindsay Banner**, a 2007 graduate with a Bachelor of Science in finance, got the ball rolling when she pitched an idea for pairing recent graduates with established professionals.

As a member of the College of Business Administration and Information Sciences Advisory Council, Banner was privy to a conversation about how to increase alumni engagement of younger, more recent graduates. Through discussions with peers, the topic of mentorship rose to the top.

“Though most alumni that I spoke with were not in the financial position to donate money to the university at that point in their career, nearly all were very willing to donate their time,” Banner said.

Those early discussions planted the seeds that have grown into the CU Mentor program.

The goal of the mentoring program is, first and foremost, to provide existing students with access to alumni of any age, according to Banner, who is associate director of Orix USA Corporation.

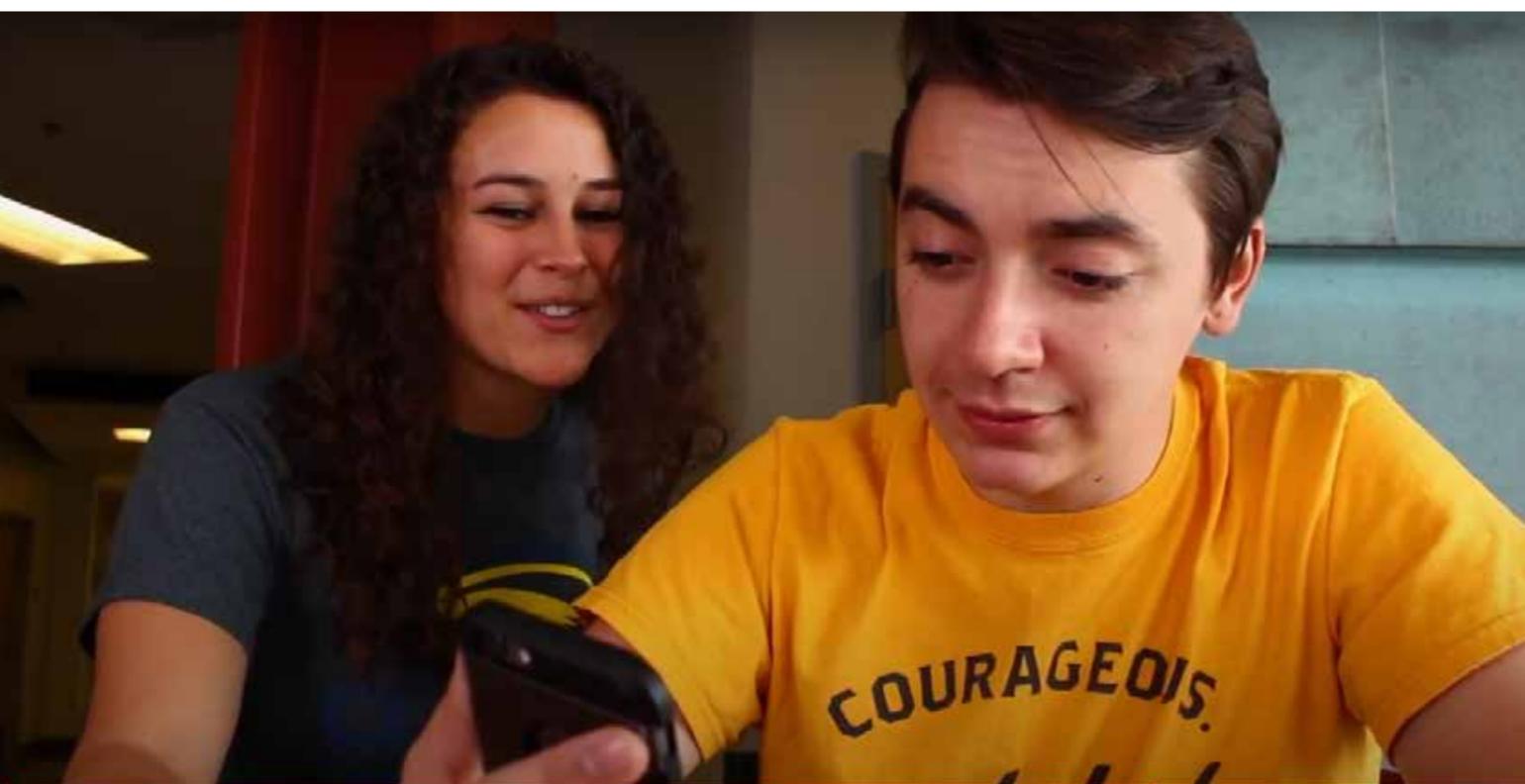
“In doing so, students would have the ability to interface with those who have gone through the transition period from college into their careers,” Banner said. “In addition, it would better prepare them for the workforce, polish their soft skills, grow their Clarion University and industry connections, and potentially provide direct access to employment opportunities.”

The mentors benefit, too.

“On the flipside, it allows alumni to connect with current students, to remain engaged with Clarion, and to more easily recruit Clarion graduates for available positions with their company or to share the graduates as potential recruits within their respective field,” she said.

Josh Domitrovich, assistant director of career and professional development at Clarion University, was instrumental in developing the program.





**CLICK THE PHOTO TO SEE HOW  
CU MENTOR CAN WORK FOR YOU!**

# CU *mentor*

“CUmentor is designed to link alumni, employers and professional partners with Clarion students to facilitate mentorship that fosters the sharing of knowledge and experience,” Domitrovich said. “Our goal is to ensure that students’ preparedness, confidence, and knowledge related to professional field(s) of interests has increased at the completion of the program.”

Banner didn’t just talk about implementing a mentoring program. She walks the walk, too. She has been one of the most active mentors.

“Formally, I’ve been paired with seven students through CU Mentor,” she said. Informally, through meaningful conversations with students, she has guided countless others.

“If someone takes the time to follow up with me and further engage, I typically interpret that action as a sign of desire and motivation. I’m always more than happy to help individuals get to where they are trying to go,” Banner said.

With her CU Mentor mentees, she has discussed everything from salary and benefit negotiation, to leveraging different offers for the mentee’s benefit, to how to improve networking skills. They’ve also discussed relocation strategies, involvement in professional organizations, and female dynamics within a male-dominated industry.

“Most importantly, we discuss who the mentee is and what motivates him or her,” Banner said. “We want to get them moving in a direction that pairs their passion with the skill set they gained at Clarion University.”

**Josh Domitrovich writes about  
how other institutions of higher  
education can start their own  
mentoring programs.  
[CLICK HERE!](#)**

## GATEWAY TO SUCCESS

With CU Mentor as a partner program, the Office of Alumni Engagement has launched Golden Eagle Gateway, a new platform aimed at connecting alumni with each other, with faculty and staff, and with students.

The overall purpose of the Graduway-based platform is networking, according to Ann Thompson, director of alumni engagement. Golden Eagle Gateway had a soft launch in spring 2020, and since then, membership has grown to 200, including Banner.



**LYNAE DELACOUR, ('19)** - My mentor was there for me every step of the way when I was searching for an internship. She helped me with my resume, gave me mock interviews, and told me what life was like for a woman in the business world. She helped me build my confidence in ways I couldn’t imagine. What I enjoyed most was it never felt like a chore. It’s something we both are invested in because she wanted to help someone and I was willing to ask for help.

For Lynae’s full story and more mentee testimonials, [click here.](#)



“Alumni can use Golden Eagle Gateway for any kind of networking, with the knowledge that other users are members of the Clarion University community,” Thompson said.

Students are welcome to join, but first they must complete CU Professional, specialized training through which they learn professionalism and appropriate behavior as a mentee. Students can use the platform to develop career connections, seek internships or seek mentors.

Thompson encourages alumni to register and create a profile. The profile will indicate if a user is willing to help in particular areas: I’m willing to be a career mentor, I’m willing to serve as career contact in my area, I’m willing to recruit students in my area. Alumni can offer to help, they can seek help in a particular area, or they can simply observe until an aspect of Golden Eagle Gateway piques their interest.

Users can create groups based on affinity – a class, a sport, a major, a Greek organization, etc. – and they can create events for other alumni to join. Thompson particularly hopes alumni will post content, whether professional, social or reminiscent of the user’s time as a student at Clarion.

## GOLDEN EAGLE GATEWAY BRINGS THE CLARION UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TOGETHER THROUGH:

- A running feed of alumni updates, interesting content, photos and conversations.
- A full opt-in directory of alumni and students, allowing members to connect with the Clarion University community, all over the world.
- A mentorship program, giving members the opportunity to be mentored by others or offer mentorship to fellow alumni/students.
- A job board with current opportunities, posted by alumni, students and strategic partners.
- Group conversations allowing members to engage at a more granular level with those with the same class, interests, careers, industries and locations.
- Events posted by alumni, students and Clarion University, inviting members to upcoming events, encouraging pop-up engagement, coffee meetings around the world, webinars hosted by subject matter experts within our networks, and other organic engagement opportunities created for and by members.

# CU PALS

This year, Clarion University has added peer mentoring to its repertoire of freshman and transfer student acclimation programs. The program provides resources and information about involvement opportunities to new students. The mentors, called Peer Adjustment Leaders or PALs, serve as accountability partners for their mentees.

PALs help new students learn about the campus and support them through their first year at Clarion. The student mentors connect their mentees with campus and community resources, guide them through questions about life at Clarion, or simply serve as someone the new student can count on.



**Christina J. Steffy**  
Adjunct Faculty, Clarion University  
August 4, 2020, 08:11 AM

Hello, everyone! I'm an adjunct library science faculty member at Clarion as well as the Director of Library Services at PA College of Health Sciences. I'm here for anyone looking for career guidance in the library ...  
[Read more](#)

2 Likes  
Like

**Jason Phillips**  
Director, Institutional Participation & Strategic Partnerships, ITHAKA  
July 20, 2020, 10:00 AM

Hello, fellow Eagles! I am available to offer career advice & help make connections for graduates of our Library Science program. I'm interested in networking opportunities as well.  
You can reach out to me directly on ...  
[Read more](#)

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# SUCCESS TRIFECTA:

GOLDEN EAGLE CREATES  
GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY UNDER  
GOLDEN ARCHES.

**Ron Lofton '75** spent close to 20 years in corporate America before he answered an inner call to give back to his community.

"I was not as connected as I wanted to be, as I needed to be," Lofton said.

He changed that in the early 1990s when he became a McDonald's franchise owner in Chicago, eventually owning six of the restaurants.

Lofton's restaurants were often in underprivileged neighborhoods in Chicago. He said the Black community misunderstood the famous chain and the opportunities it provided. Lofton, however, knew McDonald's was a pathway to management, ownership and college education.

He connected to the community by making sure people had turkeys for holiday dinners and by ensuring that classrooms in the Chicago school system had the supplies necessary for students to learn. He and his employees also offered tutoring.

"We fed them, and then we taught them," Lofton said of the students who participated.

One boy was struggling to read, but by the end of the tutoring, he had read 42 small books. "We were really proud of that."

Lofton's restaurants often outperformed national averages for McDonald's franchises. Their commitment to the community played a part in his restaurants' successes, but he credits his employees for finding the recipe for quality customer service. They worked to improve eye contact, honed their listening skills and gave customers their undivided attention.

As for his own success, Lofton has worked hard for it.

He was a young child when his mom died, and his grandparents raised him alongside his 17 aunts and uncles on their southern Mississippi plantation. He grew up picking cotton and corn, and caring for the animals.

"When you're old enough to carry a bag or dig with a shovel, you're out there," Lofton said.

Eventually, the family moved to Erie for different opportunities, and that brought him to Clarion.

"Clarion was actively trying to recruit African American students at that time," Lofton said.

He visited Clarion during the university's Black Arts Festival, at which time he caught the eye of the basketball coaches who invited him to play for the Golden Eagles.

Lofton believes he obtained a quality education. He graduated with a secondary education degree in social studies.

"I had a really great college experience at Clarion," Lofton said.

He encourages other minority students to just keep going.

**"STAY THE COURSE. IT'S HARD. IT'S NOT EASY," HE SAID. "OPPORTUNITIES WILL KNOCK, BUT IF THEY DON'T, BUILD A DOOR."**

That is what he tried to do as a leader in Chicago. "I was always called on to tell the story of McDonald's."

Lofton became president of the Chicago chapter, then vice president of the national chapter of the National Black McDonald's Operators Association. These connections helped him change the climate at McDonald's by creating

more opportunities for African Americans to own McDonald's franchises. They also had a say in products, sales and public relations decisions for McDonald's.

Because of his standing as a franchise owner, "a number of avenues and doors were opened to me."

Lofton went onto serve on the Black Caucus in Washington, D.C., where he met President Barack Obama and the secretary of labor and provided input in the minimum wage discussion.

"I'm not shy. I voice my opinion one way or another," Lofton said.

Lofton believes his role at McDonald's and in his community has been "leading the fight for fairness."



Most likely, it contributed to Lofton being NAACP Man of the Year in 2012.

**LOFTON, HOWEVER, RECOGNIZES THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BE A LEADER IF HE DID NOT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF HIS FAMILY: WIFE, LILLIAN LOFTON; SON, RON LOFTON JR.; DAUGHTER, DEYSHIA LOFTON; AND GRANDSON, JUSTIN LOFTON.**

Since his retirement, he and his wife continue to support many causes including St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Shriners Hospitals for Children. Lofton also sits on the board for Ray of Hope, which serves underprivileged youth by hosting summer camps with the help of the Chicago Bears.

The Loftons also plan to travel and relax.

It might even cause him to sing, "I'm lovin' it."





Many Clarion University graduates have found a fulfilling career at Ryan, LLC Property Tax in Pittsburgh because of the combined education they received at Clarion and the mentorship and team process found at Ryan.

Ryan is the world's largest firm focused primarily on corporate tax services. With more than 75 global tax services, Ryan provides tax recovery, consulting, advocacy, compliance, and technology.

"As consultants for larger industrial-type facilities, we help decide if our clients are paying more than their fair share of property tax and then work to obtain tax reductions," said **Mark Hefferan ('92)**.

Learning the ropes on the job is necessary when dealing with property taxes.

"Although our education provides a great platform from which to begin, property tax is much different from the more traditional careers, such as real estate sales, appraisal, or bank financing roles. Property tax is a niche role for valuation and finance-educated folks," Hefferan said.

Hefferan explained that most people don't realize that property tax is a career opportunity. One reason for the necessity of this career is that each state and even each county within a given state may have different rules and codes regarding the valuation of real property (land and buildings) and personal property (furniture, machinery and equipment, etc.) for tax assessment purposes.

"Learning those unique rules and navigating the various valuation standards across the country can be difficult to get your arms around when coming directly out of college," Hefferan said.

Ryan's team concept provides an immediate support system for its newer members.

"Not only is the team manager involved but all members provide firsthand experience and assistance to help that newer member start his/her career," Hefferan said. "Mentoring and training are combined in that the team best practices and individual experience are passed along directly to them. We find this approach creates a strong bond between teammates and builds trust and camaraderie."

Two other Clarion graduates who are Ryan employees believe that the Buddy Program at Ryan has helped shaped their career.

"In college, I had finance classes that introduced me to taxes, but none specific to property tax. At Ryan, the combination of their Buddy Program and the team structure eases the transition from college curriculum to the real world," said **Gianna Sgro ('19)**. "The Ryan Buddy Program provides you with a mentor to go to with questions."

The goal is success for the employee and ultimately the client.

"Having a buddy, especially in the beginning of a career, provides a safety net. You can learn, grow and ask questions, knowing that somebody is there to support you. Their goal is to help you succeed," **Molly Miller ('07)** said. "When teams expand, they are structured so that no individual contributor is left to fend for himself/herself. There is a mutual support system in place."



**Mark Hefferan '92**



**Molly Miller '07**



**Gianna Sgro '19**

That's not to say that each employee isn't responsible for pulling their own weight.

Hefferan said employees are accountable and responsible for their own work, but have the opportunity to reach out to other team members for guidance.

"As in most team environments, we enjoy a bit of internal competitiveness. In our case, we use that entrepreneurial spirit to set the expectations for the team, which ultimately guide us to provide the highest quality of service and tax savings to our clients," Hefferan said.

"Three of the five members of our team are Clarion University graduates—this is not a coincidence. Clarion students have an unmatched desire to achieve. Mark, Molly and I have strong similarities in our work ethic. We work our hardest until we reach our goals," Sgro said.



It seems like Clarion students can't help but succeed in this complex industry.

"I truly believe Clarion students just come prepared to work hard. They are smart, gritty, determined and ready to learn. They have been challenged at Clarion, and I believe they are prepared to engage their careers with energy and a full personal commitment to succeed," Hefferan said.

So how does Clarion prepare students for a career that they must learn on the job?

Sgro said her education allowed her to learn quickly in the industry and that her time at Clarion was engaging and supportive with professors who taught her the core coursework that she uses daily in her unique field.

"I learned how to work with others and communicate well," Miller said. "Additionally, state schools reflect the diversity of the area's culture and workforce. Therefore, not only did I gain knowledge in preparation for my job, my emotional intelligence benefited as well. Interpersonal skills and a strong work ethic are key to personal and professional success."

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"Along with the coursework, attending Clarion University taught me how to critically think. When I hit a roadblock, which happens often in property tax, I have the mindset to find multiple ways around the roadblock to reach my desired answer," Sgro added.

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When Ryan is looking to expand a team, they have come to trust and expect a certain excellence from Clarion graduates.

"Clarion, being a smaller school and having the same professors span multiple generations, creates a continuity of knowledge among graduates," Miller said. "We were able to reach out to a specific professor that Mark had in the 80s, I had in the early 2000s, and Gia had in the late 2010s. That is pretty remarkable and not as likely if we had attended a larger school."

And Ryan continues to grow, due largely to the mentorship and care it gives to employees.

"Every person in the company, no matter his/her position, is held to the same standard. Each team member, regardless of his/her service area, lives by the same rules and expectations, operates with full transparency of our management team and operating levels, and, most importantly, is committed to providing the highest quality of service and work product," Hefferan said. "It can be difficult, but it is never the same, always challenging, and ultimately a very rewarding place to be."

Miller and Sgro both had positive things to say about the leadership that exists at Ryan, as well as the ways the company seeks to make life better for its employees.

Sgro said the company's founder thought of everything when it comes to his employees, whether it be free parking or flexibility in one's schedule for when life happens.

"Not only is Ryan an outstanding company to work for, my team makes it that much better," Sgro said. "The team atmosphere at the Ryan Pittsburgh office is a family atmosphere, and for that, I am very grateful."

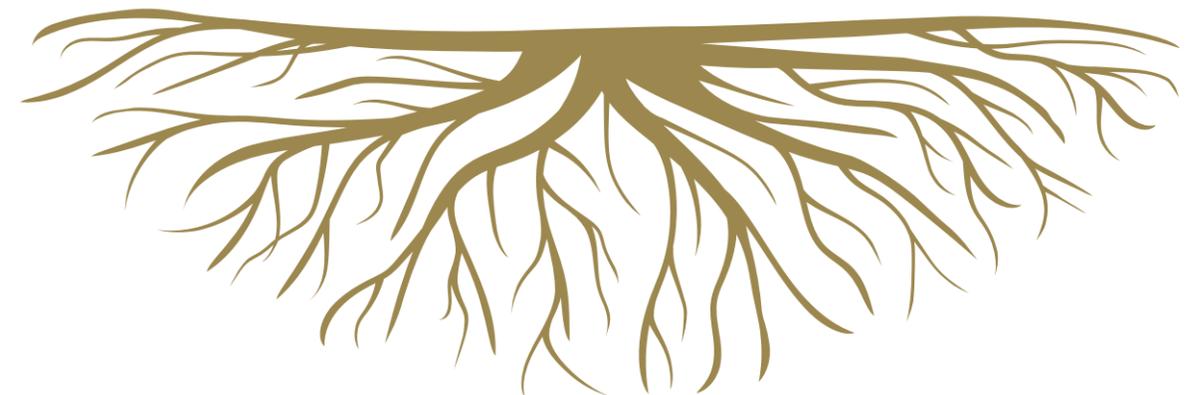
Since so many Clarion graduates work there, they already have some things in common, whether it be their former professors or famous stops in Clarion.

"After several years in jobs unrelated to my education, I searched for 'real estate jobs in Pittsburgh.' I had never heard of Ryan, but the first question of my interview with Mark was 'Do you like Bob's Subs?' I knew I had found my place," Miller quipped.



*"If you want a harvest  
in one year, grow a crop.  
If you want a harvest in ten years,  
grow trees. If you want a harvest that  
will last a lifetime, grow people."*

*- Chinese Proverb*



# The more things change.

Mark Twain is believed to have coined the phrase, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes." The lack of evidence supporting that he actually said it – other than the fact that it seems like just the kind of phrase he certainly would have originated – is made up for by how prescient it seems, even in the world of college athletics.

It is an era dominated by new methods of communication that have made the world smaller than ever. Young adults routinely question the wisdom of institutions that have existed far longer than they have as the older generation is left to either adapt, shake their heads, or both. On a micro level, college athletics coaches spend their time trying to figure out how to relate to another crop of 18- to 22-year-olds in a tumultuous time full of uncertainty.

If you thought that was a reference to 2020, you are right. If you thought it was about the late 1960s, you are still right. While the challenge of coaching college-aged athletes in 2020 may be different in its particulars, coaches young and old can certainly find some common ground when it comes to the broad strokes.

Al Jacks read some books on leadership and football coaching during his years as Clarion's head football coach (1964-81), but according to him, experience was the best teacher.

"When you're dealing with 25-30 freshmen every year, you have to be flexible," Jacks said. "Until they get here and start practicing, it's difficult to figure out what kind of qualities you need to work with them."

Jacks said that he and his staff worked hard to respect the different environments and backgrounds from which his players hailed, and recognized that a one-size-fits-all approach was not always the best course of action.

"We had to keep all these differences in mind, and we emphasized fairness above all when dealing with players," Jacks said. "We know we made some mistakes, but we always worked to learn from them."



Doc Neiman is on the other end of the coaching career spectrum, with his first year as Clarion's head baseball coach short-circuited by the COVID-19 pandemic just 15 games into the season. While that particular challenge is unique to contemporary college coaches, other hurdles translate all eras.

"Part of our job as coaches isn't just coaching the game, but also helping these people prepare for the next phase of their lives," Neiman said. "You have to get to know them and understand what kind of person they are beneath the surface."

Both Jacks and Neiman also cited the need to be genuine as a critical part of being a coach.

"College students will see right through you if you're not being straight with them," Jacks said. "At the end of the day, they want to be treated with a level of respect. The one thing we could control as coaches was to respect everyone the same way."

Another area where the eras blend is the need to identify leaders among the student-athletes. Whether one believes that culture on a team should ultimately come from the

top-down or the bottom-up, it is essential that the culture needs to be enforced by the players themselves.

"The student-athletes need to know what they want and what it will take to get there," Jacks said. "When I think back on the great teams we had, I look to the 1977 team. We didn't have the talent, necessarily, to go undefeated, but we had outstanding senior leaders that helped push us through the tough times."

"We don't have team captains, because I feel like everyone on this team should feel like they have a voice and the ability to take ownership of a situation," Neiman said. "I think it takes some time for younger players to learn how to do it 'the right way,' or the way that's best for them. But I tell every player from the seniors on down that everyone is here for a reason and that they should be confident in taking charge."

That's not to say all differences translate cleanly from one generation to the next. For example, the progression of technology in general – and social media in particular – touches every aspect of program building.

"It's a cliché to bring this up, but remember we had no cell phones, no internet," Jacks said. "Joe Paterno used to say he didn't need those things, but nowadays that's where these kids live their lives."

"High school and college kids are living more and more of their lives on social media," Neiman said. "It's led to a lot of them trying to move so fast through life, because it's the only way they've ever known. One of the things we do as coaches is try to get them to slow things down and enjoy their time with their teammates, and appreciate being in the moment."

The explosion in technology has gone as far as to affect the way that athletes are recruited to Clarion. In Jacks' era, the emphasis was on one-on-one interaction, if for no other reason than that there was little other way.

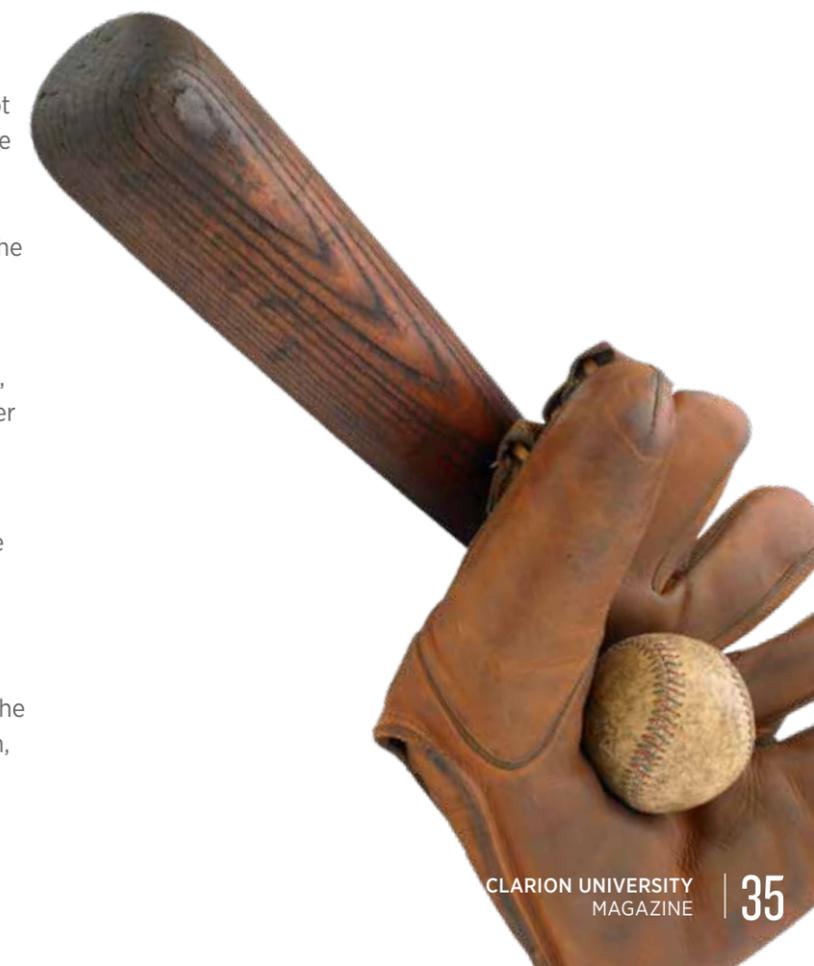
"Recruiting used to be much more local," Jacks said. "Most of our players came from this region, and it was rare for us to have more than a handful from other places like Ohio or Virginia."

Jacks recounted that he might visit more than 70 high schools in an offseason, mostly in western Pennsylvania. The advancements made over the last several decades, though, have completely changed the equation when it comes not just to finding players, but competing for them with other schools.

"I can hardly imagine what it must be like to recruit now," Jacks said. "Kids go to these camps and clinics to get professionally timed and measured, and use these recruiting sites, and it creates a national recruiting model. Now you're competing for kids from all over the place, and not just with the (Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference), but teams across the country."

That's not to say that modern coaches don't still prefer watching student-athletes compete in person. But with the concurrent rise of technology and more sports specialization, there is a wealth of information – for better or worse – available online.

"I'm a lot like my dad in that I want to get out and see these guys up close," Neiman said, referring to his father and coach Tim Neiman, the longtime head baseball coach at DeSales. "Kids are playing year-round on three to four different teams, and there's an abundance of information out there that wasn't there before. It can be good because it gives us the chance to cross-reference players with multiple sources and get a better understanding of who the player really is. Ultimately, though, because of the pandemic, coaches are all in the same boat of having to rely more heavily on video and stats instead of those in-person interactions."





# THINK ON YOUR FEET

Adaptability and overcoming adversity are hallmarks of student-athletes, and they are traits that go beyond the field of competition and apply to all facets of life.

For Golden Eagle student-athletes this spring, that adversity was the complete upheaval of the academic structure. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the university to make abrupt changes in the ways classes were delivered and students were educated, threatening uncertainty for the remainder of the semester.

Golden Eagle student-athletes handled that challenge the way they would any other. Their efforts proved to be enough not just to negotiate the obstacle, but to blow past it entirely, as Clarion athletics enjoyed one of the best academic semesters in its history in spring 2020.

The raw numbers were staggering. All 16 of Clarion's athletic teams produced a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or better, and the department as a whole produced a 3.56 GPA. There were 209 Golden Eagle student-athletes to crack a 3.5 GPA, with 100 of those individuals posting a perfect 4.0 GPA.

"As a program, we focus on success in all aspects of being a student-athlete," said head football coach Chris Weibel, whose team posted a cumulative 3.41 GPA and featured 33 players with a 3.50 or better. "Success in the classroom brings success on the field, and vice versa. We have a saying on our team:

**'BE GREAT IN EVERYTHING YOU DO.'**

I could not be prouder of everything our athletes accomplished this spring, as it is something we always strive to achieve."

"Even before the pandemic spread, we had team goals of improving our GPA for both the men's and women's teams," said head swimming & diving coach Bree Kelley. The women's swimming & diving team recorded a GPA of 3.63, while the men posted a 3.45 GPA. "(Assistant coach) Riley Hilbrandt did a great job checking in regularly with students and stressing the importance of academic success. I'm very proud of the commitment of our student-athletes in the classroom."

The swimming & diving teams have been no stranger to academic success under Kelley, but the 2019-20 school year proved exceptional even for them. Both the men's and women's programs were honored as College Swimming Coaches' Association of America Scholar All-America teams, while Connor Cary, Abbey Newman and Anna Vogt were all honored as individuals.

The commitment to academics did not simply begin this past March; Golden Eagle coaches have made the potential for academic growth a focal point of their recruitment and development of student-athletes. This past fall, the cross



Connor Carey



Abbey Newman

Hailey Germanoski



Natalie Else



country team was recognized for academics by the United States Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association, an honor that eventually led to the track & field team earning an identical laurel in the spring. In February, the athletic department announced that a record 211 student-athletes had earned Clarion scholar-athlete honors.

The academic surge by Golden Eagles led to two programs producing their first Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Champion Scholars. The league announced in May that Hailey Germanoski was Clarion's first Champion Scholar in women's tennis, and just a week later named Natalie Else the Golden Eagles' first Champion Scholar in the sport of softball.

Meanwhile, the wrestling team maintained its status among the national elite academically, earning their second consecutive public recognition from the NCAA for their Academic Progress Rate. The Golden Eagle wrestlers have ranked in the top 10 percent of NCAA Division I in academic success over the last two years, something that no other Mid-American Conference program can claim.

"Our athletes are surrounded by a team of people who expect them to excel academically," said head coach Keith Ferraro. "Kenn Staub, our faculty mentor, is all-in and is clearly having a huge impact on our program."

As in the other sports, the academic success of the wrestling program has roots going back several years.

"The APR looks at a four-year cycle, and when you consider where we were five years ago, this is a massive turnaround for us," Ferraro said. "It's an accomplishment that makes us incredibly proud."

## A LOOK BACK...



MADRIGAL DINNER FALL 2005

# ALUMNI NOTES FALL 2020

## 1963

**Ralph Montgomery Jr.** is a retired attorney. He resides in Franklin with his wife, Eileen.

**Dr. Dennis and Dr. Dene (Garvin) Klinzing** reside in Newark, Delaware. Dene is retired from the University of Delaware.

## 1964

**Larry Kuzma** owns Kuzma Group, Montgomery, Ohio.

## 1965

**Sallie (King) Ewing** is retired from the New Kensington School District, New Kensington. She resides in Springdale and has two children, Holly and Jeffrey.

## 1972

**Thomas McDaniels** is retired after 40 years of coaching high school football. He has been inducted into six football/athletic halls of fame. His 1997 Canton McKinley football team were Ohio State Champions and USA Today National Champions. Thom resides in Massillon, Ohio, with his wife, Christine. They have three sons, Jason; Joshua, who is the offensive coordinator for the New England Patriots; and Benjamin who is the quarterback coach for the University of Michigan.

**Janet Beary Williams M.Ed. '74** is retired from Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio. She resides in Shipperville with her husband, James.

## 1973

**Jacqueline Pfeiffer** is retired from the South Butler County School District. She resides in Cabot.

**Gary and Linda Clark Spoales** reside in Frankford, Delaware. They have two children, Jeremiah and Kristen. Gary is retired from Bank of America and American Public University System.

## 1975

**Rob Malley** is retired from Mine Safety Appliances. He serves on the Boards of Bushy Run Battlefield Heritage Society, Westmoreland Conservancy and Westmoreland Historical Society. Rob resides in northern Westmoreland County.

## 1979

**Jill Stahlman Shirey** is a retired school counselor with the South Western School District. She resides in Hanover, Pa., with her husband, Michael. They have three children, Lindsey, Jay, and Nicholas.

## 1980

**Vicki Hubler Anderson** is retired after 32 years working in early intervention as a speech-language pathologist for Mecklenburg County Children's Developmental Service Agency. She is a volunteer Sunday school teacher at her church, sings in the choir, travels, and is involved with various volunteer opportunities. Vicki resides in Mint Hill, North Carolina, with her husband, Vern. They have three children and six grandchildren.

**Mark Rumbaugh** is a sales representative for Univar Solutions, Bunola. He resides in Austintown, Ohio, with his wife, Melinda. They have a daughter, Amber.

## 1981

**Stacy Madalena** is a director of Retail South for Eastern National, Fort Washington, Pa. Eastern National is the parent company of America's National Parks. Stacy received the National Park Service's 2019 James V. Murfin Award, which recognizes an individual who has made a significant and lasting contribution to the partnership between the National Park Services and cooperating associations. She resides in Annandale, Virginia.

## 1982

**Kevin McKelvy** is a senior systems analyst for The MetroHealth System, Cleveland, Ohio. He resides in Sheffield Village, Ohio.

**Mark and Noel Speicher '83 McNany** reside in Casa Grande, Arizona. Mark is an account executive for Assured Partners - Gulf Coast, New Orleans. After a 22-year career, Mark retired a lieutenant colonel with the United States Army.

## 1983

**Dr. Jeffrey Cappuccio** is employed with the trauma department for Lee Health, Fort Myers, Florida. He resides in Fort Myers with his wife, Debra, and child, C.J.

**Christopher Keller** is a vice president of administration for Surefire, Fountain Valley, California. He resides in Georgia with his wife, Lisa. They have two children, Adam and Ross.

## 1984

**Kenneth Reddinger** is a cyber-security technical subject matter expert for Octo Consulting Group, Reston, Virginia. He resides in Burke, Virginia. He has four children: Ken, Alex, Rhianna and David.

**Ginger Stewart Carpenter** is a senior human resource generalist for American Zinc Recycling, Aliquippa. She resides in

Aliquippa and has two daughters, Chelsea and Jordan.

**Ron Stuver** is a managing director/owner of OOS, LLC. He resides in Twinsburg, Ohio, with his wife, LeAnne. They have two sons, Ryan and Brad.

**Sue Steis** received a B.S. in nursing from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 2014. She resides in Kittanning, Pa.

## 1985

**Michael Troster** is an Alaska high intensity drug trafficking area director for the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Washington, D.C. He retired as a colonel with the United States Army in 2013. Michael resides in Anchorage.

## 1986

**John Maletta** is a vice president for Health Monitoring Systems, Inc., Pittsburgh. He resides in Pittsburgh with his wife, Alessandra, and children, Elise and Gabrielle.

**Dr. Edward Nientimp** is a director of pupil services for the Millcreek Township School District, Erie. Ed earned his doctoral degree in special education from Slippery Rock University in December 2019. He has recently published a chapter titled "Crisis Management in Public School Settings" in a textbook, "Contemporary Issues in Special Education." He resides in Erie with his wife, Mary. They have five children: Nicholas, Laura, Luke, Vince and Ed.

**Douglas and Doria Mamolo '88 McConnell** reside in Chesapeake, Virginia. Douglas is a nuclear engineering technician with the Norfolk Naval Yard. He retired as a lieutenant from the United States Navy after 25 years. The McConnells have two children, Jordan and Logan.

## 1988

**Bryan Hower** is a computer science teacher at JP McCaskey High School, Lancaster, Pa. He resides in New Holland, Pa., with his wife, Dawn.

## 1989

**Todd Roberts** is an executive sales specialist for GlaxoSmithKline, Philadelphia, Pa. He resides in Johnstown, Pa.

## 1991

**Suzanne (Wallace M.S. '93) Odom** is a user experience librarian for Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Fla. She resides in Palm Bay, Fla., with her husband, Wesley, and their son Garrett.

## Welcome to the first digital edition of Clarion University Magazine.

The fall edition will be distributed via email, and the option will be available for the winter and spring issues. If you want to receive all issues digitally, tell us in the comments section at

[www.clarion.edu/alumni-update](http://www.clarion.edu/alumni-update).



**Neil Ashbaugh** is president and CEO for New Century Careers. Pittsburgh-based New Century Careers contributes to the economic health of southwestern Pennsylvania through meeting

manufacturing workforce needs by working to deliver a capable workforce to employers in the region.

### 1992

**Reverend Thomas Burke** is a Catholic priest in the Pittsburgh Diocese. He was installed as the founding pastor of Saint Mary Magdalene Parish in the East End/Point Breeze/Wilkinsburg section of Pittsburgh. Father Thom is also a radio host for "Catholic Education Plus", a bi-weekly radio show airing Sunday mornings on KDKA Radio 1020am.

### 1993

**Robert Raffaele** is a teacher in the Elizabeth Forward School District, Elizabeth, Pa. He resides in Pittsburgh, Pa., with his wife, Dara and children, Kathryn and Anna. Kathryn is a student at Clarion University majoring in nursing.

### 1994

**Elizabeth Hughes** is an associate counsel for UPMC Corporate Legal Department, Pittsburgh, Pa. She resides in Verona, Pa.

### 1996

**Colleen (Davidson) Swarter** is a teacher in the Avon Grove School District. She resides in Downingtown, Pa., with her husband Steve, and children, Robbie and Ryan.

### 1997

**Stephanie (Hoffman) Hoffmaster** is a registered nurse for UPMC Pinnacle West Shore, Mechanicsburg, Pa. She resides in Grantville, Pa., with her husband, Jimmy and son, CJ.

### 1999

**Christine (Brennfleck) Mason** is the William Penn Elementary School Building Secretary in the Bethel Park School District, Bethel Park, Pa. She resides in Bethel Park with her children, Brandon and Ashley.

**Mark Watts** is a principal for Saint Mary Magdalene School, Columbus, Ohio. He resides in Columbus with his wife, Nikki, and three daughters, Claire, Abigail, and Quinn.

### 2000

**Benjamin Rose** has a romance novelette, Love On The Run, being included in an online box-set from RhetAskew Publishing. Benjamin also has a full-length novel, Everybody But Us, released in 2020. He lives in Treasure Island, Fla.

### 2005

**Matthew Clyde** has been named to the 2020 Pennsylvania Super Lawyers and Rising Stars lists. Selection to Super Lawyers is based on peer nominations and evaluations are combined with independent research. Each candidate is evaluated on 12 indicators of peer recognition and professional achievement. Only five percent of attorneys are named Super Lawyers; only two and one half percent of attorneys are listed as Rising Stars. Matthew is a employee benefits attorney for Cozen O'Connor, Philadelphia, Pa.

### 2006

**Michelle (Rupert) Thompson** is a chief operating officer for ColdSpark, Pittsburgh, Pa. She resides in Pittsburgh, with her husband, John.

### 2013

**Kate (Strazerri) and Alexander Schroth** reside in Cresco, PA. Kate is a Secondary School Librarian and department chair for the East Stroudsburg School District, Dingmans Ferry, Pa. Alexander is a supervisor for Defense Logistics Agency with the Department of Defense.

### 2014

**Robbie and Sara (Clark) Tubbs** reside in Clearfield, Pa. with their daughters Nora and Hallie. Robbie is a social studies teacher for the Clearfield Area School District. Robbie was awarded the 2020 James Madison Fellowship for the state of Pennsylvania. This is a yearly scholarship given to one person per state to pursue a master's degree in American History and Government.

**Brittany (Cihal) and Shane Ross** reside in Oakmont. Brittany is a supervisor of technical support - cardiac management solutions for Zoll LifeVest, Pittsburgh.

**Amanda Platt-Tabeling** is a teacher at Rosedale Alternative School in the Baltimore County Public Schools. She lives in Baltimore with her husband, Nate.

### 2015

**Emily (Pfendler) and Devin Forgey '16** reside in Oil City. Emily is a learning support teacher in the Oil City Area School District, Oil City.

### 2016

**Andrew Pirritano** is LECOM Park operations coordinator for the Pittsburgh Pirates, Bradenton, Fla. He resides in Orange City, Fla.

**Tiffany (Hayden) Hanson** is a Librarian 1 for the San Diego County Library, San Diego, Cal. She resides in San Diego with her husband, Adam, and daughter Kirsten.

**Lauren Zabelsky** is employed with Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. She resides in Pittsburgh.

### 2018

**Dr. Daniel Eaton** is employed with Penn State University, State College. He resides in McKean, with his children, Elliana and Emerson.

**Lauren Miller** is a center director at Code Ninjas Hanover, Hanover. She resides in Hanover.

### 1940s

**Dorothy D. Webb Dryden '47**  
April 4, 2020

### 1950s

**Margaret Louise Snelson Craig '50**  
March 29, 2020

**John Tomikel '51**  
May 20, 2020

**Charles B. Davidson '52**  
May 22, 2020

**Barbara J. Flood Hill '54**  
April 29, 2020

**Mary J. Hook Spencer '54**  
April 30, 2020

**Margaret Lucille Love Orcutt '54**  
May 6, 2020

**Janice E. Neubauer Ernest '55**  
May 19, 2020

**Theodore Elbert Calkins '57**  
May 7, 2020

**Norman G. Rafferty '57**  
May 17, 2020

**Russell A. Brumbaugh '58**  
April 3, 2020

**Lee G. Detar '58**  
June 9, 2020

**Lester E. Schickling '59**  
March 12, 2020

### 1960s

**Avanelle J. Pollock Henry '60**  
May 14, 2020

**Jesse R. Copenhaver '62**  
June 21, 2020

**William John Lechman '63**  
May 23, 2020

**Bonnie L. Snyder Stiffler '63**  
May 26, 2020

**James L. Luther '63**  
June 29, 2020

**Pamela Ann Carbone '65**  
May 11, 2020

**Roger Alan Hurt '66**  
March 7, 2020

**Kenneth Cooper McKee '66**  
May 31, 2020

## IN MEMORIAM

**Judy L. Towsey Fleming '68**  
April 14, 2020

**Dennis S. Lavery '68**  
June 10, 2020

**Ruth Seech Durica '69**  
March 22, 2020

**William Owen Nall '69**  
April 11, 2020

**Suellen K. Exley Kiser '69**  
June 26, 2020

### 1970s

**Nancy L. Berlin '70**  
April 6, 2020

**Fred C. McIlhattan '70**  
June 10, 2020

**John J. Zolomij '70**  
June 14, 2020

**K. Wayne Kugler '72**  
May 19, 2020

**Victor Eugene Samanka '73**  
April 28, 2020

**Anne Elizabeth Leffler Gustafson '74**  
May 12, 2020

**Larry E. Lawson '74**  
June 12, 2020

**Hugh R. Scott '75**  
March 15, 2020

**Kevin T. Ross '75**  
April 23, 2020

**Richard J. Stutz '75**  
May 15, 2020

**Bruce S. Cherico '76**  
March 22, 2020

**Gary R. Carll '79**  
May 9, 2020

**Beverly A. Thompson '79**  
June 10, 2020

### 1980s

**Teresa E. McMullen Marusiak '80**  
May 22, 2020

**Christina Carone Sakalousky '81**  
March 7, 2020

**William C. Kutz '84**  
March 13, 2020

**Christopher M. Gordon '84**  
April 30, 2020

**Gale D. Brooks '86**  
March 5, 2020

**Richard J. Paganelli '87**  
March 17, 2020

**Maxine Y. Dade '88**  
March 28, 2020

### 1990s

**Debra Snyder '90**  
June 14, 2020

**Mary Elizabeth White '93**  
June 10, 2020

**Jennifer Lynn Bayuzik '96**  
June 9, 2020

### 2000s

**Clinton B. Washington '02**  
May 6, 2020

**Neil David Convery '02**  
May 28, 2020

**Tracy L. Blessel '04**  
May 1, 2020

### 2010s

**Ronald Ray Garten '10**  
April 7, 2020

**Robert J. Tomaszewski '11**  
March 9, 2020

**Barbara Anna Mease '19**  
May 29, 2020

### Friends

**Shae John Bloom**  
April 16, 2020 (student)

**Lyn Schmader**  
April 16, 2020 (friend)

**Melvin Nall**  
April 26, 2020 (friend)

**Dorothy Straitiff**  
May 27, 2020 (retired staff)

**Thomas Foreman**  
June 9, 2020 (friend)



# CLARION UNIVERSITY BABY EAGLES

## OUR GIFT TO BABY EAGLES OF CLARION ALUMNI IS A DASHING NEW BIB!

To receive a bib, visit [www.clarion.edu/babybib](http://www.clarion.edu/babybib) and complete the online form. Once you receive your bib, take a picture of your Eaglet putting the bib to use, and email a high-resolution photo to us for inclusion in Clarion University Magazine.

For more information, call the Office of Alumni Engagement at 814-393-2572.



Landon Matthew Nichol, son of Matt and Abby Butera '11 Nichol, born June 24, 2019



Luke Catrillo, son of Matthew '15 and Lisa Koczyk '14 Catrillo, born Jan. 1, 2020



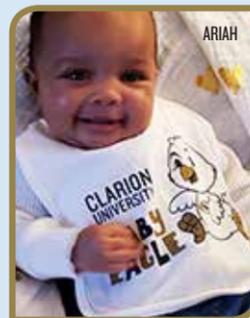
Lyla Ann Blatt, daughter of Clint Blatt and Elaina Tomsley '13, born Nov. 28, 2019



Mattilyn Ryan Gough, daughter of Amanda Gough '13, born Sept. 20, 2019



Andrew Glancy, son of Morgan and Nick '10 Perla, born April 12, 2018



Ariaiah Rose Griffin, daughter of Ashley and Nathan Griffin '10, born Nov. 24, 2019



Brandt Michael Preskar, son of Michael and Shauna Scott '12 Preskar, born Aug. 24, 2019



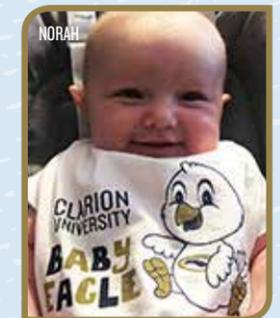
Brynn Avery Hablett, daughter of Wesley and Jacy Albert '04 Hablett, born Nov. 4, 2019



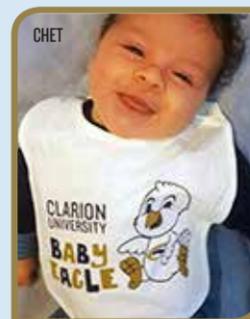
Reese James Snyder, son of Nathaniel '11 and Nichel Stuart '14 Snyder, born Sept. 11, 2019



Raymond Albert Dent III, son of Raymond '20 and Celeste Pearce '19 Dent, born Sept. 25, 2019



Norah Jean Leslie, daughter of David T. and Olivia Sue Herrold '16 Leslie, born Feb. 14, 2020



Chet Joseph Orelli, son of Christine and Chet '03 Orelli, born Aug. 13, 2018



Evelyn Ruth Prutzal, daughter of Shane '09 and Julie Humble '09 Prutzal, born June 13, 2019



Finley Quinn Pisarcik, daughter of Mark '08 and Jennifer Dettore '08 Pisarcik, born April 12, 2018



Harper Brielle Young, daughter of Brady '12 and Samantha Tenfelde '12 Young, born May 30, 2019



Penelope Jane (left) and Audrianna Grace Perry, twin daughters of Jim '03 and Angela Bussard '06 Perry, born May 14, 2019



Jaxson Joseph Noonan, son of Steve and Haley Hynes '06 Noonan, born Feb. 24, 2020



John Raymond Hackel, son of John '11 and Brittany Mesing '11 Hackel, born Nov. 10, 2019



Jonah Emmett Krisher, son of Zachary '13 and Lindsay Agnello '13 Krisher, born Nov. 8, 2019



Kennedy Marie Berezansky, daughter of Nathan and Britney Olsavsky '09 Berezansky, born Nov. 26, 2019



## MARRIAGES



Emily Pfendler '15 and Devin Forgey '16,  
July 13, 2019

Amanda Platt '14 and Nate Tabeling  
Sept. 14, 2019

Sarah Kriebel '13 and Tim Hitchens  
Feb. 29, 2020



# FIRST TO FLY

There's a discernible look of pride in the eyes of students who are the first members of their families to graduate from college. While it's a feat for any student to earn a degree, first-generation students face particular challenges from not having a parent or sibling with experience in higher education to guide them.

Supported by two grants from the provost's office – a university-wide Faculty Professional Development grant and a Teaching, Training and Instruction grant – Clarion's Partners in Teaching, Learning and Assessment group aims to change that through the First to Fly program.

According to data in the grant proposal, about 47 percent of students at public four-year colleges and universities nationwide had parents who had not earned a bachelor's degree. First-generation students were less likely than continuing-generation students to attend school full time, more likely to have dependents, and more likely to be female. Nationwide, median parental income of first-generation students is less than half of that for continuing-generation students (\$41,000 vs. \$90,000).

About 30 percent of PASSHE students self-describe as first-generation students. In 2019, Clarion reported 36 percent of its students were first gens.

"We are concerned that first-generation students have difficulty finding services and navigating the system, fall through the cracks, and feel unsupported and like they don't fit in," said Dr. Jeanne Slattery, psychology professor and a founding member of the Partners in Teaching faculty development group. "We want students to recognize that there is a place for everyone – including them – at Clarion."

Through the program, new this fall, self-identifying faculty and staff will make themselves known to students in a variety of ways that they are available to provide support. Data shows that students who feel supported tend to perform better in college.

First to Fly advocates will add the logo to their email signature lines, and, when face-to-face instruction resumes, they will have T-shirts and other merchandise that lets students know they're there to help.

"We plan to educate faculty and staff about the difficulties that first-gen students experience," Slattery said. "Each of these advocates can take this process further by soliciting/offering support, but sometimes just knowing that one isn't alone facilitates success."

The true measure of a university's greatness is in the achievements of its alumni. Many Clarion University graduates have made exceptional contributions to their professions, communities and/or the university. In 1966, Clarion University Alumni Association established the Distinguished Awards to recognize these exceptional alumni and university friends.

The Alumni Association will present the awards to six alumni June 11, 2021, during Alumni Weekend.



*Distinguished* ALUMNI

**Hon. Ruth Bermudez Montenegro '89**

Judge Ruth Bermudez Montenegro was appointed U.S. Magistrate Judge for the United States District Court for the Southern District of California Aug. 14, 2018. She is the sole magistrate judge and the first female to hold the position in Imperial County. She maintains chambers in El Centro, California. Judge Montenegro has represented many firsts as a woman and a Latina during her career, including first Latina judge in the history of Imperial County and first female to serve as Family Support Commissioner for the Imperial County Superior Court. For her complete biography, [click here](#).



**Dr. John M. Brion '89**

Dr. John Brion, a descendant of Clarion County's early inhabitants, grew up in Ohio but frequently visited Clarion. He enrolled at Clarion University and struggled academically during his first two semesters, then took time off before returning to college. Upon his return, he was better prepared and became an active member of campus in theatre, cheerleading and organizing support for the LGBT community. A certified psychiatric nurse practitioner, his work has focused on caring for people with HIV, emergency/trauma nursing, and treating substance abuse. He is on the faculty of Duke University School of Nursing. For his complete biography, [click here](#).



*Distinguished* VENANGO ALUMNA:

**Karen (Susie) Beebe Keefer '77**

Susie Keefer has always wanted to help people in need, and she has devoted her life to it. With her special education degrees, she worked with students in Pennsylvania and Delaware, meanwhile leading youth on summer work trips to the Appalachian Mountains. A 2010 mission trip to Congo, Africa, led to her establishing Miriam's Table, a program that feeds and provides clean drinking water to 350 children and provides employment to 11 adults in Congo. The program is named in honor of the orphaned Congolese girl whom the Keefers adopted. For her complete biography, [click here](#).



*Distinguished* YOUNG ALUMNUS:

**Mark H. Trumbo '07**

After earning a degree in finance and real estate, Mark Trumbo briefly worked in the corporate world before he followed a call to leadership. After earning a master's degree in sports administration, he spent five years in student-athlete support services at Ball State University, where he created the Take Flight career and leadership development program. He developed the nationally recognized S-Project student-athlete development program at Syracuse University, where he has inspired athletes to up their community service hours from 200 to 4,000. He has been honored for his work. For his complete biography, [click here](#).



*Distinguished* FACULTY:

**Dr. John R. McCullough '84, '86G**

As the son of two educators, Dr. John McCullough has always been drawn to teaching. Initially earning a degree in mathematics, he returned to Clarion for a master's degree in science education, where his love for teaching was reinforced. His teaching career led him first to a local school district, then back to Clarion, where he was integral in the Pennsylvania Science Teacher Education and the Information Technology Education for the Commonwealth programs, both housed at the university. He has held numerous leadership positions and has been instrumental in training teachers in the use of technology in the classroom. For his complete biography, [click here](#).



*Distinguished* SERVICE:

**L. Kent Kretzler '73**

Kent Kretzler's dream was to follow in his mother's footsteps and attend Clarion University to become a teacher. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Clarion, and he taught for five years. Enrollment started to drop and he knew he would be laid off. He started a travel agency with a niche in the student travel market, which segued into fundraising. Kretzler became involved with various organizations, most notably The Shriners, where he was third youngest potentate in their history. He developed various fundraisers supporting Shriners Hospital for Children. His charitable ways continue to be a way of life. For his complete biography, [click here](#).





# #WINGSUP

CHRISTOPHER TATE



Christopher Tate, a junior communications major from Meadville, is getting a taste of fame with his very first short film, "TIME Vol. 1." This summer, his eight months of film study, script writing and shot list composition paid off with "TIME" by being chosen as a finalist in the Los Angeles Independent Shorts Awards and as an official selection in the Experimental category of Montreal Independent Film Festival.

"Through my endeavors of filming, documentation, and publishing, I plan to create content based on the properties of film composition," Tate said. "To practice my film studies within the actual field, I've set out to create a series of short films in a collection called "TIME."

In this psychological comedy, a character named Wallace - portrayed by Tate - encounters a small, broken clock that appears to follow him everywhere. The seven-minute film was shot at Clarion University and Clarion Borough locations.

"The main message from my film can be drawn from many points, of always coming back to the same moment where you were before, to always considering the big picture when one tries too hard to run from the past," he said. "These themes will be explored in the sequel, "TIME Vol. 2."

Tate said the film was an exploration of combining music with storytelling to figure out why they coexist so well in the pursuit of creativity. He was inspired by 60s jazz broadcasts, as well as by Buster Keaton films and National Lampoon's Animal House.

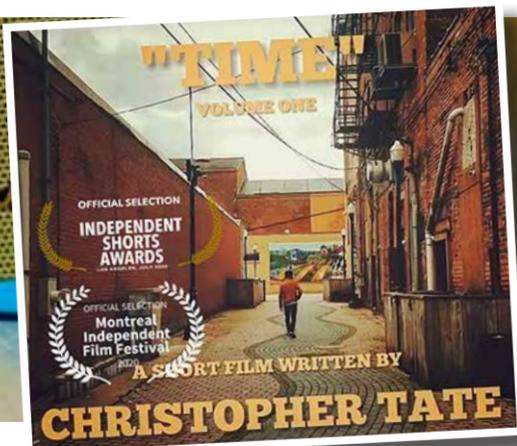
"My main career goal is to dive into the creative world of subjective storytelling by working as a director, writer, composer, illustrator and overall content producer," Tate said. "I have a growing independent mobile studio under the name "TOAST STUDIOS," and I plan to continue learning new and interesting ways to perfect my craft."

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for information about virtual  
activities for**

***Homecoming 2020.***