EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

125 years
1889-2014

A LIBERAL EDUCATION.
PRACTICALLY APPLIED.
EASTERN Magazine is published by the Division of Institutional Advancement for the benefit of alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends of Eastern Connecticut State University.

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125 Years of Leadership

Principal
ARTHUR B. MERRILL 1889–1893

Principal
GEORGE P. PHENIX 1893–1904

Principal
HENRY T. BURR 1904–1918

Principal/President
GEORGE H. SHAFER 1918–1947

President
J. EUGENE SMITH 1947–1966

President
SEARLE CHARLES 1966–1970

President

President
DAVID G. CARTER 1988–2006

President, ad interim
MICHAEL PERNAL 2006

President
ELSA M. NUNEZ 2006–PRESENT

125 Years Looking Back . . . Moving Forward

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cBC Climbing the Mountain

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Historical Willimantic photos courtesy of Ron Robillard and the Windham Textile and History Museum

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Reflections from the President

On Sept. 3, 1889, the Willimantic State Normal School opened its doors to 13 young women seeking to become elementary schoolteachers. As our students, faculty, staff, alumni and the local community celebrate the 125th year of our existence — now as Eastern Connecticut State University — I am reminded of what has not changed on our campus since 1889.

One quality that hasn’t changed is the close-knit relationships forged between our faculty and students; they take place on campus during a student’s time at Eastern and continue long after students have graduated to launch their careers. Another Eastern value that has stayed constant over our 125-year history is the University’s commitment to the Windham community. Just as the students of the Willimantic State Normal School did their student teaching in classes filled with Willimantic children, today’s Eastern students, faculty and staff remain committed to local residents. Through activities such as serving on local nonprofit boards, beautifying downtown during Town Pride Town Wide Day, and feeding the hungry during our annual Day of Giving each November, Eastern contributes more than 100,000 hours of time each year to the community.

At the same time, it is clear that our campus reflects the social, technological and economic changes that have occurred over the past 125 years—changing social norms, the Internet and online learning, and the creation of new academic disciplines in response to economic and social change are all examples of the growth we have experienced on this campus.

This issue of EASTERN Magazine celebrates our traditions and our progress by taking a look at Eastern’s past, present and future. To illustrate the past, you can read about the 125th anniversary celebration that has taken place on and off campus. The story on Eastern’s longstanding commitment to inclusion and access to education also looks back at our efforts to provide minorities, war veterans, economically disadvantaged students and other groups of people with the benefits of a college education.

The present? What better way to share Eastern’s current success than to showcase outstanding alumni who are making a difference in Connecticut and beyond. Other current accomplishments including our new class of Alumni Fellows, faculty awards and publications, and the achievements of undergraduate researchers at Eastern. News of athletic accomplishments on and off the field include the heartwarming story of soccer player Jon DeCasanova’s successful fight against cancer.

Eastern’s future is bright, and you can watch it grow in real time as the new Fine Arts Instructional Center continues to rise into the sky between High Street and the Student Center. Expect an invitation to the center’s grand opening in about 18 months! Finally, we continue to attract a record number of alumni donors, new donors and new major gifts. Such assistance is critical to our ability to offer a quality, affordable liberal arts education to our students. With this support, Connecticut’s public liberal arts university can continue to provide educational access and transformative opportunities to our students, preparing them to excel in their careers and in prestigious graduate schools.

I want to thank every member of the Eastern family who helps ensure that our future prospects are as promising as our past has been.

Elsa Núñez
President
Eastern Connecticut State University is celebrating its 125th Anniversary this year with a series of special events, displays, multi-media productions and other activities.

“It is a time to celebrate the traditions we cherish and the growth and progress we have made on our campus over the past 125 years,” said Eastern President Elsa Núñez in announcing plans for the anniversary.

“We have come a long way from our beginnings in September 1889 as the Willimantic State Normal School, when 13 young women enrolled to become primary grade schoolteachers. Today we are Connecticut’s public liberal arts university, providing more than 5,300 students each year with intellectual skills and applied learning opportunities that prepare them for professional careers. Even as we have grown, we have remained faithful to Eastern’s tradition of establishing personal, lifelong relationships between our students and the faculty.”

The highlight of the University’s celebration was a series of monthly events held this past spring, each focusing on a different aspect of Eastern’s history and campus life.

One hundred and fifty students, faculty and staff joined President Núñez in the Betty R. Tipton Room for “Education at Eastern: Past, Present and Future.” The event included two panel discussions—one featuring alumni and one presented by faculty — as well as a display of historical photographs — all of which highlighted how teacher education has been a central part of Eastern’s mission since its beginnings in 1889.

“The Roaring Twenties and Then Some!” was the focus of the second anniversary event, as more than 125 faculty, staff and students filled the Betty R. Tipton Room to celebrate the arts at Eastern. Over a traditional “luncheon tea,” the assembly was treated to music, art and theatrical performances from 1914-1939, including a slideshow of “The Art of Bygone Days” created by visual arts students Solinda Keth and Cassandra Marion, under the direction of Professors Anne Dawson and June Bisantz.

The program continued with music selections by students, including Scott Joplin’s “The Entertainer” performed on the piano by Sean Hanrahan; “Just My Bill” from the 1927 theatrical production of “Show Boat,” performed by Moriah Perrett; and “Mack the Knife” sung by Renae St. John. Kyle Girard and Alexis Kurtz sang George Gershwin’s “Who Cares?” and Melinda DeDominici performed “Someone to Watch Over Me,” also written...
by Gershwin. Lucy Shea, Michael Siddell, Derwin Hill and Jessica McDonald showcased the first scene from the play, “Prelude to a Kiss,” which was performed in the Harry Hope Theatre from Feb. 27 to March 5. In addition, Ta Anh, Moriah Perrett and Alexis Kurtz sang Paul Stookey’s “There Is Love” from the same play. The students were directed by lecturer Gloria Trombley.

The celebration “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” honored Eastern athletics. A slide show illustrating the history of athletics at Eastern (look at the uniform worn by the women’s basketball team in 1898!) was followed by a video highlighting the career of basketball coach Bob Miller, whose visionary work moved Title IX forward on our campus. A panel featuring Beth Regan ’79, Don Beerworth ’61 and current students Ashley Wolk (lacrosse) and André Reynolds (hurdles) discussed the growth of athletics on campus, and the event concluded with a “Go Warriors!” cheer led by the cheerleading squad.

The Business Administration Department teamed up with the Society for Human Resource Management, the Connecticut Business and Industry Association’s Education Foundation, and various student clubs to present student projects and a panel discussion on “The Workforce of the Future.”

The spring was highlighted by Science Day at Eastern. During a luncheon in the Betty R. Tipton Room, students, faculty and staff heard from emeriti faculty Max Ferguson, Phil Elliott, Ralph Yulo, Steve Kenton and Sherman Clebnik, and Physics Professor Tim Swanson (48 years at Eastern and counting!), who were featured in a short, informative video, “The Bards of Science,” about the past 50 years of science at Eastern.

Using the latest “clicker response” technology, the audience also participated in “Are You Smarter than a College Freshman?”, which tested people’s knowledge of science facts. Following the luncheon, the campus community had the opportunity to see science demonstrations and experiments in the Science Building and Planetarium, ranging from how bioinformatics are used to treat cancer to astronomy advances and DNA experiments.

Earlier in the day, science faculty and students hosted more than 60 students from the Windham STEM Academy and gave them a tour of campus and the wonders of the Science Building.
Eastern wrapped up its spring semester series of 125th Anniversary celebrations with Community Engagement Day. The day began with a luncheon and panel discussion in the Paul E. Johnson Sr. Community Conference Room.

Panelists Anabelitza Lozada ’11, Levar Mitchell ’12, Matt Blocker-Glynn ’03 and Victoria Nimirowski ’87 then discussed how they turned their community engagement experiences at Eastern into successful careers.

Lozada is the social worker for the Support for Pregnant and Parenting Teens program at Windham High School. Mitchell works as a sports, fitness and recreation director at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Hartford. Blocker-Glynn has directed the University of Hartford’s Center for Community Service for the past six years, and Nimirowski has been the executive director of the Windham Area Interfaith Ministry (WAIM) since 2005. Clifford Marrett, director of the Center for Internships and Career Development, served as the moderator.

In the afternoon, the CCE sponsored the annual Service Expo, with student volunteers displaying posters and other visual representations of the various service projects that took place during the 2013–14 academic year. The annual Distinguished Service Awards ceremony followed in the Student Center Theatre.

Kimberly DePaolis, a junior double-majoring in early childhood education and psychology, won the Student Community Engagement Award for her leadership, fundraising and volunteer work locally and abroad.

Professor of Anthropology Ricardo Perez earned the Faculty Community Engagement Award for working with Eastern students in service projects with Willimantic schools in the Puentes al Futuro (Bridges to the Future) program. The Community Partner Engagement Award was given to Christopher Brechlin ’09, who worked as an AmeriCorps volunteer with the ACCESS Agency and is now the CEO of Blueprint for a Dream, a “social enterprise” that focuses on northeast Connecticut. Sociology Professor Cara Bergstrom-Lynch won the Service Learning Award for her fundraising efforts and community organizing.

In the evening, “La Familia de Mucho Colores,” a community cultural celebration of dance and music, took place.
music held in the Betty R. Tipton Room concluded Community Engagement Day.

In addition to the spring series of events, a 30-foot timeline of the University’s 125-year history is being displayed in the Student Center, with each of five sections showcasing a 25-year span of time.

Eastern students also have been involved in the anniversary season — Communication students participated in a video contest which yielded several promotional videos showcasing their vision of what makes Eastern strong, and Visual Arts students are planning a public art project in the local community this fall.

“…In addition to all of the on-campus activities and media presentations, this special anniversary edition of EASTERN Magazine is our way of sharing our 125th anniversary celebration with alumni and friends,” said Kenneth DeLisa, vice president for institutional advancement. “Each of our alumni has their own set of memories, and they, in turn, are our most important legacy. We have also been pleased with how supportive the local community has been in helping us celebrate our history — it’s their history too!”

DeLisa was referring to a commemorative supplement published in early May by the Willimantic Chronicle and a week-long series of interviews of Eastern faculty, students and administrators conducted on WILI-AM’s “Wayne Norman” talk show.

In the fall, the University will conclude the year’s celebration by dedicating a time capsule that will eventually be installed in the Fine Arts Instructional Center, to be opened in 2039 during Eastern’s 150th Anniversary. Mark your calendars!
Although Marc Freeman ’93 entered Eastern with plans to become a high school teacher, he soon discovered that biology was his calling. He took on an independent research project with Biology Professor Michael Adams, beginning a journey that would last the rest of his undergraduate career and a friendship that continues today.

“My time here was really transformative,” Freeman said during his acceptance of the 2013 Eastern Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award. “The faculty focused my energies on positive things.” Freeman and Adams spent hours working side by side, and Freeman’s love and knowledge of biology continued to grow. “The professors were serious about science but embraced the notion that you have to have fun.”

An honors graduate, Freeman later earned his Ph.D. in Biology at Yale University. He then conducted postdoctoral study at the University of Oregon where he chose glial cell development and function in the brain as his specialty. Since 2004, Freeman has been a medical researcher and associate professor at the University of Massachusets Medical School’s Department of Neurobiology, where he pursues advanced research on glial cells.

Prior to Freeman’s research, very little was known about glial cells. He welcomed the opportunity to explore new territory, and work with these overlooked cells continues to keep his lab busy. Freeman and other neurobiologists have now demonstrated that glial cells play more important roles in brain health than had been previously realized, including helping the brain recover after injury.

In 2009, Freeman became a recipient of a prestigious Early Career Scientist Award from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, one of only 50 scientists across the country to receive the honor. In spring 2013, Freeman was appointed as an “Investigator” of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, a designation that recognizes exceptionally innovative and creative scientists and provides them with lifetime research awards.
The annual award, which approaches $1 million a year, gives Freeman the freedom to pursue research that is significantly changing the field of neurobiology.

Jeffrey Benedict ’91 is an acclaimed writer who has tackled topics ranging from athletes and crime to eminent domain, leadership and ethics in business. His most recent release, “The System: The Glory and Scandal of Big-Time College Football,” which was co-authored with friend Armen Keteyian, became a New York Times bestseller after its first week of sales. This is quite an accomplishment for someone who considers himself the most unlikely of writers.

Benedict was already married and juggling two part-time jobs when he attended Eastern. A serious student who devoted his time to studying, Benedict first thought that he would become a history professor. He began thinking about law school after a constitutional law class sparked his fascination with the topic, and planned to become a prosecutor. It was during the pursuit of his law degree that his first book, “Public Heroes, Private Felons: Athletes and Crimes Against Women,” was published.

“I wrote my graduate school thesis on victims of sexual assault when the perpetrator is an athlete, and how the system works against women,” said Benedict. When the thesis was complete, he thought the subject should be shared and he rewrote it for a public audience. It was published and the book’s success attracted the attention of publishers. Benedict, who received his J.D. from the New England School of Law, was offered the chance to turn writing into a career. He decided to take the opportunity.

“When writing, I begin with a subject that is compelling to me personally, since it will take up two years of my attention,” Benedict said. “The topic must also appeal to a large audience.” Most of his books begin with topics that he is simply curious about, but once he begins his research, the story begins to take on dimension and depth. “The humans in my story are more interesting to me than the questions,” Benedict explained. He looks for characters to emerge that the reader can relate to. “It becomes a very real reading experience.”

Benedict quickly found that when writing non-fiction, there can be an unexpected aftermath following a book’s release. Benedict’s books on athletes and crime led to him serving as an expert witness on behalf of rape and domestic violence victims. His book, “Without Reservation: The Making of America’s Most Powerful Indian Tribe and Foxwoods the World’s Largest Casino,” led to a run for Congress and the start of the non-profit organization The Connecticut Alliance Against Casino Expansion. Other books by Benedict have become the basis of a Discovery Channel documentary and a segment on ABC News 20/20.

Today Benedict teaches courses on advanced writing and current affairs at Southern Virginia University, and lives on an organic farm with his wife of 25 years and their four children. President Núñez presents Jeff Benedict with the 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award.

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Benedict is also a contributor for Sports Illustrated and SI.com, where he delivers several in-depth stories each year, including two recent cover stories on Duke University basketball sensation Jabari Parker.

“It’s hard to believe that I’ve had the experiences I’ve had,” said Benedict. “When you work on current events you get involved in people’s lives. It’s had a big effect on me and my family. There aren’t many dull moments.”

David Whitehead ’84 was enjoying a successful career in publishing when the love of his community steered him to a new profession, a switch that has led to a flourishing career and an even deeper involvement with the region he calls home.

Whitehead, a business administration major, was working as president and publisher of the Norwich Bulletin and as an executive with Gannett Co., Inc., the nation’s largest newspaper publishing company. When a position opened at Backus Hospital in Norwich, Whitehead felt it was time for a change.

“I was born in Norwich,” said Whitehead, whose wife Tara is also an Eastern graduate. After raising five children, they are deeply rooted in their community. “I jumped at the chance to move from a national company to a local one.” Since 2013, Whitehead has served as a Hartford HealthCare senior vice president and president of the healthcare system’s East Region, which includes Backus Hospital, Windham Hospital and a number of outpatient and ambulatory centers throughout eastern Connecticut. Prior to this appointment, Whitehead served as Backus Hospital’s president and chief executive officer, beginning his healthcare career as vice president for corporate communications at Backus.

“My background in human resources and communications gave me a great opportunity to get into a different industry,” he said. Whitehead has a master’s degree in labor relations and earned a second graduate degree in healthcare administration. By the time he was appointed president and CEO of Backus Hospital the transition felt natural.

While a student at Eastern, Whitehead began to learn valuable lessons that he has carried with him throughout his career. One has been to always reflect upon yourself. “As careers develop, hone the ability to look at yourself and your actions,” he said. “The behaviors you exhibit are an example to others how to perform and interact.” His devotion to Norwich and the surrounding area are surely an example to his colleagues.

“I continue to live, work and play in eastern Connecticut,” said Whitehead. He has returned to his alma mater as a member of the ECSU Foundation Board of Directors, is chairman of the Board of Trustees for Norwich Free Academy, and serves on the boards of the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, local chambers of commerce, Three Rivers Community College and Hospice Southeastern Connecticut. “I find personal value in that work,” said Whitehead, who champions the importance of education in our communities.

As for Whitehead’s time at Eastern, meeting his best friend and partner in life was to him the most valuable part of his education. “The best part of my experience was finding her.”
Increasing access to education — public education — has always been part of Eastern Connecticut State University’s core mission. Initially bringing higher education to young women in eastern Connecticut who wanted to become schoolteachers, and then later to those outside of the educational mainstream — war veterans, African Americans, the urban poor, Native Americans and Latinos — Eastern has been at the forefront of providing a college education to a broad spectrum of Connecticut residents in the pursuit of happiness and a better life.

In 1889, when the Willimantic State Normal School opened its doors, the two-year teacher preparatory school was joining an educational movement spawned more than half a century earlier. Visionary leaders such as Horace Mann had argued for what was to become America’s public K-12 school system. For centuries prior, a formal education was only for the wealthy and privileged.

To ensure the quality of instruction in the new public education system, a cadre of trained schoolteachers was needed, and normal schools cropped up around the country to prepare those fledgling teachers. Teaching was one of the few occupations at the time where women led the way, although all of Eastern’s principals and presidents were men until 2006 when President Elsa Núñez was hired.

Today, Eastern draws students from 164 of Connecticut’s 169 townships. But 100 years ago, it was still a regional teacher preparation school for young women in eastern Connecticut. Most students were the first in their families to attend college; even now, more than 40 percent of Eastern students are first-generation students.

As the normal school grew, broadening its curriculum and changing its name to the Willimantic State Teachers College, access was expanded to include new groups of students. The first two male students — Frank King and John McClellan — enrolled in 1893, but even in 1900, there was only one male student in the school. In 1939, there were enough men for a basketball team; they won their league championship in 1942. The teachers college hosted ROTC training during World War II, and the post-war GI Bill provided the impetus for hundreds of new male students to enroll at the college.

In 2014, almost 60 years after Brown vs. Board of Education, equal opportunity for minorities — including access to a quality education — remains a challenge in our society. Inclusion and access to education for minorities, however, has been a hallmark of Eastern since its early years.

The first two African American students graduated in 1908, including Felicia Terry, who earned her teaching certificate and taught in a one-room schoolhouse in
Canterbury. She later became a writer for the Norwich Bulletin and wrote a wonderful history of Brooklyn, CT. In 1948, the Willimantic State Teachers College hired Juliette Burst-ermann, the first African American college professor in Connecticut.

In 1988, David Carter was named Eastern’s fifth president. Under his leadership, enrollment grew 40 percent, 15 new buildings were constructed, and Carter made it a point to attract international students. Admissions staff, faculty members and Carter himself traveled abroad to extoll Eastern’s virtues, and students from Dubai, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Sweden, Ukraine and elsewhere were attracted to campus. Health and Physical Education Professor Robert Horrocks set up exchange agreements for students from England, Germany and Canada, and Economic Professor Dimitrios Pachis wrote U.S. Agency for International Development grants that brought 10 students from former Soviet Union bloc countries to Eastern.

Eastern has also welcomed Native Americans to campus, including students from the nearby Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation in southeastern Connecticut. Cora Moore, aunt of Pedro Johnson, retired director of public affairs for the Tribal Nation, graduated from Willimantic State Teachers College in 1943, taught at F.R. Noble School and Kramer Middle School and later became a member and chairperson of the Town of Windham’s City Council. Other Mashantuckers who have attended Eastern include Debra LaRosa ’97, who works in the Tribal Nation’s Finance Department; Kim Hatcher-White (Peters) ’02; and Benjamin Lopez ’03.

In the past 40 years, a new minority population has emerged. People of Hispanic heritage — Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Central Americans and other members of more than 20 Latin American nationalities — now constitute the United States’ fastest growing population sector. Yet despite their growing political representation and economic power, Latinos have lower college attendance and graduation rates than the mainstream.

To respond to the educational needs of the growing Latino population, as well as to challenges facing other at-risk groups, Eastern has embarked on a multi-faceted program of recruitment and retention strategies over the past eight years.

Using several grants, Eastern has developed an early warning system and appropriate support services to serve students who are academically at risk. In particular, a Nellie Mae Education Foundation “Project Compass” grant and a U.S. Department of Education Title III grant have helped the University to hire additional advising staff; develop a revised, four-tiered advising system; assign faculty mentors; and create a one-stop Academic Services Center (ASC) that provides tutoring, math and writing instructional support for more than 10,000 student visitors a year. While targeting at-risk students, the ASC and related services support all students.

Perhaps the most life-changing initiative introduced at Eastern to provide educational access to those least likely to go to college is the “The Dual College Enrollment Program,” a collabo-
ration between Eastern, Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) and high schools such as Hartford Public High School, where two-thirds of the students are Latino and almost one-third is African American.

The students take remedial courses at QVCC in their first semester to improve their academic readiness, live in Eastern’s residence halls and participated fully in activities, clubs and organizations. “Living on campus has enabled these students to develop friendships, gain the confidence of living away from home, experience the accountability of peer expectations and develop study habits, while removing them from the influences of the inner city,” Provost Rhona Free has noted.

The program’s first graduates are working as professionals in hospitals and schools or attending such prestigious graduate schools as Providence College. The program has benefited from a variety of public and private funds, including the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the SBM Charitable Foundation and the U.S. Department of Justice.

With a Latino population three to four times that of the state average, Willimantic is an ideal location for Eastern students — Latinos and others — to give back to the community. In 2011, Eastern launched “Puentes al Futuro/Bridges to the Future,” a local partnership with schools with heavy concentrations of Latino students. “Bridges” is a year-round academic and cultural enrichment program for Windham middle school and high school students, and includes tutoring and mentoring from Eastern students and program support from certified teachers and arts professionals. Students learn cultural dance and music, visual arts, science and participate in sessions called “Yo Soy Latino/I Am Latino” to preserve cultural traditions while encouraging academic excellence.

Eighteen months ago, the Education Trust, a national education advocacy group, announced that Eastern ranked first in the nation in a study of the improvement of six-year graduation rates of Hispanic students in public universities and colleges.

“This is a tribute to the work of our faculty and staff in providing support to students who face a myriad of issues in enrolling in and succeeding at college — language barriers, cultural isolation, financial challenges and lack of family history as it relates to college attendance,” said Núñez.
It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. Year after year the music, theatre and visual arts faculty at Eastern Connecticut State University have found innovative ways to teach, create and rehearse within the confines of Shafer Hall, a building that was constructed almost 70 years ago. As the three departments have grown, their need for a new building that can support the demands of a 21st century curriculum has increased. When the Fine Arts Instructional Center opens on the east side of Eastern’s campus in the 2015–16 academic year, students and faculty will finally have the home that they have been anxiously awaiting.

Designed by the S/L/A/M Collaborative in partnership with William Rawn Associates of Boston, the 118,000-square foot building will combine teaching, performance and exhibit space and will serve to present Eastern to the broader community. It will contain three main performance venues: a 400-seat auditorium, a 250-seat proscenium theatre and a black box theatre.

In addition to the performance spaces there will be instructional labs; acoustically precise classrooms; scene and costume shops; and other spaces in support of the performing arts department. Design studios for the Visual Arts Department will include printmaking, sculpture, painting and drawing. The building will also have three general purpose classrooms, a gallery and a large foyer perfect for greeting theatre patrons or hosting events, a far cry from cramped and outdated Shafer Hall.

“Shafer has always had a positive energy, warm and inviting,” said Theatre Professor Ellen Faith Brodie, “but the rehearsal
“The excitement has already begun, now that construction is underway,” said Jeff Calissi, associate professor of music and co-chair of the Performing Arts Department. He is excited to have the instruments and space to create more music and is speaking with his colleagues about more complex pieces they would like to perform. It was something that the music department didn’t talk too much about before the groundbreaking, but know that they are ready for.

“It’s coming at a critical time in our progress,” said Calissi. “We have grown so much, I feel we are ready now to live up to the new space.” It’s a sentiment felt throughout Shafer Hall. Over the past few years, new curriculum has been developed in anticipation of the building, and the faculty is eager to be in the new location. The Visual Arts Department plans to seek accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design following the move, while a new major and two new minors approved this June will attract additional students to the new facility.

As construction continues, those in Shafer Hall can’t help but imagine what creating, teaching and learning in the Fine Arts Instructional Center will be like. A place where artists converge and exchange ideas; where students and professors live up to their full potential; where the public is moved by exhibits, concerts and theatrical performances; where the entire campus filters through the hallways to find inspiration; a place where the arts at Eastern flourish.

With general purpose classrooms and a variety of art courses offered through the liberal arts core curriculum, the new facility will also benefit students from other majors. The faculty foresees greater collaboration among different majors, as the arts overlap with many disciplines. They have always considered the arts on campus to be all-inclusive, with everyone encouraged to lend their talents in the classroom, on the stage or behind the scenes. The center will foster even easier access to these opportunities, both on campus and within the community.

“The new location will promote a broader audience and build a stronger creative community,” said Ann Dawson, professor of art history and chair of the Visual Arts Department. Down the hill from the main campus,
The annual Eastern Celebrates! festivities kicked off on Friday, May 9, with the classes of 2000 through 2013 reuniting at Blarney’s for Eastern’s fifth annual “Bash for the Past.” While more than 200 young alumni socialized at Blarney’s, members of the Class of ’64 began their Jubilee Reunion weekend with memories, laughter and dinner at Angelino’s Restaurant. On campus, alumni traveled from as far away as Orlando and Las Vegas to enjoy a night of dining and dancing. Graduates from the ’80s and ’90s were welcomed back for a reunion featuring the classes of ’84, ’89, ’94 and ’99 in the Betty R. Tipton Room. In the Student Center Café, former resident assistants came together for a housing reunion.

On May 10, Reunion Day ushered in the return of more than 1,200 alumni and guests. The classes of 1944-1979 marveled at Eastern’s growth while on campus tours and reminisced during luncheons and receptions. Anne (Pisarko) Mahalawich ’44 was honored on the 70th anniversary of her commencement from Willimantic State Teachers College and Ruth (Standish) Swift ’64 celebrated her birthday with members of her class. All classes joined together in the afternoon to support the Class of ’64 as they received Golden Diplomas commemorating 50 years since their college graduation.

The Early Years • 1889-1914

The Willimantic State Normal School (WNS) began in September 1889 on the third floor of the Willimantic Savings Institute with a class of 13 young women starting their two-year teacher training program. Class sizes grew from 13 in 1889 to more than 50 students by 1912.
In 1895, faculty and students moved up the hill from Main Street to the first dedicated Willimantic State Normal School building. In January 1910 a “model school” opened to provide on-site student teaching opportunities to WNS students.
While reunion classes enjoyed their day, alumni members of Eastern’s chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa, along with founding members Paulette Haines ’94 and Carol Williams, associate dean of continuing education, commemorated the 20th anniversary of becoming an official chapter. Graduates from the M.S. in Organizational Management program enjoyed their own reception and participated in sessions designed to enhance the academic scope of the program.

Eastern Celebrates! ended with the Class of ’64 leading the Alumni March through an afternoon shower to the Big Tent Barbeque. Spirits remained high in spite of the spring rainfall, and members of the Class of 2014 celebrated their upcoming graduation with friends and family, while being warmly welcomed as new members of the Eastern alumni family.

The Early Years • 1889-1914 continued

In 1898, the Willimantic Linen Company became part of the American Thread Company.

Under the new ownership, the plant added mills and a warehouse. On February 2, 1901, the Willimantic City Council voted to build a trolley car system. On August 16, 1903, the line opened.
10. Eastern’s chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa celebrated the 20th Anniversary of receiving their charter with a reunion (Left to Right): Row 1: Thomas Balestracci ’13, Carrie Mantis ’14, Melissa Nosal ’13, Christina Frugale ’12, Samantha Stevens ’13, Lauren Bielawas ’12 Row 2: Kristin (Smith) Rice ’96, Steve Taylor ’14, Eric Cerino ’14, Sarah Bojorguez ’14, Paulette Haines ’94, Muhammad Malloy ’09, Dr. Carol Williams, Aileen Charland ’06, Angela Carcio ’12, Melissa Groccia ’13

11. The Big Tent Barbeque just gets bigger and bigger every year!

12. Class of 1989 (Left to Right): Gordon Hook, Lisa (Rothstein) Shaw, Tracey (Jello) Boyden, David Horan, Susan Lucas-Deneen, Bonnie (Scanzillo) Kellogg, Christa (Lucas) Shannahan

13. From the left, Randy Hall, Corey Hall, Tara Hall ’11, M ’14, Marcus Hall, John Cadasse, Lucia Cadasse, Alyssa Petoskey, Indira Petoskey, Jon Petoskey M ’14, Starsheemar Byrum ’07 all enjoying the Big Tent Barbeque.

14. From the left, Mark Verdone and Amir Pouya from the Class of 1984.

15. A lively group from the Class of 1954 met for their 60th Reunion (left to right): Ruth Rosebrooks, Joann (Boson) Riddell, Dorothy (Elliott) Thompson, Calvin Fish, Naomi (Padowitz) Swartz, Albert Wojtcuk, Lucille (Caisse) Curland

16. Alumni and current student-athletes from men’s soccer had their annual alumni game, ending their afternoon at the Big Tent Barbeque.

17. Jane (Roosevelt) Gold ’64

Streetcars and other traffic added to the congestion and dangers for pedestrians. A footbridge was built over the Willimantic River in 1906 so people could walk from downtown to neighborhoods south of the river.
18. Class of 1994 (left to right): Joanne (Chesters) Gyure, Paulette Haines, Lisa Sme Adams

19. The Class of 1959 celebrating their 55th Reunion (left to right): William Hargreaves, Martha (Scott) Bauduccio, Carl Ellison, Audrey (Davis) Smith, William Gregonis

20. Larry Colvin ’64 greets all the returning alumni at an afternoon reception. More than 500 alumni were expected to return to campus for the weekend’s activities.

21. Class of 1974 celebrating 30 years (left to right): Row 1: Marjorie Laboy-Vagell, Unidentified, Maureen (Carey) McCaffrey, Patricia (Kearns) Julian; Row 2: Annette Burton, Kevin Matsil, Katherine (Kelley) Matsil, Terrance Lomme, Lubomyr Weselyj, Phillip Obregon

22. Kimberly (Chalifour) Burns M’14 and her son add their names to the final beam for the new Fine Arts facility.

23. Housing and RA Reunion (Left to Right): Row 1: Kathryn Barnes ’10, Tamara Williams ’05, Beth [Thomson] Sheridan ’01 Row 2: Noah Blocker-Glynn, Matthew Blocker-Glynn ’03, Christina (Martínez) Brown ’04, Shawn McQuillan ’04, Allison Mangles ’07, Kemesha Wilmot ’05

1914-1939 • From Normal School to Teachers College

Principal George H. Shafer began his tenure in 1918, guiding the normal school through the Depression years, and directing the school’s transition to a four-year curriculum, with it becoming the Willimantic State Teachers College in 1937.

Hacker earned his degree in biology at Eastern and went on to Tufts School of Dental Medicine where he earned his Doctor of Medical Dentistry Degree. He practiced with other dentists for three years before buying a Branford practice from a retiring dentist. While running his own practice, he advanced his dental education at Americus Cosmetic Institute in New York City, and was one of the first practices in the area doing cosmetic dentistry. Hacker also travels to Ecuador annually with his family to provide free dental work for poor children.

Kelly double majored in Economics and Public Policy and Government at Eastern. Today he serves as deputy director of securities lending for Bank New York Mellon, and is responsible for more than $300 billion of business activity. He is also Global Head of Client Management, making sure the bank’s clients are satisfied with services provided by the investment professionals he supervises.

Both Hacker and Kelly give credit to Eastern for getting them to where they are today. When Hacker went to graduate school at Tufts, he couldn’t believe he was chosen to be in the same class as people from Yale, Cornell and Harvard. “Seeing all these Ivy League schools and competitive universities made me nervous about who I was up against,” he said, “but I quickly realized that Eastern had prepared me well. I had a solid knowledge of basic sciences and the team of teachers I had not only got me into one of the top dental schools, but allowed me to compete with other students from universities around the country and the world.”

Kelly says he gained crucial skills from Eastern that helped land him his first job in the field. “I was chosen for a leadership position because of my ability to communicate effectively and my ability to demonstrate leadership experience that I learned from my foundation at Eastern.” He advised students to keep in touch with their networks through Eastern and through their professional ranks. “Become associated, become active within your particular field and have that desire to reach out beyond your comfort zone.”

The “Daisy Chain” tradition started in the 1920s and ended in the early 1940s, with juniors dispensed to Hosmer Mountain to pick daisies the day before Commencement so that the chain could be woven and used the next day.
Eastern continues to bring alumni together throughout Connecticut and across the country to support social and professional networking while keeping alumni up to date on Eastern’s prominent rise as a quality public liberal arts university. Since the fall, events have been held in Willimantic, Hartford, and Middletown, CT; Providence, Boston, New York, Orlando, Los Angeles and San Diego. We might be coming to a city near you very soon!

To receive e-mail invitations to alumni events, contact the Office of Alumni Affairs at (860) 465-5302 or at alumni@easternct.edu, or like our Facebook group “ECSU Alumni Association.”

1914-1939 From Normal School to Teachers College continued

By the 1920s, growth in Willimantic had stalled as the textile industry faced recession. In 1925, the American Thread Company endured a nine-month strike after 3,000 workers walked off the job because of a 10 percent pay cut. By 1932, 26 percent of the state’s workforce was idle.
The flood of 1936 and the hurricane of 1938 devastated downtown Willimantic. Despite hard times, the downtown remained busy with three movie theaters, two major hotels and many stores, restaurants and dance halls.
In 1941, a bachelor’s degree in science was offered for the first time. A major fire took down the original Normal School building in 1943. A new building opened in September 1948, and was named in George Shafer’s honor. James Eugene Smith became president in 1947, and the campus began to move “up the hill.” Twenty acres of land were purchased in 1947 and a new student union/dormitory (Winthrop Hall) was built in 1959. Smith also broadened the scope of WSTC offerings to include liberal arts and graduate programs, and WSTC became Willimantic State College in 1959. Students began to stretch their wings, and study tours to Canada, Cuba and Mexico became part of the curriculum.

In 1939, the men’s basketball team was division champion that year. The 1943 fire ravaged the Willimantic State Normal School as firefighters tried to stop the blaze. A new building was erected on the same site in 1948.
With the support of the ECSU Foundation, Inc., and the guidance of Psychology Professor Carlos Escoto, coordinator of undergraduate research and creative activity, student researchers at Eastern continued to make strides this past year. In addition to participating in the on-campus Research Conference and Exhibition and the Excellence Expo, each celebrating its 14th year, Eastern students presented at the Fourth Annual Northeast Regional Undergraduate Research Conference at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) in October 2013.

Eric Cerino, a senior from Stratford majoring in psychology, was named the recipient of a highly competitive Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship fellowship from the National Science Foundation. The $30,000 stipend will cover Cerino’s tuition and support direct research costs during the first 12 months of his Ph.D. program at Oregon State University. Only five students are accepted into the program each year. With the NSF grant, Cerino said he can “continue my successful aging psychosocial research, with the inclusion of innovative and new age technologies that I will get to create with the engineers.”

“I wanted to tackle something that affects senior citizens,” said Cerino, who has been mentored by Eastern Psychology Professor Jennifer Leszczynski. “At the Trumbull Senior Center, I taught a computer course to seniors and fell in love with the idea of helping seniors.”

Richard “Ricky” Magner, a junior math major from Beacon Falls, is the University’s first Undergraduate Research Fellow. During his freshman year, Magner met Professor Mizan Khan of the Mathematics Department and was invited to take part in the research that Khan was undertaking in the field of Number Theory. Khan has been Magner’s research supervisor and mentor throughout the process and helped introduce him to the topic more than 18 months ago. This past summer, Magner presented his research at the “Combinatorial and Additive Number Theory 2013” conference at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and at the 2013 Young Mathematicians Conference at Ohio State University. Magner also recently received an Honorable Mention from the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation. He was the first Eastern student ever to be recognized by the Goldwater program.

“Ricky is arguably the strongest mathematics major we have had in the past 20 years,” said Khan. “He has an excellent mind and has shown that he is capable of doing original work in mathematics. Most importantly, his level of motivation and study ethic are extraordinary.”

Following World War II, the GI Bill allowed veterans to go to college, and the number of men enrolling at WSTC grew dramatically. In 1950-51, tuition was $10, books cost $42 and gym shoes were $3.02. By 1961, a formal liberal arts curriculum was introduced with majors in biology, math, English and history.
Service Leaders Honored

Eastern presented Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Service Awards on Feb. 19 to Biology major Yollaine Kaja; Alycia Bright-Holland, assistant professor of performing arts; and Rose Marie Hernández, family liaison at Windham Middle School and coordinator of the Puentes al Futuro/ Bridges to the Future program.

Eastern presented the 2014 Ella T. Grasso Distinguished Service Awards to Betsy Wade, the first woman to be a copy editor at The New York Times and a former resident of Willimantic; Kathleen McGrory, a distinguished member of the Eastern faculty and former academic vice president in the 1980s; and Eastern student Belinda Kwakye, a senior who helped found the Black Student Union on campus.

The University also presented Cesar Chavez Distinguished Service Awards to Todd Aviles, a senior Sociology major; Robinson Camacho, a family liaison working for Windham Public Schools; and Kimberly Armstrong Silcox, director of Eastern’s Center for Community Engagement.

Barbara Liu Wins State Award

Barbara Little Liu, associate professor of English, was named the recipient of the 2014 Board of Regents/Connecticut State Universities Teaching Award on April 17. Liu was recognized for her work in curriculum development and for how well she teaches students to write.

Liu’s students and peers consider her to be exemplary in the classroom. Alumnus Andrew Minikowski ’12 said that while working on his Honors Thesis with Liu, she constantly encouraged him to push his writing and research further, and as a result, he produced a far better final paper.

“Though her job is to teach writing, what she taught me was strength, confidence, and academic and professional integrity. Her influence has remained with me as a law student and is responsible for my success.”

Lisa Fraustino, chair of the English Department, said “Dr. Liu has always made teaching her top priority, and I cannot think of a single instructor at Eastern who has had a greater impact on student learning. Her students are lucky.”

In addition to large Willimantic employers such as the American Thread Company and Hartford Poultry Company, Electro-Motive, which manufactured mica capacitors, became an important part of the city’s economy during and after the war.

One of ATC treasurer William Barrow’s many social experiments in town was Dunham Library, home to 7,000 books, it closed in 1941.

1939-1964 • Post-War Changes continued

The American Thread Company was Willimantic’s major employer for 100 years before closing in 1985.
Michèle Bošković, French professor in the World Languages and Cultures Department, recently authored her fourth book, titled “Paroles d’auteurs jeunesse: Autour du multiculturalisme et des minorités visibles en France” (In Youth Authors’ Words: Multiculturalism and Visible Minorities in France). The book is a collection of interviews with 12 children’s literature writers and one illustrator and explores multiculturalism in France through their work.


Nicholas Parsons, assistant professor of sociology, has published a book, “Meth Mania: A History of Methamphetamine.” In the book, Parsons chronicles the history and mythology of methamphetamine use in the United States from the 1940s, when it was hailed as a wonder drug, to the present public health menace that it is today.

Art Professor Imna Arroyo’s book, “La Sagrada Familia” (The Sacred Family), is a limited edition that features 32 hand-crafted linoleum prints dedicated to the Orishas and Deities of the Yoruba Pantheon. The images are accompanied by descriptions and praises written by Isis Mattei ’02, Arroyo’s daughter. James Nicholas Winner-Arroyo ’06, the artist’s son, designed the book.

English Professor Raouf Mama has recently authored a memoir titled “Fortune’s Favored Child,” published by the Curbstone Imprint of Northwestern University Press. Mama’s memoir is a coming of age story which centers on his encounter with his birth father at the age of 20.

Stacey Close, is co-editor and contributor to “African American Connecticut Explored,” published this year by Wesleyan University Press.

Gregory Kane, health and physical education professor, has co-authored his first book, “Sport Leadership in the 21st Century,” with John F. Borland of Springfield College and Laura J. Burton of the University of Connecticut. It is among the first comprehensive textbooks on the market focusing on leadership in sport management.

The book also features two other Eastern faculty members, Professors of Psychology Peter Bachiochi and Wendi Everton, who contributed the chapter titled “Team Leadership and Group Dynamics.”
The President’s Leadership Awards Luncheon recognized four people who have made exceptional contributions to Eastern, their local communities, the state of Connecticut and beyond.

Marc Freeman ’93 received the Alumni Association’s Distinguished Alumni Award, which recognizes outstanding leadership or professional success by Eastern graduates. Following an exemplary career at Eastern, Freeman earned his doctorate at Yale University and is now a leading neurobiologist in the country as an associate professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. He credits his time at Eastern for his success: “It was a transformative experience for me. When I began my doctoral program at Yale, I discovered I was better prepared than other students who had taken their undergraduate program at prestigious schools.”

For the first time since the award was established, the Hermann Beckert Friends of the University Award was presented to a corporation—accounting firm BlumShapiro. The firm has hired more Eastern graduates and provided more opportunities for accounting students than any other firm in the state. The award was accepted by Fred Hughes ’87, a BlumShapiro partner who handles the majority of the recruitment efforts for the firm. “We have enjoyed working with Eastern in many different ways. We love the opportunity to come back to campus to recruit talented Eastern students.”

Receiving the ECSU Foundation’s Faculty Donor Award was Ann Marie Orza. For the past two decades, Orza has been one of the top donors to Eastern. During her 27 years at Eastern, Orza worked tirelessly as an advocate for women—helping to develop the Women’s Studies Minor, assisting in the supervision of the Women’s Center, and developing a course called “Psychology of Women.”

“I was hired to teach one undergraduate course in 1971; 8 a.m. in a portable,” said Orza in recalling her earliest days at Eastern. “It was in child development, so my husband and I went up to the UConn bookstore to see what texts they had, and I picked one out by Richard Solomon. I later learned it was the graduate school book at UConn.”
Edith Prague ’65 was the recipient of the Alumni Association’s Distinguished Service Award. Since graduating with an education degree from Eastern in 1965 when it was known as Willimantic State College, Edith Prague has been a teacher, social worker, state representative, state senator, executive, advocate and philanthropist. She worked as a social worker from 1976 to 1982, served on the Board of Education in Columbia for 10 years, and was then elected as a state representative and later state senator. She currently serves as the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department on Aging.

“I am thrilled to pieces to receive this award,” said Prague. “Eastern is very close to my heart. It took me eight years to get my degree, even with bringing in three semesters of credit. I was married and raising four daughters, so I had to take one course at a time. Eastern gave me an opportunity to get my degree. I am very proud to be an Eastern graduate.”

Fifty alumni, family and friends came back to Eastern on Jan. 18 to celebrate the creation of an endowed fund in honor of retired women’s basketball coach C. Robert Miller. Earnings from the fund will support special travel, equipment and other needs of the women’s basketball program. Leading the committee that raised the money to endow the fund were Janet Heck ’79, Kathy Regan-Pyne ’79, Bonnie Edmondson ’87, Beth Regan ’79/M’89, and Wendy Rogers ’93. To make a gift to the fund, contact Michael Stenko at (860) 465-5302; stenkom@easternct.edu

Scholarship Fund Established to Honor Coach Miller

These students in the Ecology of New England course stand with Professor Barry Wulff (center) on Mount Washington in New Hampshire. Mary Rogers was the Planetarium’s first director.

In 1983, Eastern Connecticut State College completed its metamorphosis and became Eastern Connecticut State University.
Proud Mother Honored

Barbara Kniffin Lapp, the mother of Eastern alumnus Charles Lapp ’76 and a donor to Eastern for nearly 40 years, received the ECSU Foundation Donor-of-the-Year Award in absentia on Nov. 1, 2013. Mrs. Lapp and her husband Howard started the Howard S. Kniffin Scholarship in the 1970s. After Howard’s death in the early 1980s and her subsequent marriage to Charles Lapp, Barbara and Charles continued to generously support the fund. The scholarship, endowed in 2002, is to assist students who excel in independent study. Since Charles’s death a few years ago, Mrs. Lapp has continued donating to the scholarship, with total giving surpassing the six-figure level, making her the highest volume parent donor in Eastern history.

Alumna Gives Back to Her Eastern Home

Anne Pisarko Mahalawich ’44 found a home in Willimantic, when she transferred from the Connecticut College for Women to Willimantic State Teachers College. “I became a real person when I came to Eastern,” she said. “I thrived at Eastern. I could live on campus and take a full load of classes for the same price that it cost to commute to Conn College.”

Mahalawich recalls doing her student teaching with another classmate at the sixth-grade level and as luck would have it, the teacher they reported to got sick and was out for an extended period of time. Anne and the other student teacher had to run the class. “I must have done a pretty good job because when the teacher returned she asked me to stay on for another training session,” she said.

Her first job was at Packerville in Jewett City where she started off making $100 per month in a one-room schoolhouse teaching 17 students in the fifth, sixth and seventh grades. Mahalawich ended up teaching 35 years, retiring in 1978 from Kelly Jr. High School near her home in Norwich. The 17 years she spent at Kelly turned out to be the longest stint of her career.

This past winter, Mahalawich established a $25,000 endowed scholarship to assist students graduating from Norwich Free Academy who planned to enroll at Eastern as freshmen. They must demonstrate unmet financial need; preference is given to students who attend Orthodox Church of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia in Norwich. “I always wanted to start a scholarship at my alma mater because I know what Willimantic State (Eastern) did for me,” she stated. “I was a farm girl from Norwichtown and I was immediately accepted by the other students. And when it was time to start my career, I was totally prepared. For that I am most grateful.”

In the late ’60s, downtown Willimantic boasted five men’s shops, two sporting goods stores, seven shoe stores, seven women’s shops, six department stores, four hardware stores and a wide variety of dining options.

1964-1989 • More Growth, More Progress continued

This fireman does his duty during the St. Valentine’s Day fire of 1968.

When the city of Willimantic was dissolved and reincorporated into the Town of Windham, the merger was “celebrated” with a funeral procession down Main Street in 1983. (Does anyone know where the casket is today?)
The Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation has committed up to $30,000 per year for the next three fiscal years to match gift dollars for three endowed scholarships that assist Eastern students planning careers in the sciences.

Eastern alumni, parents and friends will be able to restrict their endowed scholarship gifts in fiscal years 2015, 2016 and 2017 for any of the following three scholarships:

The **Sidney Vernon, MD, Endowed Scholarship** was established in 2000 by Sheridan Vernon to honor the memory of his late father, Dr. Sidney Vernon, who practiced medicine in the Willimantic area for many years. It is intended for a student with financial need who is studying physical science, biology, pre-professional programs or biochemistry, or is in an individualized program related to medicine.

The **Dr. Robert N. Horrocks and Dr. Daniel B. Switchenko Founders of HPE Endowed Fund** supports department needs as well as scholarships. The scholarship will be awarded to a student with financial need majoring in Physical Education or Sport and Leisure Management.

The **Dr. J. Donald McLaughlin Endowed Memorial Scholarship** was established in 2014 by Dr. Robert Jennette, director of Student Health Services, in memory of the first physician at Eastern. A warm, caring and exceptional doctor who set the bar high for those who were and are to follow, Dr. McLaughlin had a wry sense of humor, possibly borne out of his time as a naval doctor on a submarine. He was passionate about the harpsichord and died all too soon shortly after retiring in 2000.

With growing enrollments in the Biology and Biochemistry programs and the launch of a new Health Science major, the time is right to increase financial support for students enrolling in these programs.

“Not only will we be able to attract more high achievers who want to pursue careers in the health sciences, but the match will help to encourage more alumni and friends to contribute to this special University knowing that their gifts will be matched dollar for dollar,” said Vice President Kenneth DeLisa.

“The beauty of this gift is that Eastern alumni and friends who opt to give to one of the aforementioned endowed funds will be helping us to build the principal of these funds for future generations of Eastern students, while the matching gifts from the Ossen Foundation will be distributed to deserving students who fit the criteria the following fall, helping to address immediate scholarship needs,” continued DeLisa. “We are most grateful to Eileen Ossen and the Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation for this special opportunity.”

In 1968 Willimantic experienced one of the worst fires in its history. Fed by 25,000 gallons of paint in the Sherwin-Williams store basement, the St. Valentine’s Day fire damaged six buildings housing ten stores.

The Capitol Theatre on Main Street opened in 1926 and featured vaudeville acts and movies for many years before closing in October 1973. In 2002, a $17 million restoration project turned it into a modern performing arts academy.

Founded in 1975 by local author Sandy Taylor, Curbstone Press continues to publish eclectic works of local, regional and even international authors.
Basketball Team Hits 20 Wins Again; Garrow Wins LEC Award

Eastern men's basketball team continued its recent success with its fifth-straight season with at least 20 victories. The Warriors finished the 2013–14 season at 23-7, reaching the second round of the NCAA Division III tournament before losing to host Plattsburgh State University by a score of 70-60. Eastern had defeated Husson University, 81-75 in the first round of the regional tournament.

Eastern recent five-year run includes five straight postseason tournaments, an NCAA “Sweet Sixteen” appearance and an ECAC Championship in 2013.

On March 20, senior Mike Garrow of Terryville was named the first NABC Division III men's basketball All-American in Eastern history when he was a third-team choice to the 2014 team. The 6-foot-4 inch Garrow was the only player chosen from the Little East Conference and among only three selections from New England.

This past year, Garrow repeated as a first-team All-Little East Conference selection and was named Eastern's first LEC Player-of-the-Year after leading the Warriors to the first undefeated 14-0 regular season in conference history. Garrow also competed in the NABC/Reese's Division III Senior All-Star Game in Salem, VA, on March 22, as one of only 18 selections nationwide.

Burning up the Track!

Eastern senior Fredrick Hewett of New London put the finishing touches on a standout three-year career by winning the 400-meter dash at the 2014 ECAC Division III Outdoor Track & Field Championships at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, on May 16. Hewett paced a field of 28 competitors with a winning time of 48.51 to edge Oswego State junior Matthew Wagenhauser (48.55).

Senior Lauren Hultzman of Putnam broke her own program record in the heptathlon with a career-best third place finish at the New England Division III Track & Field Championships at Springfield College on May 3. Hultzman won All-New England honors for the third straight season in the event, breaking her own record by 145 points with a total of 4,173 and finishing behind only Alyssa Jasper (4,538 points) of Worcester State University and Abigail Bishop (4,538) of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. She placed first in the high jump, and second in the javelin. Hultzman, Hewett, junior Andre Reynolds of Hartford (hurdles) and freshman Natalie Bowens of Monrville (triple jump) all achieved All-New England status in individual events with Top Eight finishes, along with the women's 4x800 and men's 4x100 and 4x400 relay teams.

Contributing to the 4x100 were senior Andrew Prince of Orange, junior D'Vonte Chambers of West Haven, Hewett and sophomore John Boisette of East Hartford, while Hewett, junior Dylan Kruppa of Torrington, Chambers and junior Luisantoni Rosado of Ponce, PR, competed in the 4x400.

1989–2014 • On the Cusp of a new Millennium

In 1988, David Carter became Eastern’s president. During his tenure, enrollment grew more than 40 percent and a campus transformation saw 15 new and renovated buildings added to the campus footprint, doubling the University’s total square footage.

Elsa Núñez arrived on campus in 2006 as Eastern’s first female president and the first Latina president among...
More than 100 student athletes, coaching staff and administrators gathered in the Betty R. Tipton Room on May 3 for Eastern Connecticut State University’s annual athletic awards banquet. Greg DeVito, head coach for the men’s soccer team, was the master of ceremonies.

Senior awards were presented to 55 graduating student athletes. Scholar Athletes and Outstanding Scholar Athletes Awards were then presented by Provost Rhona Free, as well as the Team Faculty Athletic Representative Award for Academic Achievement given to the women’s volleyball team, which had a cumulative GPA average of 3.47 after the fall 2013 semester.

The Morrell Service Award, named after the Morrell brothers who attended Eastern and served as members of the Athletic Department staff, was awarded to Jen Tamindzija. Tamindzija has been employed by the Athletic Department for three years and as an event staff supervisor for two years.

Rookie of the Year Awards were given to Greg Walton of the men’s soccer team and Adrianne Mihalek of the women’s volleyball team.

Walton became the only third freshman goalkeeper in the 25-year history of the Little East Conference (LEC) to gain first-team honors at that position. Mihalek is the volleyball program’s first Little East Conference Rookie-of-the-Year.

Track and field athlete Natalie Bowens was awarded the Individual Sport Rookie of the Year Award. Bowens broke the program triple jump record in only her third collegiate meet.

Male Athlete of the Year Awards were given to lacrosse player Mike Devine and basketball player Mike Garrow. In his career, Devine scored at least one goal in all but five games. Garrow was named the first NABC Division III men’s basketball All-American in Eastern history.

The Female Athlete of the Year Award was given to softball player Mattie Brett, who never missed a game in three years. The Individual Sport Athlete of the Year Award was given to Katie King of the women’s swim team. King went undefeated in dual-meet competition in the 50-, 100- and 200-yard breaststroke events.

The Bonnie J. Edmondson Sportswoman of the Year Award, named after Bonnie Edmondson, an Olympic qualifier as an alternate in the hammer, was awarded to volleyball player Erynn Miller.

The Francis E. Geissler Sportsman of the Year Award, named after the former athletic director and men’s basketball and baseball coach, was awarded to Carl Stensland of the men’s soccer team.

(A top to bottom) Carl Stensland, Brendan Lynch, Mike Garrow, Mike Devine and Women’s Soccer Head Coach Chris D’Ambrosio; Jill Ritrosky, Coach D’Ambrosio, Mattie Brett and Tamar Merheb; Megan Godwin, Finley Ahearn, Erynn Miller and Bonnie Edmondson; Lauren Gevry, Fred Hewitt, Katie King and Coach D’Ambrosio; Donald Geissler, Carl Stensland and Justin Nunez

Over the past 25 years, Eastern’s liberal arts mission also has been codified. In 1998, the Connecticut State University System Board of Trustees designated Eastern as the state’s public liberal arts university; in 2004, Eastern joined the national Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges; and the faculty has updated the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum.
Jon DeCasanova is a senior from Glastonbury. He was a standout defender for Eastern’s men’s soccer team and holds the distinction of scoring the program’s first goal in an NCAA tournament game. Then came the summer of 2012.

DeCasanova contracted jaundice, followed by liver failure and a form of hepatitis. It soon was discovered he had aplastic anemia — a rare and life-threatening affliction — and given less than a one-percent chance of survival.

Cancer tried bringing down one of the strongest 22-year-olds around. It failed. After an 18-month battle, DeCasanova learned he was cancer-free on Jan. 24.

Throughout the struggle, the tears, the fight to save his life, DeCasanova’s faith, positive attitude and a large network of friends and doctors helped pick him up from his darkest days.

DeCasanova spent a few months at Hartford Hospital and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. From there, he went to Memorial Sloan-Kettering Center in New York, where he spent the next year undergoing treatment.

Despite being far from Willimantic, his Eastern classmates kept him close. Bone marrow drives were set up, one of which attracted hundreds of students. Most didn’t know DeCasanova. His soccer coach, Greg DeVito, got in touch with soccer coaches from throughout New England, and soon Western Connecticut State University, the University of Southern Maine, Rhode Island College and others were hosting drives in DeCasanova’s name.

As it turned out, DeCasanova said more than 10 matches were found for patients around the country from those drives. That’s what mattered to him.

“I think when you’re that young, and you see something like that happen to a 20-year-old, you don’t know how to react,” DeVito said. “That was very difficult for a lot of the guys.”

“There were really bad times where we didn’t talk for weeks and weeks and weeks because he couldn’t and he didn’t want to talk to anybody,” DeVito said.

DeCasanova said there would be months that went by where he wasn’t really conscious what was going on. In his words, he was “just there.”

About four months ago, DeCasanova said the results were turning out to be more positive. He underwent a procedure known as a T-cell infusion, which he said isn’t a treatment, per se, but a study. “It’s not something that’s proven,” he said. “When I first went in there, they were like, ‘Hey, this is a study. It’s something that’s only done in New York at Sloan-Kettering and at a hospital in Texas.’ I would be there to help others in the future, which was good enough for me.”

Not long ago, DeCasanova returned home, and began taking classes at Eastern once again. He was walking to his quantitative analysis class on Jan. 24 when his cell phone rang. It was his doctor.

“I would just be watching his Twitter page, wondering what was going on. Everything that came out of it was so positive, no matter what it was. It’s really hard to describe.”

Through all of the chemotherapy treatments, DeCasanova said there would be months that went by where he wasn’t really conscious what was going on. In his words, he was “just there.”

“When I was in deep cancer mode, I didn’t want to talk. I was in a zone by myself,” he said. “It was a roller coaster.”

President Núñez has also led the evolution of students’ academic experiences. More than 75 percent of students participate in internships, study abroad, undergraduate research and other applied learning opportunities. Students contribute more than 100,000 hours a year volunteering in the local community through the Center for Community Engagement. The Academic Services Center provides tutoring and advising services to more than 2,000 Eastern students a year. Campus life also has been enriched, with students competing in an annual Dean’s Cup competition, and guest lecturers ranging from Spike Lee to Madeline Albright.
“I wasn’t even feeling that great because they give you this radioactive shot that kind of knocks you out. I was feeling good about the scans, but I also remember I was feeling good about the scans two months ago and we found out that some of my tumors had shrunk, but some of the cancer had spread to my face.”

This call, however, was different. He officially was cancer free. “I think it was perfect,” he said, “because I was where I wanted to be, right in the middle of campus, with everyone around me that I would want to be around me, whether or not they heard me on the phone.”

In late January, the men’s soccer team held its banquet. DeCasanova received his framed No. 11 jersey — the one in which he scored that first NCAA goal — as well as the inaugural Real Warrior Award, which is presented to the person who defines real character and strength.

He recently made a list of priorities. First and foremost is health, followed by school — he would be the first on one side of his family to graduate from college. He also wants to be a motivational speaker.

“You know, your perspective on life definitely changes. In a way, it’s kind of a blessing,” he said. “Obviously, it’s not something you want to go through, but to be able to come out of it, and now there’s a lot of things I know and look at the world that I didn’t see before as a 20-year-old kid. ... I try and just be a good person, now that I realize how lucky I am.”

Eastern Connecticut State University’s baseball team added to its storied history when it captured its eighth Little Eastern Conference (LEC) championship at the 2014 LEC tournament.

The team capped off four straight victories by defeating the No. 12 nationally-ranked University of Southern Maine, 6-5, on May 10 at the Eastern Baseball Stadium.

After winning seven titles in the first 13 years of the tournament, Eastern had come up empty each year since defeating Keene State College in the 2009 title game.

With the victory, Eastern earned an automatic bid to the NCAA Division III New England Regional Tournament in Harwich, MA. The NCAA appearance was the 33rd for the program since 1976, but first for new head coach Matt LaBranche.

While losing both games it played on May 14-15 in the ECAC Regional, the Warriors still finished its season with a stellar 32-9 record.

Eastern had the LEC’s top pitching staff (2.65 ERA) and defensive team (.973) team during the regular season and had a 3.75 ERA and .956 defensive average in four LEC tournament games.

Baseball Wins Conference Championship
Felicia Terry graduated in 1908 as one of the two first African American graduates of the Willimantic State Normal School. She went on to teach in a one-room schoolhouse in Canterbury. She later became a correspondent for the Norwich Bulletin and wrote a history of the Town of Brooklyn.

Cecile (Lafreniere) Allen ’32 was the first in her family to get past high school and graduated second in her class at Willimantic State Normal School. “My fondest memories were my times at Burr Hall,” she has said. “You might hear a girl playing harp downstairs, and we could go downtown in groups to the theatre, but we couldn’t go alone. We were not allowed to leave Burr, not even to go to the library, which was in the old main building (next to Burr) without signing out with the proctor in the foyer and then signing in at the library with another proctor.”

In addition to having a residence hall named in her honor and being active over the years in the ESCU Foundation and Alumni Association, Luva Mead Hoar ’42 also served on the CSU Board of Trustees in its early years. In her first semester at Willimantic State Teachers College, the Great Hurricane of 1938 swept down on Willimantic while Luva was visiting history professor J. Eugene Smith. “A few of us had stopped by to visit with him in his office after class. We looked out the window and the trees were falling down, and he said in his unflappable way, ‘I believe we are having a hurricane.’ He escorted us through the tunnel that connected the administration building to the boiler room in Burr Hall.”

For Anna (Stankewich) Alfiero ’62, taking a marine biology class from Professor William Jahoda literally left a bad taste in her mouth. The class would go to Barn Island to catch quahogs, which Professor Jahoda would open with a knife. Dangling the clams in front of students, he would say, “You want an A? You have to eat this raw clam!” Says Anna, “Once that quahog was there, you just had to close your eyes and thousands of visitors to town to celebrate life and the human spirit. Today, downtown Willimantic is sprouting new businesses, many of them—cafés, music stores and clothiers — catering to Eastern’s student population.
swallow it!” She also found a turtle in the road near campus, but her roommate would have nothing to do with it. “I had to put it out in the hall. What a stir that turtle caused!”

Robert Brewster ’68 kept a secret for 40 years before revealing to President Núñez at a reception in spring 2009 that “back in the day,” he and friends on campus had released a home-made hot air balloon into the sky, only to find out later that panicked coeds in Burr Hall had called the fire department and caused jets to be scrambled from Westover Air Force Base in Chicopee, MA. Today, the Brewsters live in Port Orange, FL. In a recent article in their local newspaper, they recalled meeting on a blind date at Fort Gordon, GA, before shipping out to Vietnam in 1970—Ruth as an Army nurse working 12-hour rotating shifts six days a week and Bob as a pilot who flew more than 300 missions. “Being a married couple in Vietnam did not give us any privileges . . . each of us knew exactly why we were there. We had taken an oath to serve.”

Robert Polito ’87 and his wife Lori (Alborghetti) Polito ’85 are strong supporters of Eastern. They often look back on their time at Eastern and the positive effect that it had on them. “Whenever you meet your spouse at an institution, you are going to have a soft spot for that place,” says Robert. He fondly remembers living in Crandall Hall and Low Rise Apartments and the camaraderie between the students and faculty. In addition to the memories that Robert and Lori share, he has two cousins and an aunt who graduated from Eastern’s teacher education program, and his uncle, Ralph Yulo, is an emeriti professor. “Eastern is a special place for my wife and me,” says Robert.

Would you like to spend more time reading about Eastern graduates who recall their times on campus? Here is a list of alumni featured in “Back in the Day” over the past five years, listed by publication date. Find them at www.easternct.edu/universityrelations/eastern_mag.html.

Winter 2009: Robert Brewster ’68 and Eleanor (Labinger) Freedman ’51; Fall 2009: Richard (’52) and Lucille (’54) Curland, George Palladino ’68 and Robert Polito ’87; Winter 2010: Carla (Banelli) Goodwin ’69, Peter Colonis ’68 and Bert Nussbaum ’63; Fall 2010: Cheryl (Anderson) Kaake ’80 and Ralph Greene ’60; Winter 2011: Scott Rhoades ’73, Richard Treadway ’71 and Joyce (Chase) Solomon ’49; Fall 2011: Jeffrey Brandt ’93 and Victor Ferry ’62; Winter 2012: Christina Carico ’91 and Frederick Sousa ’70; Fall 2012: Jean (Rose) Jamieson ’55 and Martin Masters ’46; Spring 2013: Brenda (Holmwood) Winaker ’62 and Scott and Lisa (Boutot) Proctor ’82; and Fall 2013: Hermine (Purvis) Winkler ’55 and Anne (Pisarko) Mahalawich ’44.
Evelyn (Ladd) Kuck '39

Lived in Kings Park, Long Island, for 50 years. She taught at Indian Head School until she retired in 1978. After retiring, she volunteered at Sweet Briar Nature Center and Literacy Volunteers of Suffolk County. Evelyn now lives in an assisted living home. She has two sons, one daughter, seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Mary Claire (Gormley) Avery and her husband Daniel celebrate their 63rd wedding anniversary this year. They have three daughters, four grandchildren and a great-grandchild on the way.

Jeanne (Gude) Taysom and her husband Wayne have five children, 13 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren and counting.

Dolores (Kelley) Gallon sold her home in Cape Cod and is living year-round in Naples, FL.

Edward Volle has two daughters and one granddaughter who graduated from Eastern, one granddaughter who has just graduated from Eastern, and one grandson entering Eastern next year.

Shirley (Lessow) Fishbein and her husband Elliott celebrated their 52nd wedding anniversary recently. They have two daughters and three grandchildren.

Joann (Boson) Riddell retired in the late ’90s after teaching for more than 30 years in East Haddam.

Ada (Corn) Roth has been married for 60 years. She has two children and one granddaughter. Ada taught school for 30 years, with a seven-year break to stay home with her children. She loves retirement and is volunteering, traveling and working in a small library near her home. “I hope all my classmates are as well and busy as I am.”

Naomi (Padowitz) Swartz is still teaching music at the age of 81.

Dorothy Thompson is teaching at the Niantic Center School in East Lyme as a learning disabled tutor.

Herbert Shedroff enjoyed a long and successful career in public and higher education.

Sylvia Stamos taught military and dependent children in Greece and Germany for seven years. She returned to the states and settled at the New Jersey shore. Besides teaching for Toms River Schools, Sylvia has been teaching in the GED program at one of the prisons for the past 25 years. She spent the winter in Fort Myers, FL, enjoying the best of both worlds. Sylvia adds that she has two daughters and three grandchildren.

Richard Lambert is retired and enjoying life on the California coast with his wife Carol. He loves drinking his morning coffee while counting the waves.

Bert Nussbaum and his wife Judith are teaching a course titled “Your Health, Your Life” to senior citizens at Century Village in West Palm Beach, FL. The course teaches individuals how to advocate for themselves when they are dealing with chronic health conditions.

Nancy (Hayes) Schmidt retired 10 years ago and was widowed seven years ago. She has three children and six grandchildren.

On the 60th anniversary of my graduation from Willimantic State Teacher’s College in 1954, I pay tribute to my alma mater. I believe the greatest honor to this outstanding institution is reflected in the contributions my classmates and 1, along with other graduating classes, have made to the field of education.”

Mr. Bennett describes an internship he was awarded with the Gesell Institute of Child Development at Yale University during the autumn of 1953 as the deciding factor in pursuing a career in early childhood education. “This may not sound like such a huge choice at this point in time, but in the 1950s it put me on the cutting edge of men working in early childhood grades.” He was hired to teach first grade in Hebron at age 21—right out of college.

“In addition to the excitement of my first teaching position, I felt a tremendous responsibility to do well on behalf of the college in breaking a barrier . . . With my new teaching position secured in August 1954, I achieved another milestone — I bought my first car — a 1954 Chevy!”

Mr. Bennett moved on to teach in other school districts in Connecticut, met his wife, earned his master’s degree in reading from the University of Hartford, and became a reading consultant and assistant principal. He retired from the Ellington school district after 34 years in education.

“Thanks to a passion for education instilled by my parents and my extraordinary time at what is now called ‘Eastern,’ my love of and respect for teaching has endured. Now 82 years young I am proud to say, ‘I am an educator.’”

DEDICATED TO MY PARENTS

JOHN F. BENNETT SR. AND CECELIA BENNETT

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Frederick W. Bennett II ’54
Carole (Hinckley) Barstrom taught for 37 years in Vernon before retiring in 2001. She has three sons and six grandchildren. Carole travels to Florida every winter and Cape Cod each fall. She also keeps busy babysitting for her grandchildren.

Sally Carr and her husband Larry Hannafin celebrated 50 years of marriage on Aug. 31, 2013.

Larry Colvin can’t believe that he is old enough to have grandchildren who are at or approaching their college graduations.

Wilda (Loveday) Devine retired 30 years ago and is still going strong.

Kenneth Dugas is pursuing sculpture full time.

Laura Hines-Jurgens received her master of fine arts degree in drawing and painting from California State University, Long Beach. She is a professional artist, presenter, columnist and published author living in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA. Her artwork focuses on climate change and extends into the ethical, social, technological and political aspects of the subject.

John Poeton and his wife Janet received an outstanding community service award from the people of Greater Barre, VT. The award is given yearly by the Joint Service Club.

Margaret (Lathrop) Richardson spent her career as a mental health paralegal for Central Jersey Legal Services in New Brunswick, N.J. Upon her retirement in 2007 she received the Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of both her career and her work in education and with battered and abused women. Margaret has a daughter and three grandchildren. In 2007 she moved to Maine and married Robert Richardson. She belongs to a knitting group, sings in a church choir and meets with four elderly women as a senior companion.

Carolyn (Anderson) Shea has five grandchildren under the age of eight — two girls and three boys. Her husband passed away on April 23, 2012. Carolyn recently moved to Belchertown, MA, to be near her son and his family. Her daughter and her family are in the U.S. Army; Carolyn’s son-in-law is a JAG lawyer.

Ruth (Standish) Swift has been dancing and competing in ballroom dance competitions in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Ohio, New Jersey and New York since 1989.

Nancy (Still) Thorpe is retired from a very satisfying 50-year career in education. Her longest assignment was teaching kindergarten in Ashford. She then served as supervisor of early childhood education for East Hartford Schools. After retiring in 2001, Nancy traveled throughout the country as a federal program reviewer for Head Start, working with Native Alaskan programs in remote villages and with Native American programs throughout the lower 48 states. Nancy then returned home to Willimantic, working with Windham Public Schools to establish a highly successful Head Start Program and teaching courses in early childhood education as an adjunct at Eastern. Now she spends time with Charlie, her husband of 53 years, her delightful eight-year-old granddaughter, and her mother, who will celebrate her 100th birthday in July.

Franceska Postemsky is traveling to Italy this summer to teach English for two weeks as a Global Volunteer. This is her fourth assignment in three countries. While home she coaches the Special Olympics SARAH Tennis Team.

James Vitagliano '72MS, a school psychologist for the Manchester, NH, school district, was nominated for the School Psychologist of the Year award from the New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists. James earned his Ph.D. in educational psychology from Louisiana State University in 1985 and has been a practicing psychologist ever since.

Stephen Blevins and his wife Jennifer (Griggs) ’70 are enjoying retirement. They have three adult children and one grandchild.

Paula Coughlin earned her master’s degree in environmental studies several years ago and retired from public school teaching. Currently she works with adults and children at the Connecticut Audubon Society in Pomfret where she developed a citizen science program.

Elizabeth (Sihvonen) Jalkanen retired from the State of Connecticut after 25 years as a dental hygienist. She also worked as a substitute teacher.

Scott Rhoades had an art exhibit at the University of Connecticut from Nov. 4 through Feb. 21. Scott’s exhibit, “Places and Faces: Near and Far,” featured paintings of notable local figures. Mansfield and Coventry historical buildings and nature scenes. This was the first formal public show of his work. Scott earned his master’s degree in art education from Central Connecticut State University.

The latest novel by Susan Wilson of Oak Bluffs, MA, is “A Man of His Own,” the story of a man permanently injured in World War II, his wife, the dog they volunteered for service in the Army’s K-9 Corp, and the soldier who handled the dog in combat. It was published by St. Martin’s Press last September. She has recently finished another book that will appear soon. Susan, whose novels sometimes center around dogs, was awarded the Maxwell Medal for Fiction by the Dog Writers Association of America last year.
Gerard Campion is the president of Campion Financial, LLC. He is also a very happy grandfather.

Thomas Clark retired from Saugatuck High School in Michigan in 2007. He has been married to his wife Sondra for 35 years. They have three children and seven grandchildren.

Margaret (Bangasser) Doenges has 35 years of teaching experience. She received her master’s at Eastern and her sixth- and seventh-year certificates from Southern Connecticut State University. Margaret has two grown children, three grandchildren and one grandchild on the way.

Janet Irwin remembers making more space for her and her roommate in Low Rise by finding “extenders” to convert their twin beds into bunk beds. She also remembers streakers from High Rise who would “take a mad run around the buildings” in the middle of the night, chased by the Campus Police to the sounds of the William Tell Overture blasting from dorm room speakers.

Marjorie Laboy-Vagell is retiring this year after 35 years of teaching art in the South Windsor school system.

Barbara (D’Onofrio) Marsden is retired from the U.S. Navy. She now works part time as a church secretary and for three merchandising companies.

Kevin Matsil is retiring in June from Washington Middle School in Meriden. His wife Katherine (Kelley) Matsil will retire in January from Meriden’s Public Library.

Donald Richmond retired from Franklin Elementary School in June 2012 after 34 years of teaching middle school language arts. He is a volunteer with the American Red Cross, Disaster Services and teaches poetry through Adventures in Lifelong Learning at Three Rivers Community College. His granddaughter Madelyn Jordan was born in 2012.

Christine Sacerdote completed her doctoral degree in 2012. She currently works as the coordinator of the early childhood program at Lander University in Greenwood, SC.

Karen (Swantko) Thomson ‘81MS has been employed at the West Hartford Public Library for the past 21 years. Her hobbies include judging beauty pageants and attending local pageants.

Lubomyr Weselyj is the proud grandfather of four grandchildren between the ages of four and 18. He is also the proud uncle of Maria Weselyj, the Mercy High School basketball player who took the winning shot in the 2013 state championship.

Kimberley (Boissevain) Buck has three children and one granddaughter. She and her husband Robert have been married for 39 years. Their daughter Rachel began her junior year at Eastern in fall 2013 after transferring from Three Rivers Community College.

John Casicio was named the 2013 Connecticut Executive Director of the Year by the Connecticut Society of Association Executives. He was honored for his 26 years in association management and his work as executive director of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association.

Sharon Hayes is the learning skills program specialist at the Watkinson School in Hartford.

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Patricia Stefan became a certified gastroenterology registered nurse and is now working for Norwalk Hospital.

Dan Tenney is the vice president of quality at 3M Co. He is also an adjunct professor in the graduate technology management program at the University of Bridgeport.

Leslie Noble is senior director, global clinical supply, for Alexion Pharmaceuticals in Cheshire, a job that involves ensuring lifesaving drugs are available to clinical trial patients with ultra-rare diseases. Her degree in Biology opened doors for her in the pharmaceutical industry, but she found her interest in business moved her away from the research and toward the management and patient side. Leslie is on the board of the Visiting Nurses Association of Stratford, and has recently begun playing the piano, which has resulted in her buying one for the house she purchased in Shelton not long ago.
Frank Musser recalls with fondness Halloween parties in the Student Center attended by what seemed like a thousand people at a time, and President Webb’s jazz band playing in the campus pub: “I would wait for hours just to get in.”

Deborah Kleckowski was elected to her third term on the Common Council in Middletown.

Robert Pollio has been elected to the Board of Trustees of Masonicare in Wallingford. Masonicare is Connecticut’s leading not-for-profit provider of healthcare and retirement living for seniors.

Shirley Lasch-Goblirsch is a project manager shepherding research studies to help develop therapies to treat neurodegenerative disorders. The New Haven organization she works for has for-profit and nonprofit components which focus on clinical research projects designed to improve early diagnosis and support rapid drug development for neurodegenerative and neuropsychiatric disorders. On the nonprofit side through the Institute of Neurodegenerative Disorders, she works with the primary investigator to coordinate and manage research efforts around the world on a major initiative designed to identify biomarkers of Parkinson’s disease progression. She also works with multiple medical research organizations as a project manager for Molecular Neuroimaging, LLC, which provides neuroimaging research services to better assess various neurodegenerative disorders. Shirley earned her MBA from Quinnipiac in 2007. She and her husband Gregory Goblirsch ’89 and their daughter and son live in Bethany, where she also serves on the local library board.

Anne Burke ’98MS is the owner of Coventry Arts and Antiques.

Jill Cole is an energy healer. She teaches Reiki, meditation and yoga. Interested clients may contact her at cole.jill@sbcglobal.net.

Colleen DeVine is an MDE (multidisciplinary evaluation) Clinic Program Supervisor at United Community & Family Services in Norwich, and a licensed marriage and family therapist with her own practice, Devine Intervention, in Waterford. In her agency position, she provides behavioral and educational assessments to determine the services needed by foster children up to 18 years of age, and coordinates referrals for their medical and dental needs. She generally sees clients in her private practice in the evenings. Colleen has been with UCFS for about 14 years, and opened her own practice in 2005. She lives in Norwich.

Suzanne Lucas-Deneen has been employed as a mitigation specialist by the Connecticut Division of Public Defender Services for 17 years.

Lisa Shaw is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force working for the Department of Veterans Affairs as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. She has been married to Michael Moi since July 7, 2007. Lisa’s daughter currently serves in the U.S. Army.

Daniel Coppinger, a 23-year veteran of the West Hartford Police Department, was promoted to the rank of assistant chief of police. Daniel is also a member of the Connecticut Air National Guard and was deployed twice in the Persian Gulf and in Afghanistan.

Jill (Slate) Hill and her husband have five children. The oldest is a senior at Eastern.

John Toolan has started a new career as a voiceover professional for radio, television, film and corporate training videos. He operates under the professional name Jonathan Broncks; contact him at www.JonathanBronckx.com.

Marvin Chirstley is a physical education teacher at Lincoln Bassett School in New Haven. In 2011 he won the Connecticut Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance professional merit award.

GREETINGS FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION | SUMMER 2014

It is an honor to serve as president of the Alumni Association Board of Directors during our 125th anniversary year. It is exciting and even humbling to be part of an organization nearly as old as Eastern itself, and to follow in the footsteps of the association’s first president, J.R. Chapman, Class of 1895. Today I join with you and 30,000 other Eastern alumni in celebrating the rich history of our Alma Mater.

At the May Commencement Exercises, I told the Class of 2014 that our Eastern alumni network is a valuable resource and a great place to begin making connections for the future. Many of us come from the towns surrounding Willimantic, but unlike 1889, Eastern alumni are also found in every corner of Connecticut, throughout the United States and around the world. Today we are part of every profession and academic area of study. We speak every language. We come from every social, economic and ethnic background. Eastern has become a global institution, and our alumni reflect this transformation.

For our newest alumni, the adventure as “Eastern graduates” is just beginning. But the challenge for the rest of us is deciding what we will do to build a stronger Eastern to start the next 125 years. Will we be a U.S. News and World Report Tier One University as we are today? Or will we continue reaching even higher to become one of the premier public liberal arts universities in the country?

Be involved with Eastern — make it part of your life — by attending alumni events, giving of your time to provide professional development for our students and pledging your annual financial support for scholarships, academic programs, clubs, organizations or athletics. Join me today to make an Eastern education even more valuable in the years to come.

Happy Anniversary, Eastern!

Kenneth M. Briggs ’02, ’05 MS/’10 MS, President, ECSU Alumni Association
Support Eastern’s faculty by giving to the Annual Fund. Contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at (860) 465-0003, or give online at www.easternct.edu/advancement/development/giving.htm.
Melynda Guillette is the senior talent consultant at Argo Group International Holdings, Ltd.

Patrick Murphy recently joined TD Bank as the vice president, relationship manager in government banking for Connecticut and Rhode Island. He has more than 20 years of experience in government banking and finance. Patrick lives in Wolcott and volunteers as a youth coach with the Baseball Association of Wolcott and Wolcott Junior Basketball.

A former superintendent in both the Rocky Hill and Windsor school districts, Jeffrey Villar is now executive director of the Connecticut Council for Education Reform in New Haven. The basic charge of CCER, launched in 2011, is to close the achievement gap and raise academic outcomes for all students in Connecticut. After Eastern, Jeffrey earned a master’s degree in education and a Ph.D. in curriculum instruction, both from UConn. He and his wife Kelly and their family live in Mansfield Center.

Sandra (Foertsch) Williams taught at Manchester Community College and Eastern before retiring in 2009. She is enjoying her six grandchildren, traveling, tap dancing and volunteering.

Joanne Gyure has been married for 48 years and has two grown sons. She is retired after a career in government accounting. Joanne was the Town of Hebron’s finance director for 11 years, the Town of Manchester’s accountant for 10 years, and the Columbia town treasurer for five years.

John Stone Sr. recently retired from the U.S. Army after 37 years, two months and two days of service. He is now living in El Paso, TX, and working on his master’s degree in adult education.

Scott Dauphinee is senior supplier development manager for DePuy Synthes in Raynham, MA. DePuy Synthes, part of the galaxy of pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson, is itself an umbrella operation for four companies dealing in therapies for medical issues ranging from devices for orthopedic problems to neuroscience ailments. Scott’s job requires him to work with the DePuy companies and outside suppliers as well. Scott and his wife, Alicia Medrano Dauphinee, and their two daughters live in Cumberland, RI.

Jennifer Diggins is a director of public affairs for Nucor Corporation, overseeing the state government relations program covering 22 states, and is responsible for promoting the steel manufacturer’s energy and climate policy. She was recently named a chairwoman on Consumer Energy Alliance’s eight-person board of directors.

Loretta Haeger remains connected to Eastern as a member of the Eastern Concert Chorale.

Bethany (Bishop) Rice is a sales and marketing communication specialist for Cigna Healthcare. Bethany is married, and her husband and she are the proud parents of daughter Jenna.

Kristin (Smith) Rice is married with two daughters — five-year-old Abby and three-year-old Megan. Kristin is a math and science consulting teacher in Granby.

Amy Schack had great times at Eastern, including attending Earth Day festivals at Low Rise, mud volleyball and Autumn Soiree, a university-wide formal dance that took place in the Betty R. Tipton Room. Making greeting cards for the elderly, stuffing envelopes at a local publisher, and other projects were “all great ways to get involved in the community, make a difference and be of service.”

Jennifer Holowaty is a student development specialist in Eastern’s Advising Center. She comes to the center after serving as a university assistant in the Intercultural Center, as project administrator for the Bridges A Grant and as program facilitator for the Dual College Enrollment Program. Jennifer has her M.Ed. with teacher certification from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Carolyn Kurth was elected president of the board of directors for Professional Women in Construction, Connecticut Chapter for the 2013-14 program year. Carolyn is the director of forensic accounting, auditing and consulting at Shepoff, Reuber & Co. in Glastonbury.

Leah Joy Pearson is a paraprofessional at Easton Country Day School. She is active in bringing awareness and guidance to students and local youth on earth conservation, spirituality, and self-expression.

Susan Frechette opened her private practice in Putnam in 2010. Quiet Corner Counseling Services, LLC has now grown and currently houses four therapists.

Daniel Swartz is the chair of Southern Connecticut State University’s Exercise Science Department. He is also the 2012 recipient of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) R. Tait McKenzie Award. In 2009-10, he served as the president of Connecticut’s AAHPERD chapter. Daniel has two daughters: Julia, age eight, and Allison, age four.

William Bono is a developmental recreation specialist for River Street School in Windsor. The school provides individualized, comprehensive services for students with developmental and medical disabilities.

Kara (Nuthmann) Murphy is the traffic manager with Cronin and Company, a marketing communications company in Glastonbury.

Matthew Dausey is the human resources manager for Foley Carrier Services in Glastonbury.

Thierry Francois is the client segment controller and vice president of finance reinsurance for Swiss Re America Holding Corp. He is responsible for all financial controlling and reporting and provides financial steering information to the company’s leadership.

Edward Giard MS retired from teaching in June. He and his wife Frances are celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary this year. They have five children, two who graduated from Eastern, and three grandchildren.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie won the National Book Critics Circle prize for fiction for “Americanah,” her novel about race and identity. The award was announced during a ceremony in March at the New School in Manhattan.

Rick Galipeau MS (Organizational Management) is vice president and general manager, efficiency division, for World Energy. The company acquires electricity and natural gas as commodities from suppliers, sells them to governmental agencies and other users; and helps customers create energy efficiencies and cost savings. After working for Northeast Utilities and a Rhode Island energy efficiency company for more than two decades, Rick joined with two partners to form Northeast Energy Solutions. They sold it to World Energy in Worcester, MA, a few years ago. Rick works mostly from a satellite office in Cromwell. He and his family live in Norwich.

Corey Holmes is a military police officer with the U.S. Army.

Paula Miller MS joined Bartow Regional Medical Center as director of quality.

Kathryn (Dickman) Morales and her husband Mario had their first child in May. Kathryn has been teaching in Bristol for 10 years.

Joel Nowakowski was recently named vice president of commercial banking at Rockville Bank, where he will focus on commercial and industrial lending. Joel
served in the U.S. Navy and Reserve from 1994 to 1999. He resides in Farmington with his wife, Erika (Aguilar) Nowakowski ’02, and their two boys, four-year-old Ian and two-year-old Levi. Erika works as a project manager for the State of CT Judicial Department.

Sandra Potter is leaving WTNH-TV after 13 years to take a marketing and social media specialist position in Wallingford.

Ketan Tala is the president of i-Ride in Willimantic. The company provides safe, comfortable and reliable transportation with its fleet of limos, vans and buses, specializing in everything from proms and weddings to airport runs.

Sally Hamler MS teaches early childhood education at Wood County Technical Center in West Virginia. She is the director of a childcare center used as a training laboratory for students. The center is licensed for 22 children, ages two months to five years.

Jeffrey Liszka is the associate access services librarian at Trinity College.

Steven Piro and his wife Karen (Burkott) have three children: Jack, eight; Josh, six; and Jayson, two. Steven works as a physical education and health teacher in Columbia.

Jason Riccitelli is the owner of Elite Sports Events and Connecticut Elite Basketball. He is also a health and physical education teacher at University High School of Science and Engineering in Hartford.

Matthew Blocker-Glynn married Noah Glynn in New Hampshire in 2011. They are expecting a baby in August. Matthew works for the University of Hartford as their director of community service.

Jim Wolf released his new album, titled “Legacy,” on iTunes on March 18. All proceeds will go to the children’s museum in Glastonbury.

Michael Wolter ’09MS was named vice president of the Faculty Senate at Goodwin College where he works as the program director of management and leadership.

Kieran Broatch is the assistant director of development for parents and families at Quinnipiac University. He is responsible for establishing university relationships with the parents of students to increase participation in the Parents Council.

Jordan Nyberg is the events coordinator for Foodshare.

Rebecca Somers is the owner of Strength in Balance NH, a barre fitness studio located in Nashua, NH. Her classes blend ballet, pilates and yoga with an aim to make clients feel and look their best. Rebecca is a member of the National Dance Education Organization and a contributor to the Dizzy Feet Foundation.

Lineyda Aicantara is the telecom user services consultant at Columbia University Medical Center.

Aileen Charland is director of client services for Great Blue Research, Inc. in Cromwell.

Brian Flynn works for Trinity College as a programmer analyst.

Jillian McCarthy is the director of staff services for Horizons, Inc. in South Windham.

Jeffrey Nixon MS retired in April 2013 as lieutenant of the Waterford Police Department. That same year he was appointed Grotton Long Point’s chief of police. Two of Jeffrey’s children are Eastern students.

Gregory Petranek MS teaches college algebra and social science at Three Rivers Community College. He is also an artist working in oil and acrylic paints on canvas.

Jennifer Casalone, an insurance consultant in Bearingstar Insurance Agency’s Enfield office, has been named a 2014 HELM qualifier. This prestigious award recognizes the company’s sales associates that meet annual sales, profitability and customer retention objectives in Connecticut’s challenging personal insurance marketplace.

Janet Cyr is working as the development assistant at the University of Connecticut Foundation, Inc.

Lawrence Roach ’12MS is a certified Lean Six Sigma black belt and a master black belt in training.

Damali Abbensett was named a student development specialist in Eastern’s Advising Center. She previously served as a university assistant for Eastern’s STEP/CAP and Dual College Enrollment programs.

Ashton Avent works for the Hartford Board of Education as an operations manager.

Kristen Brierley graduated cum laude from Western New England University School of Law in May 2013. She is currently working as a law clerk with the Connecticut Appellate Court.

Jordan Fogel was promoted to assistant vice president with United Bank’s Loan Production Office in Glastonbury.

Derrick Gibbs Jr. established Change Incorporated in 2009, a community-based organization that provides recovery for mental health clients throughout the State of Connecticut.

Eric Grundfast is the director of ticket sales for the Iowa Wild. He lives in Des Moines and is married to Sarah Barber.

Patricia Lindo was appointed assistant director of human resources at Manchester Community College.

Tiffany Marrara is a health and physical education teacher at Horace W. Porter School in Columbia. She has two children with her husband Nicholas, one born in May 2012 and the second in September 2013.

Beth Mitchell received her master’s degree in special education from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix. Beth is able to utilize her visual arts degree from Eastern in teaching children with special needs.

Nicole Panteleakos is working towards her MFA in children’s literature through Hollins University. Her 15-minute play “Down the Rabbit Hole” was performed at Eastern in 2004 and has since been expanded to full-length and performed a number of times. She has several other recently produced plays and is a featured writer for Nanny Magazine. Nicole is an aspiring middle grade and young adult novelist and is represented by Talcott Notch Lit.

Shannon Boyle is living in Colorado and working as a preschool teacher.

Raymond Brown ’11MS is a training administrator with the U.S. Navy. He is also teaching part-time at the Ridley-Lowell Business and Technical Institute.

Alexandra Dominguez is the public policy assistant for Futures Without Violence, an organization working to prevent and end violence against women and children around the world.

Alison Garewski is a student development specialist in Eastern’s Advising Center. She received her master’s degree in
communication from Central Connecticut State University and recently worked as an admissions counselor at Eastern.

**Jenna Hagist** is the senior account executive with Cashman + Katz Integrated Communications in Glastonbury. In this role she plans, develops and implements various PR strategies for clients, and helps clients raise awareness and obtain media coverage.

**Julie Moulin** is a social worker at Mount Sinai Hospital working for a preventive hospital re-admission program. Prior to this she worked in the South Bronx for a foster care agency. Julie enjoys socializing with friends and family, running, movies and yoga.

**Andrew Powaleny** is now director at The Herald Group.

**Monica Rochon** is a residence director at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a support services volunteer in the university’s Department of Athletics.

**Stephanie (Boccanfuso) Daniello** completed her second semester of nursing school and will be graduating in May 2015. She married Anthony Daniello in July 2013. Anthony is a physical education teacher at an elementary school in Norwalk.

**Nikole Doolittle** is enrolled in the Queens University of Charlotte MBA program.

**Kileen Gilroy** returned to Eastern in November for a poetry reading. She currently teaches English at Lincoln High School in Rhode Island while writing poems and working on mixed-media projects.

**Emily Gresh** is the director of corporate and foundation relations at Trinity College.

**Corrine King** is a communication specialist at the Wheeler Clinic in New Britain.

**Nicholas Parenteau** is an administrative assistant at Perception Programs in Wilimantic, auditing medications, scheduling, providing security, and teaching de-escalation and anger management techniques to clients.

**Allison Roach** graduated from the University of Toledo College of Law with her juris doctorate.

**Jennifer Succi** is a program coordinator at the Community Health Center Association of Connecticut. She assists with the maintenance and development of several programs, including Ryan White Part D, Medicaid Outreach, Colorectal Cancer Screening and Health Care for the Homeless.

Claire Szeker works for Natchaug Hospital as a primary therapist.

**Jason Bleau** is a staff writer with the Villager newspapers. He writes stories, shoots photos and reports on the towns of Killingly, Brooklyn, Eastford, Woodstock, Pomfret, Putnam and Thompson.

**Marlana Carroll** is a digital marketing strategist at Grapevine Marketing LLC.

**Mariana (Torres) Chapen** is the director of student activities and alumni affairs at Five Towns College. Additionally, Mariana serves on the executive board of the Long Island Council of Student Personnel Administrators and is pursuing a master of arts in higher education administration at Stony Brook University. Mariana and her husband John celebrated their first wedding anniversary on May 24.

**Kelsey Conklin** joined Capital Wealth Management as an intern in 2007 and became a full-time team member in 2011 as a client services associate. Kelsey maintains her Series 6, 7 and 63 registrations through Commonwealth Financial Network. She is also a notary public.

**Curtis Darragh IV** is in graduate school at the University of Connecticut for school counseling. He is doing his practicum at Montville High School.

**Krista Juliano** passed all four parts of the CPA exam.

**Karl Lamothe** Karl is working on his doctorate in ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Toronto, funded by the Connaught Scholarship for International Students. He is also the student representative for the Toronto chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

**Mary-Francis Plaza** is a graduate assistant career advisor at the University of Rhode Island.

**Jessica Ruddy** received her master’s degree from Central Connecticut State University in counseling with a concentration in student development in higher education. She currently works at Fairfield University in the Office of Student Involvement.

**James Schull** is a management trainee with Enterprise Rent-A-Car.

**Brittany Staron** is a staffing manager with Accountemps in Hartford. Part of her job revolves around building and maintaining relationships with clients, while the other part revolves around finding, recruiting, and placing accounting and finance professionals in positions.

**Kristynya Stefak** is a resident director for two international graduate halls at the University of Bridgeport. She oversees a staff of 15 people and 300 resident students. She is also pursuing her master’s degree. Kristynya was a student intern at Eastern’s Office of Alumni Affairs in 2011.

**Matthew Thibeault** began working for Aetna upon his graduation and is part of the company’s IT Leadership Development Program. In that program he has rotated to a new assignment every six to eight months to gain management knowledge of a different area of Aetna’s IT structure, and is now in his final one. In his free time Matthew enjoys playing the guitar, playing softball and riding his motorcycle.

**Ana Valentin-Jackson** works for Leadership Greater Hartford as a program director for Leaders on Board and the A.C.T. Program. The organization was recently recognized by The Association of Leadership Programs with the Excellence in Innovation award at its national conference in Virginia.

**Karl Lamothe** is a staff accountant at BlumShapiro.

**Lauren Daddona** graduated in May from Providence College with a M.Ed. in counseling.

**Kelsey Daniels** will be attending the University of New Haven in the fall to pursue a master’s degree in community psychology.

**Judy Frankel** is a policy intern with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

**Christina Frugale** is a graduate intern in the academic advising center at Springfield College.

**Melinda Maher** is teaching third grade in the Danbury Public School System. This is her fourth long-term position since graduating. She is also working on a cross-endorsement for elementary education.

**Joelle Schrock** is the production assistant at WSHU Public Radio. In this role she produces all classical music programming as well as daily NPR promos and handles other production tasks.
Ariana White is a blogger with Black Public Relations Society-NY. She also freelances as a public relations specialist.

Audriana White moved to New York City and is working as the associate event manager for Neuman’s Kitchen/Jason’s Catering.

Thomas Balestracci is working on his master’s degree at the University of Rhode Island in the College Student Personnel program. He is the graduate assistant for the Office of Student Involvement and also the graduate student assistant for orientation within new student programs.

Nicole Gaona is a project assistant with Great Blue Research in Cromwell.

Colleen Gomola is employed by Rehabilitation Associates as a pediatric aide and will be attending Southern Connecticut State University in the fall for a graduate program in speech pathology.

Melissa Groccia is the events coordinator for Asset International, an information technology company in Stamford.

Sydney Hanlon is the entertainment coordinator at Give Kids the World.

Jordan Kallenbach is a junior underwriter at Chubb Insurance.

Rachel Murad is a production assistant with R/GA, a full-service digital advertising agency.

Scott Petit is a judicial marshal trainee with the State of Connecticut.

Mark Piombino is working as an associate agent at Stamford Insurance Group.

McKenzie Hyde is completing her MSc in International Development at the London School of Economics and has accepted a position in the Bureau of Global Health at the U.S. International Development Agency (USAID) in Washington, DC.

**Barbara Kilby ’56** and her husband Frank returned to campus this past October. They visited Burr Hall and Mrs. Kilby was elated to visit the same room she lived in almost 60 years ago. She also thoroughly enjoyed her time at the Child and Family Development Resource Center. She called her college roommate in Florida that night and they talked about everything she saw. We learned later that Mrs. Kilby was terminally ill and her only wish was to visit Eastern again before she passed away. Barbara passed away on March 11, 2014. Her husband later wrote to a friend: “The top-most thing on her ‘bucket list’ was to visit her alma mater. This summer made it possible. I (and she) am eternally grateful.”

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**Eastern Mother Honors Her Husband**

When Lyn Romano, mother of Eastern graduate Randy Romano ’11, lost her husband, Raymond, in the Sept. 2, 1998, crash of Swissair Flight 111, she knew that the long-ignored safety issues that led to the crash had to be addressed.

On March 4, 1999, Romano formed the nonprofit International Aviation Safety Association (IASA). Using her settlement money from Swissair she took on the ambitious task of improving aircraft safety.

For eight years Romano and the IASA addressed aviation safety issues and were able to resolve some while enhancing others. In 2007, Romano started her charitable foundation, Heavenly Brickks, which is self-funded with the money from the Swissair settlement.

Romano is passionate about her husband’s legacy and is working hard to reach out in his name to those less fortunate. She gives to a variety of charities, helping the mentally and physically disabled, American Indian organizations, home building, and cancer and heart disease research. “I knew early on that I wouldn’t spend any of that money on myself but rather would give back in his memory.”
In Fiscal Year 2014–15, the University anticipates operating once again with a balanced budget. This is largely due to the diligence of the faculty, staff, and administration, who continue to practice prudent fiscal management, find cost savings, and make sacrifices that include maintaining a number of staff vacancies during the year.

Even with these efforts, Eastern would not be able to maintain its operations and support our students without the continued generosity of our alumni and friends. In this 125th Anniversary Year, it is fitting that our alumni and friends of the University are giving generously and in record numbers. For the first time, we have exceeded 4,000 donors; more than half of that amount are alumni, also a record. In fact, our number of alumni donors has almost doubled in the past five years.

We also continue to receive significant support from major donors. The SBM Charitable Foundation has just announced an additional $234,000 gift over the next three years, bringing their total giving to more than $1 million. In addition, Cameron “Ron” and Dorothy Carlyle ’56 have made a significant contribution to their Charitable Remainder Unitrust. And Steve Watts, a member of our Foundation Board of Directors, recently established a $25,000 endowed scholarship fund in memory of longtime family friend, Barbara Daring.

With such support, we were able to give a record $600,000 in scholarships—both merit- and need-based—to 350 students this year. We were able to do so because of strong earnings on ECSU Foundation, Inc., endowment funds.

To give you a sense of the growing support we are continuing to receive from Eastern alumni and friends, our endowment did not exceed $1 million until Fiscal Year 2000. By fiscal year 2006, we were at $5 million, and in fiscal year 2008, we broke the $10 million threshold. Despite the Great Recession and several years of sluggish economic growth, this past year the endowment stood at $12.5 million, and total foundation assets were at $17.4 million.

With this continued level of private funding, Eastern is able to provide much needed financial support to students with unmet need; attract more students with outstanding academic records in high school; provide travel stipends and other assistance to faculty and student researchers; fund students of modest means to participate in unpaid internships and study abroad opportunities; and support the University’s programs in a variety of other ways.

This record of philanthropic support is only due to the outstanding, continued commitment of the Eastern family—alumni, retired professors and staff, current staff and faculty, the parents of current students, local foundations, and other friends of the University.

I know I speak for everyone on our campus—students, faculty, staff, Dr. Núñez and other members of the Administration—in saying we are deeply moved and eternally grateful for the dedication of Eastern alumni and friends in supporting the values and educational excellence that has been the hallmark of Eastern for 125 years. We pledge to continue to earn your support as we embark on the next 125 years of our journey.

Kenneth J. DeLisa
Vice President for Institutional Advancement
As Eastern continues to celebrate its 125th Anniversary, we thought our alumni and friends would like to see some of the milestones that have been reached in private giving to the University over the past decade and a half. Below are charts that show the increase in donors and the ECSU Foundation endowment. To continue to provide assistance to students with financial need — such as Christos Stravoravdis ’14 — as well as support other University programs, we need to maintain this upward path of success. That means continuing to grow our donor base and endowment at the rates you see below. If you are not an Eastern donor, please consider supporting the University with a financial gift. Every dollar we receive helps to provide more students with a quality public liberal arts education. To maintain our endowment growth, we would need to attract an additional $800,000 in gifts over the next year. While this appears to be a significant increase — and it is! — we have been fortunate over the years and again in this past year, to receive major gifts from donors with greater giving capacity.

What would such an increase in our endowment mean? It would generate approximately $50,000 in earnings, enough to give 25 students a $2,000 scholarship or enough to pay the full tuition of 10-11 students a year for each of their four years on campus. We ask everyone reading this 125th Anniversary issue of EASTERN to think of how they might contribute to our climb up the mountain! Of course, if you have already contributed this year, please accept our sincere thanks!

Gina Benoit ’89 and John D. Heredia Endowed Scholarship Recipient Christos Stravoravdis ’14. Christos was one of only 10 students across the United States to be selected to participate in the Century America project of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges. “As a senior with a full load and a student teaching assignment, I had to quit my job to maintain full-time status and fit in my student teaching. I would not have been able to graduate without the scholarship assistance from the ECSU Foundation and Ms. Benoit; it meant a great deal to me.”

ENDOWMENT GROWTH IN MILLIONS

DONORS
An Exclusive Educational and Travel Experience

Join us in the Fall on a Panama Canal Cruise
November 19-30, 2014

Cruise in luxury aboard Crystal Serenity

Join us in the Spring in Peru
Featuring Machu Picchu
March 5-13, 2015

For more information call us 800-323-7373 or visit us econst.ahitravel.com