

ALUMNI NOTES

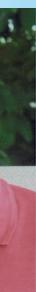
1950s

Dorothy (Hartwick) Young '51 and **Ralph Young '51** like to check in with the Office of Alumni Affairs every now and then. Dorothy writes, "How lucky we have been to share 71 happy years together, but we try not to stray too far from the lake or home."

Gladys (Seidel) Bingham '53, **Jean (Britt) Derby '53**, **Rita (Ostergren) Jackson '53**, along with **Evelyn (Hansen) Franson '53** and **Ray Franson '53** have been sending cards or notes to each other for 70 years, and in 2023 the Fransons celebrated 70 years of marriage, proof that friendships from Eastern really can last a lifetime!

Carol (Montgomery) Bush '57 writes, "When Eastern Magazine arrives, I immediately look and hope to find news from my 1957 classmates. I'm always happy when there's good news and sad when there are illnesses or deaths." Carol resides in Albuquerque, NM.

William Hargreaves '59 was named "Trustee Emeritus" at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, MA. Bill served for more than two decades in volunteer leadership roles at the museum, which houses the world's largest and most significant collection of Rockwell's work.



William Hargreaves '59

1960s

Jim Forrest '63 and **Betty (Rowe) Forrest '66** wrote, "Jim spent 35 years as a teacher and 42 years as Lebanon town treasurer. He was also an EMT, and he built our house in 1968. Betty also taught in eastern Connecticut before serving as a principal in both Killingly and Windham."

RETIRED? HARDLY. BARBARA (FITTS) CAIRNS '59 BROADENS HER WORLD

By Lucinda Weiss

Barbara (Fitts) Cairns '59 retired in 1999 after nearly 40 years of teaching around the world and serving as an elementary school principal in the Panama Canal Zone. But retired doesn't seem like the right word to describe her life.

This year she has published her 12th book, "Jacob Joins the Cow Cavalry," a young adult historical novel about the Civil War; tutored at a preschool; volunteered as a docent at Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park near her home in Florida; and planned a trip to South Africa. For her 86th birthday in February 2023, she went skydiving. "Thirteen of my friends went to watch, but nobody else wanted to go up," she said.

Her activities as a state park docent are equally adventurous. At 7 a.m. on her volunteer days, she is the human side of sensory enrichment for the park's wildlife. "I play soccer with a bobcat," she said.

Growing up in Hampton, CT, she wanted to be a veterinarian. A pastor at the church where she taught Sunday School convinced her that she had talent as a teacher, and she enrolled at Willimantic State Teacher's College, as Eastern was then known. "It was the best decision I ever made," she said.

After graduating in 1959 she attended Lexington School for the Deaf during the day and in the evenings earned a master's degree in special education for the deaf and hard-of-hearing at Columbia University. She taught for seven years in Seattle, then joined the Defense Department schools, teaching in Labrador, Canada (where she learned to fly solo in a Cessna), Bamberg, Germany, (where she met her English husband) and Panama.

After retiring in 1999, she traveled widely, including a trip to Kenya and Tanzania, fulfilling a childhood dream to go to Africa. Since her husband's death three years ago, she has traveled with the Lady Journey Seekers and the Road Scholars. She also belongs to a couple of writers' groups.

Her lifestyle advice? "You live a lot, you love a lot and you laugh a lot," she said. "There's too much negativity in the world."



Sherry (King) Medeiros '63 enjoyed making calls to her classmates for their 60th reunion. "It was so nice catching up with everyone that I'm hoping to do it again for our 65th!" Sherry still resides in Rochester, MA, after having lived in West Wareham and New Bedford, where she taught her entire career. She taught first through fourth grades and finished her career as a literacy coach. In retirement, Sherry enjoys exercise classes, reading and going out with friends. She has three grandsons, all in college.

Lita (Pellettieri) Murphy '63 taught math to high school students for 17 years in Connecticut and Massachusetts. After teaching, she got her chemical engineering degree at UMass-Amherst in 1983. She worked at Fort Monmouth in New Jersey, was chief manager for the U.S. Army Satellite Communications Control and retired after 22 years. She purchased a farm in Worden, IL, where she and her husband raised alpacas for 12 years, then moved to San Antonio, TX, to be near her daughter.

Each year the Vermont Council on Literacy awards the John T. Poeton Award to a top literacy classroom teacher in Vermont. Recipient **Jack LaPlante '66** is the author of two books, "Stories from the Fifties, East Hartford Style" and "The Odyssey of a Polish Patriot." He presented a copy of the latter to Eastern's J. Eugene Smith Library for the library's Alumni Authors Collection.

1970s

Debra Pallatto '74 writes, "I retired as a professor of education and global studies in Worcester in May 2019. Since then, I continue to volunteer at Brit's Home (an orphanage in Haiti), and started Brit's Academy, a school for 66 children/teens. After retirement, I served as interim minister in three local churches in the area and currently serve as settled pastor at the Second Congregational Church of Coventry (CT). I also love traveling to Italy every year where I have dual citizenship."

Barbara (Belport) '74 and **Arnold Davis '73** met at Eastern in 1971 and married in 1973. "We just celebrated our 50th anniversary by taking our family — our two daughters, their husbands and our two grandchildren — to Disney World for two weeks. What a great trip! We are semi-retired, doing lots of volunteer work and much, much more!"

Hilario Huertas '73 retired from Eversource after 39 years of service.

Shea Jezek '73 writes, "Retirement has opened many rewarding and exciting avenues. After suffering an injury while training for a half-marathon, I decided to investigate the challenges of running triathlons. That was more than a decade and 15 triathlons ago. This past summer I ran two triathlons including the 2023 Block Island Triathlon, where I placed first in my age group for the seventh time! My standard poodle, Zena, and I are a Pet Partner animal therapy team. Every week we visit adult day care facilities and health/rehabilitation centers in hopes of bringing cheer to the residents. Best of all, my grandson, Ryan, is a freshman on Eastern's swim team!"

Scott Rhoades '73 still paints New England scenes and images and any other subject matter that interests him. He has won numerous awards, and his paintings have appeared in national and international publications. Visit www.scotterhoadesart.com.

Laraine (Segar) Rodriguez '73, M'81 received her M.S. in reading from Eastern while teaching at Chaplin Elementary School. Over her 30-year career, she taught grades one through four at various times, sometimes in combination. "It took me 10 years to graduate, so I have waited a long time to get my Golden Diploma!" Laraine lives in Hampton, CT.

Joanne (St. Martin) Shea '73 writes, "I've been retired for 13 years from Canterbury Public Schools after having taught first and second grades for 35 years. I have been enjoying vacations out West as well as traveling to Hawaii, Alaska, Ireland, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic."



Beth (Harper) Larkins-Strathy '74

Beth (Harper) Larkins-Strathy '74 writes, "I retired this past summer after working in the field of education for 49 years!" Beth taught public school for 33 years, was a public-school administrator for three years, and associate dean and professor at Quinnipiac University School of Education for 13 years. She still teaches part time.



Pamela J. Bernardo '79

"Leadership, Literacy and Logic" is the title of an article by **Pamela J. Bernardo '79**, published in the fall 2023 issue of The Pennsylvania Administrator, the official journal of the Pennsylvania Principals Association. She has been an educator for more than 40 years, including service as a middle school principal and adjunct college professor. She now resides in West Wardsboro, VT, and is the Multi-Tiered System of Support and Educational Support team coordinator at Windham Southwest Supervisory Union 49 in Wilmington, VT.

1980s

Dan Kara '81, technology business analyst and integrated media veteran, is vice president of research and analyst services at WTWH Media. In this role, Dan provides the WTWH Robotics Group with research and analysis on how robotics, automation and intelligent systems can be used to improve business performance and address societal challenges.

Tom Roath '81 resides in southern New Jersey just outside of Philadelphia with his wife **Francine (Daros) Roath '82**. They have two daughters, Hilary and Brianna. After nearly 30 years of working for Ryder Systems, Tom now handles sales for the Miller Transportation Group, a family-owned company providing auto/truck sales, leasing and fleet services in the Philadelphia/southern New Jersey market.

Gemetta Neal-Goulet '82 received the Collaboration Award for her work with students and the local community. Gemetta is a physical education teacher at the Capital Region Education Council, Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts.

Terri (Knobloch) Wilson '82 is president of the Avon Historical Society and is leading the renovation of a one-room school that dates back to 1823. The schoolhouse will feature two permanent exhibits when it reopens in 2024.

Sharon Teel '83 has started a new position as director of safety and security at Mystic Aquarium.

Daniel Johnson '84 is the new president/senior consultant at Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Homeland Security and Cyber Security LLC. Dan has a master's degree in public administration from the University of Oklahoma and a master's degree in cybersecurity from Webster University.

Daniel Bueno '86 is an applicant services program specialist with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, an agency of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. He assists applicants with accessing FEMA assistance as they recover from natural disasters.

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1990s

Ken Wolslegel '87 presented his new film "EARTH2023" at Eastern this past fall. The film answers questions about the future of Earth and its inhabitants by examining science related to climate change and biodiversity. Ken graduated from Eastern with a degree in environmental earth science and now works as a freelance speaker and presenter on environmental advocacy.



Adam Baldinger '88

Adam Baldinger '88 has held positions at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology since 1997, first serving as the curatorial associate (collection manager) in the Department of Malacology (mollusks). At the present time he is the curatorial associate in the Department of Invertebrate Zoology. He is responsible for specimen acquisitions and has coordinated many collections improvement projects along with the digitization of collections data, in addition to supervising the day-to-day activities within the department.

Lisa Jordan '88 has started a new position as associate instructor/reading interventionist at Montessori Magnet School in Hartford.

Sister Mary Rose Reddy M'89 has started a new position as director of Catholic identity and mission in the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Manchester, NH.

The Society of Financial Service Professionals elected **Jacqueline Baldwin '90** to its national board of directors. Jacqueline has more than 36 years of experience in the financial services arena, has served FSP's Connecticut Chapter in multiple capacities, and currently serves as chapter president. Jacqueline is a financial advisor with B & L Financial Architect in South Windsor. She also works with entrepreneurs and small-business owners to design and implement retirement plans, succession plans and key employee financial plans.



John Toolan '90

John Toolan '90 has been named vice president of executive search for Cooper Coleman, a national non-profit executive search firm. In his new role, John will use his years of expertise in advancement and new business development.

Mary Dolan Collette '91 was named interim assistant principal at Riverside School in the Greenwich Public School System. Mary has been an educator since 1993, first as a second- and third-grade teacher, and then as a language arts specialist. Her most recent positions were elementary program facilitator and summer school principal, where she supervised staff while focusing on early literacy and summer boost programs.

Vanessa Collins '91 moved to California the summer after she graduated from Eastern. In 2022 she became an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God. "I am one of the pastors at Glad Tidings Church in San Francisco, where I've been on staff for 11 years."



Vanessa Collins '91

Jill (Roby) Eisman '92 has started a new position as document control specialist at Infleqtion, a global company that delivers high-value quantum information. For more than 25 years she was the race director at Racing Underground, LLC.

Rohan Masakorala '92 is a maritime shipping expert and CEO of the Shippers' Academy in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Mohegan Sun named **Guy Greene '93** the vice president of online marketing for its iGaming division, Mohegan Digital. Guy will drive the overall marketing strategies that support the expanding footprint of Mohegan Digital's online gaming products, which include MoheganSunCasino.com in Connecticut and PlayFallsViewCasino.com in Ontario, Canada.

Anthony Menard '93 has started a new position as director of human resources at Norwich Free Academy. He was a principal in the East Hartford Public Schools system for more than 11 years.

Brian Birrell '95 is a new admissions representative at Lincoln Tech in East Windsor.

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Deborah Chipperfield '96 has started a new position as senior vice president of human resources, supply chain and operations at Flowers Foods & Subsidiaries. U.S. Flowers Foods is the second-largest producer and marketer of packaged bakery foods in the United States.

Rebel Interactive Group has named **Bryan Czajkowski '96** as its new chief operating officer. This appointment sees Bryan returning to Rebel, where he was the company's first hire as the vice president of technical strategy and later as chief technology officer. Rebel Interactive Group is a digital marketing agency based in Cheshire, CT.

Shanda Hinton '96 is a new Strategic Advisory Board member at the Simmons University Institute for Inclusive Leadership, a global authority on leadership, gender equity and inclusion. Shanda is chief diversity officer of the aerospace company RTX.

Paula Duckworth '99 has started a new position as client service navigator at Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc.

Tara Girshick '99 is the new director of digital operations technology at Sanofi, a French multinational pharmaceutical and healthcare company headquartered in Paris. She spent the previous 16 years with Kross Engineering.

Daryl Gross '99 has started a new position as account manager at Accounting Resources Inc. in Glastonbury, CT.

Nancy Marin '99 is a legal assistant at the law firm of Rosina Hunt in East Providence, RI.

Temeka White '99 is director of strategic sourcing and logistics at Motivair Corporation, which designs, engineers and services liquid cooling and data center cooling technology.

2000s

Kevin Booker Jr. '00, '08, '10 is an educator, motivational speaker and social justice advocate. He was the featured speaker at a campus event hosted by the Intercultural Center in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Chad West '00 has a new position as subcontract manager, staff, at Lockheed Martin, where he supports Integrated Warfare Systems & Sensors (IWSS) in Mission Systems & Weapons.

Laura (Flotte) Litchfield '01 has started a new position as senior client advisor at The Hartford.

Bonnie Bryden '03 is at WPRI-12 in Providence, RI, where she just celebrated her 17th year. She is the production coordinator for the Rhode Show, the station's local lifestyle program, as well as the senior studio technician for all news programs.

Andrew Capasso '03 is the new co-anchor on the FOX SA morning news on KABB in San Antonio, TX. He was previously the anchor for the top-rated morning newscast at KOLD in Tucson for eight years and has worked as an anchor/reporter for stations in Jacksonville, FL; Baton Rouge, LA; Pennsylvania and Montana.

Anthony LaPia '03 has a new position as division vice president at Dayforce. Headquartered in Toronto, Dayforce HCM is a SaaS Solution for payroll, benefits, workforce management, human resources, talent management, document management and analytics.

Ryan Parker '03 was both an organizer and a contributor to "Coming Out of COVID: A Celebration of Poetry, Prose and Community." The anthology, consisting of poems and essays from writers across Connecticut, was published in early 2023 and grew out of live poetry events that sought community responses to the pandemic.

Matthew Przybyl '03 has started a new position as director of information technology at Citrin Cooperman, one of the nation's largest professional services firms. Matt was a systems analyst with Withers Bergman for more than 14 years.

John Regan '03 has started a new position as partner account manager at Funnel, a leading marketing data hub.

Kate Scheuritzel '03 is serving as secretary of the board of America's Service Commissions, which is jointly responsible for administering more than 80% of AmeriCorps state/national grants and supports more than 40,000 AmeriCorps members. She is director of programs at Serve Connecticut.

Rebecca Stearns '04 is a policy associate at the University of Southern Maine. For 10 years she was an emergency medical services instructor at the New Britain EMS Academy.

Milton Jackson '05 is the new vice president and head of customer growth at The Hartford.

Mark A. Light Jr. '05 was promoted to senior vice president and chief banking officer at Jewett City Savings Bank.

Paul Luis '05 has a new position as senior account executive at Aon, a global professional services firm that provides a range of risk, reinsurance, retirement and health solutions. Prior to that, he was a senior M&A broker at Aon.

After a 10-year career in marketing at Hartford HealthCare, **Allison Mahon '05** is a brand manager at PowerPhone.

Traci Resler '05 has started a new position as community impact associate at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.



Milton Jackson '05

DERRICK GIBBS '08 SETS ROOTS IN BUDDING CANNABIS INDUSTRY By Michael Rouleau '11



After founding the Middletown-based home healthcare agency Change Inc., entrepreneur **Derrick Gibbs '08** is setting roots in Connecticut's newest industry: recreational cannabis.

One year since the state's January 2023 legalization of recreational cannabis, Gibbs and co-founder Carl Tirella Jr. have opened a chain of adult-use retail stores under the name Budr Cannabis, focusing on destigmatizing cannabis use and providing education to customers.

Budr currently operates two retail-only stores in Danbury and West Hartford, with a third on its way in Tolland and three more in the pipeline for Bridgeport, Stamford and Stratford.

The two business partners exercise caution when approaching municipalities with their business plan. "There's a lot of fear and pushback over who the customer base might be," said Gibbs, "... over the (supposed) characters who would come to the store."

Nonetheless, Gibbs has found their customer base to be the most diverse clientele he's worked with, catering to a wide range of ages and ethnic backgrounds.

Addressing concerns from the community, Gibbs highlights the professional and respectable appearance of Budr's stores, designed to counter skepticism and convey a serious business image, steering away from stereotypical pot leaves and neon signs.

As a social-equity venture — one of the state's classifications for cannabis businesses — Budr has a company-wide goal to employ 50% people of color. Additionally, each store under the Budr umbrella supports different social causes, such as homelessness in greater Tolland and sponsoring summer camps in West Hartford.

Educating customers is a core focus for Gibbs and Tirella. Although their stores are for recreational cannabis, their goal is to share medical information with the broader market, providing valuable insights into the effects of different cannabinoids and terpene

profiles. The duo noted that customers come into their stores seeking relief for a range of issues, including anxiety, sleep problems, depression and nausea.

While they cannot make medical or health claims, Budr staff members, known as "bud-tenders," do make recommendations. "Our job is to educate and recommend products based on customers' desired effects," said Tirella.

However, the cannabis industry comes with its fair share of challenges. Despite legalization at the state level, cannabis remains a Schedule 1 controlled substance federally, posing hurdles in banking, lending and insurance. As the state rolls out its recreational market, thousands of business applicants are competing for a limited number of licenses. Zoning issues, moratoriums in towns and restrictions on marketing further complicate the business landscape.

"I know of no other business with so many barriers to entry," said Gibbs, adding that state and municipal taxes total up to 30%, and substantial upfront costs for security and infrastructure create additional hurdles.

Gibbs' entrepreneurial spirit was fostered during his time at Eastern as a business administration major and as the founder of Change Inc. He sees coping as the common thread between his two ventures, whether he is helping home health clients develop strategies or Budr customers find stress relief through cannabis.

Mary Ellen Smith '05 is the new director of application services at the University of Hartford. This will be her second stint at the university, having worked there as lead system analyst until 2014.

An artistic transom window created by stained glass artist **Theresa Cashman '06** appeared on the HGTV show "Rico to the Rescue." Theresa is the owner of TLC Stained Glass in Santa Fe, NM, where she teaches classes, completes commission work, and repairs and restores old or broken stained glass panels.

Melinda (Matthews) Delaney '06 is senior director, program management at PRIA Healthcare in Torrington, CT.

Badou Franck '06 MBA, PMP, PBA is IT portfolio manager at Rialto Capital in Miami, FL. He recently obtained an edX verified certificate for Portfolio Management, Governance and the PMO.

Catherine Seaver '06 is faculty and program coordinator of computer information systems at Connecticut State Community College-Tunxis in Farmington.

Melissa (Silvernail) Batulevitz '06 was named Mansfield's 2024 Teacher of the Year. She was cited for being a passionate, dedicated teacher and for creating the student-led writing center at Mansfield Middle School, as well as the Writing Center Club and Student Newspaper Club.

Jessica Bate '07 is rejoining the Housatonic Valley Regional High School faculty as the library media specialist. She is finishing her Master of Library and Information Science degree at Southern Connecticut State University. Jessie previously worked as a health and physical education teacher and, most recently, as the high school's library assistant for the past two years.

Jodee (Garber) Caruso '07 is head of production at Atomic Kid Studios, LLC, an award-winning animation and live-action production studio, specializing in 2D/3D animation, explainer videos, event keynotes and augmented reality.

Christopher Dutton '07 LCSW, was recently promoted to the director of clinical operations for Outpatient Psychiatric Clinics at the West Hartford-based Bridge Family Center. In this role, he is responsible for the overall operations of the clinics including staffing, compliance, licensing and regulation, revenue management and improved efficiencies. Chris earned a Master of Social Work in Administration degree from the University of Connecticut.

Ashley Scherben '07 is a fourth-grade teacher at Morris Elementary School in Lenox, MA, where she was recently recognized as Teacher of the Month. She has spearheaded multiple successful initiatives at the school, including a donation drive benefiting victims of domestic violence through the Elizabeth Freeman



Jodee (Garber) Caruso '07



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Center. She also initiated the national Girls on the Run program, which seeks to inspire and help girls build confidence and other skills through interactive lessons and physical activities.

Daniel Benoit '08 is regional territory manager at Thomsen Foodservice in Rhode Island, after spending nearly eight years with US Foods as a district sales manager.

David Steven Brown '08 is the new principal at Somers High School. Previously he had been principal at EASTCONN. He earned his M.S. from the University of New Haven in 2014.

Jeffrey Drew '08 has started a new position as a special education teacher at Consolidated School District of New Britain.

Amanda Katz M'08 has started a new position as an assistant professor at Utah State University. In addition to holding an M.S. in Secondary Education/English and Language Arts from Eastern, Amanda earned an M.A. in history from Carnegie Mellon University and an M.A. in humanities and social thought from New York University.

Mike Merritt '08 has started a new position as senior staff data engineer at The Hartford. He has been with The Hartford for seven years.

Kevin Narus '08 has a new position as senior SDO manager at Staples in Manchester, CT.

Marcus Pinchera '08 is the new senior sales manager at HireRising, Greater Phoenix Area. He had previously worked for 12 years at RandStad Technologies.

Michael M. Gale '09 has started a new position as assistant professor of counseling psychology at Springfield College.

2010s

Anslem Elumogo-Gardner '10 is head of strategy and operations at AdvanceEDU in Denver, CO.

Hillary (Malin) Gileau '10 is a senior clinical specialist at Indivior, a specialty pharmaceutical company.

Tim Murphy '10 is director of business development dining and events at Elior North America. He had previously worked as a regional sales director for the Compass Group.

Daniel Caless '11 has started a new position as a service specialist at Cummins Inc., where he has worked since 2022.

Elizabeth Hesterberg '11 is the new deputy director of corporate partnerships at World Food Program USA in Washington, D.C. She has worked there for six years.

Nicholas Kszepka '11 is the new general sales manager at Eastside Motoring in Waltham, MA.



Alicia (Dixon) McKenzie '11

Alicia (Dixon) McKenzie '11 is the new director of the African American Cultural Center at the University of Connecticut. Most recently, Alicia was director of institutional diversity, equity and inclusion at Bryant University.

Samantha Armitage '12 is the new community engagement manager at Girl Scouts of the Commonwealth of Virginia in Richmond.

Lauren Biatowas '12 is technical lead at Yale University in New Haven.

Wiley Dawson '12 has been accepted by the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education into its Ph.D. in learning, leadership and educational policy program. He will focus on higher education, racial justice and decolonization. He is currently the assistant director of the Center for Career Development at UConn's Hartford campus.



Wiley Dawson '12

Colin Dunn '12 has started a new position as patient navigation specialist at Yale New Haven Health where he has worked since October 2018.

Judith (Frankel) Halpern '12 is the new director of performance and quality improvement at the Bridge Family Center in West Hartford, a comprehensive, regional nonprofit agency that provides a broad range of services for children and families.

Cory Gabor '13 has started a new position as strategic marketing operations manager at Anaconda, Inc. in Austin, TX. Anaconda is the world's most popular Python/R platform for data science, machine learning and AI.

Burhan Kaya '13 has started a new position as agile team coach at Werfen in Bedford, MA. Werfen is a worldwide leader in specialized diagnostics in the areas of hemostasis, acute care diagnostics, transfusion, autoimmunity and transplant.

Pullman & Comley, LLC announced the promotion of **Michael Marafito '13** to member of the firm. Michael is an attorney with the property tax and valuation practice, where he negotiates with municipalities and revaluation firms and appears before local boards of assessment appeals to contest inequitable tax assessments. For the past three years, Michael has been named to the Connecticut Super Lawyers "Rising Stars" list. In addition to his B.S. in accounting from Eastern, Michael received his J.D. from Quinnipiac University School of Law.

Beth (Lewis) Mendoza '13 welcomed baby Mariana in March 2023. Beth noted that her favorite memory of Eastern is playing laser tag in the quad.

Brittney Senerth '13 has started a new position as TGH program director at Noank Community Support Services, where she has worked for more than five years.

Thomas Vickers '13 is the new general manager at Action Athletics in Norwood, MA.

Jack Duggan '14 is the new manager at Bonny's Equipment Rentals in Abington, MA. Prior to that he was a construction specialist at Heritage Improvements, Inc.

Marc Tate '14 has started a new position as IT supervisor-customer experience service management with the State of Connecticut. He had previously worked for more than six years for the Town of Westerly, RI.

Matthew Hicks '15 has been named assistant dean for student engagement and leadership at Providence College. "I'll provide direction for orientation, student activities and leadership programming and contribute to the introduction of 'The PC Path' student learning and development program."

Kaylee Latham '15 used her professional expertise as an outpatient counselor at the Institute of Living to prevent what may have been a suicide attempt. While walking her dog at the Cheney Rail Trail in Manchester, Kaylee encountered a young woman on a bridge, looking like she was ready to jump. Kaylee was able to engage the teenager and keep her calm until police arrived. Kaylee was with Hartford HealthCare when she volunteered as a mental health worker in 2016 while she pursued her B.A. in sociology at Eastern. She is now a licensed professional counselor associate.

Former television news anchor **Lauren (Zenzie) Rovella '15** is now a multimedia content manager with Avelo Airlines, where she is producing short- and long-form content for Avelo's internal communications and social media. Lauren worked as a reporter and fill-in anchor for Hartford's FOX 61 morning newscasts and was promoted to traffic anchor last year. Prior to working at FOX 61, she worked at NBC affiliates in North Dakota and Massachusetts.

Marc Volza '15 is the new network director at WeCall.

Benjamin D. Williams '15 has been named to the board of the Angel Investment Forum. Founded in 2004, AIF members invest their time, talent and money in supporting companies with solid business models and growth potential. Benjamin is also CEO of ARSOME Technology, which has developed hundreds of personalized AR/VR simulations.

Sarah Denihan '16 has started a new position as managing division director at Creative Financial Staffing (CFS), West Hartford.

After serving as a residence director for two years, **Joselyn N. Fernandez-Neubert '16** has been named interim assistant director of housing operations at Salem State University.

Clint Gosselin '16 has a new position as housing services outreach coordinator at the University of Connecticut.

Following a six-year stint in the U.S. Navy, **William Jack '16** started a new position as operations supervisor at Pike Engineering in Fort Mill, SC.

Samantha Skeels '16 is the new marketing and communications associate at the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History in Hartford.

CINDY ARCHIBALD '17 GIVES NEW MISSION TO VETERANS

By Noel Teter '24 • Photo by Garrett Twele

After completing military service, many veterans return home with a desire to continue serving. An organization called Veterans Base Camp, led by Eastern alumna **Cindy Archibald '17**, has been established to help veterans fulfill this sense of mission post-military.

"It doesn't end when they leave," said Archibald of veterans' engrained desire to serve. As executive director, she describes Veterans Base Camp as "a home between here and there," where veterans receive housing and support as they work on the issues that brought them to the camp in their first place.

Located in rural eastern Connecticut, the nonprofit organization operates a food pantry and vegetable garden to support food-insecure community members. It was recently awarded \$25,000 from the Lipinski Rural Initiatives Award by Farm Credit Northeast to construct a greenhouse to grow its gardening program.

This development will provide more opportunities for veterans and college students alike, as Veterans Base Camp often enlists the help of Eastern interns. Archibald studied social work at Eastern, where she learned an "ecological approach" to the field and the importance of considering the "impact of a person's whole environment."

Archibald synthesizes this philosophy into a "strength-based approach" to helping veterans flourish in the aftermath of service. In this approach, she helps veterans get "hooked on pursuing their passions" rather than fixating on their deficits, she said.

One veteran has become a photographer in his time at the camp, while another recently got his coaching certificate for high school soccer. Yet another has taken an interest in business and plans to buy a comic book bookstore.

Archibald has become familiar with the struggles facing veterans. "War and combat change their



worldview," she said. "The drama of everyday life as a civilian confuses and annoys them when they have lived the reality that a 'good day' is when no one dies."

Veterans Base Camp also holds clothing and toy drives for families of veterans, as well as the "Backpacks for Life" initiative, which provides military-grade backpacks to homeless veterans. This April, the camp hosted David's Race, a fundraiser in memory of David Guy, a former Marine and resident of Veterans Base Camp. Following his military service, Guy's wife and two young daughters were killed by a drunk driver.

"When I met David in March of 2022, he was 82 years old and living in a motel because he was homeless," said Archibald. In a TV interview concerning his move to Veterans Base Camp, Guy said, "This is home, and every veteran should have one."

Lauren Teta '16 is a new senior account executive at On Ideas, a full-service advertising agency in Jacksonville, FL.

Caitlyn Braasch '17 is a universal banker at Dime Bank in Taftville, CT.

Stephanie Carroll '17 has been promoted to assistant comptroller at the Connecticut Bankers Association. In her new role, Stephanie will assist in the active preparation of financial and budget reporting, supporting the CBA's annual financial audit process. She will also assist in the review and implementation of financial controls and systems within the CBA. She will continue to administer the accounts payable and receivable, payroll and general ledger account reconciliation processes. Stephanie joined the CBA in 2021.



Brittany Noonan '17

Brittany Noonan '17 is a new senior product manager at Amwell in Boston. She graduated magna cum laude from Eastern's business information systems program and received her M.S. from the University of Connecticut in 2020 in business analytics and project management.

Avgoustis Tiniakos '17 has started a new position as claims supervisor at Progressive Insurance in Newington, CT.

Michael Crowley '18 is the new senior regional manager at Trinity Solar in New Jersey.

Jenfrey Florentino '18 is assistant director of student activities at Eastern. "I am a proud Eastern alumnus who has made my way back to Eastern as professional staff. I am an entrepreneur, with several businesses and ventures. I consider myself a curator and connector of dots!"

Cooper Goslin '18 has been promoted to senior associate, sponsor and specialty finance at Webster Bank. He joined Webster in 2022. Cooper and **Lauren Biancardi '18** were married in October 2023.

James Heath-Ringrose '18 has started a new position as senior business systems specialist at Travelers in Franklin, TN.

Ryan Kelly '18 was named Teacher-of-the-Year in East Haddam. In the four years Ryan has been in East Haddam, he has advocated for the value of physical education and physical activity, expanding classes to include pre-K and adapted PE. The school's Kid's Heart Challenge, participation and fundraising has nearly tripled since Ryan took over running the event.



Ryan Kelly '18

Cara Lang '18 has started a new position as Terminal 5 production runner at AEG in Los Angeles. AEG is a leading sports and live entertainment company.

Connor McCarthy '18 has a new position as account executive-college/high school at On Deck Sports in Boston.

Jasmine Torres '18 has been promoted from corporate communications coordinator to corporate communications specialist at Edgewell Personal Care in Shelton, CT.

Matthew Voelker '18 has been promoted to assistant vice president/junior commercial loan officer at Jewett City Savings Bank. He most recently held the position of senior commercial credit analyst. He is also a member of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut.

Abigail Caselli '17 has been named an assistant professor of psychology at Western New England University. Caselli previously served as an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and as an associate faculty member at Post University. She received her Ph.D. in social psychology from Syracuse University.

The Mahaska County Historical Society/Nelson Pioneer Farm and Museum in Iowa has appointed **McKenzie "Mac" Hardeman Korte '17** as museum director. Mac has held several positions in museum education and management at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and the Mystic Seaport Museum. His experience and background in new methods and technologies in the museum field will allow him to focus on sustainable, community-focused initiatives intended to cultivate new generations of museum and community members.

Weronika Lewkowicz '17 has started a new position as anatomy and physiology program coordinator and lecturer at the University of New Haven.

Brandon Martins '17 is a new admissions counselor at Eastern.

Gabriela Meza '17 has started a new position as manager, finance for Salon-Centric at L'Oréal, New York. She earned her M.B.A. from the Stern School of Business at New York University in 2023.

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EVAN WOOD '24 BREAKS INTO NEW YORK CITY JAZZ SCENE

By Noel Teter '24

Throughout his seven semesters at Eastern, jazz drummer **Evan Wood '24** performed regularly in Connecticut and Massachusetts. In his final semester in fall 2023, however, he started breaking into the New York City music scene, a world-renowned destination for jazz musicians.

Starting with a show at Fiction, a jazz lounge in Brooklyn, Wood has continued to perform at several clubs and lounges throughout the city, expanding his network and familiarity with the scene. Wood performs with variations of his namesake band, the Evan Wood Group, as well as Static, a rhythmic jazz group he's been part of for years. He also has a private music instruction business.

The Evan Wood Group plays modernized jazz standards with a flexible lineup typically consisting of guitar, upright bass, drums and trumpet. Modern jazz standards, according to Wood, leave "more room to be expressive" than their predecessors, especially for drummers: "Our role is more involved."

Wood explained some of the challenges of being a modern musician in the age of social media. "Having a social media presence is like a resume to the world," he said. "If I'm not posting actively, then it looks

like I'm not playing much, and then it looks like, 'oh, maybe this guy's not serious about what he's doing.'"

Wood credits Eastern with helping him develop a strong network, which he says is critical for the music industry. "I've met people who are important to my developing career," he said of his mentor and music lecturer Matt Bronson. In addition to helping him get gigs, Bronson introduced Wood to other professionals in the industry, such as recording drummer and bandleader Jonathan Barber, who is now Wood's drum instructor.

Much like his work, Wood views his education as something to be worked for rather than handed to him. "What you put in is what you get out," he said. To Wood, music students should use their education to answer the questions, "How are you going to work as a musician, and what are the skills that are necessary to make that happen?"

To Wood, performing in New York is about creating future opportunities. "I think it's important for me to perform in a setting where the standard is a little bit higher," he said. "As much as I feel at home in Connecticut, I'd like to eventually feel at home in New York City, too."

Nicole Bosse '19 is a new clinical supervisor at Clarity ABA in South Hadley, MA. Clarity ABA specializes in serving children with learning and behavior support needs, teaching them life skills including communication, self-advocacy, executive functioning, safety and self-regulation. Nicole received her master's degree in applied behavior analysis from Westfield State University in 2021.

Brookelyn Cornelio '19 has started a new position as onboarding talent acquisition supervisor at Numotion in Rocky Hill. She has been employed by the company for more than four years.

Wood River Health Services in Hopkinton, RI, announced that **Calli Duthrie '19** has joined its team as an integrated behavioral health clinician. Calli has worked in outpatient settings and mobile crisis, treating at-risk youths in the community. At Wood River she will work with children, adolescents and adults. She earned her B.S.W. from Eastern and her M.S.W. from Fordham University.

Julie Ercolani '19 is a school counselor at Plainville High School in Plainville, CT.

Kyle Heibeck '19 has started a new position as senior accountant at Mapletree in New York City after working two years for LAZ parking.



Nick Kukla '19

Nick Kukla '19 is a science teacher at Barrows STEM Academy in Windham. He was named a "sustainability advocate" by the Global Schools Program sponsored by the United Nations. He is one of 3,400 teachers from 100 countries to apply for the program's advocacy training and resources.

Gabriela Mikunda '19 has a new position as senior accountant at MMNT Certified Public Accountants in Manchester, CT.

Ethan Schaefer '19 is a new marketing coordinator at MDVIP, a primary care physician group in Boca Raton, FL.

Marissa Simonetti '19 is the new sales and service manager at Alo Yoga, Greater Boston.

2020s

Natnael Belay '20 is the lead technical program manager of Google's Android Jetpack program. He is responsible for spearheading the critical end-to-end pipeline of more than 200 Android Jetpack libraries to both internal teams and external developers, to build mobile applications that reach billions of end users. "My goal is to continue to be a thought leader in my community, sharing and teaching others about certain best practices. In addition, I hope that my story inspires Black youth to enter the tech industry."



Natnael Belay '20

Anthony Choronzky '20 is starting a new position as director of lacrosse development at Nantucket Youth Lacrosse. He had previously been a physical education teacher at Nantucket High School.

Nicholas Cortes '20 has started a new position as data entry assistant at Spark Therapeutics, Inc.

Kelsey Cunningham '20 is working as a human resources specialist at ABLE Home Healthcare where she processes payroll and assists employees.

Emily Flood '20 has started a new position as a paraprofessional at Westport Public Schools in Westport, CT.

Natalia Lozano Ramirez '20 has started a new position as a coding apprentice at Road to Hire in Fort Mill, SC.

Alandra Maine '20 serves on the board of the Long Hill Estate Authority at Wadsworth Mansion in Middletown, CT.

Ryan Marron '20 has started a new position as business analyst at Charter Communications in Stamford. He earned his M.B.A. from Sacred Heart University in May 2023.

After seven years with the Connecticut Army National Guard as an automated logistical specialist, **Katrina Piotrowski '20** started a new position as a quality assurance specialist at the Defense Contract Management Agency in Andover, MA.

Lindsay Allard '21 has started a new position as a golf shop attendant at the Springfield Country Club.

Jafet Aparicio '21 is a data engineer-business insights and analytics LDP senior consultant at Travelers.

Casey Barrett '21 is a new account specialist in global supply chain at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford.

Elizabeth Colon '21 is a career consultant for Indigenous Career Futures at Arizona State University's Career Services in Tempe, AZ.

John Ferrara '21 is a sales representative at Axon in Scottsdale, AZ. Axon develops technology and weapons products for military, law enforcement and civilians.

Cigna has hired **Noah Guarino '21** as a risk and underwriting senior analyst II.

Ayinde Johnson '21 is an SMB account executive at Stamplicy, an accounts payable automation platform simplifying invoices, approvals and payments.

Erin Lenihan '21 is a school counseling intern at West Haven High School.

Jim Minor '21 has started a new teaching position at Torrington Middle School.

Katie Pescartello '21 is the new office manager at TM Burrows Associates, LLC. In her new role, Katie will work closely with clients, including Secor Auto Group, as the benefit liaison to various insurance companies.

Sydney Collentine '22 was named varsity field hockey coach at New Fairfield High School. She was a four-year starter on the Eastern field hockey team and is currently a seventh-grade science teacher at John Read Middle School in Redding, CT.

Alexander Deangelis '22 has started a new position at Fidelity Investments in Smithfield, RI.



Grace Carlos '23

as a way to amplify Generation Z voices ahead of the legislative session.

Grace Carlos '23 is president of the Connecticut Chapter of the Young Democrats. The organization held a public hearing on Jan. 29 in Hartford to build its issue priority list

Diana Damian '23 has started a new position as a milieu counselor at Yale New Haven Hospital.

Zachary Doty '23 is a robotic camera operator at CBS Sports in Stamford, CT.

Nhi Lam '23 has started a new position as an environmental science specialist at Triumvirate Environmental in Somerville, MA.

Dylan Tillman '23 conducted research on the endangered northern blazing star wildflower that will be published in the Native Plants Journal.

Ingrid Velazquez '23 has started a new position as a billing design analyst at Spectrum in Charlotte, NC.

Emily Watling '23 has started a new position as eelgrass collaborative research assistant at the Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve in Groton.

Jonathan Wilson '23 has been named assistant director of athletic communications at Emmanuel College in Boston. In this role, Jonathan will assist in the promotion and coverage for all athletic teams as well as manage social media accounts, game day operations and the development of internship opportunities.



Diana Damian '23



Dylan Tillman '23



Jafet Aparicio '21

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ALUMNI NOTE



In Memorium

Mary Lou Keables '55
Former Faculty - Mansfield Center, CT - Jan. 18, 2024

Anna (Stankewich) Alfiero '62
Waterford, CT - Aug. 19, 2023

John W. Freudenstein '62
Storrs Mansfield, CT - Aug. 23, 2023

Wilfred H. Gladue '63
Niantic, CT - Jan. 8, 2024

Cecelia (Coleda) Messor '63
Oakdale, CT - Sept. 7, 2023

Janet (Viets) Corl '64
Mechanicsburg, PA - Nov. 26, 2023

Richard J. Gwiazdowski '64
Brooklyn, CT - Dec. 29, 2023

Barbara (Ford) Jacobs '64
Norwich, CT - Jan. 21, 2024

Lucy (Shea) Sweeney '64
Manchester, CT - Jan. 6, 2024

Elaine (Avery) Effman '65
Granatham, NH - Jan. 11, 2024

Virginia (Mendenhall) Peterson '65
Hadlyme, CT - Jan. 8, 2024

Ann J. Morin '66, M'71
Canterbury, CT - Nov. 6, 2023

Jane M. Jackman M'74
Storrs Mansfield, CT - Jan. 7, 2024

Valerie (Alves) Alexander '75
Portland, CT - Jan. 25, 2024

Anthony J. Brandenburg '75
Encinitas, CA - Oct. 3, 2023

Robert S. Neborsky '75
Hampton, CT - Sept. 21, 2023

Ronald D. Pires '76
Norwich, CT - Nov. 3, 2023

Lisbeth Mary Sheehan '77
Norwich, CT - Jan. 30, 2024

April (Blevins) Carroza '82
Middlebury, CT - Sept. 2, 2023

Margaret (Leeney) Cotter '82
Frederick, MD - Jan. 31, 2024

Raymond E. Gliha '82
Manchester, CT - Aug. 14, 2023

Cynthia Jane (Ereshena) Hodis '82
Chaplin, CT - Oct. 1, 2023

Therese L. Zimmerman '84
Hooksett, NH - Jan. 16, 2024

Kathy Faber '85
Somers, CT - Nov. 25, 2023

Bruce R. Isner '85
Dallas, TX - Dec. 9, 2023

Lisa (Seman) Fitzpatrick '87
Mebane, NC - Dec. 28, 2023

Karen E. Leffingwell '87
Oakdale, CT - Oct. 29, 2023

Thomas E. Williamson '87
Waterford, CT - Aug. 31, 2023

John M. Lucas '88
Chaplin, CT - July 7, 2023

James M. Shifrin '88
Lebanon, CT - Sept. 30, 2023

Clarisse A. Pillion '90
Columbia, CT - Jan. 20, 2024

Robert R. Jackson '94
Hartford, CT - Jan. 24, 2024

Mary Jane Newman M'95
Coventry, CT - Dec. 10, 2023

Vincent Angelo Moore '96
Hamden, CT - Jan. 15, 2024

Gregory J. Thomson '00, M'02
Willington, CT - Jan. 3, 2024

Susan Leser '02
Marlborough, CT - Aug. 13, 2023

Timothy E. Hippe '07
The Villages, FL - Jan. 25, 2024

Taina Faith Foreman '09
Trumbull, CT - Oct. 16, 2023

Elaine Adelia Hickey Herman '10
Preston, CT - Jan. 28, 2024

Mitch Beauregard '11
Hampton, CT - Dec. 1, 2023

Laura Mary Zenk '22
Raleigh, NC - Sept. 5, 2023

Madeline Bernstein
Friend of the University - Niantic, CT - Oct. 2, 2023

Michael Conrad Desjarlais
Former Staff - Windham, CT - July 15, 2023

Katalin Rita Eibel-Spanyi
Former Faculty - Manchester, CT - Nov. 3, 2023

Wendi Jill Everton
Professor Emeritus - Storrs Mansfield, CT - Jan. 5, 2024

Claire M. Gregoire
Former Faculty - Dayville, CT - Nov. 16, 2023

George H. Kahkedjian
Former Staff - Waterbury, CT - Feb. 25, 2021

John J. Lombard
Professor Emeritus - Coventry, CT - Dec. 16, 2023

Jeanette E. Millette
Former Staff - Willimantic, CT - Oct. 17, 2023

Jean Stencil
Former Staff - Norwich, CT - April 4, 2023

Gary A. Sterner
Professor Emeritus - West Hartford, CT - Dec. 6, 2023

REMEMBERING PROFESSOR WENDI EVERTON



Wendi Everton, professor emeritus of psychology, passed away on Jan. 5, 2024. She had retired from Eastern in 2019 due to health issues.

Everton taught at Eastern for 18 years and was formerly chair of the Psychological Science Department. In 2009 she won a Connecticut State University Trustees award honoring her teaching innovation, instructional approaches and research supervision. She was part of an organizational research group in psychology along with Professor Peter Bachiochi, studying workplace attitudes and employee behavior.

Known for singing out loud and sharing funny stories, she was “bigger than life in so many ways,” recalled Bachiochi. “She was known to break into song with little or no prompting, just the right cue — in class, in the hall, in her office, anywhere on campus,” he said. “Those who knew her, whether as students, colleagues or mere acquaintances will never forget her generosity, thoughtfulness and her sense of humor.”

“Wendi was an amazing friend and colleague who was supportive, generous and larger than life,” said her colleague Melanie Keyes, professor of psychology. “Her fun and positive energy was infectious and the sounds of her laughter and singing in the psychology hallway are deeply missed.”

In 2016 Professor Everton established a scholarship fund in memory of her brother, Steven B. Everton. Donations may be made to the fund in care of the ECSU Foundation.