From the classroom to the C-suite, these Great Danes are changing the face of the field.
In a workspace within ETEC, seniors Maria Peregrina, left, and Mariela Monterroso, both from the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, work on a multi-signal sensor emulator for their capstone project for the Naval Nuclear Laboratory.

Photo: Paul Miller, MA '21
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Researchers at the NYS Mesonet, Ion Beam Lab Receive $1.87 Million Federal Boost

In January, U.S. Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand announced $1.87 million to UAlbany to fund the expansion of a project leveraging data from its specialized New York State Mesonet weather network and improvements to UAlbany’s Ion Beam Laboratory, home to some of the best university-based high-energy particle instrumentation in the world.

The funding is among $22 million secured for Capital Region projects through the 2023 bipartisan omnibus spending package.

$1 Million Gift to New York State Writers Institute Launches 40th Anniversary Season

In January, President Havidán Rodríguez announced a $1 million gift from area philanthropists Chet and Karen Opalka to establish The Opalka Endowed Directorship of the New York State Writers Institute at the University at Albany. The endowment will provide perpetual support for the Writers Institute’s leadership and its creative programming, while ensuring the organization’s future as one of the preeminent literary presenting organizations in the United States.

Colonial Quad Renovation and Rec Center Underway

Continuing the University’s ongoing program of modernizing student housing, the Office of Facilities Management is converting the Colonial Quad dining and kitchen facilities into a new recreational amenity. This space is slated to include a spinning room, cardio space, functional fitness suite, meditation room, large activity room, mat room and a wellness suite. The former courtyard will be enclosed with a glass pavilion. The project is expected to be completed in the summer 2024.

School of Education Ranks #4 in Online Graduate Education

Moving up four spots from last year, the School of Education is ranked #4 for best online master’s in education programs according to U.S. News & World Report’s annual ranking. This is the seventh year in a row that the school has landed in the top 10 programs nationwide, and it continues to be the top-ranked program in New York state.

“The UAlbany School of Education’s upward movement in the U.S. News rankings is a true testament to the dedicated efforts of our expert faculty, staff and collaborative community partners involved in our online graduate programs,” said Virginia Goatley, interim dean of the School of Education.
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Have a comment or story to share? Send us an e-mail at magazine@albany.edu.

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ON THE COVER

Creative Director Mary Sciancalepore worked with Pope Phoenix, a talented freelance illustrator from the Bronx, New York to create the illustrations of our alumni—all women working in the tech field.

“Pope helped us deliver a visual motif that evokes a sense of connection while providing a modern and clean aesthetic.”

Cover illustration: Pope Phoenix

“RENT” Raised at UAlbany’s Performing Arts Center

The Theatre Program of the University at Albany’s Department of Music and Theatre presented the Pulitzer and Tony award-winning landmark rock musical “RENT” in March. Directed by guest artist Chuck Kraus in his first ever production at UAlbany, the student cast featured a group of eight principal performers plus an ensemble of 16. Michael Lister was responsible for musical direction with choreography by Ashley Simone Kirchner; both are on the faculty in UAlbany’s Department of Music and Theatre.

Five Quad Celebrates 50 Years of Service

Hundreds of guests, including current and former members of Five Quad, UAlbany’s student-run volunteer ambulance service, gathered at the Crowne Plaza Albany – The Desmond Hotel to celebrate the organization’s 50th anniversary. Five Quad is a New York State certified ambulance agency operated entirely by UAlbany students. Headquartered on the Uptown Campus, the crew provides basic life support services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, during the fall and spring semesters.

UAlbany’s student-run, volunteer ambulance service, Five Quad, celebrates its 50th anniversary at a gala held at the Desmond Hotel in Albany, New York, on March 3, 2023.
For as long as Professor Jennifer Goodall can remember, empowering women has been a central theme in her life. In the 1960s, her mother was inspired by the women’s rights movement. Following her mother’s lead, Goodall studied the role of women in ancient Roman and Greek societies while in college.

Today, as the vice dean in the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity (CEHC), she teaches informatics and leads efforts to increase gender diversity through initiatives such as the state-wide New York Celebration of Women in Computing and the State of Grace conference hosted by CEHC. Goodall has also served as a consultant for the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT), a non-profit that brings together more than 1,200 universities, companies, government entities and others nationwide to increase the meaningful participation of girls and women in computing.

“I think it’s much more mainstream to acknowledge that this is a problem and that we, collectively, need to do something about it,” says Goodall, who recalls a time when there was only one woman in the web development class she taught. “I said, ‘This is not OK anymore’ … it still is a personal passion of mine.”

Goodall’s work with NCWIT, over the years, has helped raise awareness of the problem with attention-grabbing efforts such as their Sit With Me awareness campaign which features a distinctive red chair that symbolically supports women in computing and technology.

“People would take the chair with them to different places,” Goodall says. “And we use them at events to get people to talk about gender equality and technology.”

It’s the type of effort that Goodall hopes will help permanently turn the tide and usher more women and girls into STEM and the tech field. The campaign’s tagline seems to perfectly match Goodall’s lifetime of advocacy for women: “Sometimes you have to sit down to take a stand.”

In an undated photo, Goodall poses with students and Frances Allen ’54, center, the first woman to receive the A.M. Turing Award (often called the Nobel Prize of computing), and the first woman to be named an IBM Fellow.
READYING FOR AN AI FUTURE:
Q&A with Provost Carol Kim

**Q:** There have been many exciting announcements about Artificial Intelligence (AI) initiatives on campus. What are UAlbany’s ultimate AI ambitions?

**A:** Our goal is to be a national and international leader in AI academic, research and workforce development. We are developing new academic microcredentials, certificates, minors and majors around AI — all building toward providing UAlbany students a competitive edge in future careers and job markets. We want to build a foundation for UAlbany students to be the global leaders in this rapidly growing area of knowledge that spans all disciplines.

As one of the most diverse public R1 universities in the nation, we also have the opportunity to be a pipeline for a diverse AI workforce, which is essential to ensuring that next-generation AI systems and applications reflect the diversity of the communities we live in. Diversity of disciplines and interdisciplinary collaboration are essential in AI, but the racial/ethnic, social and economic and gender diversity of the workforce will also be pivotal in developing AI systems that we can trust.

**Q:** Can you share examples of how the University’s signature strengths might be bolstered by these AI initiatives?

**A:** UAlbany’s signature strengths already leverage interdisciplinary research occurring across our campus. Each of these disciplines is strengthened by overlaying elements of teaching and research in AI. For example, researchers are using AI to analyze vast datasets from the NYS Mesonet and other sources to build forecasting models that are more reliable and could lead to better, more timely severe weather warnings. In the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center, researchers are using machine learning models to predict power outages during storms — a line of work with tremendous overlap with colleagues in emergency preparedness, who also use AI for emergency simulations and predictive analytics.

In cybersecurity, researchers are using AI to find system weaknesses and identify solutions to better secure our data, while our health sciences colleagues are using AI to develop models to predict public health outcomes for things like changes to firearms policy. And, of course, UAlbany’s public policy experts are leading critical conversations about how to effectively inform the public about emerging issues surrounding AI, including the role of government.

**Q:** What is different about UAlbany’s approach to AI, and how will it play out across the University?

**A:** Unlike other universities, we are not concentrating our efforts only in STEM. Instead, we are building a truly cross-disciplinary initiative by integrating AI across UAlbany’s entire academic enterprise. Whether a student is studying art and art history, public policy or engineering, they will have access to microcredentials, certificates, minors and majors in AI. We currently have a committee developing our initial AI course offerings, leveraging existing courses and new, discipline-specific courses for every field.
AI touches virtually every aspect of modern life — from opening your phone with facial recognition to shopping on Amazon or asking your smart speaker a question. And that impact will only grow in the future. UAlbany's AI curriculum will not only prepare our students for careers and graduate programs in which a foundational and applied knowledge of AI is essential but for a modern life in which this technology is ubiquitous.

Q: A criticism of AI is that the tremendous datasets required are, sometimes, tainted with bias which can lead to serious discriminatory outcomes. How will the University address the ethics of AI?

A: This is why UAlbany has such an important role to play in the development of this technology and the workforce that will use it. To reduce the bias in AI systems, we must ensure the workforce that builds those systems represents the full diversity of our society. As one of the most diverse public research institutions in the nation, UAlbany is uniquely positioned to supply an AI-savvy workforce whose diversity of life experiences more closely resembles that of the state and nation. We have heard over and over from industry leaders that a more diverse workforce is essential for innovation. UAlbany was recently awarded $2.5 million by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to pioneer more inclusive approaches to teaching STEM in hopes of increasing retention and graduation rates among underrepresented students. Our leadership in this area positions us to be an important player in this work — in New York and beyond.

Another important step is ensuring that we’re involved not just in the research developing the latest AI systems but in exploring the challenging questions about where, why and how they should — and should not — be used. Faculty in our Philosophy Department, for example, are working with colleagues in tech to tackle these very questions, and that’s why we’re determined that Albany AI span the University's entire academic enterprise.

Q: AI is being used to generate everything from artistic selfies to incredibly convincing student essays. What has been the most striking example of AI’s abilities that you’ve seen? And what are your feelings for the AI future?

A: Certainly the development of ChatGPT and similar applications was a jolt to academia. It’s forced us to rethink our approaches to certain assignments. But that’s not necessarily a bad thing. There are two ways you can think about applications like ChatGPT: first, as a threat to some conventional teaching methods, or second, as a useful opportunity to question whether our current approaches are really the best ways to assess learning. Surely, ChatGPT will make some aspects of instruction more challenging. But if in the end it also inspires us to innovate new and more effective approaches to reinforcing key concepts and assessing students’ mastery of them, then that will benefit all future UAlbany students. Sometimes we need to be jolted to innovate. As with most new technologies, there will be positives and negatives. One of the great things about being at a research institution like UAlbany is that we’re constantly asking ourselves some version of this key question: “What can we learn from this?”
Anna Topol loves her job. As a distinguished engineer and chief technology officer for IBM Research, she has been on the leading edge of technological change for more than two decades. A native of Poland, Topol marvels at how computers have developed from the unremarkable machine of her youth to the unprecedented power of today’s quantum computing. Topol took UAlbany Magazine on a tour of her workplace, the Thomas J. Watson Research Center — the headquarters of IBM Research.
1. IBM Research conducts a Global Technology Outlook (GTO) annually to identify significant technology trends and disruptions that hold the greatest potential to transform business and society over the next decade. Anna has been involved in the GTO work several times, which is an honor within the company.

2. Anna reviews a presentation with a colleague in her Yorktown Heights, New York, office — a location referred to as the IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center. Other IBM Research USA locations include facilities in Cambridge (Massachusetts), Almaden (California), and on the campus of the University at Albany.

3. Analysis of microelectronic chips at various steps of their fabrication is critical. It can include optical and electrical systems to test the performance of devices on the chip in different environmental conditions.

4. As an IBM distinguished engineer, Anna has authored or contributed to more than 100 research papers and holds nearly as many patents, ranging from high-density chip carriers and three-dimensional integrated circuit (3DIC) technologies to biosample and nanoparticle devices.

5. This sign is emblazoned just inside the entrance to the facility; it is a rallying call for the scientists, engineers and other employees who collaborate with businesses, governments, nonprofits and academic institutions to address global challenges and explore opportunities to “co-create the future.”

6. Anna traverses a long window-lined corridor within the research headquarters building designed by architect Eero Saarinen, who also designed Dulles International Airport outside Washington, D.C., the TWA Flight Center (now TWA Hotel) at John F. Kennedy International Airport, and the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri.

7. The research and development of the world’s most advanced semiconductor wafers, like the one Anna holds in this photo, happens within the walls of the Yorktown Heights research center and at University at Albany’s NanoTech Complex. Together, these facilities are answering the urgent global need for the computer chips essential to our daily lives.

8. Anna speaks with a young staff member in the research center’s library. Anna’s personal mission is mentoring the next generation of engineers and scientists. She credits her success to the people who guided and counseled her throughout her life and career.

9. Today’s most advanced classical computers are limited in their abilities to solve some of the world’s most complex problems. Quantum computers — like this one at IBM — have the potential to solve those complex problems but these powerful systems require an ultra-low temperature (around minus 459.67 degrees Fahrenheit) and isolated physical environments.

10. Anna is in the microelectronics test lab with a colleague. It takes a multi-disciplinary team to successfully design, build, test and deploy new microelectronic technologies.

11. Microelectronics research laboratories, like this one, use a process called photolithography to etch the circuitry onto the silicon wafers, and require specific lighting (hence, the orange/yellow glow) to prevent the light-sensitive chemicals used in this process from reacting and damaging the computer chips.

12. Anna grew up in Poland on the shores of the Baltic Sea near the border with Germany. Today, she commutes more than 100 miles from her home outside Albany to IBM’s research headquarters. When she’s not working, this mother of two teenage boys enjoys archery and yoga.
Fourteen years ago, Bill Bloom ’85 looked out over the large IT team he managed and noticed there were far fewer women than men on his staff. That didn’t sit well with him. As an executive in information technology and the father of two daughters, he felt he was in a position to help change the gender imbalance in his field.

He thought about his own path. “My four years at Albany truly laid the foundation for all the good things that followed,” Bloom says. “I graduated in ’85 with a degree in computer science and my entire career has been around technology.” Committed to helping more women follow in his footsteps, Bloom and his wife, Maria, established The Bill Bloom ’85 and Maria Bloom Women in Technology Scholarship at UAlbany.

The Bloom Scholarship provides significant financial support to female undergraduate students from the five boroughs of New York City who are studying in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

“As a kid from Queens in the early 1980s, my family couldn’t contribute to the cost of my education. However, I was able to pay for a great four years at Albany by ‘simply’ taking out a small loan and doing some work-study,” Bloom explains. But he knows that today, many students are faced with taking on much higher levels of debt to complete their education. “Through this scholarship, Maria and I decided that we’d try to help a few students each year by taking some of that burden from them.”

And they have. Sydney Pennington, a computer science major and current recipient of the Bloom Women in Technology Scholarship, couldn’t be more grateful for the assistance the Blooms have provided. Being able to worry less about money and focus on schoolwork “just feels really comforting and gives me more stability,” she says.

But being a Bloom Scholar is about more than defraying the cost of college. For Pennington, it’s also about feeling encouraged as someone who is underrepresented in her field of study. “Finding other women, especially Black women, in technology can be hard,” she says. She’s been able to form a tight cohort at UAlbany, but also finds it inspiring that there are people like the Blooms who want “to help younger people move ahead and make an impact in the field as well.”

Since establishing their scholarship in 2009, The Blooms have continued to grow the endowment considerably to maximize its impact for recipients like Pennington. Bill Bloom recently retired as EVP of Technology, Data & Analytics, Operations and Claims from The Hartford Financial Services Group, and in a fitting sendoff, the company made a $25,000 gift to the scholarship in his honor. Today, Bill and Maria Bloom remain committed to advancing gender equity for women in technology.
Meet the UAlbany women alumni who are bringing the tech future forward. They’re paving the way for digital maps to better guide us, ensuring that AI systems are trustworthy, creating the next great gaming experiences, educating tomorrow’s tech leaders today and so much more.
There’s no doubt Jennifer McCarron ’01, MSW ’04 has stage presence. At a recent conference, she came out with her fists pumping, pointing at the audience. She walked back and forth, delivering her message about the importance of corporate legal operations full tilt.

Four years ago, McCarron joined the legal group at Netflix to help them innovate and work more efficiently. About 80% of her team’s focus revolves around managing contracts and legal documents.

“In a place like Netflix, there’s going to be a lot of contracts in order to see all those people on all those shows and run all those productions. And it’s a high-volume shop, and I’m innovating how they contract, how they draft, how they store, how they unlock the data, the words inside a contract. And transform that into metadata that the business can get very quickly and run more efficiently, run faster, make better decisions on.”

McCarron’s road to a top job at Netflix hasn’t been linear, but each turn helped shape her future and taught her how to trust her instincts, leading her to the position as the streaming platform’s director of legal operations and technology, following a stint at Spotify.

“Back in 2008,” she told the group, “I was touring up and down the East Coast playing bass in an indie rock band, living out of a van while playing for a few dozen people in dive bars.”
The dive bar scene got old and when she landed in New York City for a sorely needed break, she took a temp job as an office manager that was only supposed to be for a few days. She managed that office so well that she ended up staying at that gig and began her journey into the world of legal ops, leading her eventually to the group she was speaking to, the Corporate Legal Ops Consortium, where McCarron is a board member and considered a thought leader.

“I love the stage,” she said. “I do love having an actual literal platform to stand on and deliver a message to the people, to an audience.” The stage also allows her to take in the audience’s response. “I think it’s a really a special place to have a two-way dialogue.”

At UAlbany, she learned how to be organized and discovered a simple tool — a paper planner pad — at the school store, the kind she still uses even though she’s in the upper ranks at a tech company. “I’m still on an academic calendar, I never switched,” McCarron said.

“It forced my hand at organizing. I was very overwhelmed when I got there. I had to build a system of productivity to do the thing: a double major with all of these concentrations.”

After getting her bachelor’s in economics and in business administration, she worked in software development and was about to take a management consultant job on Wall Street, but had a bad feeling about the economy, so she passed. That was right before 9/11. She then enrolled in UAlbany’s social work program, which she wanted to drop out of, but her social worker father convinced her to stay. And that degree came in handy later on as a manager who could listen.

“I’m a finisher. I stuck it out,” said McCarron, who grew up in Mahopac in Putnam County. But she was unhappy, so she turned to music to escape and decompress.

“By the end of the master’s, I was so good at bass guitar.” And she was encouraged to join some bands by her guitar teacher at Blue Sky in Delmar. “I came out of social work school and played with every band I could find in the Capital District. I was in three to five bands at once.”

The discipline of a bass player who practiced countless hours and her own organizational talents honed at UAlbany came in handy for legal ops, which provides strategic and financial planning and technology that keeps legal departments running smoothly.

“It is one of the most exhilarating rides you can be on,” said McCarron, who divides her time between New York City and Los Angeles.

“I joined [Netflix] because I knew it would be another ride of a lifetime. So it’s fast moving. We’re building the rocket as we go. It zigs, it zags, it’s a roller coaster of ups, and then it’ll just start going down really fast.

Sometimes, it will take your breath away.” What she gets out of the experience is leadership growth.

“I think my whole life and career’s been a tug of war between my right and left brain,” which she said may be her greatest asset. “And it sparks because it’s creativity. And that is contagious when someone’s passionate and can bring that into the fold with you. And yeah, all of a sudden, you’re creating with me and you feel like, I don’t know, a kid again,” she said.

As for the bass, she still plays and writes songs, keeping her right side of the brain engaged. She even got back up on the stage as a bass player to mark the winter solstice, but she was rocking out in a very different kind of venue.

“That was a fun first: It was me as an avatar performing two of my songs in the Metaverse.”
You’ve likely heard of robot waiters, robot factory workers or delivery robots, but what about... a robot pharmacist?

Health systems across the United States are using robotic dispensing technology to create a more automated and data-driven process for medication inventory and dispensing. And UAlbany graduate Denise Cox ’91 is on the front lines of this revolution.

Since 2020, Cox has served as senior vice president and chief customer officer for Omnicell, a leading health technology company that specializes in medication management and adherence solutions for health systems and pharmacies. Omnicell is an industry leader in developing advanced robotics and information technology to increase operational efficiency, reduce medication errors and ultimately enhance patient safety.

The need is clear: pharmacists spend a large amount of time – up to 75 percent of their day – on manual, non-clinical activities like tracking down inventory or verifying prescriptions.

“Medication management is a complicated process that has lots of room for error,” Cox explained. “Our job is to help ensure that the right patient gets the right medication at the right time, every time. And by automating the process, we’re helping to free up pharmacy staff to allow them to better serve the needs of their patients.”

Cox leads a team of customer experience experts who work closely with their hospital partners to implement the technology and ensure proper training for the staff. But their job doesn’t end there. “Who cares if we have the best robots in the world?” noted Cox. “Our job is to continuously monitor that technology to ensure it consistently delivers the best outcomes, while constantly looking for opportunities to enhance functionality.”

“Who cares if we have the best robots in the world if they don’t deliver a great customer experience?”
Prior to joining Omnicell, Cox led global customer experience organizations for over 15 years at technology innovators Cisco and NetApp, and held senior management roles at telecommunications leaders AT&T and MCI. Her path to success in the technology sector can be traced directly back to a telecom class she took at UAlbany.

“I always enjoyed writing and was working toward my communications degree, but I also had a passion for technology and science,” Cox said. “That class opened my eyes to the possibility of combining both disciplines, and it all clicked into place.”

Cox started her career in the burgeoning telecommunications field at a time when the industry was mostly dominated by males, many ex-veterans who had received technology training in the military. Gaining success in that male-dominated world required Cox to see past sexist attitudes; she recalled one occasion where a male counterpart entered a conference room and asked her to make copies – before realizing that Cox was the manager who was running the meeting! At every phase of her journey, Cox is grateful that she was able to lean on mentors, both male and female, who helped her to grow.

Cox attributes her success to lessons learned from her mom, a nurse and single mother, who taught her “If something needs to be fixed, you have to have the strength and determination to fix it.” She also credits the nuns at her Catholic high school – who, back in the 1980s, presciently suggested that she pursue a career in computers. Finally, she acknowledges her highly supportive husband, David (Class of ’89), whom she met while attending UAlbany.

What advice would Cox give to women starting out in the technology industry today? “Ask for help. And more importantly, accept it. No one can succeed alone.”

Secured Knowledge

By Mary Fiess

Manju Mude, a leader in cybersecurity, says she has “always felt motivated by a mission.”

A few months after Apple launched its original iPhone in 2007, Mude joined Apple, where, she says as the first woman in security at the company, she helped secure such products as Siri and iMessage. After Yahoo experienced a massive data breach, she joined the company to help it recover and to investigate and track down adversaries.

Today, she is the deputy chief information security officer (CISO) at Oportun, which provides loans to “underbanked and financially underserved applicants.

“It’s a very mission-oriented company that appeals to my values,” says Mude.

Cybersecurity was not yet a topic that regularly made the news when Mude earned her master’s degree in information science at UAlbany in 2000. In fact, the master’s information science program itself was relatively new.

But in the years since, as the importance of cybersecurity grew so did Mude’s role in it.

After UAlbany, Mude went to work for the New York State comptroller’s office, which was starting a cybersecurity department. A year later came 9/11, an event that completely changed how security is viewed she says.

“If you think about where it’s gone in the last 10 years, I feel like I picked the right field.”

Mude’s security exposure and knowledge launched her career into security leadership roles at Bank of America, Splunk, Apple, Yahoo and now Oportun.

Her work in the field was recognized in 2019 when she was cited as a Woman of Impact by SC Media, a cybersecurity news platform.

On her career journey, she says, she’s learned the importance of having a purpose: “Whatever path you go down, look for a purpose. Whatever path you take, make sure you feel good about it and its impact.”
By Alicia Grimes ’17
Lawyer. Leader. Liaison.

Alicia Tambe ’11 is bridging the global gap to bring the masses together through technology and digital inclusion. As the head of International Organizations for Connectivity & Inclusion at Meta (the parent company for Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp), Tambe travels the world to aid in technological advancements, facilitate reliable internet accessibility, and give marginalized groups the tools needed to thrive in the modern world.

Collaborating with international representatives, policymakers and stakeholders, Tambe is also the primary liaison for the International Telecommunications Union — the United Nations’ specialized agency for telecommunication policies.

Her passions lie in fostering relationships and keeping different areas of the world connected and unified.

“Working with tech and international relations is never boring! I’m constantly looking for different digital solutions. ‘How can we increase digital literacy in girls and women in tech? How can we help people everywhere create a steady income? How can we help with disaster relief in affected areas? What is the global economic impact of certain tech apps?’ There is so much to do!”

As a child of immigrants from Cameroon, Tambe has seen firsthand the importance of global culture, traveling and interconnectivity between countries. She witnessed her parents work hard to provide a better life while remaining in touch with their relatives back home.

“Knowing I have all these relatives back home makes me proud. The global nature of life has always been around me. It was important that I continued that narrative for myself and pursued international relations. Some people learn about the global world through college, but it was already ingrained in me.”

A 2011 UAlbany graduate and member of the sorority Kappa Alpha Kappa, Tambe received a bachelor of arts in political science with a minor in Chinese studies and global studies. She is a licensed attorney and currently sits on the advisory board for Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy.

Tambe previously worked as regulatory counsel at the telecom company SES, focusing on global satellite and
For nearly three decades, Sharada Singh, MBA ’89, worked nonstop to build a successful cutting-edge technology company from the ground up.

In 2020, she and her husband, Anurag Singh, MBA ’90, sold their business, Education Management Solutions, but she still maintains a presence at the company because, as she says, relaxing isn’t in her nature. But now, finally, she has more time for her kids and a puppy.

“I was still working full time through 2021 and then slowly switched to part time, reduced my hours, trying to wean myself out of the business. But you know, when you’ve been running a business for some 27 years, it’s very hard to extricate yourself,” said Singh, of being co-founder and chief operating officer, handling finance, human resources and operations.

The pioneering company specializes in providing healthcare simulation hardware and software to help future medical professionals learn their trades. The students act out how they would treat a patient — either an actor or a mannequin — and the instructors evaluate the performance of their skills and training.

“We’ve been working crazy hours from the time it started,” she said. “We always prided ourselves that we were in the forefront of the technology platform to launch the product and provide services to our clients.”

The couple met at UAlbany while pursuing their MBAs. After working for other companies, they responded to a request for proposals to automate a testing process for foreign medical students. They won the contract and their own business took off.

Today, Singh, who lives in Paoli, Pennsylvania, is caring for their puppy, Penny, renovating a beach house for extended family and will soon be mentoring women entrepreneurs.

Her advice to prospective entrepreneurs is to stick with it and be willing to take risks.

“You really have to be passionate. If you believe in whatever it is that you want to provide to your customers, you will continue working on it. And that’s that, you know, perseverance, you just have to keep doing it and you will be successful.”

SHARADA SINGH, MBA ’89

powered by Passion

connectivity regulatory issues. She was a counsel and regional specialist for Africa in the International Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission. Tambe interned as a law clerk at the White House and also interned for the deputy chief of staff at the U.S. Trade Representative Office.

She attributes much of her passion for international relations to her formative college years. While at the University, she studied abroad in China.

“Studying political science at [UAlbany] inspired me to become a lawyer for international negotiations. I didn’t know I’d work in tech or telecommunications. I don’t have a tech background. I’m a lawyer. I’ve always done political science. But that’s the beauty of tech. You don’t need a specialization. You just need to have a passion for creating innovative solutions.”

For Tambe, fostering a sense of community is a crucial component of global connectivity and human interaction. She’s traveled to more than 45 countries, holding negotiations in cities like Dubai, Jakarta, Nairobi and Brussels.

By Donna Liquori ’88

For nearly three decades, Sharada Singh, MBA ’89, worked nonstop to build a successful cutting-edge technology company from the ground up.

She has leveraged those coveted global connections to catapult her career and create a space to facilitate those solutions for the next generations to come.

“It’s important to bridge the gap between everyone. The youth, in particular, contribute so much to innovation and global technology. We must have integration programs where the youth stands aside experienced practitioners to learn about tech. We need that sense of connection amongst us all to continue to grow together.”

SHARADA SINGH, MBA ’89

Powered by Passion
There’s a shake-up happening in the television landscape and the likely result will be a better TV viewing experience for everyone. At least that’s the aim behind a tech start-up called 605, an advertising measurement and attribution company founded by Kristin Dolan ’88.

“It’s about making the advertising more effective. I hate getting ads for diapers. I mean, I’m 56,” laughed Dolan during a Zoom interview. “I’d rather see fewer, more relevant ads because it makes my experience better.”

The key to making the TV experience better, Dolan says, is to gather better data, glean better insights and deliver better outcomes. It’s 605’s rallying call as they seek to revamp the television analytics landscape for advertisers, networks and, most importantly, for viewers.
Tens of billions of dollars are spent annually by advertisers looking to reach the vast viewing audiences of broadcast networks and cable channels. Placement of those ad dollars is based on viewership data and, for the past 70 years, one company has dominated the television audience measurement field: Nielsen.

The “Nielsen rating,” a statistical estimate of the number of households watching a given television program, holds significant sway over the rise and fall of careers and fortunes in the TV business. For some Nielsen critics, that is exactly the problem. The company uses a “panel” — a small group of viewers used to represent a larger group. In an August 2022 press release, Nielsen announced its U.S National Television panel grew to 42,000 households. That is a tiny fraction of the more than 120 million TV homes in the U.S. Some networks and advertisers decry this as not sufficiently representative, nor accurate, of actual TV viewership.

In August 2021, the Media Ratings Council, an industry regulatory body, suspended Nielsen’s accreditation for underreporting viewership during the coronavirus pandemic. That action reverberated throughout the TV analytics landscape and opened a crack through which entered throngs of new alternative measuring companies, including Dolan’s 605.

“Every night, [605] measures tens of millions of households’ worth of viewership data that comes to us in a privacy compliant way,” Dolan said while drawing a distinction between 605’s capabilities and Nielsen’s.

“So, when an advertiser comes to 605 and says, ‘I want to know what my advertising did,’ we’re not saying here’s what [thousands] of households did and we’re going to extrapolate up. We’re saying here’s what 44 million devices did and we’re going to extrapolate up.”

But, measuring what viewers watched in the past tense is the old battle, said Dolan. The new frontlines in TV measurement, she adds, are attribution (knowing which ads worked and why), prediction (knowing the outcomes of future ad spending) and cross-platform unduplicated measurement (following unique individuals across linear TV, smart TV, mobile, computer, streaming and more.)

If it sounds complex, it is. 605 deploys a small army of data scientists and data analysts to decipher insights from an endless tsunami of data streams. Today, the company has more than 150 employees (17 PhDs and nearly half with multiple advanced degrees) working in multiple countries — a far cry from its humble start of four people gathered around a living room table in Manhattan. Dolan points out that 605 is perfectly positioned for success.

“Now it’s just scale. The tech is ready, the company is ready ... So, now it’s just waiting for the market to kind of catch up and it’s starting to hit.”

Since the early 1990s, Dolan, who majored in English, has witnessed and, in some cases, helped usher in a range of new technologies, from modem services and video-on-demand to IP connectivity and Wi-Fi — and now, advanced advertising analytics. In the interview, she remarked on the ebb and flow of tech developments and perhaps foreshadowed her return to her cable roots: “It’s been a pretty amazing ride, but I feel like it’s always cyclical. It goes from the technology to the content, then back to the technology, right?”

It doesn’t take artificial intelligence nor an algorithm to know one thing: Wherever the future of technology and content go, odds are good that Kristin Dolan will be there working to make it better.
By Nick Muscavage ’16

While you probably have not heard of Jacqueline Hea, there’s a good chance you know her work. If you’ve ever looked up your home on Google Earth or have tried to find your way with Google Maps, Hea’s efforts have helped you do so.

That’s because Hea is a corporate counsel on the legal team at Google Geo responsible for licensing the images seen on Google Maps, a web mapping platform with more than 1 billion monthly users.

Essentially, Hea’s job is to ensure the licensing is in place for the images and data used by Google Maps, including the platform’s Street View service, which is compiled from images collected by Google or licensed from third-parties, such as satellite imagery providers.

Over the past decade, Google Maps has become the most used mapping service in the world, and with the increasing reliance on smartphones and technology, the service is making the days of unfolding crinkled paper maps a distant memory.

The team Hea works on also oversees Google Earth and handles the licensing agreements with businesses that may want to use its images or companies seeking to use its data, such as stores seeking to list locations on Maps.

Her path to Google nearly nine years ago may be unconventional compared to most corporate attorneys.

She received her bachelor’s of arts degree in Spanish with a minor in French from UAlbany in 1982, and while earning her degree, she studied overseas in Madrid, Spain, and Bogota, Colombia. At that time, Hea said, a career in law wasn’t the first thing on her mind.

“I think I was always kind of intrigued by law, but it wasn’t necessarily a goal first and foremost,” she said. “I don’t have any lawyers in my family or anything, so it was kind of more of an abstract idea.”

After Albany, Hea earned a degree in Latin American studies from Vanderbilt University and shortly after graduated from Tulane University Law School.

She spent about five years doing transactional law and some trust and estates work in Miami for law firm Kelley Drye & Warren, where she met some early role models in her career, such as Jose Sariego, a journalist-turned-attorney who was then a partner at the firm.

By Paul A. Miller, MA ’21

For two decades, the “Call of Duty” video game has been one of the most popular and profitable franchises in gaming history. The October 2023 launch of its “Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II” title made a billion dollars in just 10 days — a record for the game’s developer Activision Blizzard.

For Tory Tyksinski ’21, working for the dynamic company, first as an intern and now as a junior network programmer, has been amazing.

“I’m not going to lie,” Tyksinski said over a Zoom call from her Los Angeles apartment. “It’s very cool to be a part of such a big game.”

Operating out of Activision’s Sherman Oaks office, Tyksinski, one of about 13,000 employees worldwide, works in the company’s Central Tech division, the unit that supports the studios that develop the games. She is currently in the “rotational engineering program,”
However, when an opportunity to work in South America came her way, Hea couldn’t pass it up. In 1994, she joined Nortel Networks, a telecommunications equipment manufacturer, as a senior counsel focused on Latin America and the Caribbean. The role was based in Miami, but Hea, who speaks Spanish, Portuguese and French, would travel and stay in those regions for weeks at a time.

“So, that’s really kind of what took me to technology,” she said. “It was more of me trying to get back to an interest I had in languages and in Latin America.”

Throughout her 15 years with Nortel, Hea assisted the company with transactional work as it supplied equipment to help build Brazil’s wireless communication networks. Wireless subscribers in Brazil grew from 4 million in 1995 to 30 million by 1999, Martha Bejar, Nortel’s regional president of the Latin American and Caribbean division, told The New York Times in 2000.

Nortel, Hea said, was the second-largest supplier of wireless network equipment in the region at the time, behind Ericsson.

The work helped her understand “what a difference a wireless network could make for a society in terms of communication,” she said.

“It was a big leap forward because, previously, you were reliant on landlines and the ability to roll out a landline network, which is infrastructure — digging and all that — and is much more complicated,” she said.

In 2009, Nortel went bankrupt and was purchased by Ericsson. Hea worked at the company for about four years as senior counsel before joining Google — by “happenstance,” she said. Ericsson sent her to California to do venture capital, which opened her eyes to Silicon Valley and she decided to apply to Google, she said.

Her decades-long career in technology has mostly centered around connecting people, from working on the development of wireless networks to playing a vital role with Google Maps.

Hea knows that all technology “can have both positive and negative outcomes,” and regulating those outcomes is “a complex task for society,” she said.

“But to make information available is helpful,” she added. “Reducing our dependence on paper maps and having information at your fingertips certainly has, I think, a big impact.”

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where early career employees serve eight-month rotations in three different areas ranging from security/threat intelligence, multiplayer infrastructure management, game title support, online tools and Call of Duty Mobile. It is a way for the company to expose employees to various opportunities and to match their interests and talents to Activision’s needs.

“My first rotation was cybersecurity,” said Tyksinski, who majored in digital forensics and served as vice president for UAlbany’s chapter of Women in Cybersecurity. She credits her experience with the student group for sparking her interest in pursuing tech. “When I found my Women in Cybersecurity gals, I said ‘OK, I’m in the right place.’”

Tyksinski is finishing her rotation with Treyarch, the in-house studio responsible for the Call of Duty franchise. So far in her rotations, she’s worked on graphical interfaces, project management, back end network tools and has even collaborated closely with a manager to create a product that she can’t reveal.

“You’re really exposed to a bunch of different stuff,” said Tyksinski. “I wish more companies did this because it really has given me an opportunity to try out different hats in so many different departments.”

While she doesn’t yet know where she’ll be placed next, Tyksinski says she’s game for the experience.

“I never thought I would end up at a video game company … but staying here is one of my goals.”
Sheena Vaidyanathan has accomplished a great deal since earning her master’s degree from UAlbany, from pioneering a tech startup in the early days of the internet, to becoming a grade school teacher trailblazing in the area of STEM, to publishing a book on creative coding. And she’s not finished yet. 

Every one of her endeavors over the past three decades, she said, has had a similar thread tying them together: “using technology to solve a problem.”

The first problem came in 1994, just four years after she received her master’s in computer science, when she was laid off from Metaphor, a company that pioneered desktop interfaces and icons. At the time, she and her husband, Vijay, who graduated from UAlbany with a master’s in computer science in 1990, were living in Mountain View, California, with their 2-year-old daughter and a son on the way.

“I could apply to another job. I mean, this is Silicon Valley, so there were lots of other companies nearby,” she said. “But I just thought, ‘I don’t want to go interviewing with me being six months pregnant.’”

So, she decided to take a chance.

“I would start my own company,” Vaidyanathan said. And she decided to try something that was revolutionary at the time: to put India’s leading newspaper online.

In the mid-1990s, hardly any newspapers were online. Vaidyanathan saw a problem and found a solution, and through her initiative, The Hindu became first Indian newspaper to go online and was among the first websites in India.

“I manually inserted all the HTML needed,” she said, since her uncle was FedExing her a 5 1/4-inch floppy disk that saved the newspaper “in some weird format.”

“I spent the next six months pushing [the online newspaper],” she said. By the time it was running more efficiently, their son had been born.

The website began to get a lot of traffic, so the Vaidyanathans wanted to add a chatroom. Because chatrooms at the time were not very reliable and would often crash, Vijay built a better one.

The chat client her husband wrote was called ParaChat, which led to a company the two founded and ran called Paralogic. The company grew over the next two years and caught the attention of larger-company, Xoom, which offered them company shares to acquire Paralogic. They took the deal, and once Xoom went public the Vaidyanathans were able to sell their stocks and buy a home to raise their family.

It all stemmed from “a need to solve the problem for this one newspaper,” Vaidyanathan said.

Vaidyanathan’s husband joined Xoom while she ventured off to start another company focused on internet social groups. Xoom was acquired by NBC Internet, and Vaidyanathan’s husband joined NBCI as its chief strategy officer. NBCI also acquired Vaidyanathan’s new company, but she passed up the offer to come on board.

“I decided to quit completely, and it was a very difficult emotional moment because I kind of said goodbye to everything,” Vaidyanathan said. “And I said, ‘What am I going to do?’”

For a little while, she was a stay-at-home mom, but that didn’t last very long, she said. Vaidyanathan wanted to pursue another interest of hers, and her career path forked.

“I took a complete change,” she said. “I ended up joining our local community college and I got a certification in studio art. I was volunteering in an art program in our public schools, because my kids were going to school there,” she said, which led to her being hired by the Los Altos School District as an art teacher.

The job only lasted three years before

“I know that we still continue to have a problem in the U.S. in particular with girls taking on STEM roles or computer science roles,” she said. “Literally in my own classes, I can see that girls are inspired because I am in that role.”
she was laid off because of cuts to the district's arts budget.

Upon hearing the news of her layoff, an assistant superintendent recalled a computer-based art lesson Vaidyanathan gave to her students, and proposed an idea. “He said, ‘Why don’t you take those digital art lessons and create a program and teach it to all our schools?’” Vaidyanathan said. So she did, and for the next two years she taught the program in every one of the district’s seven schools.

After two years, however, she received word again that the district was cutting back and slashing funding for her program. Vaidyanathan had another idea, though. She proposed that instead of eliminating her program, the district should allow her to focus the lessons more on coding. The district, which at the time had no Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program, agreed and even assigned her seven teachers to roll out the program.

“So, from having no job, I turned this into an amazing new program called the STEM program,” Vaidyanathan said. “I created a curriculum for kindergarten to fifth grade, which was teaching kids how to code.”

The lessons, which still contained a lot of art elements, were extremely successful and led to Vaidyanathan speaking about her methods at numerous conferences as well as presenting before the California Department of Education in 2016 on computer science education.

More than 17 years later, Vaidyanathan is still leading this program for the Los Altos School District. She also wrote a book conveying the lessons she developed over the years called Creative Coding in Python, which was published in 2019 by The Quarto Group.

Growing up in northern India, Vaidyanathan notes that she is fortunate her parents embraced her interest in engineering early on and allowed her to go to college and study it. She believes her position in the tech world can be inspiring to young girls.

“I know that we still continue to have a problem in the U.S. in particular with girls taking on STEM roles or computer science roles,” she said. “Literally in my own classes, I can see that girls are inspired because I am in that role.”

Vaidyanathan’s family and friends joke that she can never stop solving problems, and they may not be wrong. During the pandemic, Vaidyanathan saw local farmers around the Bay Area struggling to sell their produce. So, she created a website and a nonprofit that connects people to local farmers and allows them to choose from available produce and create a curated crate of fruits and vegetables that she refers to as a “farm box.”

The new venture is called Tera Farm, and it includes an educational aspect by coordinating visits to participating farms so the public can learn more about agriculture and the work it takes to put fresh produce on the table. Vaidyanathan, who now has her own small apple orchard, is hoping the idea can spread to more regions.

Over an almond milk mocha in New York City during a recent visit, Vaidyanathan ruminated that maybe artificial intelligence can play a role in the future of farming. The thought of AI having more applications in society can be scary to many, she said, but she doesn’t view it that way.

“I think we should not fear it.” Instead, Vaidyanathan said, people should embrace it and ask themselves: “What can I do that’s different?”
By Paul A. Miller, MA ’21

When Anna Topol first encountered a computer in the late 1980s at her high school in Poland, she wasn’t entirely impressed.

“I will be very honest, I didn’t think that I was good at it,” said Topol, recalling its greenish screen and rudimentary capabilities. “I’m like ‘I can draw a square in three seconds. Why would I code for five minutes to draw a square?’”

Still, the computer sparked her curiosity. The young booklover with a talent for physics and math began to imagine what this new technology could do in the future.

Thirty years later, Topol is the chief technology officer and a distinguished engineer at IBM’s Thomas J. Watson Research Center — the research headquarters of the renowned multinational information technology company. She leads the efforts to match IBM’s innovative research and emerging technologies to the strategic needs of a range of entities, from Fortune 500 companies and start-ups to government, nonprofits and academic institutions — like UAlbany. (IBM and the University are collaborating on multiple AI and supercomputing initiatives.)

Now, Topol imagines what her company’s research and technology can do for their partners. As a scientist, she is trained to solve problems. As a technologist, she answers questions like: “How can we collaborate together and what is the next step towards the technology development that we achieve together?”
Topol is energetic, passionate and prolific; she co-holds more than 90 patents, has authored or coauthored more than 100 research publications and has written book chapters on topics dealing with advances in artificial intelligence, such as “Promoting Economic Development and Solving Societal Issues Within Connect Industries Ecosystems in Society 5.0”

Working in Yorktown Heights, New York, at one of the world’s most prestigious research labs, is a far cry from her hometown of Świnoujście, a picturesque seaport on the shores of the Baltic where she recalls the seagulls, swans and the occasional beach takeover by wild boars.

“It’s beautiful. I absolutely loved being in Poland,” said Topol. But it was a visit to Wisconsin, at age 19, to see relatives that changed her address and, ultimately, the direction of her life.

After earning an undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, she started work at Applied Science and Technology Inc. (ASTeX), a supplier of subsystems and sputtering tools for the semiconductor industry based in Wilmington, Mass. She enjoyed the firm and the work, but realized she was eager to continue learning about emerging sciences and new technologies.

On a recommended visit to UAlbany’s Institute for Materials (then part of Physics Department), Topol saw boxes of state-of-the-art equipment from known technology companies — a sign of collaboration between industry and academia — and she knew that she had found what she was looking for.

“I felt that the labs were giving me the opportunity of getting my hands ‘dirty’ with electronics,” Topol earned a master’s and PhD in physics at UAlbany. “I felt I was part of something big.” She was the first post-doctoral fellow at the, then new, College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE).

That “something big” came to Topol in the incredibly tiny form of optoelectronics (devices that emit, interact with and control light) embedded in semiconductors; it’s the field that brought her to IBM. In more than two decades with the company, she has garnered a wealth of experience in multiple departments and roles from researching technologies for the smallest SRAM (static random access memory) cells, being a principal investigator on government grants, leading patent operations and technology licensing and managing the research client experience center.

Today, as an executive, she insists that behind her success are people who served as teachers, mentors and inspirations, including computer pioneer Frances Allen ’54 — the first woman named an IBM Fellow and who also received the A.M Turing Award (often called the Nobel Prize for computing). Allen graduated from the New York State Teachers College, UAlbany’s predecessor.

Whenever visiting clients or speaking at conferences, she asks to meet with their women’s technology groups so that she can pay forward her good fortune and help them overcome barriers to their success. Topol, a confessed optimist, tells them: “Yes, there are many obstacles but you, yourself, are usually the biggest obstacle.”

It’s a lesson learned, all those years ago, after she encountered that early computer and, at first, didn’t think she was very good at it. Today, the distinguished engineer’s message to others is simple: Believe.
It wasn’t my choice to look like a musclebound, sci-fi version of NFL quarterback Patrick Mahomes, but — thanks to my 14-year-old son — here I am, in skintight digital Spandex, waiting in the “Fortnite” lobby for my squad mates, Ashley Hall and Cassendrea Jones, to check in.

For the uninitiated, “Fortnite” is the immensely popular online video game where millions of players (some 83 million each month, according to industry estimates) control custom avatars who battle for survival in vivid virtual worlds, all while deploying a near endless arsenal of startlingly realistic and imaginative weapons.

I’m a newbie, but Hall and Jones are an experienced and lethal “Fortnite” duo that plays competitively for the University at Albany’s eSports team. The affable seniors, who are also best friends and roommates, are going to show me their skills as we fight an anonymous trio of “Fortnite” warriors located somewhere across cyberspace. The goal: Keep me alive long enough to report for this story.
“She’s the muscle,” says Jones, describing Hall’s ferocious and fearless gaming persona. “Everyone knows her as a hard hitter.”

For her part, Hall refers to Jones as the “IGL” — gamer-speak for in-game leader. “She’s a people-person. She can connect with people,” Hall says of her partner, whom she admires for her game sense and knowledge. “I just shoot the people she tells me to shoot!”

We’re playing remotely from our respective homes: Hall and Jones in their apartment on Empire Commons on UAlbany’s campus and me from the basement of my suburban home. My teenage sons watch with bemusement as I struggle to activate my headset’s microphone; the youngest, who had given me a five-minute “Fortnite” tutorial, quickly solves the audio problem.
“There he is,” says Hall, as I’m finally able to speak with my soon-to-be bodyguards. Next, I need to follow them as we parachute onto the battlefield from a giant, blue school bus tethered to a hot air balloon (yes, that’s right) — except I miss the cue. Hall and Jones have already descended and I’m still airborne in the bus.

“Where is he?” Jones asks. “He didn’t jump,” responds Hall.

I sense they may already regret this mission, but they’re good sports about it. With the patience of a kindergarten teacher, Jones instructs me on how to exit the bus and descend to a blue marker on the battlefield where they’re waiting for me. I follow her advice and jump.

It was in 2013 at Medgar Evers College Preparatory School in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, where Hall and Jones, both sixth graders, took their own leap of faith.

“I was walking through the lunchroom … and, mind you, everyone already has little friends,” said Hall, recalling the first time she saw Jones. “I was just awkwardly walking around and I see this girl sitting by herself and I’m like ‘OK, let me try.’ And here we are!

“We just kinda clicked,” added Jones who explained that, after Hall moved to Florida, they kept their friendship strong through videogaming and, eventually, ended up together at UAlbany. Hall, a criminal justice major, was attracted to the school’s highly ranked program and Jones, who majors in psychology, says she knew UAlbany as “a good school.” For both, the announcement of the new esports team was an additional enticement.

“That whole summer prior to joining the esports team, we were getting better and better, so we’d always play ‘duos,’” said Jones, describing the mode of play where a player and a partner are pitted against another set of players. “We’d go against other teams and were surprised we were winning.”

Their wins are the result of intensive, almost daily practice. When asked how many hours a day they play, Hall said: “Oh my god! I hope my mother doesn’t read this!” They average about three hours of practice a day, but have been known to go as long as six hours. Their expertise shows.

On the digital battlefield, the duo moves with balletic brutality; a study in grace with guns. Their patter is surprisingly sparse and efficient. They share their heading, the location of targets and any “loot” they’ve found such as additional weapons, med kits and even something called “Chug Splash” — a six-pack of health — which, apparently, I urgently need. My injured character, ‘Military Mahomes,’ is suddenly engulfed by an explosion of liquid that surprises me. Fearing that I’m being attacked, I randomly fire my rifle in various directions.

“It’s just me. I’m healing you,” says Hall. I apologize for my frantic outburst of gunfire. She says it’s fine because this version of the game doesn’t allow friendly fire and, also, I’m a terrible shot.

By the time I figure out how to run, jump, aim and — let’s be honest — mostly hide, Hall and Jones have already neutralized dozens of adversaries. At one point, I get injured (again) and Hall is carrying me on her back when a giant robotic bird swoops down from the sky, lifts me into the air and drops me to the ground. It’s something that neither of the veteran players has ever seen before. I’m a little bit proud to provide them with this unique experience, even though it results in my demise. Unfortunately, trying to rescue me is just enough distraction that it takes Hall and Jones out of their rhythm and we lose the first match. They’re not happy with the loss, but they don’t cast blame. Instead, we get ready to drop in a final time.
Their complementary gaming styles (Jones as the tactician and Hall as the trigger) have translated into esports success for the pair. In 2022, they competed for the Eastern College Athletic Conference “Fortnite” championship and going into the finals, they were in command of first place. Then, it was discovered that unauthorized players had infiltrated the competition. In response, tournament officials voided a series of matches, which ultimately cost Jones and Hall their top spot. They were awarded third place.

“It was so upsetting,” Hall remembers with humor. “All the hard work was just thrown in the blender and then in the trash … and then thrown back in your face and then put in the trash again!”

Dealing with adversity in the male-dominated world of esports is nothing new to these young women, who say they’re often harassed during gaming when they reveal their gender by speaking.

“The next line that most likely follows [from male opponents] is like, ‘Make me a sandwich,’” Jones says with more than a tinge of annoyance. “They always try to undermine our skill because of our gender.”

They’re quick to point out that the UAlbany eSports team is completely different: It has a zero-tolerance policy on toxicity, discrimination or harassment of any kind.

“There is no gamer-girl or gamer-boy here,” says Hall. “We’re all gamers enjoying the game. That’s the kind of environment that’s there for us.”

Still, outside the positive confines of UAlbany, they say that some male players, after having been beaten by women, simply can’t accept the loss.

“They start insulting you after they hear that we’re not just grown men playing in their basement,” says Hall.

As a grown man playing from my basement, I’m determined to not slow down Jones and Hall in our second battle royale, but I also understand that I’m not exactly going to be an asset either. Like a good soldier, I’ll do exactly what they say, when they say to do it.

This time, I make the jump from the flying bus on time and rendezvous with them at the checkpoint. They’re fast and know what they’re doing. I’m just hoping to keep up. We run, swim and hide — well, mostly, I hide.

Through the headset, I hear Hall and Jones strategizing about opponents who have suddenly appeared. I hear a volley of automatic gunfire. Instantly, a brick wall is being built around me. (In this game mode, players have the ability to quickly construct and destroy structures. It requires expertise.) Hall has decided, for my safety, to box me in. It’s also probably meant to prevent me from screwing things up.

I peer through the gaps in the bricks, eager to catch a glimpse of the action. I level my rifle at a distant bush, daring an imaginary enemy to surface. Over the headset, I hear Hall and Jones fighting actual opponents. Suddenly, the bricks around me flash red and disappear. Someone is destroying my safehouse and shooting at me. My squad mates hear the commotion and try to react, but it’s too late. Before I fire a shot, I’m dead (again).

Hall’s cheery voice reaches out to me: “Well, at least now you can watch.”

For the next two minutes, I “spectate” — which is gamer-speak for “You’re terrible at video games and that’s why you’re dead.” Actually, it just means you’re observing, but it feels like the former.

I watch as Hall and Jones fly through the air, “Matrix”-style, building structures and firing their weapons. They jokingly plead with opponents who can’t hear them: “Cut it out, sir, and just die!” More action, more gunfire. The world briefly moves in slow motion. Their avatars break into spectacular dance moves. A graphic appears onscreen: “#1 Victory Royale.” They have won. I can hear them clap for each other as they sing, “We did it! We did it! Promotion! Promotion!”

I can also hear something else in their voices. It’s neither boastful nor prideful. Rather, it’s a sense of satisfaction and maybe a tiny hint of joy in knowing that, as teammates, as women and as best friends, they achieved this small victory (and so many others) together. Mission accomplished.
The University at Albany’s College of Engineering and Applied Sciences new dean, Michele Grimm.
The University at Albany’s College of Engineering and Applied Sciences has a new dean, biomedical engineer Michele Grimm, and she’s happy to introduce herself.

But first, she has a message: “We want to let everybody know we’re here.” She means, of course, the young College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS).

Founded in 2015 as the first traditional public engineering option in New York’s Capital Region, CEAS offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in electrical and computer engineering, environmental and sustainable engineering, and computer science. Additional programs are in development. The college currently enrolls about 700 students.

Grimm, who started as the college’s dean in August 2022, is excited about all the college has accomplished so far and the opportunities ahead to build its strengths. And she wants to spread the word far and wide about the college and the value of engineering.

“Engineering is a great first degree,” she likes to point out. “My basic recruiting pitch is ‘if you have the ability to study engineering, I encourage you to pick engineering as your first degree. You can go from engineering into law, into medicine, into education, into business, because what engineering essentially teaches you is problem solving.’”

In her own life, she sees great value in an engineering mindset.

“The way I approach almost every problem is: What is our goal? What are the constraints? OK, let’s figure out how we are going to best meet this goal within the constraints we face, which is a very engineering way to approach things. My kids will laugh about the fact that I do this for anything. But the fact is that problem solving in a structured way is an important skill.”

Grimm came to UAlbany from Michigan State University, where she was serving as the Wielenga Creative Engineering Endowed Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Biomedical Engineering. It was a position, she said, that allowed her to focus on “student success, creativity in engineering, what can we do to really think outside the box to help students.”

She said she wasn’t looking to leave but the UAlbany position was “an opportunity that does not present itself very often. It offered all the things I love in taking on a leadership role.”

“Having the chance to help build a young college of engineering into a strong and vibrant community of faculty and students is rare. I have spent a significant part of my academic career creating and advancing new academic programs, at both the undergraduate and graduate level, and so the chance to lead a college through this process is exciting. When new leadership is named for long-established schools and colleges, there is often a significant momentum that needs to be overcome if any changes are suggested,” she said.

“CEAS has many highly engaged, early career faculty — individuals who are excited to pursue cross-disciplinary research and develop educational programs that truly prepare students for their professional journeys. I am grateful to have the opportunity to work with them to create a college that will stand out from others in the region,” she added.

Grimm said she liked that UAlbany is a diverse campus, bringing together “people with different
life experiences,” something that is important for engineers in developing solutions to meet differing needs.

Another big plus, she noted, is the launch of Albany AI, a $200 million public-private artificial intelligence supercomputing initiative that includes the renovation and transformation of the former Albany High School into the new home of College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, as well as the construction of a new supercomputer, intended to be among the most powerful university-based computers in the country.

“An important approach to addressing society’s greatest challenges is to bring a broad range of disciplines together in convergent problem solving,” said Grimm. “Albany AI is an exciting example of this — providing an opportunity for faculty and students from the college to work with researchers across the University, as well as companies and agencies in the Capital Region and throughout the state to advance and apply artificial intelligence to answer pressing questions.”

The plan to reintegrate the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering into the University at Albany will further strengthen cross-disciplinary research, she said.

As part of the AI initiative, UAlbany is adding an unprecedented 27 new faculty members specializing in artificial intelligence, the largest cluster hire in the University’s history. Of those 27 positions, six will be part of CEAS. The college is also hiring four other faculty members, for a total of 10 new faculty members expected to join the college in Fall 2023.

“It’s extremely exciting. It’s a way for us to make a huge leap forward in both the programs we offer and our research,” said Grimm. Moving forward, she said, CEAS wants to add a mechanical engineering department and a biomedical engineering department.

It won’t be the first time Grimm has led the development of a new biomedical engineering department.

After earning her bachelor’s degree in biomedical engineering and engineering mechanics at Johns Hopkins University in 1990 and her PhD in bioengineering at the University of Pennsylvania in 1994, Grimm took her first job as a visiting professor, which later converted into a tenure-track position, at the Wayne State University College of Engineering in Detroit, Michigan. Wayne State had been doing research that combined medicine and mechanical engineering since 1939 but didn’t have an educational component, Grimm recounted, and she was asked to start a graduate program in biomedical engineering.

“I spearheaded writing the grants to get outside money to support it. I determined that I loved that side of things, creating curricula, thinking about how to develop programs that would best prepare students for success after earning their degrees,” she said. “So in 2002, we started the department of biomedical engineering. I received my tenure and promotion. I was still in mechanical engineering when I was tenured. I have the dubious honor to this day of being the only woman faculty member ever tenured in the department of mechanical engineering at Wayne State. And then, of course, I left and went to the new department I formed.”

In 2003, she assumed the role of associate dean of academic affairs at Wayne State, a position she held for seven years, during which time she led the development of an undergraduate program in biomedical engineering. Again, she said, she “loved being able to create something new and exciting that really supported the students.” She returned to the biomedical engineering department in 2010 to run the undergraduate program.
In 2016, she was offered the opportunity to serve a three-year rotation as program director for three biomedical engineering-related programs at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and also served as co-chair of the White House’s Office of Science and Technology Policy Task Force on Research and Development for Technology to Support Aging Adults.

“I’m one of the weird people out there who actually like the administrative side of things. I really enjoyed my time at NSF. Learning what they are looking for in grant applications was hugely helpful at Michigan State and will be here at UAlbany as well. It was wonderful in terms of my ability to mentor early-career faculty,” said Grimm.

Mentors and mentoring have been important to Grimm throughout her career. In 2022, she was awarded the Robert M. Nerem Education and Mentorship Medal awarded by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in recognition of her outstanding work as a mentor. At the award ceremony, Grimm delivered a lecture summarizing her philosophy of mentoring. She noted how valuable mentors have been to her throughout her career, particularly in the earlier part of her career at a time when women in her field were rare.

“I’ve had numerous mentoring relationships that are bi-directional – both of us benefiting from the different experiences we each have had. I’ve also found that many of my students have provided me with increased insight based on their life experiences – even if neither of us would call me the mentee in that relationship,” said Grimm.

When she looks at her experiences over the years, whether as a mentor or a mentee, as a student or a faculty member, as an associate dean or, now, a dean, she said she finds “the most important thing is to be open to learning.”
1952
Tom Holman spent the summer of 2021 on Long Island and also visited his sister in Hanover, Pa. He spent the winter in Naples, Fla., just after Hurricane Ian had devastated the city. Tom’s apartment complex was not damaged.

Joyce Leavitt Zanchelli and Joe ’49 moved to an assisted living residence since Joyce is now wheelchair bound.
Class Councilor: Joyce Leavitt Zanchelli, jjzanch@yahoo.com

1953
A note from your class councilor:
Hello Red Devils! Here’s hoping that not only those members of the Class of 1953, but the other alums as well, have all been vaccinated and are getting the booster shots. Be sure to get the flu shot, too! Who knows — it’s possible that a little pinch could be the saving of a life!

Janet Norton DeFabio passed away in June 2022 at Transitional Health Services, Kannapolis, N.C.

Douglas Nielsen and Gail are enjoying life with their four great-grandchildren. They celebrated their 5-year-old great-grandchild’s birthday over a week’s time. “It’s great to go to their house to visit. Knock on the door and all four come streaming to greet us. Who could ask for more?” Doug and Gail’s daughter, Sara, runs Lego camps and uses Lego therapy in various ways. The Nielsen’s last trip was with their daughter, Lisa, to Watkins Glen to visit relatives. “Walking the Glen trail is no longer for us old people. It’s so nice having all these helpful kids and grandkids to help us old ones,” Doug said. “My walking is curtailed by an arthritic right hip and knee. I don’t push the envelope anymore.”

Betty Cockendall Hart taught at her local high school via Google Meet during the pandemic. After Covid-19 restrictions were lifted, Betty continued working in the math lab daily. She has been faithful to a swimming exercise program, completes two miles each day on the elliptical and takes yoga classes on the weekend. Betty’s daughter has connected her with an adult learner who is studying to become a nurse and receives tutoring in Math three times per week. Betty says, “I have been extremely blessed and love working with the students and, of course, the math.”

Margaret (Peg) Hebert Wernette and husband were both staff at London Central High School where students were from military families as well as families in the oil and gas industries. There was a very special connection between the former students and Jack and Peg. Jack taught American literature and drama for 34 years and Peg taught math for 33 years at the London Central School. A very special friendship developed between the teachers and their students, and they have stayed connected after all these years.

Pam Calabrese Weigand ’54 shared that Art Weigand died in Dec. He was a proud member of the Potter Club and attended as many reunions as possible. Pam and Art were two weeks shy of having been together 68 years. “I consider it a privilege to have known him so long,” Pam said. Our condolences to Pam, and to all of Art’s loved ones.

Rose Mary (Rosie) Keller Hughes was another very fortunate Red Devil who did not get Covid-19. Rosie did a daily reading of jokes for almost three years on Facebook, telling her audience she would continue the daily readings until the pandemic was over. It isn’t totally over yet, but she announced at the beginning of Dec. that she was retiring from being a jokester. It was wonderful for Rosie to reconnect with former students who logged on to her daily readings. She now listens to the song written for her by a former exchange student from Sweden. All of us who have taught know what a great experience it is to come together again with former students. What is shocking is that they are now grandparents!

Many classes have recently chosen to raise money for the Student Emergency Fund, which provides immediate funding for things like food, rent and internet access for students in crisis. This ensures these students can remain on their path to a UAlbany degree, despite whatever obstacles they are facing. Is this something for which the Class of 1953 would like to raise money? Let your class councilor know if this is something that you would like to raise funds for.
Please remember to stay in touch and please pass along any news you hear about a classmate. Go, Red Devils!

Class Councilor: Rose Mary (Rosie) Keller Hughes, rosemaryk.hughes@gmail.com

1954

2022 was a milestone year for Joseph Stella and Madeline Payne Stella who, like many of you, joined the elite group of people known as “nanogenarians.” Joe and Madeline celebrated their twin great-granddaughters’ 1st birthdays in Aug.

Jim Bennett is “still on his feet, just moving a bit slower these days!”

John Allasio is doing well in Michigan. “Marge and I can still walk and talk. In fact, we can do both at the same time!”

Last June, the Class of ’54 celebrated its 68th anniversary during a virtual reunion on Zoom. About twenty class members participated. This was our second Zoom Reunion, and it was enjoyed by all those attending. We will celebrate our 69th anniversary on Zoom on June 14, 2023.

Class Councilor: Joan Paul, fpaul1@nycap.rr.com

1957

John Rookwood passed away in Aug. following two years of various health issues.

The Class of ’57 celebrated its 65th anniversary during a virtual reunion on Zoom in Oct. About 20 class members from all over the country participated, including Jan Champagne McCrath (Hawaii), Mary Furner (California) and a few classmates from Florida. We plan to have another session in the spring. We all have been very generous to the University, accumulating a large amount in our Class Fund and donating some of these monies to the University Library and the School of Education through the years. As many of you have suggested, we will continue to do so.

Sheila Lister Bamberger and Hank celebrated the New Year by participating in a Road Scholar program about the Rose Parade.

Class Councilor: Sheila Lister Bamberger, bambergersheila@gmail.com

1960

Greetings, Yellowjackets!

We are looking forward to the 1955-65 reunion luncheon June 7, 2023. There will be no formal program so that time can be fully spent renewing friendships and reminiscing. Call your friends from all classes, even beyond the 10-year span, to join us!

Class Co-Councilors: Joan Cali Pecore, cueville@comcast.net; Doris Hische Brossy, dbrossy@aol.com

A Message from Lee Serravillo
Executive Director UAlbany Alumni Association

Enhancing Career Connections Through Improved Technology

When recruiting prospective students, most institutions tout the power of their alumni network, assuring that this network will be available for graduates as they navigate their career paths. And now, in a world that is very dependent on virtual platforms as a means to connect both personally and professionally, it’s imperative that the career-related needs of students and alumni alike are met with accessible online tools using the latest technology and interactive features that help build valuable relationships and produce great job and internship opportunities. This is why, in late 2022, the UAlbany Alumni Association invested in a more robust virtual platform, PeopleGrove, to host the UAlbany Career Advisory Network, or UCAN.

Since 2014, students and alumni have learned the benefits and ease of UCAN to connect, build relationships and ultimately find success. This semester we’ve worked to build an even stronger career program dedicated to more than just advising. With interactive tools for students and alumni seeking career help, as well as alumni volunteering to provide mentorship, UCAN is able to support user needs from advice to job opportunities all in one virtual space. Users have more options for fine-tuning their profiles, which results in better search results and more personalized mentorship experiences.

As for a powerful alumni network, there is no question that UAlbany has one of the best, which we’ve seen since launching UCAN nearly a decade ago. We know that our alumni are eager to give of their time and talent. If you’re wanting to give back to your fellow Great Danes, being a part of UCAN is one of the best ways that you can leverage your expertise and help shape the next generation of UAlbany graduates. If you haven’t already, join UCAN and start making a difference today!

To join UCAN, scan the code or visit ualbany.peoplegrove.com.

Lee Serravillo
Executive Director,
UAlbany Alumni Association

Connect and engage with your most valuable network:
www.alumni.albany.edu/update.

@UAlbanyAlumni                 @UAlbany Alumni
fb.com/UAlbanyAlumni                   linkedin.com/company/ualbanyalumni
University at Albany Alumni Association

2023 EXCELLENCE AWARDS GALA

The University at Albany Alumni Association bestowed Excellence Awards on the following alumni for their outstanding achievements and service. Recipients were honored at the Excellence Awards Gala, April 22, 2023.

STONEMAN DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI
Honors an alum for an extraordinary achievement; or honors an individual who, over the course of a decade or more, has exemplified outstanding success in a chosen profession or outstanding service to society
Leigh L. Wen, MFA '94
Director, Leigh Wen Fine Art

COLLINS CITIZEN OF THE UNIVERSITY
Recognizes a non-graduate's outstanding contributions of service, leadership or a special gift to the University
Rabi Musah
Professor of Chemistry; Associate Vice Provost for the Learning Commons and the Center for Achievement, Retention and Student Success, University at Albany

IRVIS OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUMNI
Recognizes early outstanding achievements in a chosen profession or field and/or service to the community by an alum aged 35 years or younger
Nicholas Creggan, BA '13
Actor/Producer

WHITTLESEY EXCELLENCE IN ALUMNI SERVICE
Recognizes sustained leadership and service to the Alumni Association or the University by alumni
Alex J. Fredericks, BS '95
Partner, Ernst & Young

EXCELLENCE IN ARTS & LETTERS
Celebrates alumni for outstanding achievements in music, literature and language, visual arts or performing arts
Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah, BA '13
Author

EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS
Pays tribute to alumni for distinction in for-profit business
Elda A. Di Re, BS '83
Retired Tax Partner, EY

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
Honors alumni for extraordinary distinction in the field of education, including pre-K through post-secondary classroom teaching, school services and administration/supervision
Dana Basnight-Brown, MA '04, PhD '10
Assistant Director of Funding at the Psychological Science Accelerator; Associate Professor USIU-Africa

EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE
Recognizes alumni for outstanding contributions to local, state or national communities, generally, but not exclusively, through opportunities in appointed or elected office or public service non-profit organizations
Nancy Grasso Barry, Esq., BA '85
Chief of Operations, NY State Office of Court Administration

EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
Pays tribute to alumni for distinction in science and/or technology
Perry Samson, BS '72, MS '74
Professor, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

BERTHA BRIMMER MEDAL
Celebrates alumni for excellence in teaching K-12 and for dedication to their profession
Alicia M. Wein, MS '03
Secondary School English Teacher, Guilderland High School

MAKE YOUR NOMINATION FOR 2024:
If you are interested in nominating someone for a 2024 Excellence Award, contact the Alumni Association at (518) 442-3080 or email alumniassociation@albany.edu. The deadline is Oct. 6, 2023. Visit www.alumni.albany.edu/awards for more details.
1961
Ann Marie Sundstrand Mullen shared that Lillian Mullen of Yorktown Heights, N.Y., passed away in Jan. She was an English major, a member of Phi Delta Sorority for which she served as president her senior year, and was also elected to Myskania. Lillian started her professional career as an English teacher at Yorktown High School, and later retired as an executive associate at CBS-NY.
Class Councilor: Mel Horowitz, melandsis@yahoo.com

1962
Robert Sweeney served as election county deputy in Florida, enjoyed a “leafing” trip to Asheville, and is planning a trip to Japan to visit his son who is captain of a submarine.
Hannah Schnitt Rogers enjoyed a family reunion at Lake Tahoe.
Class Councilor: Sheril McCormack, vanillastar202@yahoo.com

1963
Peter Fisher of Queensbury, N.Y., passed away in Aug. 2022. He was class councilor and chaired the reunion committee in planning the class’s 50th anniversary reunion, which brought in the largest attendance of any reunion classes from the New York State College for Teachers.

1964
Patricia Jewell McAlexander published her third book, The Student in Classroom 6. The novel is set in Athens, Ga., where Pat lives. It is full of suspense, mystery and romance, and explores family relationships.
Piret Kutt Kelly and husband Dick ’63 travel as much as they can and spent the winter in Portugal.
Bill Robelie made his annual fall trek to Oneida to get together with Ed Reid and wife Carol Eames Reid ’65.
As you receive this issue, we are looking forward to meeting our 2023 Class of ’64 Scholarship winner in May. Please keep us informed of your activities and changes in your contact information. Stay safe and healthy.
“Inquiring minds reach for international understanding and good will.” — 1964 Torch
Class co-councilors: Bill Robelie, wmrobelee31@gmail.com;
Columba DeFrancesco Heinzelman, heinzel1779@aol.com

1965
In July, Laurel Wemett had a reunion in Seneca Falls with Margie Dunajski Harde and took some photos at the “It’s a Wonderful Life” Museum.
Gene Tobey capped off a long musical career singing in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony at SPAC this past summer with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin. In the past 50 years, Gene has sung choral works of Brahms, Verdi, Handel and Mahler at SPAC. In 2009 he was in the male quartet accompanying the Mark Morris Dance Group.
Class Councilor: Judy (Koblintz) Madnick, jmadnick@gmail.com

1967
Greetings, beloved 1967 Classmates and Friends,
I am very excited to share with you the following news:
Michelle Miller Bloom reported that following retirement as a teacher and curriculum supervisor, she began creating

The Class of 1972 celebrated its 50th anniversary reunion during Homecoming, along with the Classes of 1970 and 1971.
jewelry on a part time basis in 2014. Her focus is on Kumihimo, a Japanese braiding technique using fibers, glass beads, and unique artisan beads from around the world. Michelle generally partners with charities in Delray Beach, Fla., to sell at their events. Her goal is to support worthy causes. She also sells on her website: https://michelle-bloom.square.site. To see a short video of a Kumihimo demonstration by Michelle go to www.facebook.com/beadsbybloom. The marvelous video was produced by our classmate and Michelle's wonderful husband, Michael Bloom. We are so proud of you, Michelle.

Your '67 classmates and I would love to hear your news or any news you hear about our classmates.

Class Councilor: Canon Kay Carol Hotaling, FHC, aspenpaepke@msn.com

1970
Reba Architzel shared that her friend and former UAlbany roommate Christine Kirby ’69 passed away in Jan.

1971
Ellen Datlow received a Shirley Jackson Award in recognition of the anthology When Things Get Dark: Stories inspired by Shirley Jackson (Titan Books, 2021).

Onnolee Weatherup Smith was inducted into the Albany City School District Class of 2020 Hall of Fame. She was honored for her active involvement in the school district as board member of the Albany Fund for Education from 2002, and as its president from 2008-2018. Onnolee remains a strong and tireless advocate of public education.

1972
Judicate West welcomed retired Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Judy Hersher to its exclusive roster of neutrals.

1973
Steven Chase was recognized in the 2023 edition of The Best Lawyers in America® for Commercial Litigation. He is partner, Special Counsel in the Sarasota office of Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP.

1978
Deanna Sirlin’s artwork was featured in three exhibitions in the fall. “Borders of Light and Water” was on display in Venice, Italy, as part of the prestigious 59th Venice Biennale, the largest art fair in the world. Watermark was featured in the Crosland Library at Georgia Tech in Atlanta. “Wavelength” was on display at Chastain Gallery by the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Atlanta. Below: Deanna Sirlin’s Borders of Light and Water on display at the European Cultural Centre, Venice, Italy, 2022.

1983
Mitchel Levy received a master’s degree in Mathematical Statistics from the University of Maryland in College Park in 1988. Since then, he has been teaching mathematics at Broward College in Davie, Fla. He will retire in June.

Want to RECONNECT with fellow alums from a group(s) you participated in as a student?

The Alumni Association will assist in planning your event!

Learn more: www.alumni.albany.edu/eventrequest

Women’s Lacrosse Alumni Weekend, Fall 2022
Howard Krooks was elected chair of the Elder Law Section of the Florida Bar. He is partner at Cozen O’Connor in Boca Raton.

Keith Brennan joined Barclay Damon’s Health & Human Services Providers and Health Care Controversies Teams in the firm’s Albany office.

The U.S. Department of Transportation named Gloria Shepherd the executive director of the Federal Highway Administration.

George Serrano was elected town supervisor of the Town of Wallkill in 2021.

Wendy Marsh was listed in The Best Lawyers in America for 2023. She is chair of the Environmental and Land Use & Zoning Departments at Hancock Estabrook, LLP, Syracuse.

John Bagyi was named to Lawdragon 500’s Leading U.S. Corporate Employment Lawyers. He also was recognized as a 2022 Upstate New York Super Lawyer and listed in the 2023 edition of Best Lawyers in America.

Alon Bochman joined Google as Group Product Manager for YouTube Ads Privacy.

Francis Creighton was named president of the Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America in Washington, D.C.

John Castro joined the faculty at Nassau BOCES GC Tech as a Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) and plumbing teacher. John is the owner of Air Master LLC.

Heather Sunser is Barclay Damon’s Financial Services Practice Group leader and Tax Credits Team leader.

Jana Goldman Ryan is the director of Advancement at Adelphi University.

David Burch, partner at Barclay Damon, LLP, Syracuse, was among the 2022 Upstate New York Rising Stars honorees specializing in business litigation.

Dan Bressler was promoted to partner at Seward & Kissel in New York, N.Y., where he is in the firm’s Investment Management practice group.

Nic Rangel, Esq., was named Executive Director at the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York.

Tibisay Hernandez is diversity and inclusion manager, New York State Office of Diversity and Inclusion Management.

Garrett Guttenberg co-founded Seaview Adjusting Group, an adjusting firm based in Long Beach, N.Y. The firm was featured on “The Blox,” the world’s largest live-in startup competition created by MTV’s Wes Bergman. The show can be viewed on Vimeo, the Beta Blox Facebook Page and the BetaBlox app.

Melissa Alcoba joined the Worker’s Compensation group at Goldberg Segalla in Garden City, N.J.

Nic Rangel, Esq.”

First-gen alumni offered advice to first-gen UAlbany students at a panel and networking event hosted by Monte Lipman ’86, CEO, Republic Records; Avery Lipman ’88, president, Republic Records; and Steve Gawley ’86, executive vice president, Business & Legal Affairs, Universal Music Group.
2010
Kayla Arias, associate at Barclay Damon, LLP, Syracuse, was selected a 2022 Upstate New York Rising Star.

2011
Ancell Scheker Mendoza was appointed vice-minister of education of the Dominican Republic. Ancell earned a doctoral degree in educational administration and policy studies from UAlbany and received the Alumni Association’s International Award of Excellence in 2016.

2012
Jacob Fischler and Kathryn Beard welcomed daughter Annie Madison, April 11, 2022. Annie is the first grandchild of Dr. Arnold Fischler ’82 and Heidi Amsterdam ’81.

Georgia Crinnin of Bousquet Holstein PLLC was named a Super Lawyers Upstate New York Rising Star in 2022. She is a member of the firm’s Trusts and Estates and Litigation Practice groups.

2013
Amanda Miller was included in the 2023 edition of Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch in America™. They were also named 2022 Upstate New York Rising Stars.

2014
Gina Valentino is managing editor of luxury lifestyle magazine Gulfshore Life.

2015
Jamie Zieno joined New York State Senator Jeremy Cooney’s team as Chief of Staff.

2016
Meteorologist Mike Slifer joined WFSB News in his home state of Connecticut.

2017
Felix Abreu is a customer solutions engineer at Google and founder of Blue It LLC.

2019
Jackie Orchard is pursuing a master’s degree in Creative Writing at California State University, Northridge.

2020
Grace McGrath is Graduate Admissions coordinator, Graduate Enrollment Services at Marymount University.

2022
Sierra Radley is a legislative correspondent with the U.S. House of Representatives.

Kiara Alvey is among the first Peace Corps volunteers to return overseas and will be serve as a community economic development volunteer in Colombia.

The Alumni Association Arts & Culture Committee met in the summer to discuss upcoming events and donor initiatives, including the Grandma Moses Fund. Clockwise from bottom left: June Mastan ’08, PhD ’18; Stephen Soucy ’91; Bill McCann ’86, MS ’87; Loida R. Vera Cruz; Adriel Colón-Casiano ’10; John Knight ’09; and Judy Madnick ’65, MS ’66.

EVENT CALENDAR

MAY 11-14
Commencement

MAY 19-21
Psi Gamma 125th Anniversary Celebration

JUNE 7
Classes of 1955-1965 Reunion Luncheon (Albany)

JULY 14
Day at the Races (Saratoga Springs)

OCT 21
Homecoming/Great Dane Pregame

Gerry Holzman ’54, MA ’69, is the author of *Wanderings of a Wayward Woodcarver*, a light-hearted and life-affirming book about Holzman’s career change from history teacher to woodcarver. The book can be purchased online at barnesandnoble.com, and classmates can contact the author directly at gerrygoodguy1@gmail.com to purchase a signed copy.


Barry Perlmutter ’75, published *Integration and Optimization of Unit Operations*. The book offers an integrated and holistic approach to the chemical process industries.

Michelle Edwards ’76, is the author of *Me and the Boss: A Story About Mending and Love*, a Random House picture book that has received starred reviews from Booklist and Kirkus. This is Edwards’s 20th book.

Joseph Bocchi, MA ’81, PhD ’85, is the author of *Wild Dogs*, a short story which will be published in the upcoming issue of Blueline Magazine. The literary magazine is dedicated to the spirit of the Adirondacks. http://www.blueineadkmagazine.org/

Jeffrey Cousins ’85, published *The Right Thing to Do*, a sci-fi adventure in which a captured alien reveals that aliens created humans, and humans are just robots.

Patricia Salkin ’85, published *May it Please the Campus: Lawyers Leading Higher Education*. Salkin is senior vice president, Academic Affairs and provost, Graduate and Professional Divisions at Touro University.

Mark Chesnut ’86, is the author of *Prepare for Departure: Notes on a single mother, a misfit son, inevitable mortality and the enduring allure of frequent flier miles* (Vine Leaves Press). The non-fiction story touches on death, grief, parent/child relationships, growing up gay in the 20th century and self-acceptance.

Phil Adamo ’94, PhD, is the author of *The Medievalist*, a domestic terrorism thriller about historians taking on white supremacists who brandish medieval symbols on their signs and shields. This is Adamo’s first novel.

Gary Bugh, PhD ’04, is the author of *Incorporation of the Bill of Rights: An Accounting of the Supreme Court’s Extension of Federal Civil Liberties to the States*, published by Peter Lang. Bugh is a professor of political science at Texas A&M University.

Casey Jakubowski ’12, CAGS ’13, PhD ’19, is the co-author of *Crush It From the Start: 50 Tips for New Teachers*.

Isabella Wang ’12 is the author of *The Digital Mind of Tomorrow*, a thought-provoking book that will make readers rethink their role in the digital future. Learn more: www.isabellawang.us/book.
Our alumni were all smiles celebrating together at Homecoming weekend.

Reunion class members couldn’t miss out on the photobooth!

Hundreds of Divine Nine fraternity and sorority members celebrated Homecoming across campus. Among them were members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

The 1970-1972 reunion planning committee gathered prior to their classes’ milestone celebration.

Grads of the Last Decade (GOLD) and Damien celebrated at the Great Dane Pregame.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. sisters Denise Gray ’98 and Tiffany Anderson ’19 celebrate their sisterhood in a selfie by the fountain.
Alumni members of Omega Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. attended the Great Dane Pregame.

Figure out your next step. Find your next job. Share your expertise. Become a mentor.

Claim your account in less than two minutes and instantly connect with our community.

Activate your alumni advisor profile on our new and improved platform now! Visit ualbany.peoplegrove.com

Connell with old friends in 2023!

Psi Gamma Sorority 125th Anniversary Celebration  
May 19-21, 2023

Classes of 1955-1965 Reunion Luncheon  
June 7, 2023

EOP 55th Anniversary Reunion  
Oct. 6-8, 2023
IN MEMORIAM

1940s & back

Kathleen J. Butler ’40, Aug. 28, 2018
Hilda Kronovit Sternberg ’40, Jan. 15, 2022
Edith Beard Generous ’44, Aug. 20, 2022
Janet L. Smith Hawkes ’44, Sept. 1, 2022
Eleanor Hayeslip Colby ’45, Jan. 10, 2023
Christine B. Truman Ghent ’47, April 5, 2020
Molly Kramer Gordon ’47, April 14, 2020
Audrey M. Bopp Hauprich ’47, Dec. 2, 2022
Solomon J. Minsberg ’47, Sept. 19, 2017
Barbara H. Hyman Shapiro ’48, April 25, 2018
Edith Dell Warner ’48, Oct. 31, 2022
Bonnie Lewis Adkins ’49, Sept. 11, 2021
H. N. Feder Mills ’55, April 24, 2022
Marylou C. Cusack Birk ’55, Nov. 3, 2021
James E. Fox, Ph.D. ’54, July 28, 2022
Mary Lavery Feuerbach ’54, Jan. 17, 2022
Herbert D. Thier ’53, April 14, 2019
Mary G. Nedelsky Maciuk ’53, Sept. 8, 2021
Aug. 29, 2021
Yvonne Kloosterman Farmer ’53, Jan. 28, 2019
Elsie Shaw Clark ’51, Jan. 28, 2019
Ruth Sandler Elson ’51, June 18, 2022
Eleanor Hayeslip Colby ’51, Sept. 30, 2022
Robert E. Kittredge ’52, June 29, 2022
Helene Grossman Kass ’52, July 25, 2022
Evelyn Erdle Eisenhard ’52, Dec. 3, 2022
Belva McLaurin Symister ’51, Oct. 23, 2021
Doris Freedman Pock ’51, Oct. 3, 2022
Max E. Fallek ’51, July 2, 2022
Sept. 3, 2021
Ruth Sandler Elson ’51, June 18, 2022
Elsie Shaw Clark ’51, Jan. 28, 2019
Audrey E. Greene O’Hare ’50, Sept. 20, 2022

1950s

Robert C. Dallow, Jr. ’59, June 18, 2022
Lee Denike ’59, July 11, 2022
Joseph J. Garcia ’59, Oct. 31, 2022
Donald T. McClain ’59, Sept. 21, 2022
Richard L. Sumner, Ph.D. ’59, May 24, 2019
Ethel Hart Coulter ’60, March 28, 2020
Audrey C. Hurd ’60, July 16, 2022
Donna Lees Reston ’60, Dec. 21, 2022
Elizabeth A. Spencer ’60, July 19, 2022
Melba J. Fairbairn Tacy ’60, Oct. 10, 2022
Edward R. Vesneske ’60, Jan. 3, 2022
John J. Abrams ’61, May 3, 2020
Camie Everett Baker ’61, June 1, 2022
Karen Caster Everhart ’61, May 30, 2020
Althea Kampf ’61, July 4, 2022
James Warner ’61, May 24, 2022
Sandra L. Hill Berning ’62, Nov. 12, 2022
Janith Cellura Curran ’62, Aug. 9, 2022
Doris Kopeza Karafanda ’62, March 8, 2020
Robert B. Nenno ’62, Nov. 22, 2021
Anne M. Margetanski Antos ’63, May 13, 2020
Peter N. Fisher ’63, Aug. 20, 2022
Dorothy H. King ’63, Dec. 12, 2012
Edward A. Budnikas ’64, Aug. 7, 2022
Alexander J. Capasso ’64, Aug. 6, 2022
Louis Harmin ’64, June 20, 2022
Joseph A. Bonacci ’66, Jan. 10, 2023
Carol Cipullo Lowes ’66, Oct. 16, 2022
James J. Maloy, Ph.D. ’67, July 10, 2022
Anne Moorheeder Binder ’68, July 19, 2020
Paul Ianiri ’68, Aug. 28, 2022
Rosaly M. Marcus ’68, June 13, 2022
Georgia S. Polhemus ’68, April 27, 2019
William L. Sullivan ’68, June 20, 2022
Ronald Szczepanski, Ph.D. ’68, Nov. 4, 2022
Dorice K. Brickman ’69, Dec. 22, 2022
Roxyan M. Murray ’69, Aug. 20, 2022

1960s

Linda Colabello ’70, Nov. 3, 2013
Ann D. Dingman ’70, June 20, 2022
Linda H. Falk Fowler ’70, June 18, 2022
Robert A. Moughan ’70, Sept. 18, 2022
Kathleen Blotnicze Zegarelli ’70, Sept. 30, 2022
Carlton J. Bell ’71, Nov. 11, 2022
David D. Benedict ’71, Oct. 24, 2022
Diana T. Loschiavo ’71, June 16, 2022
Thaddeus M. Raushi, Ph.D. ’71, Aug. 2, 2022
Edward J. Arcuri, Ph.D. ’72, Sept. 13, 2021
Charles E. Arnold, II ’72, Aug. 4, 2022
Mary E. Bobear ’72, Dec. 30, 2022
Raymond P. Fortman ’72, July 14, 2022
Paul A. Holmes ’72, Dec. 4, 2022
Anne T. McCartt ’72, July 23, 2022
Lynn C. Mihailek ’72, April 1, 2019
Terry H. Schwartz Moskowitz ’72, Oct. 3, 2022
Catherine Paupst ’72, Nov. 25, 2022
Virginia A. Rovelli, Ed.D. ’72, July 1, 2022
Shirley Wildner Rugolo ’72, April 17, 2020
Maureen P. Corrigan Wronkowski ’72, July 26, 2022
Gaynelle J. Goddard ’73, Nov. 29, 2022
John C. Lareau ’73, Jan. 2, 2023
Clifford A. Moses ’73, Dec. 15, 2022
Kerry Ann White Williams ’73, Sept. 20, 2022
Colette O. O’Connell Holmes ’74, Oct. 22, 2022
Borys R. Kowalsky ’74, May 28, 2022
Patrice M. Miller ’74, Nov. 12, 2022
John L. Sheffield ’74, June 25, 2022
Robert E. Williams ’74, Aug. 20, 2022
Lorraine M. Levan Alvarez ’75, Dec. 11, 2017
Kenneth M. Jalousie ’75, Dec. 3, 2021
William P. McGuire ’75, Dec. 1, 2022
Margaret I. Morgan ’75, Aug. 5, 2022
Anthony P. Bianchini ’76, Dec. 5, 2022
Jeanne E. Duke ’76, Dec. 2, 2022
Jerry C. Goldhagen ’76, Jan. 11, 2023
Richard D. Healy ’76, Dec. 20, 2022
George M. Lein ’76, June 8, 2021
Lawrence J. Roberts ’76, May 27, 2022
Mark Rogow, DDS ’76, Dec. 13, 2022
Donald J. Roll ’76, Feb. 24, 2018
Gordon B. Wright ’76, Oct. 1, 2022
Debra A. Randall ’77, Jan. 9, 2023
Suzanne Stauffer Roberts ’77, April 17, 2021
Cathy D. Sagendorf ’77, Oct. 17, 2022
Emily M. Wink ’77, June 10, 2022
Edward D. Bewayo ’78, July 2, 2022
Joseph Graham ’78, Dec. 6, 2022
William C. Johnes ’79, Aug. 27, 2022
Denyce E. Duncan Lacy ’79, Dec. 3, 2022
Nicoie F. Rafter, Ph.D. ’79, Feb. 29, 2016
Joan C. Tarbox ’79, Jan. 22, 2023
Glen M. Trotner ’79, June 16, 2022
Maria E. Sattler Anderson ’79, July 6, 2022
Matthew H. Crouk ’79, Sept. 12, 2020
Cheryl B. Ratner ’79, Oct. 28, 2022
Glenn E. Waldman ’79, Jan. 8, 2023
1980s

Geraldine E. McCrum ’80, Sept. 4, 2022
Marilyn Schneebalg Star ’80, June 22, 2022
William M. Cimbel ’81, June 23, 2022
Paula K. Lockhart ’81, Sept. 18, 2021
Gerald A. Thompson, Ed.D. ’81, Aug. 26, 2022
Kerry L. Couchman ’82, Nov. 21, 2022
Nancy T. Edwards ’82, May 30, 2022
Blake R. Montgomery ’82, May 25, 2022
Edward J. Zuchorski ’82, Oct. 21, 2022
Michael Corso ’83, Oct. 29, 2022
John R. Bouchard ’84, Nov. 19, 2022
Michael J. Leiber, Ph.D. ’84, Jan. 13, 2020
Kevin M. Shanley, Ph.D. ’84, Jan. 12, 2023
Sandra K. Akin ’85, July 5, 2022
Aline Drescher ’85, Nov. 26, 2022
Larry J. Navatka ’85, June 7, 2022
Janet H. Akerstrom Smith ’85, July 26, 2022
Patricia Alsid Thompson ’85, Nov. 27, 2022
Laura L. Svitek Anglin ’87, Oct. 13, 2022
Paul K. Kusak ’87, Aug. 30, 2022
Charles E. Bunshaft ’88, Feb. 14, 2019
Regina M. Clark ’88, Nov. 30, 2021
Robert Lewis, Oct. 25, 2022
Shirley A. Anthony ’88, Nov. 18, 2022
Kathleen Kinsane Boncimino, MD ’89, July 14, 2019
Deb Dubay-Rohitaille ’89, Nov. 18, 2022
Edward J. Verhoff ’03, Nov. 12, 2022
Scott T. Conklin ’05, May 27, 2022
Robert M. Mauro, Ph.D. ’09, Oct. 31, 2022
Cristal L. Perez ’09, July 24, 2021

2010s

Drew O. Gibson ’10, July 5, 2022
Diane M. Hamilton, Ph.D. ’10, June 22, 2022
Elizabeth M. Carroll-Marsh ’12, Sept. 11, 2022
Pamela A. Culbertson, Ph.D. ’12, Nov. 20, 2022
Oliver R. Young ’12, July 3, 2022
Fatima Hussain ’14, Nov. 22, 2022
Scott R. Wolcott, Jr ’15, Jan. 1, 2022
Christopher J. Orzeszek ’19, July 11, 2022

2020s

Ahsid Hemingway-Powell ’22, May 31, 2022

1990s

Brian E. Kennedy ’90, Dec. 7, 2022
Cynthia A. Shelmidine ’90, Sept. 16, 2021
L C. Breiner ’91, Sept. 9, 2022
Charles E. Bunshaft ’91, Feb. 14, 2019
Howard M. Axelrod, Ph.D. ’92, Nov. 20, 2022
Megan A. Fairlie ’93, Dec. 27, 2022
Stephanie L. Barker ’94, Aug. 10, 2022
Regina M. Clark ’96, Nov. 30, 2021
George V. Laventure ’96, June 25, 2022
Eugene D. Minton ’97, July 25, 2022
Keith W. Oakes ’99, Oct. 28, 2020

2000s

Patricia L. Lederman ’00, Dec. 27, 2022
Kyle R. Patton ’00, July 16, 2022
Andrew C. Wiley ’00, June 14, 2022
Robert J. Faulkner ’03, Aug. 24, 2022
Edward J. Verhoff ’03, Nov. 12, 2022
Scott T. Conklin ’05, May 27, 2022
Robert M. Mauro, Ph.D. ’09, Oct. 31, 2022
Cristal L. Perez ’09, July 24, 2021

Faculty/Staff

Frances L. Allee, Dec. 2, 2022
Jeanne M. Aviles, Nov. 25, 2022
Martin Coffey, Nov. 13, 2022
Fred Cohen, March 30, 2022
Andon Demelli, Sept. 18, 2022
Gwendolyn Deiber, Dec. 12, 2022
Sharyn E. Desroches, Dec. 9, 2022
Barbey N. Dougherty, Jan. 10, 2023
James W. Fossett, Ph.D., Dec. 15, 2022
Mohmir S. Frinta, Jan. 21, 2015
Richard F. Haase, Ph.D., July 11, 2022
Diane M. Hamilton, Ph.D., June 22, 2022
Erik P. Hoffmann, Ph.D., Aug. 3, 2022
Mary T. Hooper, Jan. 16, 2023
Robert Lewis, Oct. 25, 2022
Volker A. Mohnen, Ph.D., June 5, 2022
Leslie R. Newell, Dec. 30, 2022
Joanne Parker, Nov. 14, 2022
Nancy Poehlmann, Dec. 15, 2022
Robert H. Rosenbach, Nov. 8, 2022
James J. Sweeney, Oct. 1, 2022
Tomasz Siuba, Jan. 1, 2023
Michelleen J. Treadwell, Jan. 11, 2023
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