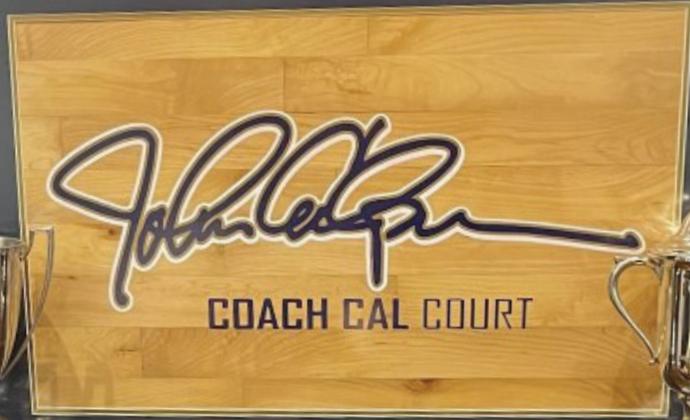


CLARION

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE
WINTER 2021





MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY OFFERS STUDENTS A HEALTHY FUTURE

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought attention to all health careers, but one health career in particular has grown in relevance and need.

Medical technology is one of Clarion's more than 175 programs of study, and it offers a healthy future for the student who excels in biology and chemistry.

Medical technologists solve the mysteries of a person's

health and provide a clearer picture of a person's physical well-being. The position was in demand in all 50 states prior to the pandemic, and its need has only increased.

A medical technologist tests and analyzes blood, body fluids and tissue samples. Medical technologists also are responsible for operating and maintaining the equipment used to analyze specimens.

CLICK OR VISIT [CLARION.EDU/NEWS/2021/DECEMBER/MED-TECH](https://clarion.edu/news/2021/december/med-tech) TO READ MORE!



MKBC Local Leader Reading Hospital/Tower Health



Your Blood. Their Hope.

MILLER-KEYSTONE
BLOOD CENTER

FEATURES

12 A daybreak that's wondrously clear

Orphaned as an infant and raised in the foster care system, Cassie Schwalm found school to be a refuge and a place where she excelled. Now, as she prepares to graduate, she plans to become a lawyer to help other kids in foster care.

16 MBA or bust

Marcus Ryan, a senior in the accelerated MBA program, spent 11 months converting an old school bus into an off-the-grid RV that he hopes to sell to fund his graduate degree. He learned by watching YouTube videos and through the help of family and friends.

22 The Golden ticket

When Judge Ruth Bermudez Montenegro '89 came to Clarion from California in the 1980s, she had no idea how much being a Golden Eagle would shape her life. She has made a name for herself and is shattering glass ceilings as a woman and a Latina.

28 Gaines in diversity

Florence Gaines, the first Black woman to live on Clarion's campus, said the environment is much different from when she was a student in the 1950s. Gaines '89, was a special guest at Homecoming 2021.

ON THE COVER

Coach Cal Court

DEPARTMENTS

4 Clarion Digest

Students win cash prizes in the fourth annual BizPitch Competition; Lineman shares workforce development expertise; Venango Veterans Club hosted its annual Flags for the Fallen ceremony on Veterans Day; five honored for work in social equity; ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge awards Clarion's action plan.

10 Homecoming 2021

30 Coach Cal Court

University of Kentucky basketball coach John Calipari '82 returns to Clarion for the dedication of the basketball court in Tippin as the Coach Cal Court.

34 Volleyball cruises to its third PSAC championship.

40 #Wings Up

The career of Alexis Robison '20 is off to a good start. Publication of her research in a top-tier professional journal is already on her "done" list.

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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.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Clarion family,

As we prepare to celebrate the beginning of a new year, we have been busy working toward another new beginning – that of Pennsylvania Western University, or PennWest for short. Pending Middle States approval, Clarion, Cal U and Edinboro will begin working as an integrated institution July 1, 2022. Although much about PennWest will be new, it is rooted in and retains the histories of the universities it comprises. Throughout the process, we have remained intentional about building on our successes of the past as we plan for the future. The goal of integration is to create new opportunities for students, including expanded academic programs and support services, and to hold down costs for students at all three campuses while financially strengthening our institutions

The work that was completed throughout the fall includes the selection of the name and a wordmark that represents the integrated university. From the beginning of the process, we have remained committed to Clarion (and integrating partner campuses California and Edinboro) retaining its brand and history, and our promise that Clarion students and alumni forever will be Golden Eagles.

Also this fall, we finalized the academic array and established PennWest leadership and the employment structure we will use moving forward. This information is available at www.clarion.edu/integration. I encourage you to review the section to learn more about the future PennWest.

Wings Up!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Dale". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Dr. Dale

EAGLE SPIRIT

Lauren Murphy, a junior nursing major and nutrition & fitness minor from Union City, submitted the winning design for the 2021 Homecoming T-shirt. Murphy said she loves to be creative with art projects in her spare time.



SHOW OF SUPPORT

Students were invited to put their hand print on the apple to show their support for National Coming Out Day in October. The Allies organization sponsored the activity.



PERFECT PITCH

Three Clarion students won cash prizes in the fourth annual BizPitch Competition. The competition awarded \$1,500 for first place, \$1,000 for second place, \$500 for third place, and a fan favorite award of \$250.

Marcus Ryan of Mercer, a senior business management major, won \$1,500 for first place and \$250 for fan favorite for a total of \$1,750. His business, Skoolie City, is contract work-based business that facilitates the remodeling of old school buses into renovated motor homes. With help from Skoolie City, customers will have their dream motorhome at a very affordable price. See page 16 to learn about Ryan's first Skoolie project.

Indya Durham of Pittsburgh, a sophomore communications major, won \$1,000 for second place. Her business is an online cosmetic store that features a variety of high-quality and affordable products. The mission of the business is to give customers a wellness experience that goes beyond face value.

Shamyia Johnson of McKeesport, a junior early childhood education major, won \$500 for third place with her business in which she creates one-of-a-kind, commissioned works of art for customers.



FLAGS FOR THE FALLEN

Clarion University – Venango’s Veterans Club hosts Flags for the Fallen each year on Veterans Day. The 296 flags placed in front of Suhr Library are a memorial to our commonwealth’s heroes who sacrificed their lives during Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Flags dotting the campus represent Pennsylvanians who fought and died in all wars.

Susan Hileman '97, was guest speaker. She is a veteran of the US Air Force who received the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Air Force Training Ribbon; Air Force Outstanding Unit Award; Air Force Good Conduct Medal; and Small Arms Marksmanship Ribbon with Oak Leaf Cluster. She is pictured with Mark Conrad, advisor of Venango Campus Veterans Club.



LINEMAN SHARES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EXPERTISE



Hope Lineman, dean of career and workforce education, presented “#Prepared4PA: Preparing Pennsylvania’s Workforce of the Future” in November at the Regional UPCEA Conference and again at the National CAEL Conference in San Diego. Lineman leads the statewide work for the State System and is strategic advisor to the chancellor on workforce innovation.

Affordable, career-relevant post-secondary education is an engine of social mobility and economic development, which is essential to the future of this commonwealth, Lineman said. Currently, Pennsylvania higher education is shrinking in the number of newly credentialed individuals it produces annually. To meet its workforce needs, Pennsylvania must significantly increase the number of adults with some postsecondary education.

The #Prepared4PA initiative is a 21st century strategy that better connects higher education and industry at different levels, building a stackable career pathway that incorporates certificate programs or credentials. It leverages opportunities for building a vibrant economy and helping to foster a brighter future for students. The initiative also fosters partnerships to improve educational pipelines into high priority occupations; ensuring our workforce is prepared for the jobs of today and in the future.

To learn more, click or visit www.prepared4pa.org.



CARR PHOTOGRAPHS 2020 OLYMPIC GAMES FOR NBC NEWS

Evan Carr '07 covered the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games as a photojournalist for NBC News, Washington, D.C.

Carr has worked for NBC News for eight years, winning multiple Emmy, Murrow and Associated Press awards. He covers the movers and shakers in Washington, D.C., as well as providing live shots for talent and logistical knowledge about Capitol Hill and the district.

KNOEDLER HIRED AS PRESS SECRETARY FOR US REP



Matthew Knoedler '14 is press secretary for U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly (R-PA). Before joining Kelly's team, he was the Washington, D.C., bureau chief for Lilly Broadcasting. His final story for Lilly was an interview with Clarion political science professor Dr. Kevan Yenerall and others about the 2022 Pennsylvania Senate race.

At Clarion, Knoedler was part of Yenerall's 2012 National Convention Experience class. He completed his fieldwork at the Washington Center academic seminar at the Republican National Convention in Tampa.

**CLICK OR VISIT
ERINEWSNOW.COM TO WATCH THE INTERVIEW.**

ALL IN

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge presented the 2021 Best Action Plan Award to Clarion University Nov. 9 during the State Voting Challenges Awards Ceremony.

The award recognizes an institution's efforts to develop and implement a campus democratic engagement action plan to help college students improve nonpartisan civic learning, political engagement and voter participation. Clarion tied for first place in the 4-year Institution category.

Sarah Zerfoss, Clarion's assistant director of student conduct and community development, said the COVID pandemic presented unique challenges that required a strategy for engaging students during remote learning.

"Our civic engagement efforts have included virtual speakers, social media campaigns, podcasts and the continued development of the CU Engaged Coalition on our campus," Zerfoss said.

CU Engaged Coalition works to promote bipartisan student engagement.





Ernie helps CU Engaged Coalition co-chair Taylor Boyle and member Kaitlyn Krupa at a Campus Democracy Challenge event

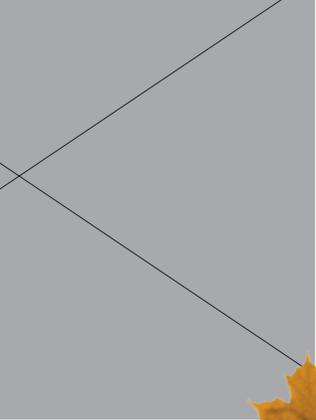
NATIONWIDE EFFORT TO BE VOTER FRIENDLY

Clarion is one of over 231 campuses in 37 states and the District of Columbia designated as a Voter Friendly Campus. The initiative, led by national nonpartisan organizations Fair Elections Center’s Campus Vote Project and NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, held participating institutions accountable for planning and implementing practices that encourage their students to register and vote in 2020 elections and in the coming years.

The mission of the Voter Friendly Campus designation is to bolster efforts that help students overcome barriers to participating in the political process. Clarion’s campus was evaluated based on a plan about how the university would register, educate and turn out student voters in 2020, how it facilitated voter engagement efforts on campus, and a final analysis of these efforts, all in the upheaval caused by a global pandemic. The designation is valid through December 2022.

HOMECOMING 2021





Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

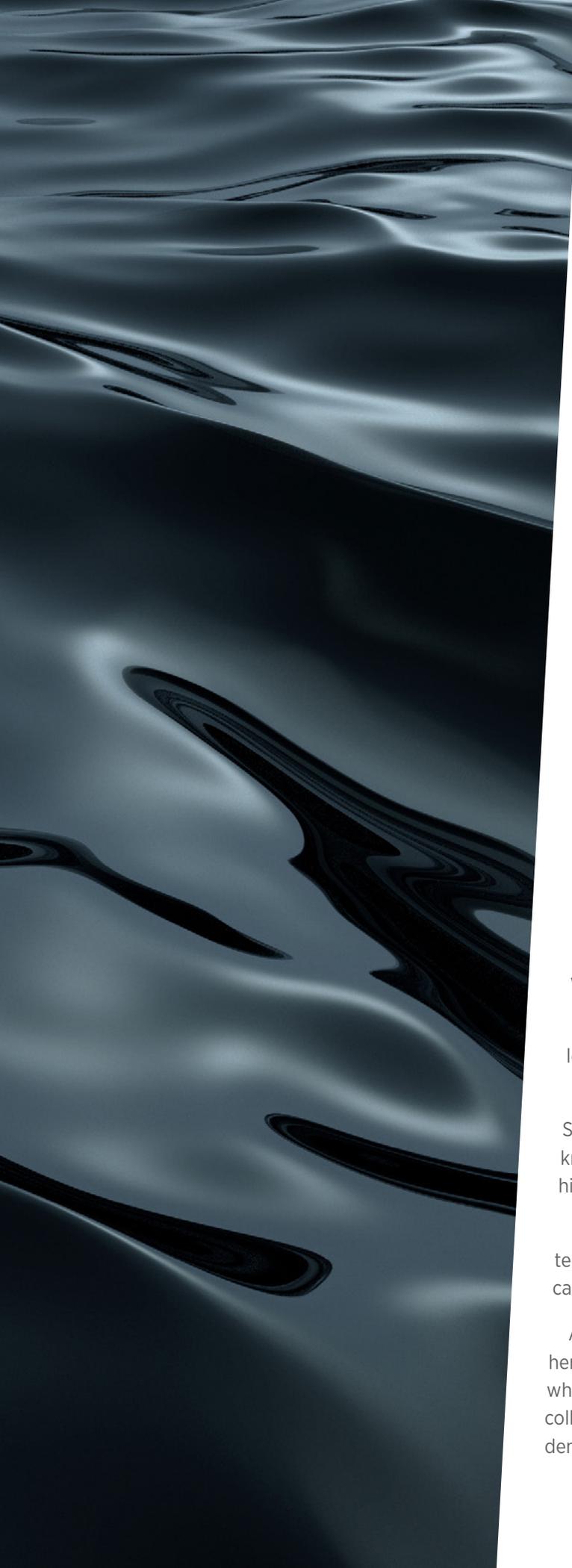
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise

I rise

I rise

(Excerpt from Maya Angelou's poem, "Still I Rise")



A DAYBREAK THAT'S WONDROUSLY CLEAR

The Maya Angelou poem “Still I Rise” is an indelible part of Cassie Schwalm. She identifies so strongly with it that she has it permanently inked on her body.

Angelou’s and Schwalm’s pain came from different circumstances in different times and places. Their response to it, however, was the same: They rose.

“My parents passed away when I was two months old,” Schwalm said. “My grandmother raised me until I was 12, and she passed away.”

Schwalm became a ward of the court. She had half-siblings and bounced around among them and other family for a while.

“I never found a stable environment until I was in ninth grade. I was placed with a family and stayed until my senior year,” she said.

The family had guardianship of her, which made her essentially their child. The arrangement provided food and security for Schwalm, but she said there was verbal and physical abuse. She wasn’t happy in the home, but she had created a life for herself at school and with friends, and she didn’t want to go back into the foster care system.

“Academics is the only area where I found success. I flourished in English and literature, and I found passion in public service,” Schwalm said. “I was involved in student government, the National Honor Society, I played multiple varsity sports. It was my friends and their parents who took me to practice.”

She left that foster home the day she turned 18. She never looked back.

In spite of the misfortune that had been thrust upon her, Schwalm was determined to create for herself a bright future. She knew that the path to the kind of life she wanted was through higher education.

“I wanted to be more than what I had been reduced to in my teenage years,” she said. “I knew I was more than the horrible cards I had been handed.”

Although her A-C Valley high school grades were excellent and her academic resume showed her to be a well-rounded student who was sure to succeed in college, she found it difficult to get into college because of her background and her status as an independent student.

ROSS MEMORIAL LIBRARY



“When I turned 18, I didn’t know my Social Security number. I didn’t have my birth certificate, and I had never had a job,” Schwalm said. She didn’t know how to access the documents she needed for admission and financial aid.

Again, her friends and their families were her support system. They, along with a “very good admissions counselor who had dealt with kids aging out of foster care” helped her to eventually gain admission to Edinboro University.

“I fought hard to get into college. That encouraged me to base my career on helping other foster kids who age out of the system to find the resources they need,” Schwalm said.

After one semester at Edinboro, she transferred to Mt. Aloysius College to play volleyball, remaining there until the spring semester of 2020.

“Once COVID hit, I transferred home to Clarion. It was the most financially responsible choice,” she said. “I did it with remorse at first, but it turned out to be the best decision I ever made.”

Schwalm said before she transferred to Clarion, she loved the idea of going to college. She loved classes and learning, but she lacked a personal connection at Mt. Aloysius.

“WHEN I CAME IN, I KNEW WHAT I WANTED TO DO WITH MYSELF – I KNEW WHAT MY GOALS WERE – BUT I DIDN’T KNOW HOW TO GET THERE,” SHE SAID.

THAT CHANGED IN HER FIRST SEMESTER AS A CLARION STUDENT.

“Dr. Lingwall was one of my professors, and right off the bat he took interest in me,” Schwalm said. “Even though classes were over Zoom, he showed personal compassion and directed me to Lacey Fulton.”

Fulton became her academic advisor. She suggested Schwalm consider pre-law and urged her to visit the Center for Career and Professional Development. There, **Erin Kriebel Lewis ’01, ’06G** connected her with the people on campus who could help her reach her goals.

“I knew when I took my first law class that it was the missing piece,” Schwalm said.

She is taking full advantage of opportunities at Clarion.

“I got connected with Dr. Kevan Yenerall, and I mentioned

that I wanted an internship. He got me in touch with the Jill Beck campaign, and the next week I had my first internship,” she said. Yenerall helped her secure her second internship – with John Fetterman’s campaign for senate.

“This little support system grew in front of my eyes,” Schwalm said. “People here cared about me more than anyone in my academic history. I wouldn’t be in the position I am without those four. I have found the community I’ve been searching for.”

With a lifelong interest in politics and the experience of two political campaigns under her belt, she ran her own campaign for a seat on Clarion Borough Council.

“Coming out of foster care as an individual who had to come into adulthood quickly, I understand the weight of political policies. I have the understanding that as a citizen of this community, state, and country, I can lessen that weight on someone else’s back,” she said.

Schwalm will graduate in May 2022. She plans to take a gap year filled with professional paralegal experience, study for the LSAT and start applying to law school.

“My goal is Columbia or NYU Law. From there, I’ll start a career in public service.”

Despite the challenges Schwalm has faced, she’s never felt like quitting, especially where her education is concerned.

“The idea of not being a student is more terrifying than anything. I love being in school. My dreams of helping other students in similar situations has kept me going,” she said.

She admits to struggling with a victim mindset when she was younger, but going to therapy, finding her community, and identifying her passions helped her develop the mindset to rise above her circumstances.

“IF ANYTHING,
I’M PROUD OF
MYSELF.”



MBA

CLARION
GOLDEN EAGLES
UNIVERSITY

OR BUST

Much like the spacecraft in the Apollo space program, Marcus Ryan's Apollo was built for exploration. The 20-year-old business administration major with a minor in international business loves to travel, and the idea for his Apollo was borne from his desire to explore America.

Ryan's parents own a diesel repair garage in Mercer. During the COVID pandemic when classes were held remotely, he worked full time as a mechanic in the family business. He was looking for a project to keep himself busy.

"After previously flipping a car, I decided I wanted a bigger challenge, so I took on a school bus conversion," he said. He sold the car to fund the project and began to look for a bus.

Through his parents' business contacts, they helped Ryan locate a 40-foot, yellow BlueBird school bus which was retired from use and parked in a field. A school bus requires a commercial driver's license to operate it, so his dad had to drive it home. That was Sept. 23, 2019.

Overall, the bus was in good condition. It ran well and needed no engine work. The exhaust and some brake components were rusted, so Ryan replaced them. He changed the oil and fuel filters and replaced bulbs in the exterior lights.

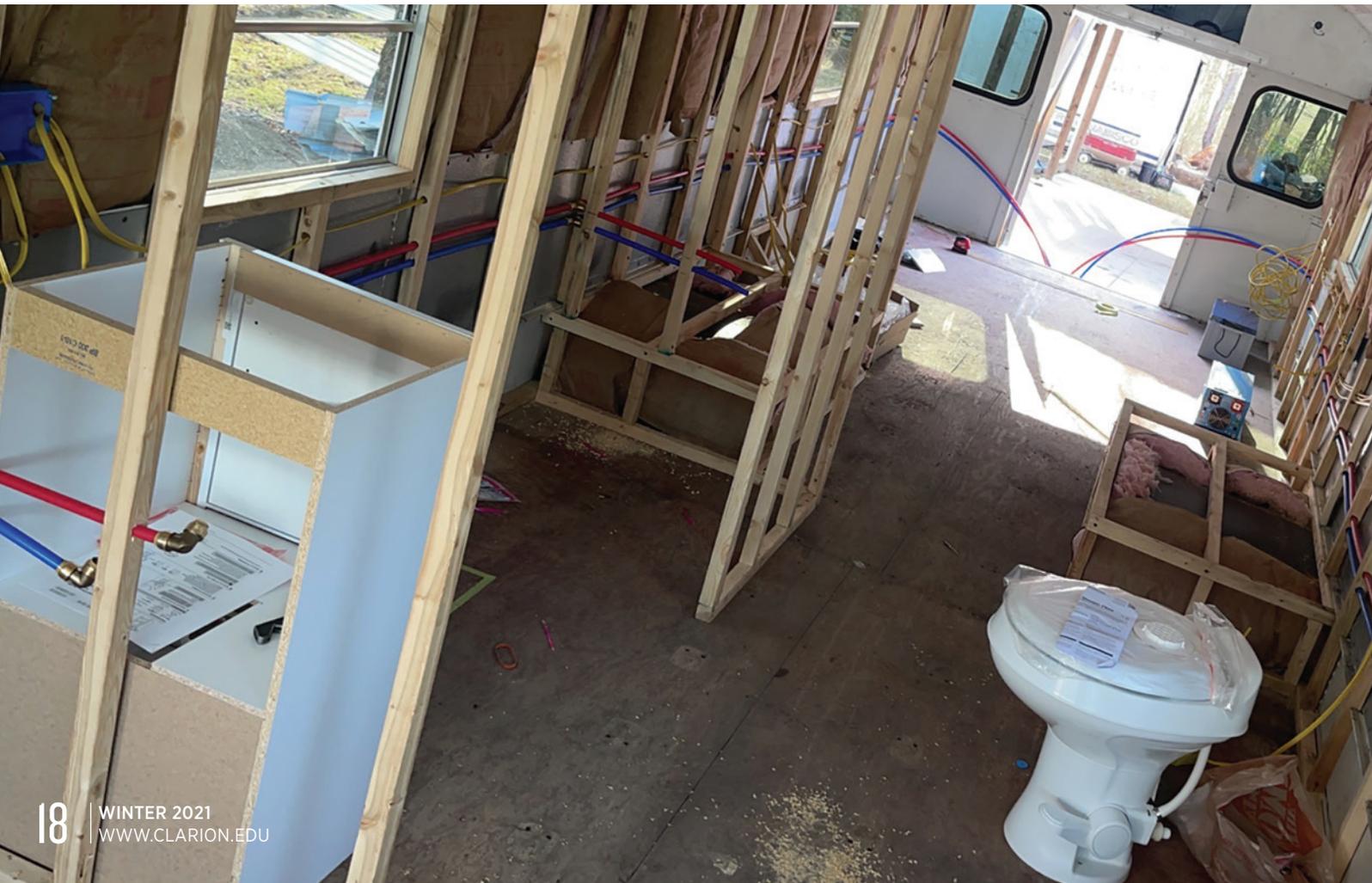
The first step in actually transforming the bus was removing everything from the interior, including unbolting the 26 seats.

Once the interior was gutted, the next step was measuring and planning. For the planning phase, Ryan called on a high school friend who is proficient with computer-aided design software. Ryan had a general idea of the layout he wanted, but together, they developed a detailed design and color schemes.

"I knew I wanted a couch there," Ryan said, pointing to the area inside the door on the passenger's side. "And I knew I wanted the kitchen table there," he said of the space behind the driver's seat.

Initially he envisioned the kitchen on the passenger's side and the bathroom opposite it, but the two areas were flipped because of where the holding tanks for the black water and gray water would be installed underneath. The kitchen is equipped with a full-size refrigerator/freezer, a three-burner stove and plenty of storage.

The master bedroom, furnished with a queen-size bed, stayed in the location Ryan initially planned, encompassing the rear third of the bus.







To power the vehicle when it's off-the-grid, he installed solar panels which create enough power to supply the bus for a couple of hours. The bus can be plugged in if electrical service is available. Propane powers the heating and cooling system.

Ryan had no experience with construction, plumbing or electrical work before he started on his bus project. He averaged 8 to 10 hours a day of researching and working on the build.

"I put in hundreds of hours of research and reaching out to the community for guidance on all the issues I ran into," Ryan said. "I spent many hours on YouTube to learn the aspects of plumbing, electrical and construction."

His high school physics teacher helped him with the electrical work.

As he continued through the conversion, Ryan learned a lot of construction basics, such as using insulation in the ceiling to prevent moisture.

"Thermal bridging is when metal comes into contact with another substance, causing moisture to build up," he said.

"To prevent that from happening, I sprayed the metal beams in the ceiling with foam insulation."

On the exterior, Ryan replaced lighting and painted over the yellow.

Friend Gabe Wiley, also a Clarion student, helped with the project. He laughed, remembering some of the painstaking work they did.

"We had to sand every inch of the exterior before we painted it," Wiley said. "We thought we'd sand today, prime tomorrow, and paint the next day. A few weeks later, we were still sanding."

On Aug. 14, 2020, 11 months after he started, Ryan completed the conversion. He calls the bus Apollo, derived from the letter 'A' that identified the bus when it was in service. He took it for an enhanced inspection, which was required to convert the vehicle status to motorhome. Once it was registered as a motorhome, Ryan no longer needed a commercial driver's license to get behind the wheel.

He hoped to try it out on a three-month trip, but because of COVID, much in the nation was closed. He hasn't taken



What is a skoolie?

From [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com)

Launched in the 1970s as part of the hippie culture, the skoolie movement today is growing, encompassing smart, custom-crafted little homes that have handsome finishes and high-tech features enabling them to provide the comforts of home, the joys of mobility and the economies of living partially or totally off grid. With their full metal frame, robust structure, large tires and height above the ground, skoolies are regarded by many to be sturdier and safer than typical RVs.

Their home is on wheels but it's not a trailer. Nor is it a standard motor home or recreational vehicle.

Rather, it's a tiny, one-of-a-kind house that once was a school bus. Homes like this are called skoolies, and there are many of them around the country, especially in western states.

any trips in the bus, but he's tried out all of the systems, and everything functions as intended.

"Five people can comfortably sleep in the bus. As for hanging out inside, there's room for about 10 people," Ryan said.

Ryan, who is enrolled in Clarion's accelerated bachelor's to master's program, will complete his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in May, then continue into the MBA program. He hopes to spend a portion of his graduate studies serving an internship abroad to support his minor in international business. To help pay for his education, he has listed the bus for sale.





THE GOLDEN TICKET





When Judge Ruth Bermudez Montenegro '89 came to Clarion in the 80s on a full-ride scholarship, the young Latina had no idea how much being a Golden Eagle would shape the trajectory of her life.

Montenegro has been nominated by the Biden administration for the United States District Court for the Southern District of California.

Montenegro now serves as a U.S. Magistrate Judge for the United States District Court for the Southern District of California. She is the sole magistrate judge in Imperial County, the first female to do so and the first Latina judge in the history of Imperial County. She maintains chambers in El Centro, California.

Prior to her appointment to the federal bench, Judge Montenegro served as a Superior Court Judge in Imperial County.

Before becoming a judge, she served as a family support commissioner for the Imperial County Superior Court where she was the first female to serve in that capacity and assistant county counsel for the Imperial County Counsel's Office.

Montenegro also worked as an associate attorney with Horton, Knox, Carter & Foote representing numerous public agencies, school districts, businesses, corporations and nonprofits. During law school, she served as an extern with the U.S. Attorney's Office, Civil Division, in Los Angeles.

The California native said Clarion was one of the key foundations for her personal and professional life.

"My time here at Clarion shaped who I am today," Montenegro said. "And all of my experiences at Clarion set me on a trajectory for personal and professional success. My time at Clarion is where I formed lifelong friendships, received invaluable mentorship from professors and staff, traveled and became familiar with life on the East Coast, and ultimately realized my goal of being accepted into law school. All of these experiences were far more than I could have ever wished for and dreamed."

She formed mentorships with faculty members Dr. Ngo Tu, professor of political science, and the late John Shropshire, the first Black dean of admissions at Clarion, who fostered her undergraduate achievements.

Montenegro said Shropshire drove her to her LSAT exam and recommended her to represent Clarion at the National Conference for Women College Student Leaders, where she had the opportunity to spend a week in Washington, D.C., all expenses paid, to network and learn from senators and congress members, as well as women college leaders throughout our country. This experience cemented her desire for a life of public service and gave her the goal of becoming an attorney.

"This conference was a formative experience where I honed my leadership skills and became inspired to be a public servant," she said.



Tu served as her pre-law advisor, wrote letters of recommendation on her behalf and guided her through the law school application process. He also served as a reference for her after she left Clarion.

“Dr. Tu and Dean Shropshire continued to support me throughout my career,” Montenegro said.

She graduated with a political science degree from Clarion in 1989 and then from UCLA School of Law in 1992.

“On campus, Ruth was always smiling, sharing stories about her family and the sunny state of California. You could always tell, she was on the path to greatness,” said

Shannon Fitzpatrick Thomas '92, Montenegro's friend from her Clarion days.

While at Clarion, she formed lifelong friendships with other students like Thomas, who would take her with them when they went home on weekends and breaks. During this time, she got to taste regional foods and had the opportunity to create a family away from home.

“It (Clarion) became my home and my family,” Montenegro said.

Montenegro joked that Clarion also introduced her to Bob's Sub.

Her time at Clarion gave her the gift of travel by moving across the United States to the East Coast where winters were cold and snowy. She has since traveled the world with her beloved family, but she first got a taste of travel by going on university trips.

“I remember Ruth being so enthusiastic about Clarion’s Pre-Law Club, her roommate and I joined in the fall 1988,” said Thomas. “Just a few weeks into the Fall semester, Ruth’s leadership and organizational skills went into high gear and she organized a weekend trip to NYC for the club.”

In addition to pounding the gavel, Montenegro is widely recognized for her community service working with youth. She is the past president and co-founder of the El Centro Education Foundation and a member of the California Civic Learning Partnerships Committee. She previously served as president of the Imperial County Bar Association, president of MANA de Imperial Valley, board member of the California Bar Foundation as well as on the boards of numerous nonprofit organizations.

Montenegro is a member of the Federal Magistrate Judges Association, the National Association of Women Judges, and the California Latino Judges Association. She is the co-founder of the Imperial County Superior Court Summer Extern Program.

She is a member of the Federal Magistrate Judges Association Diversity Committee and co-chair of the Diversity Award Committee. She serves as a guest speaker at educational programs sponsored by the Federal Bar Association and actively participates in court-sponsored outreach programs, the Imperial County Mock Trial Competition and the Imperial County Migrant Education Student Speech and Debate Competition.

In 2019, Judge Montenegro oversaw the chartering of the Imperial County Lawyers’ Association. She also mentors high school students and prospective law students from Imperial County.

When she was sworn in as a U.S. magistrate judge in 2019, fellow U.S. Magistrate Judge Barbara Major spoke of Montenegro in Stephanie Garcia’s story from the “The Desert Review.”

“I didn’t know Judge Montenegro before she was chosen to be magistrate, and after she was selected, I contacted her and we had lunch. I have to tell you, it was like having lunch with a celebrity,” Major said.

“During lunch, I discovered why she knew so many people,” Major said. “Initially, Montenegro was born and raised here in the Imperial Valley and is incredibly involved in her community.”

She has received numerous honors including one of the 2020 “Women of the Year” for the 40th Senate District, 2012 “Woman of the Year” for the 56th Assembly District, Imperial County Community Foundation Distinguished Philanthropist, Inspirational Community Leader – Iron Woman Award, MANA de Imperial Valley Las Primeras Award and Legacy Award, two-time recipient of the Soroptimist International of El Centro Ruby Award, and the City of El Centro Mardi Gras Queen. In 2019, Judge Montenegro served as the commencement speaker at San Diego State University-Imperial Valley.

Recently, she was named a Distinguished Alumni at Clarion’s 2021 Distinguished Awards ceremony and Thomas nominated her for the award.

“Courageous. Confident. Clarion. You gave me the courage and the confidence to dream big and achieve more than I had ever imagined possible,” she said.

Judge Montenegro and her husband Joe reside in El Centro, California, with their daughter Miranda, a recent UCLA graduate.



Florence Gaines

Florence Gaines was the first Black woman to live on Clarion University's campus, and she returned for Clarion's 2021 Homecoming to find a much different environment from when she was here in the early 50s.

Gaines, or Flo, as she is known to her friends, now 89, attended school during the time of segregation and was the only Black person living on campus.

"It was quite obvious when I enrolled and when I started," Gaines said. "There was no one but me."

Gaines said she was aware of two other Black students at the time, a brother and sister from Oil City with the last name Smith, but neither of them lived on campus.

When she first enrolled, she and her father learned that it wasn't likely she'd find a roommate. At the time, a Mr. Moore who was helping her through the admissions process said some parents probably wouldn't want their daughters to room with her, but she could always occupy a single room. However, a single room cost more than a shared room, and her family had to keep an eye on the bottom line.

They made an exception for her by not charging her more for a single room. She began her time in Becht Hall, which used to be a women's residence hall.

Despite having no roommate, Gaines became friends with four white women in the first several days of being at Clarion. She has fond memories of laughing and talking in front of Becht Hall after Sunday dinner with these women and others who were passing through. At that time, the cafeteria was on the first floor of Becht Hall.

A negative experience came after the holidays when she and her friends were sharing holiday treats in the dorm. Another student recited the rhyme "Eenie, meenie, miney, moe, catch a (expletive) by its toe." This upset Gaines and she returned to her room.

Living in the residence hall would prove to be challenging in another way as white women didn't understand that ethnic hair couldn't be washed every day.

Gaines said the other ladies would ask her, "Why aren't you washing your hair?"

This concern also came to light during shower time pranks.

This was the time of open-topped showers and girls would pull pranks such as dumping cold water over top from the next shower stall. Florence didn't believe this was racially motivated as all of the girls were targets. For Florence, however, this was a "don't" for her hair, so she started showering at later times when she wouldn't be pranked.

Despite these incidents she eventually did get to have a roommate when she later moved to Science Hall. Financial difficulties sent Gaines home for little while and when she returned she was back in Becht in a single room again.

Gaines credits her parents with her return to Clarion. "I had a mother and father who were bound and determined that their children would be educated."

Her father told her, "You started something and you're supposed to finish what you start."

In addition to financial difficulties, the times that were especially difficult for Gaines were when she would encounter someone who had never seen a Black person before her.

In the 50s, there was one laundry facility on campus. She and her friends went to this facility together. She said it was a very loud place with the machines always clacking, but when she walked in, "Everything stopped. All of the workers stopped."

Gaines asked her friend, Pauline, "Did I forget to put on all of my clothes this morning?"

The incident demonstrated a reality to Gaines.

"I know that the majority of them there had never seen a Black individual before," she said.

She said that same issue stopped her from going into town during certain times. Gaines encountered a mother and her young children who would not stop staring at her. The mother tried to pull them away to stop them from staring.

Gaines said she didn't blame the children for their reaction, but it did make her uncomfortable as others treated her as if she wasn't there.



“It stopped me from going into town on Saturdays,” Gaines said. Instead Gaines would go into town in the early mornings throughout the week as her class schedule allowed.

She hopes that her presence inspired Clarion families to have positive conversations around the dinner tables.

Despite the attitudes of townspeople, Gaines said her fellow students and teachers treated her well.

Originally, Gaines wanted to obtain a degree in library science, so she completed a library science student teaching experience in Erie and another student teaching experience in English at what was known as the campus school on Clarion’s campus.

While she was completing her library science student teaching, she had some Clarion students observe her and one of the students was none other than Dr. Paul Chandler’s wife, Kathleen Hicks Chandler.

Good fortune was with her in the form of an 8 a.m. Saturday morning practicum class that taught students professionalism. A man named Mr. Skinner taught the course and cautioned Gaines that she may not be able to get a job in Clarion.

“I didn’t necessarily want a job in Clarion,” Gaines said.

Skinner guided her toward the Bryant Teachers Agency in Philadelphia, which connected her with a job in Wilmington,

Delaware, teaching in the Howard High School Library – fulfilling Gaines’ professional aspiration. She would work in this capacity for the next 24 years.

Although her parents weren’t happy about the move to Delaware – it was too far away, and they were concerned about racial issues there – Florence got married, raised her family and still lives there to this day.

In 1979, she was asked to take her talents from Howard to Delcastle Vo-Tech High School in Delaware, an all-white school they were trying to diversify with Black teachers. Gaines said she was worried about the change at first, but it ended up being a positive experience and she retired from there in 1996.

She’s never doubted that she received a good education at Clarion, and she is happy to have done her life’s work in the education system.

She encourages other students of color to put aside any negativity that they may encounter, “go where you can get the education that you need,” and find the finances you need to do it.



John V. Caliper Court
Coach Cal Court
Dedicated in honor of outstanding commitment
and loyal support of Clarion University
September 21, 2021



**On September 21, 2021,
John Calipari came home.
From now on, part of him
will remain here forever.**



Flanked by former teammates and coaches, family and friends, the Kentucky head men's basketball coach and 1982 Clarion graduate was honored for the many contributions he and his wife Ellen have made to the university. The playing surface in Tippin Gymnasium was officially renamed the John V. Calipari Court, with the words "Coach Cal Court" henceforth emblazoned on the hardwood.

"It is my absolute pleasure to welcome back Coach Calipari and the many teammates, friends, loved ones, coaches, mentors, and all those who joined us to celebrate," said Clarion University President Dr. Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson. "This is a rare and extraordinary moment we are sharing."

The curriculum vitae for Calipari is familiar to even casual fans of college athletics. Simply put, he is one of the most successful men's basketball coaches of the last three decades. A 29-year veteran of college basketball coaching, Calipari was a 2015 inductee into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. He has guided six teams to the Final Four, led one to a national championship and helped 54 players earn selection in the NBA Draft during his college coaching career. From UMass to Memphis and ultimately Kentucky, Calipari has been among the very best college coaches in the game for the last three decades.

The roots of that story stretch back to western Pennsylvania, where he was a star high school basketball player

at Moon High School under another Clarion graduate, Bill Sacco '66. Calipari started his college playing career at UNC Wilmington before transferring to Clarion in 1981, helping the Golden Eagles reach their first NCAA Division II Tournament in program history that year. Under legendary head coach Joe DeGregorio, Clarion went 23-6 and reached the East Region championship game. He was a key member of Clarion's 1981-82 team that started the season 7-0 and ranked third in Division II at one point.

Upon his arrival in September, Calipari took a guided tour of the renovated Tippin Gymnasium, seeing with his own eyes for the first time the updated home of the Golden Eagles. He then met with the Golden Eagle men's basketball team for more than an hour, passing along his wisdom, reminiscences and anecdotes before joining the unveiling party already in progress. After hors d'oeuvres and dinner, the ceremony began in earnest, with a number of visiting dignitaries taking the opportunity to celebrate Calipari, as well as the role Clarion University and its athletics programs play in keeping the community vibrant.

"What I was reminded of again tonight was how important an organization like this is, not just for the region but for the students," said Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education Chancellor Dr. Dan Greenstein. "The level of camaraderie and passion I've witnessed amongst team-



mates, their recollections from many years, is really special. It must continue, and it will continue.

“To the students that are here today, you are part of this family,” Greenstein said. “You are launching on a trajectory which I hope will lead you to the same places it led these graduates.”

Among those special guests honoring Calipari were two of the most influential voices in his coming to Clarion: his high school coach Bill Sacco and his head coach from his time as a Golden Eagle, Joe DeGregorio.

“Congratulations to John, Ellen and the Calipari family,” Sacco said. “This is quite an honor, to have a court named after you, and he has absolutely earned it.”

“In this world of ours, there are givers and takers,” DeGregorio said. “John has always been a giver. From the day I met him, he’s always been a giver. He never forgets.

DeGregorio recounted what made Calipari such an effective player for the Golden Eagles. Despite a purported lack of athleticism – “as John once said, ‘I was small but I was also slow!’” DeGregorio joked – it was Calipari’s ability to see the big picture that made him a strong point guard.

“John was a gym rat, John knew where everyone was on the court, John was a master planner, and John could get

the ball to whom it needed to get to,” DeGregorio said. “He wasn’t concerned about being the high scorer or the leading rebounder. His concern was being successful and winning ball games.

“That’s why I love him. He understood the game, and he still does,” DeGregorio said.

After that, it was time for the grand unveiling of the “Coach Cal Court” signature and mark on the floor, followed by statements from Calipari himself.

“I’ve had a lot of people help me,” Calipari said. “Whether it be my coaches, my teammates or mentors in the profession, I had help. I was carried to that position.” His hope is that when people ask how he became successful that they’re told, “He started his path here. He built his foundation here. He was able to dream big here. You can all dream big if you choose to. Do more than is expected, and it’s all yours.

“Lastly, I hope they look and they say, ‘He never forgot.’” I appreciate the opportunity I had to be a student here, an athlete here, to be coached by who I was coached by, to play for the guys that I played for,” Calipari said. “For that, it has all been worth it.”

STILL SOARING

VOLLEYBALL CRUISES TO PSAC CHAMPIONSHIP WIN



Thanks in large part to one of the top offenses in the nation, as well as key defensive contributions at the net and in the back row, Golden Eagle volleyball made waves in 2021 with the third Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference championship in program history. Clarion defeated perennial contender Gannon Nov. 20 in the championship match, raising the trophy at East Stroudsburg's Koehler Fieldhouse.

The Golden Eagles started their championship run by avenging a pair of losses to the only team that beat them more than once in the regular season, the Edinboro Fighting Scots. Going on the road to take on the team that held a share of the PSAC West championship, Clarion stunned the Fighting Scots with a 3-0 sweep at McComb Fieldhouse, which earned them a trip to the conference semifinals at East Stroudsburg. The Golden Eagles won their second straight road match in the tournament, beating the hosting Warriors 3-1 on their own floor, and



followed with a dominant victory over the Golden Knights in the final.

Three Clarion players earned All-PSAC honors in 2021, including First Team selections London Fuller and Cassidy Snider. Fuller, the team's starting setter, was named the PSAC Tournament MVP after a dazzling three-match display in the playoffs, while Snider, an outside hitter, was voted the West Division Rookie of the Year after leading the conference in kills. Fellow outside hitter Julia Piccolino ranked third in the PSAC in kills and earned Second Team All-PSAC West status.

The championship is the third overall for the Golden Eagle volleyball team, and their first since 2010. That marks two PSAC championships for head coach Jennifer Herron, the program's all-time coaching wins leader who is in her 15th season at the helm. With the victory over the Golden Knights, the team guaranteed their 10th appearance in the NCAA Tournament.

It was a confluence of different factors – young players maturing throughout the year, veterans adjusting to new roles, and a group needing crucial time to jell – that led to the Golden Eagles peaking at the right time of year. After going 8-4 in tournaments to start the season, the team began to gain traction and make themselves known as a contender in the PSAC West division.

The league got its wake-up call that the Golden Eagles were more than an afterthought Oct. 30, when they swept Gannon at Tippin Gym to move into striking distance of a regular season division title. Though Clarion was unable to catch up with the Golden Knights and Edinboro before the regular season ended, they made it clear they were going to be tough come playoff time.

Equity AWARDS



Student Senate and the Office of Social Equity presented the 2021 Equity Dinner and Awards Ceremony Nov. 9 in Gemmell. From left are: Dr. Jane Walsh, Presidential Award; Dr. Nripendra Singh, Outstanding Employee Award; Dr. Lorie Taylor, Outstanding Supporter Award; and student Kendall Watts, Special Equity Award. Lucia Diaz, not pictured, won received the Outstanding Student Award.

IN MEMORIAM

1940s

Evelyn C. Rippy '41, Sept. 19, 2021

1950s

Eugene W. Fitzsimmons '55, Sept. 27, 2021

Edward Urban '56, Oct. 6, 2021

1960s

William Larry Beightol '61, Oct. 13, 2021

Michael P. Ferraro '64, Oct. 13, 2021

Kenneth H. Roadman '67, Sept. 20, 2021

Thomas H. Schrecengost '69, Sept. 26, 2021

1970s

Ralph S. Marasia '70, Sept. 22, 2021

Deborah A. McCanna '73, Sept. 14, 2021

Susan J. Morrison '75, Nov. 5, 2021

Frances K. Williams '79, Sept. 30, 2021

1980s

Jeff Lavender '88, Sept. 7, 2021

1990s

Eugene Curtis Schruers '90, Sept. 30, 2021

Kenneth Wayne Dolby '95, Sept. 17, 2021

Colleen Ann Silvis Wisner '96, Oct. 8, 2021

Caryn Lynn Gevaudan Richman '99, Sept. 18, 2021

2000s

Adrian I. Thornton Baker '05, Nov. 2, 2021

Brooke Marie Brown '05, Oct. 6, 2021

Bonnie K. McDaniel Sharrar '05, Sept. 18, 2021

Marcia Kay Shaw '06, Sept. 28, 2021

Corey J. Giles '09, Nov. 16, 2021

2010s

Kayla Rae Branthoover Wessel '17, Nov. 17, 2021

2020s

Ralph N. Bommer '21, Sept. 24, 2021

Friends

Robert Girvan, Oct. 13, 2021 (retired faculty)

J. Ivan Rhode, Nov. 6, 2021 (retired faculty)

Ronald Clair Shumaker '62, Oct. 5, 2021 (retired faculty)

David R. Romig, Oct. 19, 2021 (retired staff)

Mary Landi, Nov. 23, 2021 (retired staff)

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

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



- 1 Andrew Crevar**, born June 3, 2021, and **Nathan Crevar**, born Nov. 16, 2019, sons of Shane and **Lindsey Batchelor '15 Crevar**
- 2 Decker Anthony Moley**, son of Amanda and **Vince '05 Moley**, born Dec. 10, 2019
- 3 Sylvia Ruth Bruckner**, daughter of Albert and **Marissa Rapone '08 Bruckner**, born Oct. 5, 2020
- 4 Charleigh Kate Gravel**, daughter of Christopher and **Alicia Barnett '03 Gravel**, born Oct. 6, 2020
- 5 Brooks Fleming**, son of Andrew and **Kristen Pavlina '08 Fleming**, born Oct. 26, 2020
- 6 Fox Alex Boyles**, son of Scott and **Ashley Boyles** (student), born Nov. 7, 2020
- 7 Landon Schrader**, son of Chad and **Rachel Slater '12 Schrader**, born Nov. 30, 2020
- 8 Eloise Kathryn Puckey**, daughter of Jason and **Jackie Rodgers '06 Puckey**, born Feb. 12, 2021
- 9 Deklan Francis Smith**, son of Jacob and **Joelle Hoffman '17, '18 Smith**, born Feb. 15, 2021
- 10 Kyle Jeffrey Kuhn**, son of **Matthew '16** and **Megan Mullen '17 Kuhn**, born March 28, 2021
- 11 Nathan Griffin II**, son of Ashley and **Nathan '10 Griffin**, born May 19, 2021
- 12 Mark Peter Catrillo**, son of **Matthew '15** and **Lisa Kopczyk '14 Catrillo**, born June 9, 2021
- 13 Palmer Rose Duncan**, daughter of **Justin '13** and **Lyndsey Brecosky '12 Duncan**, born June 20, 2021
- 14 Colten Russell Brown**, son of Cody and **Meggi Wilcox '07 Brown**, born July 13, 2021
- 15 Kacen Kyle Zimmerman**, son of **Sean '11** and **Emily Hulburt '09 Zimmerman**, born Dec. 1, 2020
- 16 Eli Robert Betza**, son of **Stephen '14** and **Shalynn Giovannitti '14 Betza**, born Sept. 20, 2021





#WINGSUP

ALEXIS ROBISON



Alexis Robison '20 started her professional career by getting her honors research published in “Freshwater Biology,” a top-tier journal in her field.

For perspective, Dr. Kurt Regester, biology professor at Clarion, compared Robison’s accomplishment with his own: “I published in this journal as a Ph.D. student — Lexi, as an undergraduate. She has been the most remarkable student of my career, so far,” he said.

Robison completed the research for her paper titled “Impacts of invasive Amur honeysuckle, *Lonicera maackii*, leaf litter on multiple trophic levels of detritus-based experimental wetlands” during a summer in the National Science Foundation research program at Eastern Kentucky University, where she worked with two collaborators.

She credits Regester, who served as her research mentor, with equipping her for success by providing a multitude of opportunities to get involved in ecological research.

“He introduced me to the world of herpetology, which is now a passion of mine. He encouraged me to apply for the NSF position, and gave me the confidence, inspiration and assistance that I needed to publish my research.”

Her NSF experience further fueled her passion for ecological research. “I learned how to design a research project, collect the data, analyze it, present it, and

eventually publish it. This 10-week program made me feel like I had learned years’ worth of experience in something I love.”

Eastern Kentucky’s Dr. Mott also helped her with research and drafting and editing of the manuscript.

Robison now works as a forest insect pest aide 1 with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. She is part of the spotted lanternfly cooperative program in partnership with the USDA and Penn State Extension.

“My day is different every day, but it mainly involves responding to public reports of sightings and surveying areas that are not currently known to have spotted lanternfly so that we can slow the spread and control populations early on.”

Robison credits Clarion University’s biology and geoscience programs for much of her success. Robison said she was able to get involved in research and field work as early as her freshman year.

“Attending a small college like Clarion gave me the opportunity to stand out, get to know my professors, and get involved in research early, during my freshman year,” she said. “Clarion also introduced me to many great professional contacts, which is key to success in the environmental field.”

Your gift *matters.*

No matter which department or scholarship you support, no matter the size, your gift makes a difference.



MARA CHAPPIE, MAY 2022 | WINDBER, PA
Environmental Biology with a minor in
Environmental Sustainability

*Your gift to Clarion University
creates opportunities
for students like Mara.*

What brought me to Clarion?

When I began looking into universities, I wanted a small campus that wasn't too far from home. As I researched universities that offered environmental biology, I noticed that Clarion was within two hours of home. I scheduled a tour on a day specifically for biology majors. When I stepped onto campus, I knew Clarion was where I wanted to be: I loved the small-town feel, the Science and Technology Center, and the welcoming faculty I met that day.

What do I love about Clarion?

I love its location. As an environmental biology major, I need a school that offers plenty of field experiences. Since Cook Forest and a section of the North Country Trail are close by, I have been able to gain hands-on skills in the field since freshman year. Another favorite thing is the friendly faces everywhere I go. There's always someone close by to help if I need it.

Why are you grateful for Clarion?

I am very grateful for the opportunity to continue my education. My professors are helpful and encouraging. Within my major, I am grateful for the field experiences I have had. My professors help students connect with professionals in our field and gain the skills to be top candidates as we apply for jobs. I am also grateful for friends that I have made and for people I have met and worked with here.

What your gift means to me?

I am responsible for paying for my education, and I am thankful for the financial help I am receiving along the way. As soon as I was admitted, I was offered academic and housing scholarships from the Honors Program. College is very expensive. Without help, most students here would not be able to continue their education. Your gift is helping me and many others to get a degree and fulfill our dreams.

To make a gift today, click go to **clarion.edu/yourgiftmatters**



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11:15 am Lunch Buffet

12:30 pm Golf Scramble

6:00 pm Dinner Buffet

Come join us for any or all of the events: lunch, golf or dinner. Rooms will be available at a reduced rate at the Holiday Inn Express. Ask for Clarion's rate by February 8, 2022. 941-764-0056

For more information, contact:

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