Hey Trey. Welcome to Eastern. How you settling in?

Fri, Aug 28, 4:33 PM
Shannon (Sophomore)

Hey, Eastern have a debate team?

Fri, Aug 28, 5:17 PM
Trey (Freshman)

Fri, Aug 28, 5:23 PM
Cafémantic on Main Street an Eastern alum runs it!

Sat, Aug 29, 11:09 AM

Hey, Eastern have a debate team?

Sat, Aug 29, 12:21 PM

No but they will help you start one

Sat, Aug 29, 12:21 PM

playing pool in SC cafe w Tim & Jess wanna join us?

Sun, Aug 30, 7:09 PM

Can I get you something?

Sun, Aug 30, 7:33 PM

Cant... gotta test on Monday

Sun, Aug 30, 7:16 PM

Pizza... no anchovies!

Sun, Aug 30, 7:41 PM
From the President’s Desk
Eastern Has a New Mascot
Father Larry: A Beacon of Faith
Back in the Day
Catching up with Adam Meikle ’00
Eastern Celebrates
Commencement
Fore!
Why I Give
President’s Leadership Luncheon
Eastern Fellows Class of 2015
Dual College Initiative
Matches Made at Eastern
Eastern is a Great College to Work For!
Linkedln
Honoring Kevin Crosbie
In Memoriam: Mary Lou DeVivo
Eastern Athletes Shine!
Class Notes
Final Thoughts
Dorothy Gardiner Lackman Scholarship

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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.
From the President’s Desk

I hear all the time from students and alumni that Eastern is a great place to get a college degree. Those feelings were confirmed recently when Eastern received the news that it was ranked the 27th top public university in the North Region by U.S. News and World Report — our highest ranking ever.

In addition, the Princeton Review recently named Eastern one of the “Best Colleges in the Northeast.” Eastern also received news this past summer that we have again been recognized as a “Great College to Work For” by the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Put those two realities together — a great place to learn and a great place to work — and it is no wonder that so many Eastern alumni have returned to campus as employees, either faculty or staff — 153 people to be exact! You can read about them in this issue of EASTERN Magazine; I hope their experiences remind you of the special times you had while at Eastern.

Speaking of “special,” we hope you are enjoying the new look we introduced in the previous edition of EASTERN Magazine. A colorful, visual and more concise read was our objective; judging from the feedback we have received from alumni, faculty, parents, donors and other friends of the University, it worked! This issue’s cover — mimicking a mobile app conversation between a freshman and sophomore — is our way of reminding all of us that the world of technology has fundamentally changed our lives.

By the time you read this, we will be only months away from opening Eastern’s new Fine Arts Instructional Center (FAIC). The FAIC will bring our theatre, music and visual arts majors “up the hill” to join the academic hub of the campus, and will provide a modern facility for students to practice, perform and exhibit their talents. With the entrance to the building facing High Street, we are committed to making this a cultural resource for our local and regional communities.

Several national recognitions, a new magazine look, a new freshman class, a new fine arts building — all signs of continued progress at your alma mater. We are so very proud of the almost 35,000 people — alumni, emeriti faculty, students, faculty and staff — who have made Eastern their home over the years. Your continued support and engagement in the University is what keeps us strong.

Elsa M. Núñez
President

Note: The text continues beyond what is visible in the image.
EASTERN HAS A
Eastern Connecticut State University has a new mascot, thanks to an SGA-led design project that eventually involved the entire campus.

“I believe the student body was in favor of a new mascot simply for the reason that the old mascot wasn’t intimidating enough,” said SGA Secretary Nicole Vigorita. “As a student, I like showing the other team what we’re made of and I think this new mascot will do just that.”

As part of the process for developing the new mascot, the SGA served as a focus group for the redesign process and played a vital role in ensuring that the student body’s voice was heard throughout.

To kick off the process, an e-mail was sent out to students encouraging them to submit a design. The only rules were to make sure the design was not offensive, gender specific or overly aggressive. The result was 11 viable options that were distributed via e-mail and voted on by students.

After a year of planning and designing, Eastern’s new Warrior mascot was ready to be unveiled this past summer. The winning design was submitted by student Alexa Senia.

“Alexa is extremely talented and this design helped showcase her dedication as well,” said SGA President Justin Ahern. “She put a piece of herself into that mascot design and now it has come to life. This process definitely helped show why student opinion is crucial to running a successful school.”

“Having students design their visions and then allowing the campus to cast their vote gave us valuable feedback on a variety of levels,” said Director of Student Affairs Michelle Delaney. “Since students were involved so early in the process, everyone was excited to see which design won. To see that come to life is great.”

As an ambassador for the University, the new mascot will be present at sporting events and other activities across campus. From athletic events to student orientation, to campus activities, students can expect the mascot to have a big presence on campus. There is also a hope that the mascot will be involved in events in the local community to promote Eastern’s brand.

“I love our new mascot!” said Eastern President Elsa Núñez. “This futuristic warrior reflects the grit and spirit of our athletes, and the “can do” attitude of all Eastern students. Go Warriors!”

**NEW MASCOT**
Most colleges have a chaplain or an office that serves the spiritual needs of the campus community. For 38 years, the Very Reverend Laurence LaPointe has been the shepherd of the faithful at Eastern Connecticut State University.

When “Father Larry” LaPointe began his work at Eastern in 1977, the Campus Ministry occupied a 20-square foot closet in Shafer Hall, with three walls, two doors, a window, desk and two chairs. It moved to the basement of Burr Hall, and Father Larry gained another wall and a second window. After a short stay at 288 High Street, Campus Ministry finally moved to its present location in the Knight House, nestled next to Winthrop Hall.

Father Larry’s educational background reflects his scholarly approach to the pulpit. He earned his B.A. degree in scholastic philosophy from St. Mary’s Seminary and University in Baltimore in 1966 and his master’s degree in education with a concentration in psychology from Johns Hopkins University in 1976.

“My prayers are not usually a prepared text. A prayer is more than a speech,” he said. “When I pray, I pray with my whole being, with my mind, body and soul. If it comes from the heart, it goes to the heart.”

The thousands of students, faculty and staff who have listened over the years to Father Larry’s prayers, homilies, invocations and benedictions will tell you of his special ability to say just the right thing, making each person in an assembly feel that he is speaking to them personally.

Susan Heyward, an ordained minister and director of the advising center, said Father Larry’s presence on campus is critical. “It is very important that students realize the importance of having both an opportunity and space to express their spirituality. Father Larry gives them value and dignity.”
Father Larry's calendar is full and busy. In addition to serving pasta dinners to students and hosting Thursday night activities at the Knight House, he holds weekly Mass in the Paul E. Johnson Sr. Conference Room on Sundays; holds Holy Day Masses; leads memorial services for Eastern students and faculty; and participates in groundbreaking and dedication ceremonies for Eastern buildings. He even finds time to attend sporting and cultural events on campus. In addition to his Eastern duties, Father Larry is also the pastor at St. Joseph's Church in Willimantic and at Sagrado Corazon de Jesus in Windham. At the heart of his work is his commitment to the well-being of everyone he encounters.

“I am concerned about what affects human beings, so I am on a quest for the well-being of others, their creative growth and internal peace,” said Father Larry. “Students have challenges — addictions, psychological problems, even suicidal tendencies and more, and sometimes I have to make referrals. I am also concerned about social justice for everyone.”

Father Larry recalls many times that he has led vigils and prayer services at the Foster Clock Tower and elsewhere on campus to fill the spiritual and emotional needs of families, students, faculty and staff following tragedy and loss.

All of Father Larry’s work, however, is not devoted solely to help people cope with grieving. He enjoys having a good time too. “Thursday Knight Café nights are so much fun. We help students. We celebrate. There’s music. President Núñez is a hoot when she shows up. She gets the students to dance and dances with them. Alumni still come back to campus and talk about the fun they had by the fireplace on Thursday night in the Student Center. I have baptized students. I go to weddings. Alumni send me Christmas cards with pictures of their families and new babies every year.”

In 1991 Eastern presented Father Larry with its Hermann Beckert Friends of the University Award for his service. As much a presence as Father Larry has been on Eastern’s campus, he has worn many other hats, including officiating at hundreds of weddings around the state, serving as a member of the
Back in the Day

Adam ’88 and Sandra (Marena) Baldinger ’88

Father Larry married us 25 years ago on June 9, 1990. It is a day we will never forget, and we owe many of our fondest memories of the day to Father Larry. We both were involved with Campus Ministry during our time at Eastern and got to know Father Larry quite well. The fact he knew us made our wedding day special and personal. During the ceremony, he told our guests that we had met at Eastern in Willimantic, a wonderful school, and then said, “Just a plug for the local school!”

Father Larry loves telling stories — usually humorous — and at our wedding, he told several. It was a rainy morning, and as Sandra’s family is Italian, he reminded the congregation that Italians believe rain is a sign of good luck on a marriage! Father Larry talked about the details that we put into our wedding. He also told a story about Michelangelo that he used to make a point. Later in the ceremony he announced “there is no second collection.” And that was Father Larry’s way — using humor to put people at ease so that he could impart wisdom.

He made us laugh. He made us feel calm and secure, and gave us wonderful advice about the years ahead. Father Larry marrying us was a beautiful gift. He made it even more special when he came to our reception, and before he left he returned our check for his services — it was his wedding gift to us.

He also provided a welcoming environment at Eastern where people of different faiths could share experiences at Sunday night mass, spaghetti night dinners and retreats. “I am not Catholic,” (Adam) “But it didn’t matter to Father Larry. He made me feel comfortable going to his Masses, and he always said something that I could take to heart personally.”
CATCHING UP WITH
ADAM MEIKLE ’00

MY HAPPIEST MOMENTS AT EASTERN…
were spent interacting with the faculty 
and students in the Math Department. 
I liked the fact that there was no sep-
aration between the faculty and the 
students in the department. It was truly a 
community and it reminded me more of a 
graduate level academic department.

MY FAVORITE CLASSES WERE…Physical 
Geography with Sherm Clebnik and 
Abstract Algebra with Steve Kenton. The 
material was interesting and the classes 
were well paced, so the material really 
resonated with me and the professors 
excelled at presenting it.

EASTERN WAS A GOOD FIT FOR ME BE-
CAUSE… it presented the right challenges 
for me. Tom Carter, a key faculty member 
in Eastern’s Math Department, came into 
my home to instruct me in math. He saw 
that I had the potential to move right into 
college-level coursework and he made 
arrangements for me to begin taking 
classes at Eastern in 1986 at the age of 
14. Carter had a unique ability to break 
down algebra for me and I went from a 
mediocre math student in middle school 
to a top-notch math student in college. 
My love for math was fueled by Carter.

THE TOUGHEST THING I HAVE HAD TO DO 
IN MY CAREER IS… discipline an employ-
ee. It’s very difficult to do something 
that could have a negative impact on 
someone’s future career and their family, 
in addition to potentially hurting their 
confidence. You wonder if you are doing 
the right thing or if there is a better way.

ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT PROJECTS 
I WAS INVOLVED WITH WAS… a massive 
project I worked on in 2011 with Cigna. It 
was a huge piece of software with many 
moving parts and a significant amount of 
data. It was different from many of the 
projects I led where we were just focused 
on writing fast, quality code.

GIVING BACK TO YOUR ALMA MATER… 
should be on everyone’s radar because a 
good education is priceless and the best 
investment anyone can make in their fu-
ture. Your education is priceless because 
you can use it over and over without any 
cost. Helping others obtain knowledge is 
the most important thing you can do.

ADAM MEIKLE ’00

MAJOR MATHEMATICS
CAMPUS ACTIVITY WECS RADIO AND TV, 
KAPPA MU EPSILON, CAMPUS LANTERN
EMPLOYER VICE PRESIDENT, QUANTITATIVE 
ANALYTICS; R4 TECHNOLOGIES
HOMETOWN WEST HARTFORD, CT
Eastern Celebrates Another Great Year!

Linda (Frank) Rizzo receives her Golden Diploma from President Núñez.


The Class of 1965!

Linda (Frank) Rizzo receives her Golden Diploma from President Núñez.


On Saturday, May 9, Reunion Day ushered in the return of more than 1,200 alumni and guests. Following a luncheon in their honor, the Jubilee Class of 1965 reconvened for an alumni reception in the Paul E. Johnson Sr. Conference Room where they were joined by the classes of 1945, 1950, 1955, 1960, 1970 and 1975. During the reception, the Class of ‘65 received Golden Diplomas commemorating 50 years since their college graduation. At the end of the day, alumni faithful marched from the Library to the Big Tent BBQ, set up on the Gelsi-Young parking lot.

More than 1,000 people enjoyed each other’s company, sumptuous food and classic rock and roll provided by Flip Entertainment LLC. As usual, a good time was had by all, as alumni, new graduates, and family and friends came together to share good times and common experiences.

Other reunion events included a CAB reunion; a reunion of Honors alumni; awards for Education students; a hooding ceremony for this year’s master’s degree recipients; a reception for alumni from the Master of Science in Organizational Management; and a golf scramble and alumni game for the men’s soccer program.
More than 13,000 family members and friends filled the XL Center in Hartford on Tuesday, May 12, to cheer on 1,130 undergraduates and 70 graduate students receiving their diplomas at Eastern’s 125th Commencement exercises.

Award-winning author and distinguished Eastern alumna Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie ’01 was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa during the Commencement Exercises, and offered remarks following presentation of her honorary degree. Adichie graduated summa cum laude from Eastern in 2001 with a degree in Communication. She was also awarded Eastern’s Distinguished Alumni Award in 2004.


In her remarks, she told the graduates that she cherished the bachelor’s degree she received at Eastern. “You are very fortunate to have received your education at Connecticut’s public liberal arts university, where professors are keen to see you succeed.”

Adichie recalled that when she graduated 14 years ago, “I had doubts and worries. ‘What next?’ was the question on my mind. You are worried today just as I was. You should be worried, because it shows that you care. It is okay not to have all the answers.”

In concluding her remarks, Adichie encouraged the graduates to “make an effort and speak the truth. It is okay to say, ‘I am wrong’ or ‘I don’t know.’ Life on Earth is short. Each moment that we are not truthful to ourselves, we are wasting our time on Earth.”

In her charge to graduates, Eastern President Elsa Núñez said, “Our nation and the global society we live in are looking to you for leadership. As you embark on your career, take care of yourself, take care of your families, but make sure that you take time to help others when you can. You will find that supporting and helping others strengthens you. As the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu wrote, ‘From caring comes courage.’

“You are very fortunate to have received your education at Connecticut’s public liberal arts university, where professors are keen to see you succeed.”

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie ’01
2015 Honorary Degree Recipient
Eastern’s annual golf tournament was another great success this past June 15. Held for the 10th year at Lake of Isles Golf Course at Foxwoods Resort, the tournament drew 116 golfers and grossed more than $70,000 for support of the Athletic Department and for scholarship support. Over the past 10 years, the tournament has generated more than $825,000 in philanthropic giving.

Presidio served as this year’s title sponsor. Other teams who showed up to offer their support came from such long-standing sponsors as Savings Institute Bank and Trust, Barnes & Noble, Blum-Shapiro, Chartwells, Constitution Coach, Windham Pepsi-Cola, Walmart, Webster Bank, First Niagara, the SLAM Collaborative, Windham Hospital, Kahan Kerensky & Caposella and the Mohegan Tribe. The first-place trophy went to the team from Walmart, with Presidio taking second place and H. T. Partners taking third place.
Robert W. Dolph was remembered at Eastern for many things during his 19-year career (1968-86), including his expertise in the classroom, his concern for the education and welfare of children, and his tireless efforts to re-establish an early childhood educational facility on campus. When he passed away in 1996, the Dr. Robert W. Dolph Scholarship was established to support education majors with financial need. This past winter the ECSU Foundation received more than 100 memorial gifts totaling more than $11,500 for the Dolph Scholarship following the sudden passing of two of Dolph’s children — Susan and Bob.

Susan Ellen (Dolph) Leach ’80 of Manchester, NH, passed away on Dec. 31, 2014, surrounded by her family and friends after an extended battle with cancer. Susan was born in Buzzards Bay, MA. Although she was only 64, many of her friends said she must have felt like she was 93 because of her 29-year marriage to her husband Dan. As Dan recounts, the story of their love — which began with a blind date where they both arrived wearing a fake nose and glasses to disguise themselves if things didn’t go well — was unconventional yet strong and true. Susan inherited her father’s love of educating children. She was a graduate of Plymouth State College with a degree in elementary education, later earning her master’s degree at Eastern. After 35 years of teaching first grade in Nashua, NH, she retired having taught more than 1,000 students, able to remember every student who passed through her classroom.

Susan’s younger brother, Robert T. Dolph ’78 of Stratford, beloved husband of Nancy Schneider Dolph ’80, passed away on Jan. 26 after a courageous battle with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy. A financial analyst for Webster Bank, Bob was born in Lawrence, MA. For as long as he was physically able, Bob was a fixture at community sporting events cheering on local youth in the Stratford area.

“You can count on one hand the number of scholarships at Eastern that have received more than 100 memorial contributions in one fiscal year,” said Ken DeLisa, vice president for institutional advancement. “This clearly speaks to the number of lives that Susan and Bob touched in their respective communities. Professor Dolph would be proud to see what Susan and Bob accomplished and how they were also focused on helping future generations succeed at the collegiate level. This is a tremendous legacy for the Dolph family.”

Anyone interested in contributing to the Dolph Scholarship can contact Joe McGann in the Development Office at (860) 465-4514.
The Linda Alapi Juras Memorial Endowed Scholarship was established in 2014 in memory of Linda Juras ’71 M ’76 with a gift from her daughter Lisa Girard and Lisa’s husband James P. Girard ’97. Mrs. Juras received both her degrees in Early Childhood Education at Eastern, and taught first grade for 36 years at Lyme Consolidated School, where she was named a Connecticut Teacher of the Year. Scholarship recipients must be Early Education or Elementary Education majors or minors in good academic standing, with financial need.

“Lisa and I felt this was one small way to give back to Eastern, a place where Linda received a great education,” said James Girard. "It was a fantastic start to a fantastic 36-year career at Lyme Consolidated School (Lyme, CT) for a woman who grew up on a farm and was the first in her family to go to college. I had a similar path, graduating from Windham Tech and Three Rivers Community College before matriculating to Eastern and like my mother-in-law, Linda Juras, I have been able to carve out a successful career. Lisa and I knew that establishing this memorial scholarship would be a great way to honor Linda and establish a legacy that lives on forever.”

Art Professor Claudia Widdiss has been one of Eastern’s best faculty donors for a number of years. For most of that time, she has supported a scholarship for the late Sandy Taylor, local poet, professor and publisher. Thanks to Claudia’s longtime support and a recent flurry of donations from others, Taylor’s scholarship is now endowed.

When Claudia’s husband, Arnold Prince, passed away in April 2014, she decided to redirect her giving. To assist Eastern art students with financial need, Claudia has established a scholarship in memory of her late husband, a prominent author, sculptor and longtime art professor at the Rhode Island School of Design. The fund is about halfway to reaching the endowment level, and Claudia expects to add to it from the sale of some of her own sculpture this year.

CLAUDIA WIDDISS

The Linda Alapi Juras Memorial Endowed Scholarship was established in 2014 in memory of Linda Juras ’71 M ’76 with a gift from her daughter Lisa Girard and Lisa’s husband James P. Girard ’97. Mrs. Juras received both her degrees in Early Childhood Education at Eastern, and taught first grade for 36 years at Lyme Consolidated School, where she was named a Connecticut Teacher of the Year. Scholarship recipients must be Early Education or Elementary Education majors or minors in good academic standing, with financial need.

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CLAUDIA WIDDISS

LINDA JURAS ’71 M’76

James Girard ’97
Business Administration Major, Summa Cum Laude
Vice President of Human Resources, Government Communications
Systems Division
Harris Corporation
Recognizing Outstanding Donors and Alumni

The annual President’s Leadership Awards Luncheon was held on Sept. 18 to honor and thank the University’s leadership level donors. The luncheon is the premier donor appreciation event of the year; in addition to recognizing Eastern’s top donors, the event also honored several distinguished Eastern alumni.

“Today is special. Every day I am reminded of the generosity of our family of donors, but today, I get to say ‘thank you’ in person,” said Eastern President Elsa Núñez. “I am amazed by your generosity, and I am humbled by your commitment to Eastern and to our students. Your role as leadership level donors is more important than ever, for you are leading by example. I know those efforts are paying off, and I thank you for that leadership.”

Ken DeLisa, vice president for institutional advancement, spoke to the fundraising achievements of the past year. Gifts to the ECSU Foundation exceeded $2 million for the fourth straight year. In addition, the number of alumni making gifts to Eastern has grown by 250 percent since 2003, with a record 2,350 alumni donors.

“Through your personal philanthropy and commitment to Eastern, you inspire our passion for higher education and for creating opportunities for our students to succeed,” said DeLisa. “We are blessed to have you as part of our family and for your friendship and generous support of our students and faculty.”

Following the luncheon service, Núñez, DeLisa and alumna Kathleen Fabian, vice president of the Alumni Association, announced this year’s awards. Professor Emeritus Charles Prewitt received the ECSU Foundation Distinguished Faculty/Staff Donor Award. Four years ago, Prewitt made a generous donation in honor of his late wife Virginia to help Eastern open the Virginia and Charles Prewitt...
Your role as leadership level donors is more important than ever, for you are leading by example.


“The high point of my time at Eastern was the creation of the Peace and Human Rights minor,” said Prewitt. “That program and today’s award are reminders of the importance of peace and human rights in education, and that the goal of world peace is possible.”

David Engelson ’67, M’70 received the ECSU Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award. At age 27, Engelson became the youngest principal in Connecticut in 1970, and he served as an elementary school principal in Vernon for 32 years until his retirement in 2002. Since then, he has served as executive director and now CEO of the Hockanum Valley Community Council. In relating his 35-year career in education and his current work at HVCC, Engelson said, “I enjoy being out in our local community meeting people. It is an honor to receive this prestigious award today. Thank you!”

Noted New York City psychotherapist Jonathan B. Alpert ’95 received the ECSU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award. In addition to his private practice, Alpert is an author and media consultant. His book “Be Fearless: Change Your Life in 28 Days,” has been published in nine countries, and he is a frequent contributor to Inc.com and the Huffington Post. Alpert has also appeared on The Today Show, CNN, FOX and Good Morning America, and has been interviewed by newspapers, magazines and radio networks around the world. “Eastern gave me a solid education and offered me really interesting classes,” said Alpert. “It taught me to express myself and welcomed my ideas. Eastern embraced curiosity.”

Ellen Lang ’81 and her husband, Jim Watson, received the ECSU Foundation Distinguished Donor Award. Together they have built the Ellen L. Lang ’81 and James E. Watson, M.D. Endowed Scholarship to a current endowment of more than $50,000, and hope to bring the balance to six figures in their lifetime. With other generous gifts, Lang and Watson will soon pass $75,000 in total giving to Eastern, and as members of Eastern’s Legacy Society, have provided for Eastern through their estate plan. Lang is also president of the Alumni Association Board of Directors, for the second time. “Eastern has a special place in our hearts,” said Lang. I was a nontraditional student and was already a registered nurse when I attended here. Eastern gave me a chance to advance and succeed.”
Three highly distinguished alumni were inducted into the seventh class of the Eastern Fellows Program on March 4. As part of their induction, Brian Bohling ’83, Michael Johnson ’97 and David Whitehead ’84 offered professional advice and discussed their Eastern experiences and distinguished careers with a packed house of students in the Paul E. Johnson Sr. Community Conference Room. “We all went to Eastern and we made it, so you can make it, too,” opened Bohling. “Be proud of where you come from and go for it.”

A former business administration student, Bohling advanced to the highest levels of human resources management over a 29-year career, working for such corporate leaders as Trane, Campbell Soup, Honeywell and the Hess Corp.

Johnson, a former biology student in Eastern’s Honor’s Program, is an oral and maxillofacial surgeon who has appeared on Connecticut Magazine’s annual list of Top Dentists for the past seven years and is now a full-time instructor at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

Whitehead, a graduate of Eastern’s business administration program, is president and CEO of William W. Backus Hospital and Windham Hospital, and senior vice president of Hartford HealthCare.

The fellows commented on the importance of developing mentors. “Mentors are a key ingredient to success,” said Whitehead. “Caring faculty kept me on track as a student. Be proactive, create those relationships; it will help you here and in your career.” Johnson added, “At Eastern, I was fortunate to be part of an exceptional department with accessible and enthusiastic faculty.”

When asked how he has been able to work in a variety professional sectors, Whitehead said the ability to lead and learn has made all the difference. “Leadership is being able to envision a value set, and then communicating it.”

Speaking to the importance of work ethic, Bohling said, “People who do what they like to do are really good at it, compared to those who are only there for a paycheck.” Johnson added, “If you truly care, it shows; you can’t fake it.” Whitehead said, “Be in the moment; don’t work on autopilot.”
Due to the generosity of Eastern donors such as the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving, the SBM Charitable Foundation and First Niagara Bank, students in Eastern’s Dual College Initiative (DCI) have the opportunity to embrace the dream of a college education. Since its launch in 2007, the program has worked closely with inner-city students in pursuit of their college degree.

The DCI takes high school graduates from Hartford and Manchester whose academic credentials would not qualify them to enter college under normal conditions, and surrounds them with Eastern’s student-centered support system of tutoring, advising, financial aid and other services. During their first semester, students take one course at Eastern and several remedial courses at Quinebaug Valley Community College in Willimantic, where they receive intensive instruction in reading, writing, mathematics and other core academic skills. Throughout this time, DCI students live on Eastern’s campus as part of the student community, making friends, establishing relationships with faculty and staff, joining student clubs and immersing themselves in college life.

Graduates of the program are prospering. **Orquidea Burgos ’12** is a graduate assistant at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, where she is pursuing her master’s degree in clinical psychology and working at a center for children with special needs. **Federica Bucca ’13** is a hall director at Providence College, where she is working on her master’s degree in education and counseling. Federica also interns at Wheaton College on their Sexual Assault and Misconduct Response Team. **Whitley Mingo ’13** is the Nurturing Connections Coordinator at St. Francis Hospital, where she works with young mothers and their children, and is also enrolled in the Master of Social Work program at Springfield College. **Kayla Bynum ’13** is a university specialist in the African American Cultural Center at the University of Connecticut. **Jahaira Camacho ’14** is an outreach educator for the Generations Family Health Center. **Todd Aviles ’14** is working at Our Piece of the Pie, a program for urban youth in Willimantic. **Ivori Harrison ’13** works in human services at Community Solutions, Inc., and **Sherona Ramsey and Treshia Rattigan** just graduated from Eastern in May 2015! In addition to the success of graduates and the aspirations of the 2015 entering class, 17 DCI students continue in the program this fall, with about half of them having GPAs of 3.0 or higher.

**Dual College Initiative Continues Serving Inner-City Students**

Due to the generosity of Eastern donors such as the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving, the SBM Charitable Foundation and First Niagara Bank, students in Eastern’s Dual College Initiative (DCI) have the opportunity to embrace the dream of a college education. Since its launch in 2007, the program has worked closely with inner-city students in pursuit of their college degree.

The DCI takes high school graduates from Hartford and Manchester whose academic credentials would not qualify them to enter college under normal conditions, and surrounds them with Eastern’s student-centered support system of tutoring, advising, financial aid and other services. During their first semester, students take one course at Eastern and several remedial courses at Quinebaug Valley Community College in Willimantic, where they receive intensive instruction in reading, writing, mathematics and other core academic skills. Throughout this time, DCI students live on Eastern’s campus as part of the student community, making friends, establishing relationships with faculty and staff, joining student clubs and immersing themselves in college life.

Graduates of the program are prospering. **Orquidea Burgos ’12** is a graduate assistant at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, where she is pursuing her master’s degree in clinical psychology and working at a center for children with special needs. **Federica Bucca ’13** is a hall director at Providence College, where she is working on her master’s degree in education and counseling. Federica also interns at Wheaton College on their Sexual Assault and Misconduct Response Team. **Whitley Mingo ’13** is the Nurturing Connections Coordinator at St. Francis Hospital, where she works with young mothers and their children, and is also enrolled in the Master of Social Work program at Springfield College. **Kayla Bynum ’13** is a university specialist in the African American Cultural Center at the University of Connecticut. **Jahaira Camacho ’14** is an outreach educator for the Generations Family Health Center. **Todd Aviles ’14** is working at Our Piece of the Pie, a program for urban youth in Willimantic. **Ivori Harrison ’13** works in human services at Community Solutions, Inc., and **Sherona Ramsey and Treshia Rattigan** just graduated from Eastern in May 2015! In addition to the success of graduates and the aspirations of the 2015 entering class, 17 DCI students continue in the program this fall, with about half of them having GPAs of 3.0 or higher.
Vera (McGovern) and David Flight ’51

David Flight came to Willimantic after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania and from a graduate program at Yale University. He arrived in the spring 1951 semester and trained with Sarah Drayton in the model school. At a Friday seminar of early childhood majors he met Vera McGovern, who was reporting her experiences while training off campus. She chased him until he caught her and in August 2014 they celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary with their three children and three grandchildren at EastView, a retirement community in Middlebury, VT.

Carol (Sexton) and Don Cohen ’62

After leaving the military in December 1959, and in need of completing my college education, I was able to gain quick acceptance into Willimantic State Teacher’s College for the spring semester. The first class I attended was Dr. Ann Curran’s general math class in Shafer Hall. I chose an empty seat near the middle of the room, a significant choice as sitting in front of me was my future wife, Carol Sexton. Since our class was small, Carol and I were in several courses together, which helped our friendship grow and blossom. As the next two and a half years went by, we planned our careers in education and a marriage. Since then, we have raised three fantastic children together — Tim, an architect; Matt, an electrical engineer and vice president of his company; and Melissa, a physical therapist — each flourishing in their own careers. Carol and I have devoted our careers to the children of East Hartford, and are proud of our accomplishments and relationships over the years. Upon retirement we moved to Florida, enjoying life and new friendships. The most powerful bond in our relationship through all these years is our love and respect for each other and the accomplishments of our children and their families. Little did we know that a chance encounter in a math class so long ago would lead to an enduring relationship 54 years later!
Christina (Amato) Turner ’09 and Andrew Turner ’08

We met in fall 2006 when our roommates introduced us. We were both Sport and Leisure Management majors with concentrations in Health and Fitness but we had surprisingly never crossed paths in the classroom prior to our introduction that fall. We had a lot of common interests and friends, which made for a great connection. We have been together ever since and married in June 2013. We reside in Hamilton, NY, where we are putting our degrees and experiences at Eastern to great use working for Colgate University. I am the director of recreation and chair of the Physical Education Department, and Andrew is the director of fitness and an assistant strength and conditioning coach for the Athletics Department. We have been here for more than three years, bought a home last year and have a two-year-old dog named Chumlee. Thanks, Eastern, for a great education and bringing us together!

Eric McKenzie ’10 and Alicia Dixon-McKenzie ’11

Eric and I met my freshman year when he was a sophomore. We began dating in November 2007 and have been together ever since. We were both involved in the Eastern community, in such activities as M.A.L.E.S, Umoja Dance Team, West Indian Society, as an office assistant for Housing and Residential Life, as well as a resident assistant for two years. We got married on July 3, 2014, on a beach in southern Connecticut. He is a corrections counselor for the Department of Corrections and I am the hall director of Noble Hall at Eastern. We are also expecting our very first child, who will also be living here with us on campus. We loved Eastern and we loved our Eastern experience. This is not just our Alma Mater, this is home.

Baby makes three! Madison was born on March 26, 2015.

Jill (Macaulay) Levasseur ’87 and Paul R. Levasseur Jr ’89

My husband Paul and I met at Eastern in 1986. I was a senior and he was a sophomore. We were both runners on the cross-country teams, which shared coaches and vans for meets. After graduating, we continued our courtship until we were married on Feb. 16, 1991. This coming year we will celebrate 24 years of happiness. We often talk about “Romantic Willimantic” and even drove our kids (now 19 and 16) to campus to show them the steps of the Sports Center where we first met. We continue to run although not as fast as we used to!
Many Eastern alumni have returned to their alma mater as employees to pursue careers in higher education. From athletic coaches to professors, to administrative assistants, they share with colleagues their institutional knowledge and first-hand understanding of the ways Eastern can change a young person’s life. Would you believe there are currently 153 Eastern alumni working and teaching at their alma mater!

“When we hire Eastern graduates, we know that they have received a quality education, and are familiar with the environment and cultural norms,” said Ken DeLisa, vice president for institutional advancement. Among the list of 153 alumni currently working at Eastern, we highlight just four alumni who are helping to make Eastern such a special place.
Diana Pepin ’92/’99 knew that she would end up at Eastern. Growing up in Willimantic and watching the softball team compete at the national level, she thought it was natural for her to become a student athlete at Eastern. She followed that path, living on campus, majoring in sociology and playing third base for the softball team, helping them to win a national championship in 1990 and playing the next year for another national championship on their own home field.

“The people at Eastern made it feel special. My friends, other students and professors created a positive experience,” said Pepin. She graduated and a few years later returned for her second degree, this time in physical education. She then taught for two years at Windham High School and was Eastern’s assistant basketball coach under Denise Bierly. Pepin’s ultimate goal was to coach softball at Eastern, and in 2000 she became the assistant softball coach and was named head coach a year later.

So far in her tenure, the 2010 and 2011 teams stand out the most in Pepin’s memory. Not just because they went to the Division III World Series both years, finishing as high as third in in the nation in 2010, but because they were a team without a home. The new softball field was being installed, and her team spent two years playing their home games in Storrs. “I told them, it doesn’t matter where we play. It made us closer as a team. We called ourselves the Road Warriors.”

Pepin develops lifetime relationships with her student athletes, and many of them go on to coach at various levels. She was also able to reconnect alumni to the program, showing them that the program’s tradition of success on and off the field is still alive. “Eastern has been good to me. I can’t see myself being somewhere else.”
“I’m one of these people who never left,” said Ken Bedini ‘78, whose wife of 34 years also graduated from Eastern, as did their two sons. Bedini first came to Eastern after working in an Electrolux factory. “I saw people in their 40s, 50s and 60s working there and realized that was not where I wanted to be,” he explained. It was time to further his education, and Bedini chose Eastern. In his junior year, he became an R.A., feeling that it would be more fun enforcing the rules than breaking them. As an R.A., Bedini was encouraged by the director of housing and the dean of students to pursue higher education. When he was offered a full-time hall director position after graduation, he accepted, earning his master’s degree at the University of Connecticut at the same time.

His career at Eastern continued when he became the director of student activities. “After 26 years in that position, the director of housing resigned and I was asked to keep that office afloat,” said Bedini. Since then he has worked as director of housing and residential life, interim dean of students, interim vice president for student affairs, dean of students, and is now vice president for student affairs. “It was never my plan to stay in one place,” said Bedini, who had opportunities to apply for other jobs. “There was never any added value (to leave). Eastern has always been a great place to work.”

Over the years, Bedini has helped Eastern change for the better, but the students still arrive much the same, “looking forward to what their future holds, full of anxiety and expectations. I see young men and women come in a little unsophisticated and after four years they are on to great lives and careers. We get to see the result of the work that we do.”
“I didn’t pick Eastern, Eastern picked me,” said Kemesha Wilmot ’05, the coordinator of the Intercultural Center. In high school Wilmot was told she would never attend college, but while working in a clothing store an Eastern student encouraged her to look at the school. “I had no idea where Eastern was located,” she said. Wilmot applied anyway and was offered admittance through the STEP/CAP program. After gaining a spot at Eastern, the school transformed her.

“I found a supportive staff dedicated to my success,” Wilmot said. She liked that Eastern was a small community. She was in class with people who she recognized on campus, and could turn to when she had questions. Wilmot was very involved on campus and was part of a program for minority students that sent her to conferences and workshops. She was also an R.A. for four years.

“Once I was an R.A. I knew that I would spend my career in higher education.” Wilmot worked full time at Missouri State University as a residence hall director following her graduation. She then returned to Connecticut as a hall director at Central, where she began working toward her master’s degree. In 2008 Eastern welcomed her back as a hall director and then a professional academic advisor.

With her master’s degree completed in 2010, Wilmot worked in the Advising Center, and later became the assistant director of career services before being hired as the coordinator of the Intercultural Center. “It was always my plan to return to Eastern and give back to the community that gave me so much.

“I like that it is easy to work with other departments. I can refer students to the departments and support that they need. The entire campus works hard for student success.” Over the years, Wilmot spoke so highly of her time as a student and employee that her mother, Eva McDonald, decided to matriculate to Eastern and graduated in 2014.
Darren Robert ’92, professor of kinesiology and physical education, enrolled at Eastern right after high school, living on campus with a friend from his hometown of North Stonington. He describes his freshman year as typical, but by his sophomore year Robert was married, living in West Virginia with his wife, and attending West Virginia University. By his senior year his wife was pregnant, and they wanted to raise their family in Connecticut, so Robert became an Eastern student once again.

“I was a commuter my senior year, and a much better student,” said Robert. “I was named outstanding major in my senior year.” Robert worked 35 hours a week while earning his degree, doing everything from working construction, to bartending, to teaching preschool.

After graduation, Robert returned to West Virginia for his master’s degree, then came back to Connecticut to teach in the public schools. When Eastern reached out to him for a one-year appointment, Robert took the opportunity. He earned his doctoral degree and three years later received a permanent position at Eastern. “It was the only university I applied to,” he said. “I love the students, the faculty and staff. Eastern is a great place to work.”

Robert sees little difference between today’s students and his peers in the early 1990s. Many are “first generation, part-time workers, and not the best students in the beginning,” said Robert, who feels that those who don’t initially apply themselves can change for the better at Eastern. “Eastern is the land of opportunity.”

Another constant about Eastern has been small class sizes. Robert can get to know his students and develop trusting relationships. “I know when they haven’t slept. I know when they procrastinated on a paper.” As a former student, he can also relate to student experiences. “When they say they got stuck in Burnap Hall I know what they are talking about.”
Cities where our alumni reside in the United States

14,661 Eastern Connecticut State University registered LinkedIn Users

INDUSTRY

- Sales
- Education
- Operations
- Information Technology
- Support
- Finance
- Administrative
- Community & Social Services
- Entrepreneurship
- Media and Communications

WHERE THEY WORK

- Travelers
- The Hartford
- University of Connecticut
- Cigna
- Aetna
- Mohegan Sun
- Pfizer
- UnitedHealth Group
- Pratt & Whitney
- CT Dept. of Energy

WHAT THEY STUDIED

- Business, Marketing
- Business Administration
- Social Sciences
- Communication, Journalism
- Psychology
- Communication & Media Studies
- Management & Operations
- Education
- English and Literature
- Communication, General
Philanthropists Honor Local Publisher

The Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation has partnered with local philanthropist David Foster and his wife Marilyn to create a scholarship program in memory of the late Kevin Crosbie, long-time publisher of the Willimantic Chronicle. The $50,000 scholarship, funded by a joint contribution from the Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation and the Foster Family Foundation, will support Windham High School graduates attending Eastern. Priority will be given to students interested in music or communications; four students will receive four-year scholarships in the amount of $3,000 a year. Mrs. Crosbie has also started a fund that will support a future endowment.
Mary Lou DeVivo ’60 passed away on July 1 after a short battle with cancer, leaving behind a legacy at Eastern and in the local Willimantic community that is unparalleled. “With Mary Lou’s passing, the Eastern family has lost a dear friend, a loyal alumnae and a generous supporter,” said Eastern President Elsa Núñez. “Mary Lou’s love of her alma mater was obvious through her active involvement on our Alumni Association and her strong support of our students. We will truly miss her advocacy and friendship.”

When Mary Lou graduated in 1960, she was serving her second year as class president and was in a number of campus organizations. She spent many years employed as a preschool and kindergarten teacher and later served as the director of religious studies at St Joseph’s Parish in Windham. She helped her husband, James, with their family business, Willimantic Waste Paper, and when Jim passed away suddenly in 1996, Mary Lou took over as CEO, grew the business and was joined by her sons, Tom and Tim.

Perhaps Mary Lou was most known for her involvement in community-based organizations. She was a founding member of the Covenant Soup Kitchen and the Willimantic Co-op. She served as chair of the Board of Directors of the Access Agency, was an active member of the Windham Library Board, the Victorian Neighborhood Association, the Windham Garden Club, and many other local groups. Mary Lou started the Windham Reads Program and was an advocate for literacy education in the local schools.

Her involvement with Eastern mirrored her commitment to the local community, and she remained involved with the University as a member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors over the years. Through her business, a number of Eastern students obtained internships. Her philanthropy was equally special. In addition to contributing funds in support of athletics, to honor her classmates Barbara and John Zulick and to support the Class of 1960 Scholarship Fund, she created the Mary Lou Corbett DeVivo Endowed Scholarship in 2010. This past fall, the ECSU Foundation honored Mary Lou with its Distinguished Donor Award.

“Mary Lou was always of high spirits, and her enthusiasm fueled her colleagues on our Alumni Association Board of Directors,” said Kenneth DeLisa, vice president for institutional advancement. “Whether it was as a sponsor for a fundraising event, a contributor to one of our scholarship funds or creating her own endowed scholarship, Mary Lou’s generosity and genuine love of Eastern ensures that our students will benefit from her support in perpetuity. We will miss her greatly.”
Men’s Lacrosse

New coach Brian Tilley led Eastern to the championship game of the Little East Conference playoffs for the 13th time in 14 seasons, with Eastern and Keene State meeting for the seventh straight season and for the 12th time in the past 13 years. Eastern leads all LEC teams with eight playoff titles.

Women’s Lacrosse

A young team that started six sophomores and one freshman lost five matches by a total of six goals. In the first round of the LEC playoffs, the Warriors battled Southern Maine through two overtimes in a one-goal loss. Two sophomores and a freshman represented Eastern on the All-LEC team.

Baseball

Eastern’s late-season surge carried it to within one win of a second straight Little East Conference tournament title. Sitting with a 7-10 record in early April, Eastern won 16 of 22 games to reach the LEC tournament title game. After losing their LEC tournament opener, the Warriors rode hot pitching to win four games in three days and force a winner-take-all final.

Softball

The Warriors won an unprecedented sixth straight Little East Conference regular-season title and its first LEC tournament title since 2012. An NCAA tournament appearance was the sixth in the last eight years for Eastern. Junior shortstop Alyssa Hancock was named the program’s 42nd NCAA All-America since 1982 and third LEC Player-of-the-Year choice in the past four years.

Men’s and Women’s Track & Field

Freshmen Savonnah Artis and Taylor Driggers were recognized by the Little East Conference in its season-ending women’s outdoor track & field major awards program. Driggers received recognition as the LEC Rookie Indoor Field Athlete-of-the-Year and the outdoor Field Athlete-of-the-Year. Artis was named outdoor Rookie Field Athlete-of-the-Year. Junior Lee Cattanach was named to the Capital One Academic Division III All-District Team, becoming Eastern’s second track & field and cross country athlete to earn the award.

(clockwise from upper left) Paige Schneider (women’s lacrosse); Blake Smaldone (men’s lacrosse); Sam Rossetti (softball); Taylor Driggers (track); Lee Cattanach (track); Andrew Scully (baseball)
Edmondson Chosen as Olympic Coach

Bonnie Edmondson ’87, a two-time national champion in the hammer throw, has been named assistant coach for throws for Team USA at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Edmondson joins four-time Olympian and Southern Illinois head coach Connie Price-Smith, who will serve as head coach for the women’s team. Edmondson is a two-time national champion in the hammer throw, was a two-time Division III All-American while at Eastern, and still holds University records in the hammer throw, the discus and the shot put. She has coached at all levels, including high school, college and Team USA. An assistant coach at the 1998 World Junior Championships, she was also Team USA’s throwing events coach at the 2012 and 2014 IAAF World Indoor Championships. She is currently the Assistant Men’s and Women’s Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field Coach at Trinity College.

Runksmeier Named Eastern’s New Athletic Director

Lori Runksmeier, who has spent nearly 25 years in athletic administration — the last 16 as director of athletics at New England College — was named director of athletics at Eastern Connecticut State University on June 17, and began her tenure on Aug. 7.

At New England College — an NCAA Division III institution of 1,000 undergraduates affiliated with the North Atlantic Conference — Runksmeier oversaw 19 intercollegiate programs, as well as club and recreation sports and served as an adjunct faculty member in the Kinesiology Department.

“Eastern is fortunate to have Lori Runksmeier as our new director of athletics,” said Ken Bedini, vice president for student affairs. “She brings with her a wealth of experience that includes serving the North Atlantic Conference, the NCAA Division III governance structure and as a student affairs administrator on her campus. These experiences are a great fit for Eastern and we are excited for the leadership she will provide to our University community.”

Prior to her appointment at NEC, the Ledyard, IA, native held various athletic department positions at the College of Saint Benedict, St. Cloud State University and Minnesota State University, Mankato.
Mary Claire (Gormley) Avery says, “At 88 years of age, I don’t get around much anymore!” She is enjoying family life, with six grandchildren to keep her entertained.

Kenneth Ring began his college career with the class of 1951 at Willimantic State Teacher’s College, but left early to pursue a career in the plumbing field, and later became a plumbing, heating and general construction supervisor. Ken retired at the age of 58 and returned to Eastern, graduating in 1990 with his nephew Patrick Daley ’90.

Eleanor (Christensen) Waring lives in Washington, IA, with her husband Arnold after residing for more than 40 years in Dixon, IL, 100 miles west of Chicago. She has been a consistent supporter of the Class of 1951 Scholarship and fondly recalls getting her first job offer. “I received an offer in the winter of my senior year for $2,700 from the Centerbrook School District (part of Essex, CT),” said Eleanor. “By the time I started in the fall the offer had been increased to $2,900. I spent seven good years teaching in Centerbrook and Glastonbury before moving to Illinois where I taught for 25 years.”

LeRoy Russell Burgess retired from Putnam Public Schools in 1986. He lives on Cape Cod.

Joyce (Gardner) Walker traveled after retirement then moved to Florida to help with her daughter and grandson.

Reisa (Goldfarb) Sweet marched with Dr. Martin Luther King in Selma, AL. She taught for 40 years in the public schools and did many assemblies for students at schools and a college on Jim Crow laws and the climate that existed during that time period.

Patricia (Avery) Morrissey retired in 2004 after 44 dedicated years of teaching.

Donald Beerworth was recently inducted into the Rockville High School Hall of Fame.

Jean-Henry Mathurin retired in August 2014 as the media coordinator for Fairfield University after 34 years of service. After graduating from Eastern, he served as a hospital corpsman in the U.S. Navy/Fleet Marine Force in Vietnam and taught secondary mathematics in Thompson and in Madison. Jean-Henry received a M.A. from Fairfield University as well as a certificate of advanced study, and was a freelance media production management specialist for several Fortune 500 companies before his career took him to Fairfield in 1980. He and his wife Sharon Cohen live in Newtown, celebrated their 35th anniversary in October 2015, and have two sons, Seth and Jordan.

Judith (Edwards) Boligan taught elementary school for 27 years and retired in 2003. She has three children and seven grandchildren.

Ellen Lang ’81, President, ECSU Alumni Association
To make a gift in memory of Mary Lou, go to www1.easternct.edu and click on “Give” in the upper right corner of the home page, or mail your gift directly to the Office of Alumni Affairs, 83 Windham Street, Willimantic, CT 06226.
Edith (Everts) Brainard and her husband retired to Maine 15 years ago and are turning their camp into their permanent home. They have traveled extensively to China, Antarctica, South America and the Amazon, and also to Europe, Mexico, and Central America. They hope to do more traveling before they get too old.

Carol (Weber) Colvin and Lawrence Colvin ’64 are enjoying life in Florida during the winter. They continue to travel and enjoy river cruising and keeping up with their six grandchildren.

Lance C. Magnuson retired in 1999 from a very rewarding career teaching Biology, Anatomy and Physiology at Montville High School. He is actively involved with Joshua Trust of Mansfield, runs competitively with the Mohegan Striders, and is owner of the Log’s End Christmas Tree Farm. He is also participating in several habitat improvement projects with the Natural Resources Conservation Services on his property in Lebanon; he and his wife Pauline have placed much of their land into “conservation easement.”

William Meehan ’70MS founded Meehan and Daughters in 1970 and co-founded the Connecticut Soccer Coaches Association. He also started the Meehan and Daughters Real Estate Endowed Scholarship at Eastern. William and his wife Virginia ’68 have two daughters, Heather and Lindsay.

Norma (Lawton) Wu delayed her graduation from Eastern to participate in the International Farm Youth Exchange (IFYE), spending six months in Taiwan. She recently celebrated her 72nd birthday with her husband, three daughters, three sons-in-law and four grandchildren. Norma has been running her own company, Ways Unlimited, for 30 years and has been treasurer for the national IFYE Association of the USA, Inc., for four years.

Beverly Sanford Follis welcomed her first grandchild, Grace EvaLynn Wolfe, on Aug. 3, 2014.

Marja Grossman-Parks retired after 30 years of teaching. She worked as the education coordinator for Holy Family Home and Shelter in Connecticut and taught in Iran, Indonesia, and for 16 years in remote villages in Alaska working with Yupik Eskimo and Athabascan Indian children.

Norman Hicks was elected chairman of the Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) Governing Board. He is on the ACES Thomas Edison Middle School’s Steering Committee and ACES Buildings, Grounds and Transportation Committee. Norman is vice-chairman of the Regional School District #13 Board of Education. Prior to his involvement with ACES, Norman was a teacher in the Guilford Public Schools for 37 years, where he also served as vice president of the Guilford Board of Education.

Thomas Chapman just celebrated his 26th anniversary with HRP Associates, an environmental engineering firm. Thomas says that this milestone “could not have been possible without the quality education that I received at Eastern. Getting my degree at Eastern was the best life investment that I have ever made.”

Sherlene Skov ’74MS taught at East Lyme Middle School from 1970-99. Since retiring she has done much traveling with her husband.

Barbara Candales, Ph.D., in addition to being a certified career coach, is also an international adjunct consultant at IMPACT Group. Barbara writes the “Career Coach Newsletter” that is emailed to all Eastern alumni.

Kevin and Kathy (Kelley) Matsil recently retired to Chocowinity, NC. Kevin spent the past 24 years with Meriden Public Schools as a sixth-grade teacher and Kathy retired after 33 years with the City of Meriden, most recently as youth services director of the Meriden Public Library. Kevin says that now that they’re retired, “it’s time to put in place a gift to Eastern in our wills. How else can we share the good fortune that our education gave us if we, as alums, don’t help the generations of students to come?”

Mary (Eckle) Flynn and her husband are enjoying life in Georgia after 29 years in Minnesota. They have one grandson who lives in Iowa.
Ellen (Freudenstein) Gillon was lucky enough to spend time with the Eastern softball team in Florida last year.

Donna (Keener) Kammerdeiner spent most of her adult life living in Pittsburgh. She is happy to be back living in Connecticut.

John David Prewitt worked in international schools in Asia for 40 years. He and his wife have returned to Connecticut, where he works as a part-time counselor and therapist with his own practice.

Patricia Lawson spent her summer traveling through Europe and Asia with the Gettysburg College Jazz Band. The band has performed in several international jazz festivals in Turkey, Italy and France. When she returned from her international travels, Patricia planned to spend the rest of the summer on a lake in Maine.

Agnes (Trompetter) Pace was recently hired as the Savings Bank of Danbury’s senior vice president and director of development and human resources. Prior to joining Savings Bank of Danbury, Agnes worked for Union Savings Bank as senior vice president for education and development. She is a member of the advisory and auxiliary boards of the Salvation Army-Danbury Corps and serves as acting president and shelter director of the New Fairfield/Sherman Animal Welfare Society.

Beth Ann Fetzer was named Advocate of the Year by the Bridge to Independence and Career Opportunities, an educational, employment and personal resource center. In addition to serving on the organization’s board, Beth aids a variety of nonprofits including the Danbury Women’s Center, the United Way of Western Connecticut and the Danbury Music Center, and was recently named to the Board of Directors of Ann’s Place. Beth Ann works as the community development officer/assistant vice-president at Savings Bank of Danbury.

Michele Karwoski is the owner of M&M Tack Shop in Raleigh, NC. Michele founded M&M, which caters to English style horseback riding, 23 years ago.

Thomas Connors PhD is a past vice president and current member of the Piscataway, NJ, Township Board of Education. He was recently honored in grateful recognition for his devoted service on the Board of Directors of the New Jersey School Boards Association. Tom is a retired scientist with Colgate-Palmolive Company.

Donald Philips earned his law degree from the UConn School of Law and spent almost a dozen years at the Connecticut Bar Association in various roles. He went on to earn a graduate certificate from UConn in nonprofit management before becoming executive director of the Connecticut Bar Foundation, which raises and distributes money for the state’s legal aid agencies to provide services to low-income residents.

Philip Smyth has been working for United Parcel Service for 29 years. He is currently a tractor trailer driver.

After more than three decades in the hospitality business, Carol Stierle has moved from Connecticut to Vermont where she purchased and is now operating the East Poultney General Store in East Poultney, VT. She is shown above with classmate and store visitor Terri (Knoblauch) Wilson. She invites Eastern alumni to drop by and see her and the store when they are in the area, near the New York line. Carol’s most recent full-time position in hospitality was as a group sales executive for the Ocean House resort hotel in Watch Hill, RI.

Claudia LaRocque is a certified financial planner and has served as an investment associate at Wells Fargo Advisors in Glastonbury. She currently teaches accounting and finance at Manchester Community College.

Kathryn (Schaffhauser) Irvine ’90MS received her Sixth-Year Degree in Administration/Educational Leadership after teaching grades 3-5 for 29 years. She is employed by Stonington Public Schools as assistant principal of West Vine and West Broad Street Schools.

Michael Trahan is the president of Trahan Public Relations. He is also executive director of Solar Connecticut, Inc. and the Consortium for Solar Lighting, as well as project co-lead for the Northeast Solar Energy Market Coalition.

Kenneth Barber is proud of his daughter Elizabeth, who is a current student at Eastern.

Michael LoStocco was appointed as treasurer to the board of directors for GE Credit Union. Michael has 27 years in the insurance industry as an agent and broker and is the principal of LoStocco Insurance Services. He lives in Stratford with his wife Tracey and has two children.

Ruth O’Neill, a former public school teacher, left teaching to open the Song-a-Day Music Center in 2002. Located in
Coventry, the full-service music store has a teaching staff of 15 offering instruction in all instruments. Ruth also offers music workshops and live performances in libraries, museums and at events throughout Connecticut.

Patrick Rosenberger lives in East Granby with his wife Michaeala and three children. He practices law in Hartford at Shimkus, Murphy and Rosenberger P.C.

Brian Taylor was recently awarded the Career Commendation Medal by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Michael Veillette is the CFO of the Eastern Connecticut Health Network, which owns Manchester Memorial and Rockville General Hospitals.

Patricia (Prodo) Sesto was unanimously elected as the Greenwich Inlands Wetlands and Watercourses Agency’s new director. Before taking the position, Pamela had been director of environmental affairs for the Town of Wilton since 1992.

Bonnie Edmondson has been named to the 2016 USA Track and Field Olympic Team Staff as women’s throwing events coach. Bonnie also served as the women’s throwing events coach for the 2015 IAAF World Track and Field Championships held this summer in Beijing. She is currently the assistant men’s and women’s indoor and outdoor track and field coach at Trinity College.

Pamela Riccio was promoted to vice president of operations, contracting and risk management with Gartner Consulting in Stamford. Pam has served as a member of the ECSU Foundation Board of Directors for the past six years.

Carrie Wall, a former sixth-grade science teacher, has joined RE/MAX The Woodlands & Spring as a sales associate. She and her husband Vernon have two grown children, Kimberly and Kameron.

Michael Burns was recently named The River Valley Newspaper Group’s new publisher. Michael has worked in the print news industry since 1994, most recently as publisher of the Press-Enterprise, a California-based company.

Patrick Daley was named deputy chief of the Norwich Police Department. He joined the force in 1993, was named sergeant in 2003 and was promoted to lieutenant in 2011. Patrick is also chief of the East Great Plain Volunteer Fire Department and lives in Norwich with his wife and children.

David DeNunzio, an Eastern police officer, received the “Unsung Hero” award at the 2015 Special Olympics Connecticut Hall of Fame Dinner. Officer DeNunzio has been in the forefront of Special Olympics fundraising at Eastern for many years, including events like Tip-A-Cop, Jail-N-Bail, Dream Ride, Torch Run and the Penguin Plunge.

Sean Drake works for the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board as a principal consultant.

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**EASTERN DOES MATH AT WOODSTOCK ACADEMY!**

While it should come as no surprise that Connecticut schools are full of Eastern alumni serving as outstanding teachers, what might surprise you is how many Eastern alumni have found their home at Woodstock Academy in the Math Department. Five of the department’s math teachers — Amy (Bell) Couture ’09, Ronald Rhault ’00/’08MS, Stephen Tyler ’10MS, Thomas Young ’13MS and Bill Guillot ’84/’93MS — all attended Eastern. What drew them to Woodstock Academy?

Guillot has been a teacher for the past 29 years and thinks that a personalized environment is something that Eastern and Woodstock share. “I believe it is because many of the teachers grew up in a rural setting, chose to attend Eastern because of its small-town feeling, and then wanted to go back and teach in a similar environment they grew up in,” he said.

Young, who came to Eastern following a relocation from another state, attributes the concentration to word of mouth. “We are all supportive and collaborative with one another in the math department, and so we are happy to discuss our experiences and career paths with our colleagues.”

All five graduates expressed a deep respect for the programs and teachers they encountered at Eastern. Tyler, who received his master’s degree in Secondary Education from Eastern, said, “I owe a great deal of my success to the time I spent at Eastern. The classes I took taught me how to see the material from the perspective of the students.”

Couture also found herself heavily influenced by her professors at Eastern. A nontraditional student who returned to college after being out of school for 10 years, she explained, “I had such fantastic support, specifically from the Math Department at Eastern. My professors were encouraging and went out of their way to support me and enlightened me about the type of teacher I hope I am in my classroom each day.”

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Roger DelGiorno was promoted to secondary market manager and wholesale mortgage manager with the title of assistant vice president at Simsbury Bank Home Loans.

Michael Prescherio, a 21-year veteran of the South Windsor Police Department, is currently assigned as the supervisor of the Relief Shift. He has served as a traffic accident reconstructionist, narcotics investigator, criminal investigator and field training officer.

Ethel (Floyd) Harris is a supervisor at AT&T in Meriden, where she just celebrated 19 years of service. Ethel engages in a great deal of community service through AT&T and spearheads activities for Junior Achievement's east region through AT&T. Ethel earned her master's degree in organizational leadership from Albertus Magnus College and is Six Sigma certified.

Christian Renstrom has joined the Hartford Business Journal as their new advertising director. Christian was formerly vice president of corporate relations and special events for Special Olympics Connecticut Inc., and vice president at the Worx Group LLC, where he was vice president and general manager of Marketing Resource Consultants, Inc., publishers of Hartford Magazine. Christian currently serves as a board member for the Connecticut Boxing Hall of Fame. He lives in West Hartford with his two daughters.

Christopher Edge, a former business development director for downtown New Britain, was appointed the new economic development director for the Town of Berlin.

Jennifer (Grantland) McCaughtry served in the U.S. Air Force from 1995-2003. She has one daughter who is 10 years old.

Deanna Murray and her husband celebrated 20 years of marriage in August. They have “three wonderful children.”

Mark Kelly was appointed as the president of OnX Enterprise Solutions’ U.S. Division. He joined the company in 2013; prior to being hired as president, he served as executive vice president of strategy and sales operations. Mark is a 20-year veteran of the technology industry and previously held positions with Logicalis, Inc., Computer Design and Integration, LLC, EMC Corporation, and Ciber and Micro Warehouse, Inc.

Duane Mitchell completed a MBA with a concentration in finance management at Goldey-Beacom College in 2008 and a PhD. in business administration with a focus on leadership and organizational behavior at Wilmington University in 2015. Duane has worked at BNY Mellon Asset Servicing for 17 years before becoming a full-time faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford in Pennsylvania. Duane and wife Christine have been happily married 23 years and have adopted two little girls through the foster care program; Hannah in 2013, and Charlotte in 2014. They are both three years old and are three days apart in age.

Cheryl (Denien) Mucha has taught at Haddam-Killingworth Middle School for eight years. In 2007 she was named the teacher of the year. Cheryl also coaches the school’s cross country and softball teams.

Chastity Pimental-Belanger is a licensed clinical social worker working part-time at the Partial Hospitalization Program for Natchaug Hospital with children and adolescents doing individual, group and family therapy. Chastity is also an adjunct faculty member at Eastern, where she teaches the field instruction seminar for seniors in the Social Work program.

Sean Walsh has been named a fellow by the American College of Sports Science and Medicine, the organization’s most prestigious distinction. Sean is a professor of physical education and human performance at Central Connecticut State University. He earned his master’s degree in exercise science from Ohio State University and holds a doctorate in kinesiology from the University of Maryland.

Amado Rodriguez has been appointed as assistant chief financial officer for Marrakech Inc, where he will support the chief financial officer in the oversight of the business office, including grant management, audits and monthly accounting operations. Rodriguez previously served as the director of finance at Family & Children’s Agency in Norwalk and the business/finance manager at Chemical Abuse Services Agency (CASA) in Bridgeport. He lives in Trumbull with his wife and children.

Dianne (Schafer) Smith MS has been inducted into the Rockville High School Hall of Fame, joining 21 previous inductees.

Christina Baribault-Ortiz has been promoted to vice president of Baribault Jewelers in Glastonbury. She has also been named a co-owner of the corporation.

Nory Oakes 07MS is a copywriter at Jimmy Marketing in Waterford.

Kevin Zingler has been named executive director of MARC Inc, a Manchester-based nonprofit organization that serves disabled people. Zingler has worked with the organization for about 20 years in various roles, including director of marketing and director of services. He has also served on the Manchester board of directors and is currently a selectman and pension board member. Kevin lives in Manchester with his wife, Cynthia, and two children.

Gerry Amenta is the Vice President of Transportation and Logistics at Northeast Wood Products LLC, a Mohegan Tribal subsidiary. Gerry was formerly vice president of operations at Global Trade Associates and an agent for Zim Integrated Shipping Services. Gerry currently lives in Marlborough, MA, and has a young son.
Denise (Burgher) Hawk has enjoyed 12 years of meaningful work supporting the mission of Trinity College and the Center for Hospice Care. She is now pursuing a master’s degree in education. Her most treasured work, however, is raising her two daughters, Amber and Ruby.

Jennifer (Fuhrmann) Horner has rejoined the Eastern family as the University’s director of financial aid. Jennifer joins Eastern from the University of Hartford, where she was the director of student financial assistance.

Jessica King has joined the firm Blank Rome LLP as an associate in the Real Estate group. She is based in the firm’s Philadelphia office.

Adam Meikle works for R4 Technologies as the vice president of quantitative analytics.

Linsey Bareisa is an English instructor with Manchester Community College.

Steven F. Barker has been with The Hartford for 13 years. He was recently promoted to IT Specialist II. Steve resides in Hollywood, FL.

Kenneth Briggs ’06MS/’10MS is director of financial aid at Three Rivers Community College. He is immediate past president of the ECSU Alumni Association.

Travis Monroe was appointed director of the Bucks County Human Resources Department. He formerly served as the deputy human resources director.

Jerry Piscitelli has been married to Catherine (Schmidt) Piscitelli ’00 for 10 years. The couple has two sons. Jerry was recently hired as content & marketing manager at LEX Products in Shelton. Jerry is also an entrepreneur – creating and running his own online business, co-developing an iPad app, and working with dozens of small-to mid-sized businesses as a freelancer/consultant.

Summer Sage-Williams recently published her first novel in a family saga entitled “The Summer of Tsunami, Legacy: Book One.”

Amy Golas teaches eighth grade English at RHAM Middle School. Amy also just completed her 11th season as an assistant coach with the Eastern women’s swimming team.

Katherine (Cameron) Scheuritzel was married on Aug. 30, 2014 to Adam Scheuritzel. On Oct. 31 she began a new job as a senior program officer with the Connecticut Commission on Community Service in the Office of Higher Education. Kate is a member of the ECSU Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Daniel Silva, assistant vice president and direct sales manager with United Bank, was named to the bank’s “Chairman’s Club” for his outstanding performance in mortgage production in 2014. Daniel has been with United Bank since June 2013 and manages the bank’s Direct Sales Channel.

Kathleen (BurdeLSki) Adams works at The Hartford as an underwriting director.

Steven Bartunek is a manager for Rice, Davis, Daly & Krenz Inc. in Middletown.

Jill Greenwood is the director of Havas Formula PR in New York.

Christopher Overend, a researcher in the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech, has received a two-year, $150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture to develop a vaccine engineered to overcome weaknesses of current vaccines against an economically important swine disease. Christopher is a postdoctoral associate in the college’s Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology.

Deanne Prior is an engagement manager with Preventure, Inc. in Rhode Island.

Raymond Stankoski will be working on Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign in Connecticut and Rhode Island in 2015-16.

Jesse Schoolnik is a health care regulatory affairs manager with the UnitedHealth Group.

Stephanie (Bedard) Dumont joined Comcast Business in 2007 after completing her MBA and is currently a marketing communications manager. While completing her MBA, Stephanie successfully raised more than $55,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and she continues her volunteer work by serving on the Women in Cable Telecommunications board of directors and the Comcast Veterans Network Committee. Stephanie was recently featured in The Hartford Business Journal’s “40 Under Forty,” a list of up-and-coming young professionals in the Greater Hartford area.

Frederick Michael France MS is serving his first term as state representative representing the 42nd District. He serves on the Appropriations, Planning and Development, and General Administration and Elections committees. He lives in Gales Ferry with his wife Heather. They have six children and four grandchildren.

Jeffery A. Lampson, a Windsor Locks police officer, was recently honored by the Police Commission, the Windsor Locks police chief and his fellow officers for his part in
saving the life of a five-year-old boy who stopped breathing during an asthma attack. The boy is home and doing well.

Lindsey McDonald is a guidance counselor at Attleboro High School. She was married in April 2015.

Gordon Shepard is a correctional training officer with the State of Connecticut Department of Corrections. He is married with twins, a boy and a girl. Gordon volunteers for the Hyde School basketball team and gives speeches to elementary and middle school children to encourage them to stay out of prison.

Jacqueline (Boucher) Tacy has worked as a nonprofit administrator for more than 13 years, most notably for the international organization Covenant House. She served as a missionary in El Salvador in 2010 and currently volunteers at Revelation Church in Bozrah. Jacqueline married her husband Ryan in May 2011 and they welcomed their daughter, McKenna, in 2013. “I am forever grateful for my experience at Eastern. The faculty and advisors ensured that my non-traditional class hours and semesters did not translate to a lack in an engaging learning environment.”

Tracey (Udas) Busch married William Busch, III in 2012. She is the director of account development for space150 in New York.

Matthew Denegre is a senior associate in Transaction Services at Montgomery Coscia Greilich.

Robert Greene is an adjunct professor of Sculpture in the Department of Art and Art History at Eastern. His sculpture, “Frenetic Composure,” was recently chosen by interior designer Thom Filicia to be displayed in the room he designed for the Kips Bay Decorator Show House. The exhibition was on display at the Arthur Sachs Mansion in New York City.

Gregory Petranek MS completed one year as the Three Rivers Community College alumni president.

Brendan Case is the new athletic director for the Monomoy Regional School District. He is the former basketball and football coach at Ledyard High School and also served as head coach of the boy’s tennis team at St. Bernard School in Uncasville, CT. Brendan previously served as the athletic director for St. Bernard School and as a physical education teacher at Windham Middle School in Willimantic.

Mark Clifton is an assistant professor at the Hodges University School of Allied Health. He received his Ph.D. in Biology from Florida International University (FIU). In 2013, Mark was the head teaching assistant for the FIU Genetics Lab, and a post-doctoral research associate in FIU’s Department of Biology. He has also been on research teams for Washington State University and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. In his free time, Mark can be found gardening or enjoying other outdoor activities. He is married and has one child.

Jaclynn Hart, who started at Hartford Performs in 2010 as the organization’s first full-time employee, is now the group’s programming director, supporting the organization’s mission to ensure all students in Hartford Public Schools have equitable access to quality arts education. Prior to joining Hartford Performs, Jaclynn was employed at Access Agency, supervising youth development programs. Jaclynn was recently featured in The Hartford Business Journal’s “40 Under Forty,” a list of up-and-coming young professionals in the Greater Hartford area. In her down time, Jaclynn says she enjoys crafting, traveling and “embracing the art scene in Hartford!”

Andrea Brown is the premium activation manager with the Orlando Magic.

Holly (Vasquez) Butler was at the Connecticut State Capitol to speak to the Appropriations Committee about decreases in mental health funding and how it would affect the population of her clients as well as its effects statewide. Holly just completed two years as treasurer of the ECSU Alumni Association.

Derrick Gibbs, Jr. is the chief executive officer at Nurses at Home. Since 2009, he has been the executive director of Middletown based CHANGEinc, a nonprofit that provides homecare and behavioral health services to the elderly and mentally ill.

Robert Riendeau is now sales development manager at EFI.

Steven Rolfe is an environmental health and safety engineer at 3M.
Luke Boyd is the interpretive programs coordinator at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum.

Christopher Doyle is a U.S. program coordinator at Level Up Village in Greenwich.

Neil Frutuoso is the general sales manager at the Parsons Buick Company.

Norman Melendez is an aviation machinist mate with the U.S. Navy.

Andrew Powaleny is a senior manager of communications for the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

Summer Spellmann is development coordinator at The Connecticut Children’s Medical Center.

Stephanie (Boccanfuso) Daniello is working as an online health and fitness coach for Beachbody.

Jocelyn DeMaio MS is the director of account management at The Hartford, and is a member of nine employee resource groups. Jocelyn serves as the membership chair of the Northeast and Central Connecticut United Way Women’s Leadership Council as well as vice president of finance for the Connecticut chapter of HDI, a professional service management organization. Jocelyn was recently featured in The Hartford Business Journal’s “40 Under Forty,” a list of up-and-coming young professionals in the Greater Hartford area. She thinks the three greatest factors to her success are her family, her optimism and enthusiasm, and her passion. In addition to her work, Jocelyn has also operated one of the country’s largest dart tournaments for several years.

Reese Painter-Payne is the applicant advisor at Goodwin College.

Megan Pavia-Cogliano is the events and annual campaign manager at YMCA of Greenwich.

Amanda Pierlioni works as a registered nurse at Rhode Island Hospital.

Mary-Francis Plaza is an academic advisor at Mitchell College.

Olivia Puckett is executive secretary for the Program Review and Investigations Committee at the Connecticut General Assembly. Olivia also serves on the board of directors of the ECSU Alumni Association.

Joe Saad received a Master of Arts in Teaching from Sacred Heart University in 2013. He is currently a math teacher at Fairfield Warde High School.

Charlotte Sibbesen is the Wix community translator at Wix.com.

Taylor Deguzis was married to James Vincenzo on July 18, 2015

Orquidea Burgos-Jimenez is a graduate assistant at UMass Dartmouth and is pursuing her master’s degree in clinical psychology.

Wiley Dawson is working as an academic coach at Central Connecticut State University.

Ryan Henowitz has been appointed as volunteer veterans’ liaison of the City of New London. In the past, Ryan has served as a medic in the U.S. Army and has worked with the New London Veterans Organization, Iraq Veterans Against the War and Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Hamilton Levy was recently promoted to business process improvement analyst at FM Global in Boston.

Laura Looney is pursuing a master’s degree in mental health counseling at Westfield State University.
Scott Nolan is a graduate student at Springfield College and is pursuing his master’s degree in higher education. He began an internship with Eastern Connecticut State University’s Office of Residence Life in the fall. He served his undergraduate internship with Eastern’s Office of Alumni Affairs.

Edwin Ortiz has a seven-year-old daughter and another child on the way. He works as an intensive case manager at Intercommunity, Inc.

Chelsea St. Pierre MS works for Fidelity as a relocation project coordinator.

Ariana White is an assistant publicist at Atlantic Records.

Kayla Bynum works in the African American Cultural Center at the University of Connecticut as a university assistant.

Kyle Droniak works as a student activities coordinator for Kaplan International English.

Melissa Groccia is the specialist for global event operations at Asset International in Stamford, CT.

Ivori Harrison is a human service worker with Community Solutions Inc.

Jennings Mansfield is a technical sales representative at Sika Sarnafil USA.

Whitley Mingo is a nurturing connections coordinator at St. Francis Hospital, working with the maternal and child health population. She is pursuing her MSW at Springfield College.

Haley Russenberger was sworn in as a member of the Middletown Police Department in April. Previously, Officer Russenberger worked at the Connecticut Department of Corrections.

Alissa Savage is a social media specialist at Source Marketing.

Megan Sniffin is the residence coordinator at the University of Saint Joseph.

Samantha Stevens graduated in May from the University of Rhode Island with a master’s degree in human development and family studies and a concentration in college student personnel. She now works full time in URI’s alumni relations office as a specialist and student alumni association advisor.

Jessica Bretherton is now a Marketing Associate at Conair Corporation. She was formerly a project manager at Colangelo Synergy Marketing.

Jahaira Camacho is working as an outreach educator for Generations Family Health Center.

Chad Dominique made his directorial debut co-directing the Windham Theatre Guild’s production of Larry Shue’s “The Nerd” at the Burton Leavitt Theatre.

Megan Godwin is the Avon High School softball coach and a seventh-grade paraprofessional at Avon Middle School. In her spare time, she continues to coach the Connecticut Eliminators, an under-14 travel softball team from Rocky Hill. She also plays for the club’s under-23 and under-30 teams.

Matthew Hesterberg is working freelance with Studio 51 at New York Life Insurance Company.

Rachel Junga is the new assistant director of annual giving at the University of New Haven. She was formerly the phonathon coordinator at Sacred Heart. She served her undergraduate internship with Eastern’s Office of Alumni Affairs.

Jessie Kohn had an “once-in-a-lifetime” opportunity earlier this year when he spent five months on a mission to Cholula, Mexico, from January to June. His assignment included working with students at volunteer sites and building a rehab center for handicapped people who have been rejected by society. The highlight of his stay was a spring break trip to Acuña where a group of 85 students built 10 houses in four days! “Through the families’ gratitude and indescribable smiles, they showed me how to enjoy life with only a tenth of the belongings I have.”

Gabrielle Little is a business development specialist at TSL Marketing and was recently accepted into the Professional Strategic Communication master’s program at American University.

Zachary Powers is a media specialist at Ferguson & McGuire. Zach served his undergraduate internship with Eastern’s Office of Alumni Affairs.

Sheila RuJoub is a university assistant in Eastern’s Office of Alumni Affairs.

Rachel Santacroce is a communications and social media coordinator at The Governor’s Prevention Partnership in Wethersfield.

Jennifer Tamindzija is working for Accenture as an associate software engineer.

Amy Vento is a co-manager at Bath & Body Works. Amy has also started a position with Lee Partyka Isuzu/Chevrolet as a service writer.

Lindsay Witkoski is attending graduate school at Sacred Heart University where she will earn her master’s degree in criminal justice.

Nick Aconfora is working for the American Athletic Conference as a digital video production assistant.

Amanda Anderson works for RKM Research and Communications in Portsmouth, NH, as a phone interviewer. During her time at Eastern, Amanda participated in the phonathon program as a student caller and says her time was well spent as the duties of her current job are a reflection of the work she did with Eastern during phonathon.
Dr. Robert “Buddy” Spillane ’56 passed away on July 20, 2015. Dr. Spillane began his long and successful education career as a fifth-grade teacher in Storrs, later becoming the youngest principal in the state of Connecticut at age 25. He went on to become superintendent of schools in Glassboro, NJ; Roosevelt-Long Island, NY; New Rochelle, NY; Boston, MA; and Fairfax County, VA. He received national attention by instituting management standards in Boston and by promoting merit pay for teachers, longer school days for children and more rigorous performance standards for both. He was named National Superintendent of the Year in 1995 by the American Association of School Administrators and later served as deputy education commissioner for the State of New York. After working with the U.S. State Department as a regional education officer overseeing American schools in Europe, Buddy left in 2006 to become vice president and director of the Center for Education at CAN Corp., a research organization in Alexandria, VA. He met his wife, Geraldine (Shea) Spillane ’57 while they were students at Eastern, and they married after she graduated in 1957. In addition to his wife, Spillane is survived by four children and eight grandchildren.
As Dr. Núñez noted in her message to begin this issue of EASTERN Magazine, the University recently learned that it had again received recognition by the Chronicle of Higher Education as one of the nation’s “Great Colleges to Work For.”

What is especially impressive about this award are Eastern’s ratings on a number of key indicators – we were graded highly for our collaborative approach to making decisions; for the relationship between employees and their supervisors; for the confidence the community has in senior leadership; and on several other important measures.

The collegial relationships among Eastern faculty and staff have been a hallmark of this special campus community for decades, and they serve to create a supportive environment in which our students can maximize their learning. Hopefully, they can model those relationships as they enter their careers.

I believe this same sense of community — of being a “family” in a fundamental sense — has been a major factor in the success we have experienced in philanthropy the past 10 years. Over that time, and despite Wall Street’s financial meltdown in 2008, the ECSU Foundation has received $25.8 million in philanthropic support over the past decade. This support has helped Eastern move forward as an outstanding educational institution.

When I think of endowed and other scholarships that have been created by alumni, their family members, emeriti faculty and friends loyal to Eastern, I see familiar faces, shared experiences and real relationships in my mind’s eye — all of them products of Eastern’s culture of community. In addition to hearing the warm words and testimony of alumni donors and other friends of the University, I take great satisfaction in the personal relationships that I have been privileged to have with many alumni, parents and other University friends.

The friendship and mutual trust and respect that we have developed with so many wonderful people has resulted in a sizable increase in financial support for our students over the past few years. For instance, in 2014-15, the ECSU Foundation gave a record $750,000 in merit scholarships to 325 deserving students. We also received seven major gifts or pledges in the six-figure range, in addition to grants and corporate or foundation gifts approaching $1 million.

We are forever indebted to the generous donors who have invested in Eastern’s future. In addition to providing support for our students and helping Eastern enhance its reputation as Connecticut’s public liberal arts university, our generous donors are an inspiration to our faculty and staff, and one of the many reasons Eastern is indeed a “Great College to Work For.”

Thank you for your support. It has made a fundamental difference in the lives of our students. We hope you are as proud to be one of “Those Who Are Eastern,” as we are to count you as one of us!

Kenneth J. DeLisa
Vice President for Institutional Advancement
The Dorothy Gardiner Lackman ’67 Memorial Endowed Scholarship was established with a significant endowed gift of $66,000 in December 2014 by three of Dorothy’s children — Deborah Walthert, Steve Lackman and Nancy Flynn. The scholarship will assist nontraditional education majors at Eastern while creating an appropriate legacy for Dorothy, who passed away in 2009. After graduating from Eastern, she began her teaching career in the Eastford School System, and in the early ’70s she took over administration and teaching at the Pompey Hollow Cooperative Nursery School in Ashford.

Dorothy was a major proponent of innovation in early childhood education curriculum and worked to incorporate Montessori methods into her classrooms. She studied diligently to earn her own degree while raising five children. Her daughter Nancy says, “Teaching young children suited Mom’s personality perfectly. It allowed her to blend her warm nature and creative talents to present a wonderful initial school experience to many local children.” The Lackman family hopes that the future recipients of this award share both Dorothy’s love of learning and her determination to teach.
A semester-long celebration of the arts at Eastern is being planned for spring 2016 to coincide with the opening of the new Fine Arts Instructional Center.

Check www1.easternct.edu/FAIC over the next few months for event details.