

# WILKES

SUMMER 2007



KEYS TO A KINGDOM | A DARK DESCENT | HOLLYWOOD HOPEFUL | ON THE BALL

## Toward a Greener Wilkes

**F**ROM THE BANKS OF THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER to the Pocono Mountains and beyond, northeastern Pennsylvania abounds with natural beauty. These assets are important to promoting a quality of life that will allow us to attract and retain the talent to drive the region's economic renaissance.

Much work has been done to address the scarring of our landscape over the last century and a half, but so much more must be done. Wilkes University wants to help lead the effort in this region.



This issue's cover story provides just one example of how Wilkes trains students to appreciate the environment and forge a brighter future. For a decade, budding biologists have worked to catalog plant life in nearby Kirby Park. This area offers city dwellers an easily accessible, natural habitat in the midst of the busy city. Its riparian forest is home to numerous plant and animal species and a valuable open-air classroom for Wilkes students. Learn about their efforts and how you can access their key in an article beginning on page 8.

This is only one example of environmental initiatives at Wilkes. We plan "A Year of the Environment" for the coming academic year, in which all academic programming, including the freshman seminar, will focus on the topic. We plan to design a green building to house our science, engineering and health science programs. Our vision is to make this building a showcase of environmentally friendly design principles and a model of energy conservation and use of renewable resources. This state-of-the-art building will be a key piece in our efforts to build a green campus.

Wilkes recently launched an Institute of the Environment to expand educational and research opportunities in that area for our students and faculty. Projects will include our geospatial watershed research program on the Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna American Heritage River.

Finally, as we improve the landscaping of our campus, we are making every effort to plant native species well-adapted to the climate in this region and that require a minimum of water and chemicals. These efforts highlight our commitment to the ecology of our region as we practice and teach sound stewardship.

Above: An online key developed by students allows visitors to Wilkes-Barre's Kirby Park to identify plants like this foxtail.

PHOTO BY MARK GOLASZEWSKI

**Dr. Tim Gilmour**  
*Wilkes University President*

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### SUMMER 2007

Wilkes University is an independent institution of higher education dedicated to academic and intellectual excellence in the liberal arts, sciences and professional programs. The university provides its students with the experience and education necessary for career and intellectual development as well as for personal growth, engenders a sense of values and civic responsibility, and encourages its students to welcome the opportunities and challenges of a diverse and continually changing world. The university enhances the tradition of strong student-faculty interactions in all its programs, attracts and retains outstanding people in every segment of the university, and fosters a spirit of cooperation, community involvement, and individual respect within the entire university.



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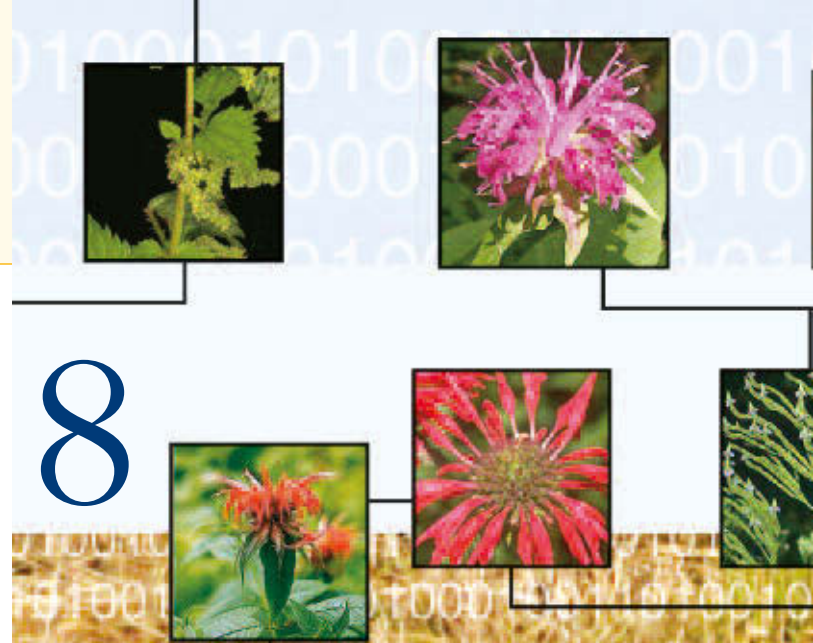
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On the cover: Technology meets nature as Wilkes students, including Ryan Stetz '07, develop an online plant identification key for Wilkes-Barre's Kirby Park. PHOTO BY MARK GOLASZEWSKI. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY KARA REID.



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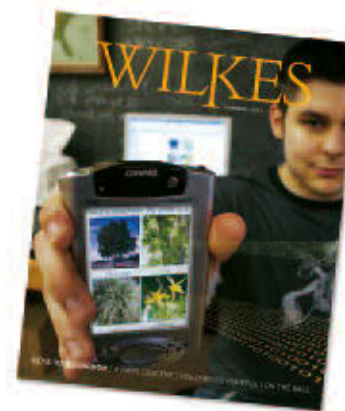
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## Wilkes Takes Early Taste of New Apple Macs

Wilkes won national attention by becoming one of the first campuses in the country to switch from Windows-based personal computers to Apple's new Intel-based Macs.

Over the next three years, Wilkes will become an all-Mac campus, providing faculty and students access to both Windows applications and Mac-only offerings such as iLife, Apple's suite of digital lifestyle applications, and Mac OS X.

"Macs are constructed with superior technology and hardware, and their ability to run Windows means we still have access to any Windows programs," says Scott Byers, former vice president for finance and general counsel. "We're making working and learning more efficient. It's the best of both worlds."

The university's move caught the attention of *The Wall Street Journal*, *Computerworld* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. More than 40 blogs and online news services carried the story.

"For 30 years, Apple has been committed to education and worked with faculty and students across the country to enhance teaching and learning," says John Couch, Apple's vice president of education. "We're thrilled that Wilkes is becoming an all-Mac campus, providing its students with access to



Wilkes will invest \$1.4 million to convert its 1,700-computer network to Windows-compatible Macs over the next three years. PHOTO BY CHRISTINE SEITZINGER

the world's most advanced technology and helping to ensure they graduate with 21st century skills."

Nearly all University computer labs are already equipped with the new Mac computers, and the university expects to replenish its 1,700-computer network with Macs in the next three years. The switch to an all-Mac campus is a \$1.4 million investment.

## WILKES WANTS YOU

Wilkes University broke new ground this spring with an advertising campaign that speaks one-on-one to prospective students — an unconventional concept never before seen in traditional higher education marketing. The campaign garnered the attention of Stuart Elliott, one of the most respected writers in the advertising industry, for an article in *The New York Times*.

# “Megan Smith”

As editor of the West Scranton High newspaper, you can spot the typo on this sign.

That attention to detail will serve you well at Wilkes University.  
Megan, call a Colonel 570-408-6032

Wilkes officials wanted to take the university's mentoring philosophy and develop a unique campaign that captures its very essence: personal attention.

"We developed an overall recruitment package unforeseen in higher education marketing," says Jack Chielli, executive director of marketing communications for Wilkes. "Combining traditional advertising vehicles with a unique approach to media buying and reinventing the concept of a virtual tour, the campaign's solution challenges the way brands communicate to teens."

A kiosk in the mall where potential Wilkes student Kate Murtaugh works reads: "Kate Murtaugh — You sell California beachwear. In Allentown. In the dead of winter. That kind of dedication will serve you well at Wilkes University. Kate, call a Colonel."

"The ads create the exact reaction that we planned the media strategy around," says Darryl Cilli, executive creative director of 16Over90, the Philadelphia-based branding firm Wilkes hired to create the campaign. "Kate's friends, co-workers, family and strangers are intrigued. People call the number out of curiosity and hear a current Wilkes student speaking directly to Kate about why she is such a great fit for Wilkes."

"I've gotten a lot of positive feedback," 18-year-old Megan Smith of Scranton, Pa., told Elliot, referring to the billboard addressed to her. "People at my school, all the teachers that I've never had, are saying, 'Is that really you on the billboard?' They really can't believe it."

Learn more about the ad campaign at [www.wilkes.edu](http://www.wilkes.edu).





## Steele Receives NSF Grant

Michael Steele, biology professor and Fenner Endowed Research Chair, recently received a collaborative \$500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to continue research on animal-mediated seed dispersal and oak regeneration. Less than 10 percent of 200 proposals were funded. This is Steele's third NSF grant in 13 years.

A behavioral and evolutionary ecologist, Steele studies interactions between plants and their seed dispersers and predators and their effect on forest regeneration. The NSF grant will fund studies conducted in partnership with Purdue University in Indiana. Eastern Pennsylvania has an 80 percent forest cover. Oak's importance as a cash crop in Pennsylvania gives the professor's work environmental and economic implications.

Steele will pursue mentoring grants from the university to involve up to 12 students per year in his research. Together, they will monitor the movement of birds such as blue jays to determine how forest fragmentation affects patterns of oak dispersal in Pennsylvania and Indiana.

An ongoing part of Steele's research also involves food hoarding behavior of gray squirrels. That research has appeared in numerous publications and attracted the attention of wildlife researcher Sir David Attenborough. Last year, producers and a film crew from the cable television network Animal Planet traveled to

Wilkes-Barre to tape Steele and students conducting research in Kirby Park. Animal Planet featured that footage in a program called *The Most Extreme* in autumn 2006.

Steele, with help from more than 150 students, has studied seed dispersal and oak regeneration for 15 years. He is working on two books based on this work.



Above: A film crew from Animal Planet captures footage of gray squirrels for a segment on Professor Mike Steele's research.

Right: More than 150 students have assisted Steele in his research.

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE SEITZINGER



## MBA Program Offers New Concentration in Healthcare Administration

Responding to the region's growing healthcare industry, Wilkes now offers a healthcare administration concentration for its master of business administration program.

"The healthcare MBA fills a niche between the general MBA and the very specialized, more narrowly focused master of healthcare administration," says Justin Matus, assistant professor of business management and a specialist in healthcare issues. "It's an attractive option for someone who is interested in the business of healthcare. Graduates will be well-equipped to lead a large department in any number of healthcare organizations, such as a hospital or managed care company or a long-term care system."

Beyond the core MBA curriculum, the concentration will include two courses: Managing Healthcare Systems and Advanced Topics in Healthcare Management. Matus says the concentration was born out of a need for advanced, specialized training for managers in the growing healthcare field.

## Poetry in Transit: Verse Meets Bus

Riders of county buses will soon have more to look at than fellow travelers and fast food ads, thanks to Mischelle Anthony, assistant professor of English.

Luzerne County Transportation Authority will display the poetry of Wordsworth, Joyce, Dickinson and Frost on placards installed in inside spaces traditionally reserved for commercial advertising. LCTA estimates more than 4,500 people ride its 38 buses each day.

Anthony, a daily patron of LCTA buses, adapted her Poetry in Transit idea from an internationally lauded cultural program. It will include a series of poems by 20th-century masters.



Professor Mischelle Anthony will introduce new poems on LCTA buses each month.

PHOTO BY MARK GOLASZEWSKI

“If we accept that an advertising jingle or slogan can stick in someone’s head and influence them, why not give the same opportunity to an inspiring, thought-provoking poem?” Anthony asks. “In our department recently, we’ve focused on ways to move literature outside the classroom. This seemed the most obvious place for it. Educational institutions like Wilkes have an obligation to transform theory into practice. If poetry can really enrich our lives, then let’s get it out there.”

Inspired by Poems on the Underground, a successful program that began in London in 1986, Anthony will introduce new pieces of poetry – from haikus to 14-line sonnets – to the buses each month. The program is sponsored by Wilkes, Lamar Advertising and LCTA.

“Dr. Anthony approached us with the idea of installing poetry on the LCTA buses, and we jumped at the chance to be involved in such a wonderful program,” says James Gattuso, local sales manager at Lamar Advertising. The company provided the advertising space free of charge.

“We see this as a value-added service for our patrons,” says Stanley Strelish, executive director of LCTA. “I envision many surprised and delighted faces when our riders see the poetry. We’re always looking for ways to make LCTA transportation an enjoyable experience. This program certainly fills that need.”

The Poetry Society of America runs a similar program called Poetry in Motion. Funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the program is active in 14 cities across the country.

“Wilkes-Barre’s version is locally funded and created,” Anthony notes. “This is for the people of Luzerne County. If it takes off, in the future I hope to involve local poets.”

## New Ed.D. Degree Attracts Hundreds of Inquiries

Even before the state’s February approval of the University’s new doctor of education degree in educational leadership, the program had prompted more than 300 inquiries from prospective students.

The 60-credit Ed.D. program includes majors in higher education administration, kindergarten through 12th-grade administration and educational technology leadership.

“The program’s core focus is on developing leaders,” reports Mary Kropiewnicki, associate professor of education and assistant to the provost. Kropiewnicki, who developed the Ed.D. curriculum over two years, noted that many inquiries have come from private industry, policy-level decision makers and state lawmakers.

The campus-based program, which will offer some courses online, will take most candidates seven to eight years to complete, including about two years of dissertation research and development.

“To accomplish the demanding goals of education, we teachers must always be learning,” says Leslie Nicholas ’81, who was named 2004 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year. “We must be the role models for lifelong learning. I am proud that my university continues to lead the way in the field of education.”

True to the university’s mentoring culture, each Ed.D. candidate will be part of a leadership development team and progress through the program with a core group of eight to 10 classmates. “The teams will provide mutual support through the rigorous curriculum and will provide mutual support through common coursework and study groups,” Kropiewnicki explains. Candidates also will be assigned a mentor instead of the traditional faculty advisor.



“IF WE COMPETE IN BUSINESS WE will naturally seek out and do business with and prefer to do business with businesses and people that we like. There is nothing rational or logical about that. Harley is competing with the absolute best manufacturing companies in the world. If we can get people, for whatever irrational reason, to like us just a little bit more than they like everybody else, we can become more competitive.”



Ken Schmidt, former director of communications for Harley-Davidson, shared how to “Make Some Noise” at the Allan P. Kirby Lecture in March. PHOTO BY MICHAEL P. TOUEY

## Wilkes MBA Goes Global

Sidhu School MBA students worked side by side with 10 counterparts from Punjabi University, India, as part of a new exchange program.

The Indian students came to the Wilkes campus Feb. 24 to March 17 and took the course Business Issues in a Dynamic Environment. American and Indian students worked together in groups to present an overview of eight U.S. industry sectors, including technology, transportation and pharmaceuticals.

As Anthony Liuzzo, professor of business and economics, covered topics like antitrust law and federal and state regulations, students from Punjab School of Management Studies shared perspectives from their country. “Our students noted that they’ve been taught about diversity, but they could actually feel the cultural diversity in this class,” Liuzzo says, adding that Punjab and Sidhu School students also had opportunity to eat lunch and shop together. “This was very helpful to both sides.”

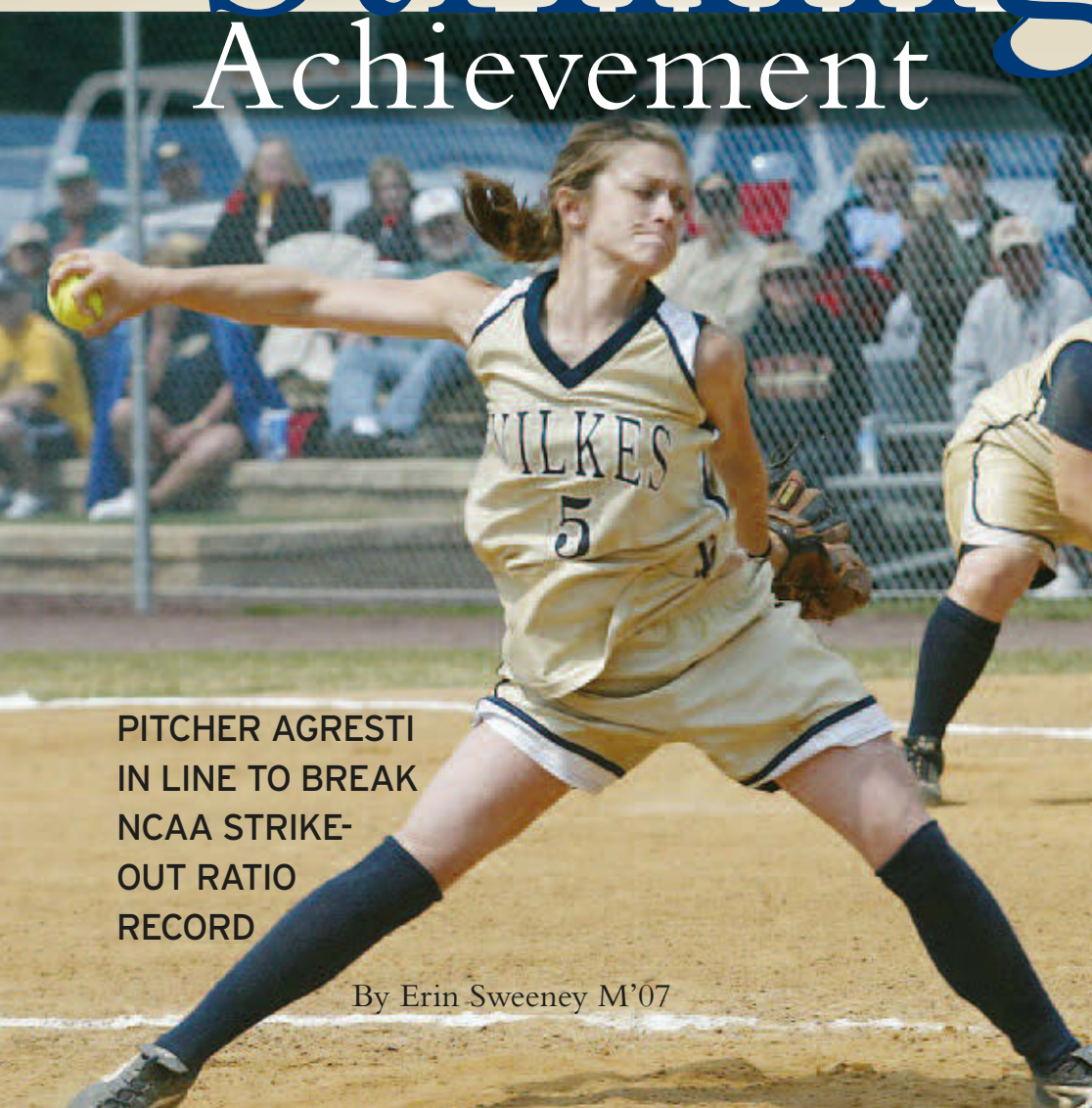
This fall, economics Professor Wagihya Taylor will take several Sidhu School MBA students to Punjabi University. Says Liuzzo: “It is truly an international exchange.”



Punjabi MBA students added a cross-cultural dimension to the course Business Issues in a Dynamic Environment. PHOTO BY GARY HOSKINS



# Striking Achievement



**PITCHER AGRESTI  
IN LINE TO BREAK  
NCAA STRIKE-  
OUT RATIO  
RECORD**

By Erin Sweeney M'07

Laurie Agresti averaged 12.1 strikeouts per game in 2006. PHOTO BY WARREN RUDA

**T**HE UNASSUMING, BESPECTACLED STUDENT WALKS across the greenway to attend class in her senior year, the female Clark Kent of Wilkes University. On the softball mound, however, Laurie Agresti becomes almost superhuman.

Over the past three years, Agresti has been a powerhouse on the mound, fueling the University's softball program. A three-time Freedom Conference Pitcher of the Year, Agresti enters her final season with the Lady Colonels ranked eighth on the NCAA Division III career strikeout list, with 780. Averaging an outstanding 12.4 strikeouts per game during her first three seasons, the hard-throwing right-hander is in line to break the Division III record for career strikeout ratio, which currently stands at 10.8 per game. The Harrisburg, Pa., native also will look to reach the 1,000

strikeout mark this spring, becoming one of only four student-athletes in NCAA Division III history to reach the plateau.

Agresti has garnered a plethora of accolades during her prolific career at Wilkes. After fashioning an overall record of 15-6 on the mound in 2006, including seven wins by shutout, she was named a National Fastpitch Coaches Association East Region All-American. The hurler led the Lady Colonels to a 28-15 record during the campaign and the Freedom Conference championship. She pitched in all four games for Wilkes in the NCAA Division III East Regional Tournament and was named to the All-Tournament team for her efforts. In 139 innings of work last season, Agresti averaged 12.1 strikeouts per game, fanning 241 hitters while walking just 22. She allowed the opposition to hit a mere .135 against her en route to a 0.76 earned run average.

Besides her success on the mound, Agresti is an accomplished student. The accounting major is a four-year member of the dean's list

and a Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants scholar. The 2006 season saw Agresti earn a berth on the ESPN The Magazine Academic All-District II College Division Softball first team, after garnering second-team honors as a sophomore.

Coach Frank Matthews is proud of Agresti's achievements but expects a lot more to come, both on and off the field. "Laurie is the best pitcher ever at Wilkes University. She will set the NCAA strikeout ratio record this year, and she will get 1,000 strikeouts – all while maintaining a 3.7 GPA."



# DOUBLE PLAY

FRESHMAN LAUNCHES PRO  
BASEBALL CAREER WHILE  
EARNING ACCOUNTING DEGREE

By Kim Bower-Spence

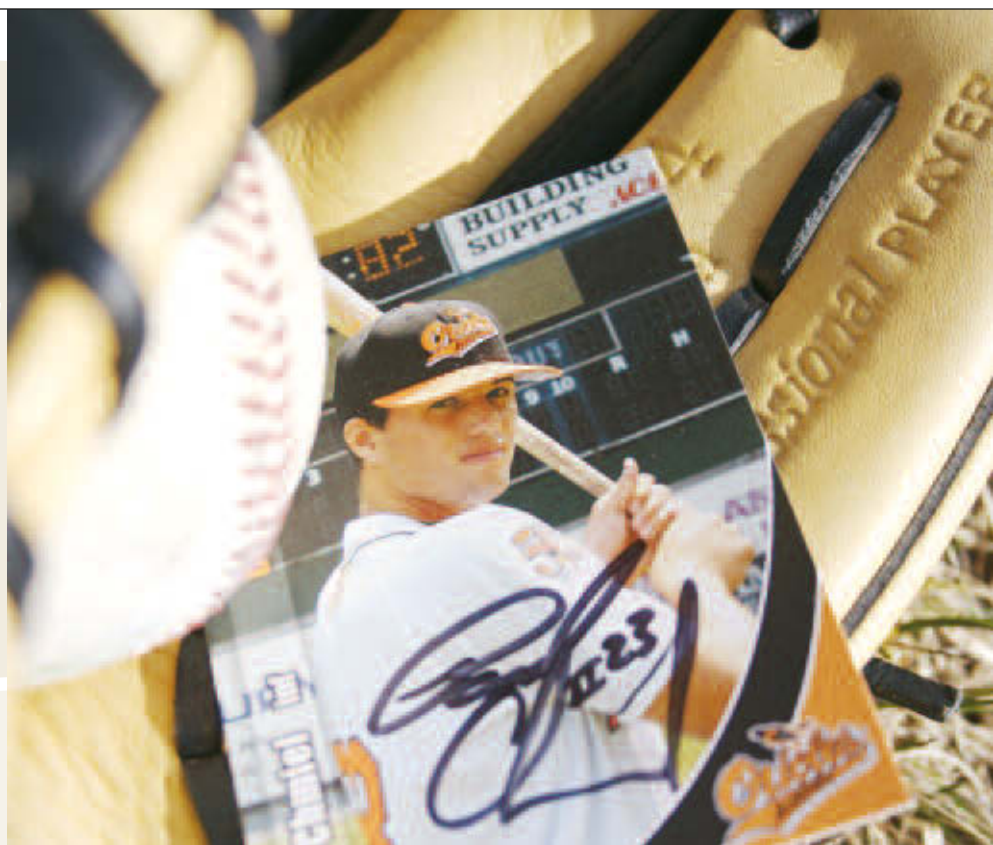
**A**S HIS FELLOW WILKES students took off for spring break, freshman Paul Chmiel headed to Sarasota, Fla., for spring training with the Baltimore Orioles farm system.

The Orioles selected the 6-foot-6-inch 20-year-old in the 22nd round of the 2005 draft – on the same day as his high school graduation. The Orioles deal included a signing bonus and college tuition.

An Outstanding Leaders Scholar in the Sidhu School of Business and Leadership, the accounting major played first base for Baltimore's rookie team, the Bluefield (W.Va.) Orioles, in 2006. Chmiel hopes this spring season finds him moving up to the Aberdeen (Md.) IronBirds, Baltimore's Class A affiliate.

Training starts with a half-hour of stretching and 20 minutes of throwing. Then the team breaks into positions and works on basic defensive drills before finishing up with about an hour of batting. In the afternoon, players move on either to exhibition games or more conditioning, base running or individual training. The day's work may end as early as 12:30 p.m. or as late as 5:30 p.m. "It's the same thing every single day, seven days a week for spring training," Chmiel says. During the extended season, he gets off every fifth day.

Chmiel took a year off academically before beginning studies at Wilkes in fall 2006. Not to sit idle, he took a free tax course while waiting to launch his professional career. "I really liked



Chmiel, shown here on his baseball card, was ranked eighth among "power prospects" for batting in the Orioles' minor league system. PHOTO BY MARK GOLASZEWSKI

working with the numbers and doing the taxes." This year, he taught the tax course and had cranked out 70 returns for Liberty Tax Service before leaving for spring training. "In case baseball doesn't work out, I'm realistic, and I'll have my college education to fall back on."

Chmiel missed the first week of classes as he finished out baseball season in Bluefield but then turned his attention to full-time studies. For spring semester, he lightened his class load to just seven credits. Business Professor Jeff Alves and accounting Professor Nandita Das recorded lectures and PowerPoint presentations so Chmiel could keep up with lessons.

"We do not often have a student with Paul's range of interests and talents," Alves explains. "When we do, I try to make sure that he or she has the opportunity to stretch and learn as much as they can – and this means outside the classroom as well as inside."

Chmiel completed his responsibilities for his team's successful business project. During spring training, he will continue the course with copies of the class presentations and audio clips of classes online. And he will submit homework and take all quizzes – including unannounced – and exams on the same schedule as classmates.

Chmiel misses more than class. One of the bigger challenges is being away from girlfriend Trisha Nawrocki, his co-valedictorian at Pittston Area High School and a finance major at Villanova University.

He got off to a rough start in Bluefield, starting last season 0-21 at bat. "I wound up hitting over .300 the next two months and ended up at .300 for the season." A March article in *Inside the Warehouse* ranked him eighth among "power prospects" in the Orioles' minor league system. Chmiel's goal for this season is to keep building skills and getting the attention of coaches.

# KEYS

# KINGDOM

OVER NEARLY A DECADE, STUDENTS HAVE DEVELOPED AN ONLINE PLANT IDENTIFICATION GUIDE FOR KIRBY PARK

By Bill Wolfson

# TO

# A

# A

As a natural realm, it is not large and its green subjects do not number in the millions. But the 65 acres of special habitat comprising the Kirby Park Natural Area bordering the west bank of the Susquehanna River across from Wilkes-Barre are home to about 130 members of the plant kingdom. A few of the natives are rarely found in urban settings, many others are common, while at least two species – Japanese knotweed and mustard garlic – are aliens that muscled their way in. The natural area is also home to more than 200 species of birds, at least 12 mammals and other creatures such as amphibians, reptiles and insects.

Users of the online plant guide click through a series of choices to identify specimens.

Image Sources: Patricia Merwine • Texas A and M University • USDA PLANTS Database • Wildflowers and Other Natural Wonders of the Southeastern United States.



Species belonging to the plant kingdom in the park have long been of special interest to Kenneth M. Klemow, professor of biology and geoenvironmental science. Since 1998, teams of Wilkes University students under his tutelage have developed two taxonomic keys on the World Wide Web, soon to be downloadable onto hand-held devices. Whether desktop-based or mobile, computer-powered keys can incorporate text, images and “instant search” capabilities not possible in printed, often hefty biological field guides and technical manuals.

When powered by a handheld computer, users can take these large databases of information directly to the specimens they want to identify, speeding up the process and also eliminating any need to disturb rare or endangered species for classification inside a four-walled laboratory.

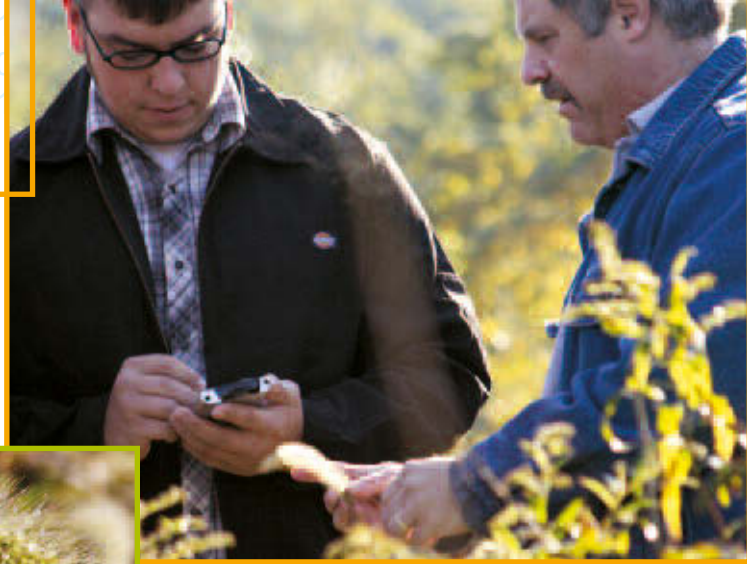
## KEYS AND HOW THEY WORK

**T**axonomic keys are usually developed in one of two formats: dichotomous or polyclave. Klemow’s students continue to refine both.

Dichotomous keys (the most common and easiest for most people to use) offer the user successive choices between two contrasting statements called couplets. Using a dichotomous key can be compared to traveling down a road with many side streets: To arrive at the right address, correct choices must be made all along the journey. If, for example, an evergreen is to be correctly identified, one pair of couplets may ask: “Are the needle-like leaves mostly in clusters or are they scattered or alternate?” By choosing the right answers to successive couplets, the specimen is finally identified.

“I’m glad they continue to refine the dichotomous key Web site because for younger students and casual hikers who haven’t mastered their botanical terminology, a graphic interface is more user friendly,” observes Jessica (Kwasny) Guy ’00, now a dentist in Mount Pocono, Pa. Though she majored in biology, Guy learned much about creating frames-based Web pages as she upgraded previous students’ work. “I believe the concept of the dichotomous key paired with today’s programming capabilities and wireless technologies will achieve the goals we dreamed about seven years ago.”

In contrast, polyclave keys allow users to enter the key at any point and choose the most obvious or important characteristics of the specimen to identify – no need to travel the length of the entire road to arrive at the correct destination. This type of key, however, usually requires understanding of biological



Senior Zachary Wilson, left, and Professor Ken Klemow examine foxtail in Kirby Park. PHOTOS BY MARK GOLASZEWSKI



terminology; for instance, “Are the leaves pinnately or palmately compound?”

“Polyclave keys are often written in a very cryptic manner, which makes them difficult to understand for people who aren’t professional botanists,” Klemow observes. “You really have to learn a whole new vocabulary, which is not a problem if you’re a professional botanist. But most people don’t use words like these and don’t want to learn them.” Klemow stresses, however, that polyclave keys are great learning tools for the biologically tempered among us. And because they tend to be database-oriented, they lend themselves more easily to manipulation and management by computers.

Complicating matters for biologically disinclined souls, both types of traditional keys often lack pictures and illustrations. While the online keys to Kirby Park remain works in progress, the dichotomous version with photographs is largely complete. It can be found on the Web at <http://kirbypl.wilkes.edu/>.

“  
I feel a GREAT  
SENSE of PRIDE  
to have been  
a part of it....  
I try to PAY IT  
FORWARD –  
to students  
I TEACH today.

– Amie D’Angelo ’98

Ongoing development of the keys for nearly a decade has resulted in rich educational experiences and collaborations between students in the biology and mathematics and computer science departments. “By having a biologist work with a computer science person, the result is a real synthesis of something that neither person can do alone,” Klemow believes. “There’s good educational value to that – interdisciplinary collaborations can yield some very good science.”

## OF WIKIS, RIPARIAN ZONES AND IPODS

**T**he Kirby Park keys, because their development is collaborative and ongoing, follow the “wiki” model: a Web site or similar online resource allowing users to add and edit content collectively. A wiki (from wiki wiki, a Hawaiian-language phrase for fast) also can be a form of software that handles complex problems with simple solutions. “We were doing wiki before wiki became fashionable,” Klemow chuckles. “Our students continue to build a tool in a successive way. The result is something that none of the groups could have done alone.” Next steps: versions downloadable to hand-held computers, smart phones and similar hand-held devices.

“Technology is becoming a bigger part of our everyday life,” observes Ryan Stetz, class of ’07. “In a few years, just about everybody is going to have an iPod or PDA device.” Stetz partnered with classmate and fellow biology major Zachary Wilson ’07 to re-program the dichotomous version of the key for hand-helds. “Our project demonstrates where much of science seems to be headed,” Wilson explains. “We’re getting away from the paper-based world and more and more, we’re going electronic.”

The pair also began work on what will become podcasts for Kirby Park and several other natural areas. After downloading onto hand-held devices, commentary will augment what visitors are seeing along nature trails as they hike from station to station. Stetz’s and Wilson’s unfinished work represents a great opportunity for future senior project teams.

“Nine years down the road, I still come back periodically to the Kirby key to see what people have added, what they’ve changed and how they’ve improved it,” says Amie D’Angelo ’98, now teaching physical science in the Hazleton (Pa.) Area School District. The first students to work on the project, D’Angelo teamed with Anastasia (Gurdock) Zabielski. “I feel a great sense of pride to have been a part of it,” D’Angelo reflects. “I look back with deep appreciation for how much Dr. Klemow helped me learn – about plant and tree identification, riparian zones like Kirby Park, how important they are in maintaining the health of our waterways and so much more. I try to pay it forward – to students I teach today.”

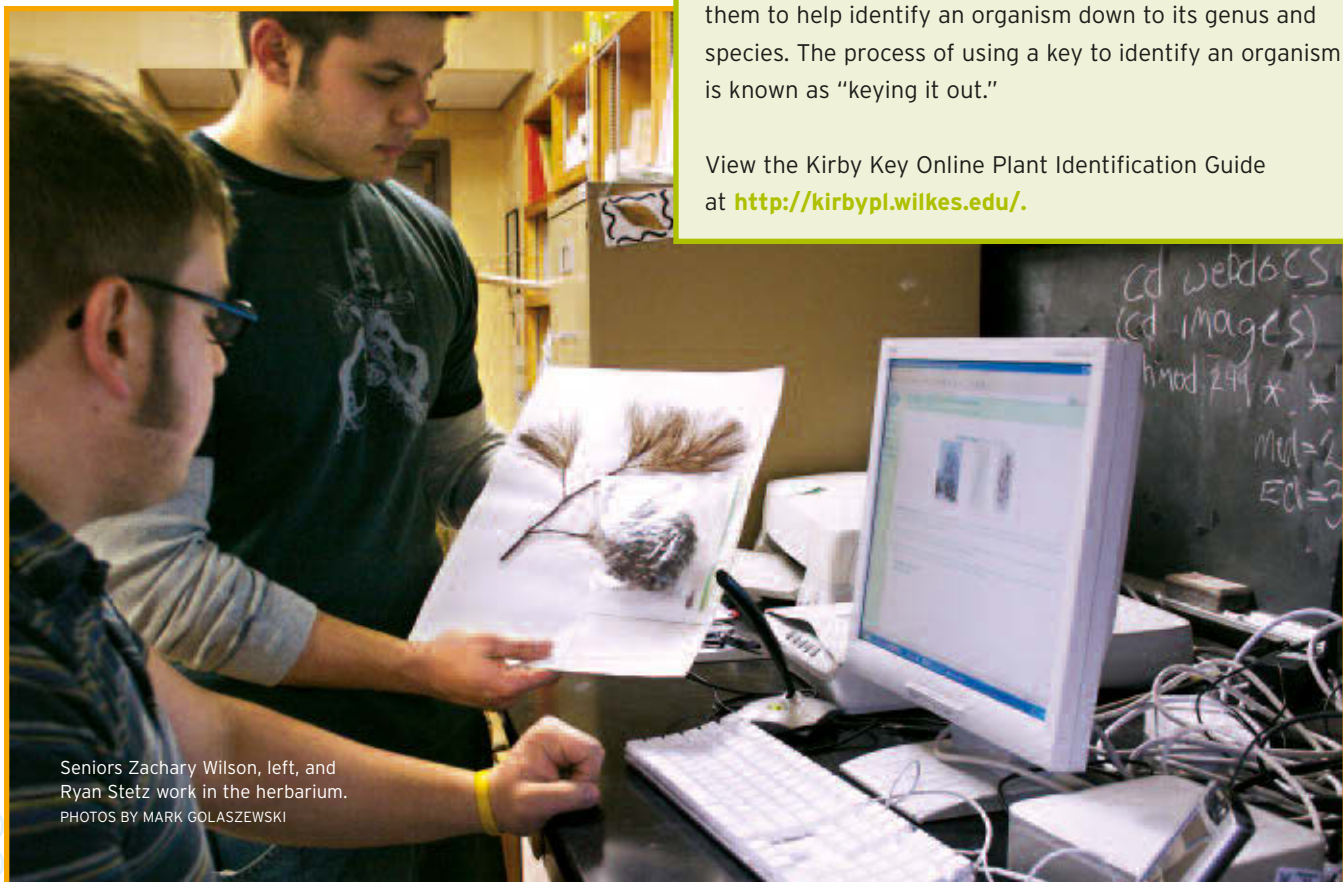
## WILD, “TAMED,” NOW WILD AGAIN

**R**iparian zones, or habitats, are the green, vegetated areas found along river and stream banks. Subject to repeated flooding, they are especially worthy of protection and preservation because of the many important functions they perform: purifying water by removing sediments and contaminants, reducing risk of wider flooding, preventing erosion and supporting a diversity of plant and wildlife species, to list just a few. Klemow, current students and

### ABOUT KEYS AND TAXONOMY

**Taxonomy** — the science of precisely classifying plants and animals — often relies on keys traditionally in the form of booklet-style guides. Botanists and zoologists develop them to help identify an organism down to its genus and species. The process of using a key to identify an organism is known as “keying it out.”

View the Kirby Key Online Plant Identification Guide at <http://kirbypl.wilkes.edu/>.



Seniors Zachary Wilson, left, and Ryan Stetz work in the herbarium. PHOTOS BY MARK GOLASZEWSKI



“ I can already see the NETWORK of regional keys all SHARING information with a central database.... It’s a LIVING PROJECT, perpetual and COMMUNITY-BASED.

- Jessica (Kwasny) Guy '00



alumni all note how unusual it is to find such a specialized habitat still existing in the heart of a city. Many riparian zones disappeared long ago, eliminated by factories, mills, mines, urban development, farmland and other human-driven modifications to our ecosystem.

The Kirby family donated the tract to the city in 1927, and it quickly became a popular recreation area. The land was cleared of many native trees and vegetation, and a small zoo, arboretum and a greenhouse dotted an increasingly manicured landscape in the northern section of the park. Gravel was mined in the southern section. Almost all original riparian habitat was destroyed.

Only a decade later, the Army Corps of Engineers constructed the first levee along the too-often

flooded Susquehanna River, effectively bisecting Kirby Park. All the land along the river-side of the levee quickly began to revert to what it had been for millennia, a natural riparian forest. Stands of sycamore, black locust and silver maple trees – all common to Pennsylvania’s riparian habitats – form a dense canopy once again, while spring beauty, dutchman’s britches, trillium and other herbaceous plants carpet the forest floor.

Now at age 70, the Kirby Park Natural Area is again approaching maturity. Its location just across the river from the University makes it a convenient and very accessible living laboratory for Klemow, generations of Wilkes biology students yet to follow and anyone else who wants to learn. The taxonomic keys make the learning easier.

## KEYS FOR THE FUTURE

W

When the Kirby Park keys are complete, work by Klemow and future students will not end at the park’s borders. He estimates Luzerne County alone is home to more than 2,000 plant species. Plus, many thousands more birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish, mollusks, insects and spiders offer enough taxonomical work to keep students and others busy for years to come.

Then there’s the rest of the commonwealth. Never short on ideas or enthusiasm, Klemow and former students envision



Above left to right: Professor Ken Klemow, Zachary Wilson and Ryan Stetz give a newspaper photographer a botany tour of Kirby Park. PHOTOS BY MARK GOLASZEWSKI



alliances with other educational institutions. “I can already see the network of regional keys all sharing information with a central database,” envisions Guy. “It’s a living project, perpetual and community-based. Anyone – students, environmental club members and even the random person with a camera phone – could e-mail photos and descriptions to the key for review and entry.” It might find use in ecological monitoring, mapping invasive species or charting maturation of forests.

Such a vision might be coordinated by organizations such as the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership, a broad-based, public-private partnership created in 2001 to promote conservation of native species and their habitats. Its formation came as a direct response to a recommendation made by the Pennsylvania 21st Century Environment Commission. Klemow chairs a committee for the organization that focuses on biodiversity informatics – the creation, integration, analysis and understanding of information regarding biological diversity.

“There are a couple of models that I think we could explore to develop sets of statewide taxonomic keys,” he says. “We could carve up the work geographically, county by county perhaps, or we could do it by biological classification: ‘You folks do the trees, we’ll take the shrubs ...’ ”

Collaborative efforts such as those envisioned by the professor and his current and former students would have been difficult if not impossible before the emergence of the Internet and World Wide Web. “When Web browsers developed with their ability to link words to text blocks and provide images, it just hit me that this is something that should be easily doable to help people identify the specimen they are looking at,” Klemow remembers.

Using the power of computational and information technologies to organize, analyze and transmit biological data, the biology professor and his students are finding new ways to easily share information – whether from a city park in Wilkes-Barre or the other side of the planet.

# A Sobering Spring Break



Among those who gutted homes were, back row from left: Chelsey Gosse, April Burko, Kaitlin Taber-Miller, Steve Karpinski, Ashley Maresca, Theresa Brewer, Steve Felter, Lisa Mulvey, Jim Bochicchio, Patrina Jordan, Andrea Smallacombe; and front row from left, Ann Loyek, Greta Kleckner, Valerie Martinez, Jessica Krupski, Allyson Bazarsky. PHOTO COURTESY OF MEGAN BOONE

## STUDENTS AID NEW ORLEANS RELIEF EFFORTS

**T**wenty-nine Wilkes students and five chaperones spent a week in New Orleans on an alternative spring break. Responding to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, the students worked with the National Relief Network to clear debris from yards, demolish dilapidated structures and gut homes. The students kept daily journals excerpted here and documented work in photos.

### 2:30 p.m. Monday, March 5

By Zach Bremmer

Yesterday we went to a Baptist church only a few miles from our campsite, and the people we met greeted us so warmly.

We then went on a tour of the business district and the French Quarter. It is truly a sobering experience driving through this place. It was like a ghost town.

We moved into the area hit hardest by the flood. Seeing the X's marked on the doors of all the houses and buildings is just so unreal. These marks were used by rescue workers to indicate that the houses had been inspected, how many bodies were found, how many hazards there were and date of the inspection. Rescue teams also initialed the doors.

Right now we are doing yard work, cleaning up things that haven't been touched in 1.5 years. We see movies and books and other items just left here. Families just had to leave everything. I can't imagine not having a home.

### 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 7

By Amanda Kunkel

In the backyard of the house I am working on, I found Bibles and love letters scattered around. I didn't read any of these letters because they are private and I respect that.

I did read a card that was found opened. It read: "Time endures and cannot fade the memories." I can't believe this card survived.

### 3 p.m. Friday, March 9

By Valerie Martinez

An amazing story of courage that I will never ever forget is what a firefighter told me. His name was Ribo and he was a part of the first rescue team to help in the recovery efforts during and after the flood. He told us that when he was at a rescue shelter, he looked across the way and spotted a young man rowing in a small boat. Firefighter Ribo asked the young man who else was left in the boat and the man replied that it was his mother, but on the way to the shelter, she had died. The firefighter asked the young man if he was OK, if he needed anything. His reply was, "Yes, I'm OK. I just want to go help others stay alive."



Jim Bochicchio removes debris from a roof.

PHOTO BY LISA MULVEY

### 3 p.m. Friday, March 9

By Andrea Smallacombe

Last night the whole group sat around a campfire and began to reflect on all of our fears. Someone wrote that she/he was afraid that coming down here wasn't going to make a difference. We came to realize that we are helping, helping in a huge way. Through our efforts, we have been able to help 10 families get closer to coming home. And then after those 10 families come home, they can begin to help others, like we did. We all realized our efforts will cause a ripple effect.



# a dark descent

POIGNANT PAINTINGS BY ARTIST WITH ALZHEIMER'S MOVE AND EDUCATE

By Kim Bower-Spence

**T**HE CONTRAST STRIKES IMMEDIATELY. William Utermohlen's 1967 self-portrait depicts a confident young man with piercing eyes. By 1996, a new portrait shows a much older man with eyes wide, lips open, conveying a sense of fear. His last attempt, in 2001, lacks detail altogether, save for the nostrils. So the London-based Utermohlen chronicled his own decline as a victim of Alzheimer's disease, with which he was diagnosed in 1995, at the age of 61.

Wilkes University, in conjunction with the Alzheimer's Association Greater Pennsylvania Chapter, brought the exhibit "The Later Works of William Utermohlen" to the Farley Library in February. "I was so moved by it because Alzheimer's has touched my life and my family," explains Eileen Sharp, coordinator for health sciences professional programs at Wilkes.

The event commemorated 100 years since German physician Alois Alzheimer in 1906 first described symptoms of the disease that bears his name. In addition to the exhibit, three seminars gave students and the community opportunities to hear how families cope with this disease, learn about the biology of brain diseases and discover what resources are available to help patients and their caregivers.



Significance of the disease will only grow as people live longer and Baby Boomers age. Alzheimer's and related dementias affect one in 10 people age 65; at age 85, the figure climbs to almost half, according to Estella Parker-Killian '76, regional director for the Alzheimer's Association.



As Alzheimer's disease progresses, paranoia and agitation accompany memory lapses, says neurosurgeon David Sedor '85.  
PHOTO BY CURTIS SALONICK PHOTOGRAPHY

Neurosurgeon David Sedor '85, who lectured on diseases of the brain, says Alzheimer's starts with a little memory problem that could have a number of causes. However, over time, Sedor says, memory lapses become more frequent and are accompanied by paranoia and agitation.

Improved MRI and CT scans simplify diagnosis. "It's a structural change you can see, but it's not repairable," he adds. Easier diagnosis means a higher reporting of the disease; symptoms are no longer simply attributed to old age. "They get labeled a lot more now than they did before."

The disease leaves plaques and microscopic tangles of filaments in its wake. Advances and new treatments have not made a big difference, Sedor says. Rather than depend on medicines to fix damage, researchers seek methods to protect cells earlier with genetic treatments. The hope is that someday a targeted virus may be injected into people who carry the gene that makes them susceptible to the disease. In theory, that virus could alter problematic cells and prevent the disease. "We're a little ways away, unfortunately."

Still, Parker-Killian finds reason for hope. New drugs can slow progression in some patients. And "there's more research going on right now than there ever has been worldwide."

People often avoid seeking diagnosis. "You're starting a long journey that's just not going to end pretty," knows Parker-Killian, whose own grandmother lived with the disease for nearly 20 years. Even so, early treatment may delay decline. And doctors may find symptoms come from some treatable cause, such as blood pressure, depression or medication.

If the diagnosis is Alzheimer's, Parker-Killian concedes, there is no cure. "The hope is at best to stabilize the disease. You're not going to deteriorate as quickly."



Facing Page: Utermohlen Self-Portrait, 1996.  
Right: Utermohlen Self-Portrait, 1999.  
ALL PHOTOS OF ART BY CHRISTINE SEITZINGER



This is a **RARE GIFT** that Utermohlen has given us to see the effects of this disease. You can see him **DISAPPEARING** – to himself and to us.

– Eileen Sharp



Utermohlen  
Self-Portrait, 1997.

Her organization can help families find resources such as day care, counselors, psychologists, support groups and the Area Agency on Aging.

Nicholas Metrus, a Binghamton, N.Y., sophomore biology major with a premedical concentration, attended seminars and brought his parents to the exhibit. A grandfather with Parkinson's disease and a great aunt with Alzheimer's make the issue personal for this aspiring geriatric physician.

He and his mother noted that the abstraction prominent in Utermohlen's earlier works was absent from the final painting, which shows a head without features. "The entire face, as well as the mind, had become all abstract." He thought of the exhibit and what he'd learned when visiting his aunt over spring break.

That is what Sharp had hoped Utermohlen's paintings would bring students. "We set up a variety of programs because I wanted them to hear about the disease from a variety of perspectives," she says. "This is a rare gift that Utermohlen has given us to see the effects of this disease. You can see him disappearing – to himself and to us."

To learn more about Alzheimer's disease and resources available, visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) or call (800) 272-3900.





# HOLLYWOOD

## Hopeful

THEATRE ALUMNA LAUNCHES  
ACTING CAREER SHARING SCREEN  
WITH GEORGE CLOONEY AND  
COURTENEY COX

By Cindy Taren





Facing Page: The Wantage, N.J., native, shown here at High Point Regional High School during a fall visit to her hometown, joined the Screen Actors Guild in February. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW JERSEY HERALD

Left: Trovillion played the lead female, Elmire, in Moliere's *Tartuffe* in her senior year at Wilkes. PHOTO BY DICK GILLESPIE

**S**INCE GRADUATING FROM WILKES University, Lauren Trovillion '05 has been an FBI agent, an assistant district attorney and a gambler. All are roles she's added to her resume since leaving her New Jersey home for an acting career in Hollywood in January 2006.

Within weeks of her arrival in California, she landed two jobs: one for an independent film and the other for a television commercial. By August, Trovillion was working on the set at Warner Bros. Studios with Al Pacino and George Clooney for the film *Ocean's Thirteen*.

"It was my first major project, and I learned a lot about the industry and where I needed to go from there," Trovillion says of the debut experience.

"The goals and dreams that I've had my whole life are slowly becoming a reality," says the 23-year-old Wantage, N.J., native. The most exciting part is being surrounded by so much talent and creativity every day. "It motivated me and encourages me to succeed."

Her current acting gigs include appearances on the CBS crime drama *Numb3rs*, the ABC series *Boston Legal* and the NBC soap opera *Passions*. In addition to these, Trovillion also has a role in a television show called *Dirt* on FX, starring Courteney Cox, and an ABC television comedy called *Big Day*. She also expects to appear in the upcoming movie *Drillbit Taylor*, starring Owen Wilson.

"It was always so hard to be taken seriously when I told people that I wanted to be an actor," Trovillion remembers. "Now I'm realizing that it actually is possible to make a career of doing what I love to do."

Trovillion joined the Screen Actors Guild in February. "From there my plan is to get an agent and really dive into auditions."

Trovillion says her Wilkes experience has prepared her well for life after college, and professors like Joseph Dawson, chair and associate professor of Visual and Performing Arts, are

part of the reason she has made it so far and will continue to challenge herself in the future.

"(The professors at Wilkes) took whatever talent I had and showed me how to use it. They inspired me and encouraged me each and every day. It is because of them that I now have a theater career as opposed to just a theater degree," Trovillion says.

"It's not uncommon for theater majors to get professional work after graduation," explains Dawson. Wilkes has several alumni who have built upon their college experience to become stage performers or have involvement in other aspects of the institutions of performance and production. Trovillion "has movie star looks and is a very accomplished dancer who had modeling experience before she came to Wilkes. She made connections in the Los Angeles area through Adam Hill, who used to teach here from 1996 to 2005."

"Lauren was a delight in class and terrific onstage because she worked hard at academics, dance, voice and acting classes," explains Bonnie Culver, English professor and director of the master of creative writing program at Wilkes.

While at Wilkes, Trovillion was nominated for an Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship, a national award, for her portrayal of Portia in the University's production of *Julius Caesar*.

Though she regrets having to be so far away from family and loved ones at home, Trovillion is grateful for the chance to spend so much time with other talented young actors who also are striving for greatness. "I get to watch some of the greatest actors out there at work and learn from them."

"I think the most important thing is to stay hungry," she adds. "I don't know exactly what the future has in store for me, but I know if I stay focused on what I want and never settle, I will succeed."

“The GOALS and DREAMS that I've had my whole life are slowly BECOMING a REALITY.”

**Lauren Trovillion, Los Angeles**  
**B.A., Theatre Arts 2005**  
**Career:** Has appeared as an actor in the film *Ocean's Thirteen* and is a regular on TV shows, including *Numb3rs* and *Passions*  
**Notable:** Expects to appear in this summer's movie *Drillbit Taylor*, starring Owen Wilson





# ON THE Ball

“MOST QUOTED MAN  
IN BASKETBALL”  
DISCOVERED DENNIS  
RODMAN AND  
SCOTTIE PIPPEN

By Emily Vincent

**M**ARTY BLAKE’S CAREER IN professional sports began at age 13, when the Wilkes-Barre Barons basketball team’s scorekeeper failed to show up for a game. Blake was pulled from the stands and paid \$1 to do the job that night.

Now 80, Blake ’50 still serves as the National Basketball Association’s director of scouting. Discovering such talents as Scottie Pippen, Dennis Rodman, Tim Hardaway and Ben Wallace, he is considered the number one authority on college and professional basketball in the world. He writes a weekly column on NBA.com called “Travels with Marty.”

Blake was the first NBA official to tap the international market for players. In 2005, Blake won the prestigious Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award from the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. He also received the Guardians of the Game Award from the National Association of Basketball Coaches, of which he’s been an associate member for 44 years.

After service in the Army and attending the University of Pennsylvania a year, he applied to Wilkes College under the GI Bill. While at Wilkes, Blake organized softball leagues, dances, picnics and other events. The journalism student worked on *The Beacon* and wrote columns for the *Wyoming Valley Sports Journal*. He also was a member of the theater club.

Blake spent summers working for the local professional baseball team, a Class A affiliate of the Cleveland Indians also called the Barons, where he ran programs and began scouting prospects. At 19, Blake received his matchmaker license and became the youngest licensed boxing promoter in the country, bringing

professional boxing and wrestling matches to Wilkes-Barre.

In 1954, Milwaukee Hawks owner Ben Kerner hired Blake as the organization’s only employee. Blake served as ticket salesman, traveling secretary, front office staff, advertising director, announcer and more. Blake cataloged players and scouted – just like he did for baseball.

Blake convinced Kerner to move the team to St. Louis in 1955. Kerner sold the team to an Atlanta group, and Blake moved with the team again.

Shortly after the 1970 draft, Blake became president of the Pittsburgh Condors of the American Basketball Association. A year later, he founded his scouting business in Alpharetta, Ga., where he lives with wife Marcia, an artist and photographer, and runs Marty Blake & Associates with son Ryan. The family also includes son Eliot, daughter Sarah and four grandkids.

Blake also enjoyed an acting career. He appeared in several stage productions and two movies. In the 1946 movie *They Were Expendable*, a war epic starring John Wayne, he was cast as an extra. “They were looking for soldiers to wear their fatigues,” Blake recalls. “I got \$12 to play a dead soldier.” He also appeared in the 1994 basketball movie *Blue Chips*, starring Nick Nolte and Shaquille O’Neal.

“Basketball has been the life’s work of trusted advisor and scout Marty Blake, who has been contributing to the game of basketball for over 50 years,” says John L. Doleva, Hall of Fame president and chief executive officer. “He has reserved his place in basketball history while he continues to seek out new talent for tomorrow.”

“  
Blake...is  
considered the  
NUMBER  
ONE  
AUTHORITY  
on college and  
professional  
basketball in  
the WORLD.  
”

**Marty Blake**  
Alpharetta, Ga.

**Journalism Major, 1950**

**Career:** NBA Director of Scouting

**Notable:** Won the Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award from the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2005



**SPALDING**

**OFFICIAL GAME BALL**

Blake talks to former NBA player and Atlanta Hawks guard Jon Barry.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF NBA PHOTOS



## New Leadership Takes Helm of Association

By the time you receive this issue of *Wilkes* magazine, your alumni association will have confirmed its new leadership. With a plan for succession in place, it is easier for successful (and busy!) alumni to make the commitment to serve as an officer. The maximum length of service from point of entry in the process (second vice president) to service as president is six years. Each term of office is one year, and each officer may be re-elected once.

After two years in the role of first vice president and the development and implementation of the organization's strategic work plan, George Pawlush '69 has sought and secured the presidency.

Following two years as second vice president, Terrence Casey '82 will assume the position of first vice president. Upon the recommendation of the nominating committee and confirmation of the board at its March 23 meeting, John Wartella '84 assumes responsibility as second vice president. As development committee chair for the past year, Wartella brought new levels of participation to the board.

Stay tuned as the next class of directors is selected. This group of at least seven alumni will serve a three-year term ending in 2010 and will carry out the work of the association. All board members serve on various committees and task groups to develop programs and benefits for Wilkes alumni. Consideration is given to the demographics of the constituency as candidates are selected to reflect the alumni population.

Outgoing President Colleen Gries Gallagher '81 inaugurated a new era for the association. Her management of the strategic work plan and deployment of able volunteers to the myriad processes and tasks has resulted in a strong, focused and motivated organization. With the adoption of the amendment to the bylaws, she assumes the position of historian for the coming year.

If you are interested in serving as a member of the board or its committees, e-mail us at [alumni@wilkes.edu](mailto:alumni@wilkes.edu).

— By Sandra Carroll



George Pawlush '69

## George Pawlush Aims to Build Relationships

Incoming Alumni Association President George Pawlush '69 knows Wilkes. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University, where he began his 38-year profes-

sional career. He has served Wilkes as sports information director and public relations director.

Pawlush now is vice president of public relations and community affairs at Greenwich Hospital, Greenwich, Conn. Prior to joining the Greenwich senior management staff in 1996, he held senior public relations positions at Danbury Hospital, Yale-New Haven Hospital and Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center in Wilkes-Barre.

"Throughout my entire professional career, I have been involved in building relationships," Pawlush says. "As president of the alumni association, I will try to enhance our relations with University administration and faculty, and with alumni. Working together, we can be a force for getting out the good word about Wilkes. We have alumni doing wonderful things throughout the world. I believe there are some great stories to be told. I feel these stories can inspire new support for our University. I plan to do everything possible to make this happen."

George's wife, Carol '79, and son George IV '98 are both Wilkes graduates. The Pawlush family also includes two other grown children, Tim and Tina.

### PLAN NOW TO ATTEND HOMECOMING 2007

Don't forget to mark your calendars for Homecoming 2007, Oct. 5 to 7. Expect some very special events, including:

- Dedication of the Karamelas alumni pergola.
- Celebration of the life of Dean George Ralston.
- Commemoration of the founding of the University 75 years ago.
- Recognition of the contributions of the Army Air Corps 6th College Training Detachment to the strength of its host college, our antecedent institution, Bucknell University Junior College.

Those are just a few highlights of the weekend! Oktoberfest will again coincide with homecoming weekend, so Wilkes-Barre will be an even livelier town than usual. The Crew Club will host another regatta, bringing a number of other schools to the area. Make your reservations early so you have the hotel of your choosing. Be sure to mention your Wilkes alumni affiliation to receive special rates.



## Explore Exotic Locales with Fellow Alumni

### Tropical Costa Rica

Departs Nov. 7, 2007

Price per person: twin, \$1,999; single, \$2,499



#### Highlights

- San José • Poás Volcano
- Thermal Spa Resort • Caño Negro Refuge • Monteverde Cloud Forest • Guanacaste

Join fellow Wilkes University alumni as they travel to Costa Rica

for nine days. This trip includes round-trip air travel from Allentown, Pa., hotel transfers, air taxes and current fuel surcharges. Eight breakfasts, two lunches and seven dinners are included. Fuel charges are subject to change until trip is paid in full. Cost does not include insurance of \$120 per person.

For more information on any of these trips, contact Michelle Diskin '95, associate director of Alumni Relations, at (570) 408-4134 or [michelle.diskin@wilkes.edu](mailto:michelle.diskin@wilkes.edu).

### French Riviera

Departs March 2, 2008

Price per person: twin, \$1,849; single, \$2,249



#### Highlights

- Nice • Flower Market • Chagall Museum
- Grasse Perfumerie • St. Paul De Vence • Ventimiglia • San Remo • St. Tropez • Cannes • Antibes • Picasso Museum • Villefranche • Rothschild Villa and Gardens
- Monaco Oceanographic Museum

The price of this eight-day trip includes round-trip air travel from Newark, N.J., air taxes, hotel transfers and current fuel surcharges (subject to increase until paid in full). Six breakfasts and four dinners are included in the cost. It does not include insurance of \$120 per person.

## Alumni Association Revises Election Bylaws

The nominating committee of the Alumni Association has completed the process of reviewing the association bylaws and proposing revisions to bring them into alignment with best practice.

The revisions passed by more than the required two-thirds vote of the board of directors, which is composed of 39 members. Thirty-two members voted, with 81 percent of the voting members voting “yes.” The result of these changes provides all officers with one-year rather than two-year terms, with the option of succeeding themselves for one additional consecutive term. With these approved changes, now confirmed by the Board of Trustees at its April 13 meeting, officers will be put forward as a slate by the committee for a confirmation vote of the board of directors. The same will be true of the

incoming “class” of directors; competition among candidates/nominees now takes place at the committee level. The Alumni Association will continue to invite alumni to nominate themselves and others in *Wilkes* magazine and online at The Colonel Connection.

“Too many times we lose key volunteers due to the competitive election process, and that is what we are trying to avoid,” explains Sandra Carroll, executive director of the Alumni Association and Alumni Relations. The best volunteers have busy lives and can’t imagine themselves committing to a 12-year stint in office. “This effectively limits their commitment to a total of six years from start to finish.”

The new process also saves the university time and more than \$10,000 in printing and postage costs. This move makes sense as there is a low response rate on the mailed ballots (about 1 percent). “We thank everyone who was involved with the process of the revision to the bylaws, and we look forward to your nominations in the months ahead,” Carroll concludes.



#### Chair Position Description:

The chair of each of the five standing committees is responsible for organizing and monitoring the work of their groups/subgroups and reporting progress on projects and priorities to executive committee and at board meetings as appropriate. The work of each group will determine the frequency of meetings.



**1960**

George Murdock is retired, but he keeps active with his four grandchildren. He resides in Wilkes-Barre with his wife, Lorraine.

**1963**

Philip Siegel will retire this year from his position as visiting instructor in accounting at Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Fla. He plans to spend most of the year in Wilkes-Barre.

**1965**

Steve and Jane ('66) Paradise have moved to West Paterson, N.J. Steve is director of Professional Liability Programs and senior vice president of CBS Coverage Group of Plainview, N.Y. Jane is retired from Merrick School District.

**1970**

Philip J. Thorick retires June 30, 2007, after 36 years as a United Methodist minister. He lives in the Binghamton, N.Y., area.



Tommy Johns and Terry Casey '82 share a laugh at a "Florida Swing" alumni event in Naples, Fla.

**1982**

**Reunion Oct. 5-7** 

Robert Cochran recently returned from holiday visits to Sweden and Iceland.

**1983**

Stuart Joshua Kall has published his first novel, *Chocolate Princess: Schoolin' and Killin'*, available on Amazon.com and through his Web site, chocolateprincess.net.

**1984**

William Ronca and wife Patricia welcomed their first child, Sophia Isabella, born June 22, 2006.

**1988**

William Griffin has been promoted to vice president of North American Channel Sales at Autodesk Inc. His group also manages North American license compliance activities, the Autodesk e-store and the new Telesales Center in Denver. Bill has been with Autodesk for six years. He lives in Orefield,



The Board of Governors of the 6th College Training Detachment, also known as the Bucknell University Junior College Flyboys, gathered March 20 in Cherry Hill, N.J. From left to right are: John Horner, president; Joe Rodowsky, secretary and treasurer; Jim Lynch; Arnold Rifkin, trustee liaison; Lou Holz, chairman; and Art Pareene, air cadet. Not pictured is John Agren, vice president.

PHOTO BY SANDRA CARROLL

Pa., with his wife, Kelly, and their four children.

**1992**

**Reunion Oct. 5-7** 

Dr. Lori Truman-Kraft and Jason Kraft of New Hope, Pa., welcomed their first child, Benjamin Glyndon Kraft, on Jan. 23, 2007.

**1993**

David Howard works for Richer Feeds as a dairy nutritionist. He is married with two children.

**1994**

Stephen Klem and his wife, Lauren, welcomed their first child, Trevor Stephen, on Aug. 14, 2006.

Jennifer (Nagrant) Leddy and her husband, Mark, announce the birth of their son, Jack Cooper, born Dec. 10, 2006. The couple also have a 4-year-old son, Devon, and reside in Collegeville, Pa.

Suzanne (Stanski) Scheible and her husband, Robert, announce the birth of their daughter, Zoe Emma, born May 17, 2006. The couple also have a 4-year-old daughter, Hannah, and reside in Green Township, N.J.

**1995**

Gia (Andrejko) Shedd and her husband, Tony, are expecting their second baby this summer. They are already the proud parents of a daughter, Kalyssa Sophia, born July 29, 2004. Gia is a seventh-grade school teacher at the Valley View School District. The family resides in Jessup, Pa.

Tanya (Daigle) Zegers and her husband, Ernie Zegers, welcomed their first child, Emma Margret, on Aug. 14, 2006. They reside in Roscoe, N.Y.



Burke sells metal detectors out of his home.  
PHOTO BY KIM BOWER-SPENCE

## Treasure Hunting Yields Business, Friendships for '70 Graduate

A quarter-century of metal detecting has yielded **Ed Burke '70** everything from diamond rings to colonial coins. The biggest treasures are the friendships cultivated along the way, says this retired elementary teacher and football coach from Kingston, Pa.

A tax refund paid for his first metal detector in 1979. The hobby fed his interest in coin collecting and provided a fun activity to share with his three children. Today, the hobby is almost a full-time job, run from a small office in the back of his home.

Burke currently serves as vice president of the national Federation of Metal Detectors and Archaeological Clubs. He is also president of the Susquehanna Valley Metal Detecting Club. His involvement takes him across the country to hunts and shows from South Carolina to Arizona, and from New England to Florida.

"I started my business by selling what I found with a card table and a couple boxes of goodies," Burke

explains. He travels to coin shows, organizes treasure hunts and shows catalog jewelry in homes. He also sells metal detectors.

At shows, he often lives out of a camper, rolling out the awning and setting out his table and wares. At night, fellow treasure hunters share stories and dinner around a campfire. Son Ed Jr. still goes with him, and wife Nancy joins them when she can.

"Right now I get a kick out of sales, but I still really enjoy the metal detecting." Beaches, picnic areas and other locations where people gathered a century ago provide fertile ground for treasure hunting, explains this history buff. "You have to find the places that are no longer there, the lots that have stairs that go nowhere. It takes detective work."

Finds include heavy gold bracelets, rings, toys and campaign buttons. The real fun comes in the hunt itself.

"Researching and finding something is great," he says. "Possessing it isn't that great."



**1996**

**Kristin (McNally) Goldberg** and her husband, Erik, announce the birth of their second daughter, Emerson Grace Goldberg, on Feb. 6, 2007. Emmie is welcomed by big sister Ellie Rose, born Dec. 1, 2003. The family lives in West Deptford, N.J.

**Brian Pacanowski** and his wife, Lori, announce the birth of their son, Benjamin Thomas, born Dec. 20, 2006. He joins siblings Kelsey, Kyle and Hannah. The family resides in Clarks Summit, Pa. Brian works as the head pharmacist at CVS in Clarks Summit.

**1997**

**Reunion Oct. 5-7** 

**Meredith (Cabrey) Nascimento** and her husband, Christian, welcomed their first son, Charles Nicholas, on July 3, 2006.

**Leah (Yurcho) Sabatini** and husband Bruce welcomed their first child, Tristen John, on Nov. 20, 2006.

**Dr. Scott K. Schonewolf** has joined the faculty at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine as an assistant professor of family and community medicine in Carbondale, Ill. He specializes in sports medicine and is also associate director of SIU's new primary care sports medicine fellowship. He is a native of Harrisburg, Pa.

## From the Colonels to the Eagles

**Paul Domowitch '77** still writes about football, just like he did as sports editor of Wilkes University's weekly newspaper, *The Beacon*. But now he analyzes professional football and the Philadelphia Eagles rather than the Colonels.

Fresh from Wilkes, the English major played semi-pro football and launched his professional writing career at the *Midland (Texas) Reporter Telegram* before joining the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*. Domowitch now serves as professional football columnist for the *Philadelphia Daily News*, where he's worked for 25 years.

Domowitch admits that covering the Super Bowl "beats work."  
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS



Football is a year-round topic of discussion in Philadelphia, where Domowitch's online chats pique as much passion two months post-season as in-season. "(Philadelphia) fans are probably as passionate as any you're going to come across. Maybe Pittsburgh is the only one that comes close," he says. "They really care about football in this town, even though they don't have a whole lot of championships."

Domowitch himself steers clear of cheering on any particular team. "When you're covering something, it's kind of like politics. Once I got out of Wilkes, I stopped rooting for anybody."

One of 40 selectors for the Pro Football Hall of Fame, he visits at least a dozen training camps each summer. Once games start, he spends weekends watching and analyzing Eagles games. Post-season finds him covering playoffs and the Super Bowl. Then attention turns to owner meetings, scouting and the draft. "The exciting thing about covering sports is it's not the same thing every day."

The Wilkes-Barre native confesses he enjoys a plum assignment. "It certainly beats work," he quips. "It's what I always wanted to do. The hours are long, and the travel can sometimes be tough on family life, but it's a very gratifying life."

Family includes his wife of 27 years, Shelly, and daughters Allison, 23, and Amy, 21. "I've probably enjoyed watching my daughters play sports better than any professional games I've covered."



President Tim Gilmour talks with Mollie and Gerry Moffatt '63 during a "Florida Swing" alumni event in Naples, Fla.

**Philip H. Siegel Jr.** works in Bonita Springs, Fla., as a cost accountant in the construction industry.

**Meghan (LaVigna) Suhocki** and her husband adopted two baby boys: Alex Luca, born Dec. 1, 2005, 7 lbs. 3oz., 19.5 inches, 8:49 p.m.; and Jonah William Suhocki, born Dec. 28, 2006, 6 lbs. 13 oz., 20 inches, 9:34 a.m.

### 1998

**Daniel Rickard** earned an M.B.A. degree from Wilkes University, graduating in January 2007. He works for Pennsylvania American Water Co. as an engineering project manager and currently resides in Kingston, Pa.

### 2000

**Wendy-Ann Oresick** and her husband welcomed their second child, Olivia Elisabeth, on June 28, 2006. She joins big brother, Tyler Michael.

**Michael Vivian** works at the State Correctional Institution at Retreat, in Hunlock Creek, Pa., recently marking his fifth year there. He works in a dual diagnosed therapeutic community program as a primary counselor. Vivian recently enrolled at Kaplan University to seek a master's degree in criminal justice.

### 2001

**Amanda (Abramoske) Albert** and her husband, Paul, welcomed their first child, Hailey Grace, on Dec. 22, 2006. They reside in Glastonbury, Conn.

### 2003

**Christina Baigis** married William Woronko on Dec. 22, 2006. The couple currently reside in Shavertown, Pa.

**Elizabeth (Alles) Sheakoski** married Brian Sheakoski on Sept. 16, 2006. Beth is a sales manager for the Sandestin

Marriotts, and Brian is a captain and pharmacist in the U.S. Air Force. They reside in Florida.

### 2004

**Bill Burke** works for Household Finance, a subsidiary of HSBC Bank. He has worked in several locations in the Accelerated Management Trainee program. In November 2006, he accepted a promotion that landed him back in Wilkes-Barre. He is now the branch sales manager for the company's Wilkes-Barre branch. He currently lives in Zion Grove, Pa., with fiancée Mindy.

**Dale Heller** is a publicist for *Avenue Q* and other Broadway productions.

**Jason Holloway** is a financial representative for Northwestern Mutual Financial Network.

**Tiffany Smith** is a professional actress in *Freaks*, an off-Broadway production.

### 2005

**Vincent Hartzell** and **Kristen Dulick ('06)** were married Oct. 14, 2006, in Bethlehem, Pa. The couple reside in Richmond, Va. Kristen is currently a pharmacy primary care resident at the McGuire VA Medical Center, and Vincent is one of 10 pharmacists honored by the One to One Patient Counseling Program and *Pharmacy Today*. He is a manager at CVS Care Center in Glen Allen, Va.

**Ben Ptashinsky** is a singer in a production called *The Hoop-Dee-Do Musical Revue* at Walt Disney World, Fla.



Left to right: Jeff Slank '95, Jean Matz, Marty Williams, George Matz '71, President Tim Gilmour, John Williams '58 and Patricia Stout Williams '56 gathered in St. Pete's Beach, Fla., in February.





Aaron Tufankjian '93 and wife Courtney Cachet enjoy an alumni event in south Florida.

### 2006

**Denise Blacker** is an equity stage manager for an off-Broadway production of *Theopholis Now*.

**Carlos Candelario** is a professional actor in National Players touring company of Washington, D.C.

**Rachel Dyer** is a professional actor in National Players touring company of Washington, D.C.

## Master's Degrees In Memoriam

### 2006

**Suzanne Dailey** is an elementary teacher in the Easton Area School District. She and her husband, Richard, welcomed the birth of their third child, Avery Kate, on Oct. 16, 2006. She joins brother Caden and sister Olivia. The family resides in Nazareth, Pa.

### 1949

**Arthur J. Rice Jr.**, 82, of Forty Fort, Pa., died April 15, 2006, at Wesley Village in Jenkins Township, where he had been living for more than a year. He graduated from Forty Fort High School and Wilkes College. He was a weather observer in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II and worked at Glen Alden Coal Company. He retired from IBM in Vestal, N.Y.



## Submitting Class Notes

Send your news to **The Colonel Connection** ([community.wilkes.edu](http://community.wilkes.edu)) or to **Class Notes, Wilkes Magazine, 84 W. South St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18766.**

## Remembering Tom Bigler, Professor Emeritus and Veteran Newsmen

Television news pioneer and Wilkes Professor Emeritus Thomas A. Bigler, 85, of Edwardsville, died March 2, 2007.

"Tom was many things to many people," recalls communications professor Andrea Frantz. "He was a teacher, a journalist, a voice of conscience. For me, Tom was an incredible friend and mentor, but perhaps, more importantly, he was a great friend, mentor and champion for many, many people and organizations in this community. He represented beautifully the sort of leadership and ethical ideal I encourage among our



Bigler was a well-known television personality in northeastern Pennsylvania.

students. Since his death, I've heard from many former students who all communicated a deep respect for how this man modeled the kind of person and professional they hope to be. I can think of no higher compliment for a teacher than that."

Bigler graduated from high school in Hazleton and studied at Ithaca College. He received his bachelor's degree in communications from Wilkes University in 1993. The Edwardsville, Pa., resident began his broadcasting career as a part-time announcer in Hazleton during the summers of 1939-41. In 1942, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Forces, where he spent most of his World War II service flying over India and Indochina. When he returned to the United States, he resumed his broadcasting career serving several radio stations as announcer and news director. He also served as news director for WNEP-TV and was news director and vice president for news and public affairs at WBRE-TV, where he became well-known for his daily on-air editorials.

Upon his retirement from broadcasting in 1986, Bigler wrote a column for the *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*. He also chaired the communications department at Wilkes University, where he taught a variety of journalism courses, including: basic and advanced news writing, editorial writing, ethics and First Amendment law. He also advised the student newspaper, *The Beacon*, and helped establish Wilkes University's Thomas Shelburne Telecommunication Studio, a state-of-art television broadcasting center. Bigler retired from full-time teaching in 2001.

Bigler was an active community leader, serving on numerous boards of directors, including: the Osterhout Free Public Library, Family Service Association, the Wilkes-Barre Association for the Blind, Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce, Wilkes-Barre Human Relations Commission, Wyoming Valley Historical and Geological Society, Ethics Institute of NEPA and the League of Women Voters. In addition, Bigler co-founded and served on the board of Leadership Wilkes-Barre. He was an active member of B'Nai B'rith Temple, Torch Club, NAACP and the Pennsylvania Associate Press Broadcasters Association, which he served as president from 1965-66.

Memorial donations may be sent to either the Tom Bigler Scholar Fund at Wilkes University or the Osterhout Free Public Library.



# Mourning a Legend

DEAN GEORGE RALSTON  
PASSES AWAY AT 89

**T**he Wilkes University community mourns the loss of George Ralston, 89, the “Father of Wilkes Athletics,” who passed away March 2, 2007.

“George Ralston will always be remembered as the man who best embodies the essence of the mentoring spirit at Wilkes University,” says Tim Gilmour, Wilkes president. “George knew and remembered virtually every student who attended Wilkes during his tenure, and he is an irreplaceable treasure for our institution. On behalf of the university, I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Helen, his family and to all those Dean Ralston taught and mentored.”

“I don’t have enough superlatives in my vocabulary to describe the profound impact ‘The Dean’ has had on me, Wilkes, his community, and the many charitable and social service organizations with which he was affiliated,” adds Paul Adams, vice president of student affairs. “He was a blessing to all who knew him. His capacity to care for others is unmatched in anyone I have ever known. With the exception of my father, no other person has had such a formative impact on how I’ve lived my life.”

Ralston lived in Wilkes-Barre, was a native of Harrisonburg, Va., and graduated from Susquehanna Township (Pa.) High School and the University of North Carolina, where he was a member of the Tar Heels football and baseball teams. An Army veteran of World War II, Maj. Ralston served in Africa and the South Pacific and was awarded two Purple Hearts. When he returned home to Forty Fort, Pa., he accepted the position of counselor to veterans returning to Bucknell University Junior College, precursor to Wilkes College and Wilkes University.

Ralston lived in Wilkes-Barre, was a native of Harrisonburg, Va., and graduated from Susquehanna Township (Pa.) High School and the University of North Carolina, where he was a member of the Tar Heels football and baseball teams. An Army veteran of World War II, Maj. Ralston served in Africa and the South Pacific and was awarded two Purple Hearts. When he returned home to Forty Fort, Pa., he accepted the position of counselor to veterans returning to Bucknell University Junior College, precursor to Wilkes College and Wilkes University.

– Paul Adams



Dean Ralston's affiliation with Wilkes spanned 61 years.  
PHOTO BY MICHAEL P. TOUEY

Ralston was dubbed the “Father of Wilkes Athletics” after beginning the athletics program in 1946. He coached the Wilkes football team for 10 seasons, from 1946 to 1954, and again in 1957, and registered a record of 41 wins, 32 losses and 4 ties. Ralston also spent 10 seasons as basketball coach at Wilkes and five years as head baseball coach. He served a stint as director of athletics. Ralston has been associated with Wilkes for the past 61 years.

In September 2003, the Ancestral Colonels, a group of former student-athletes who attended Wilkes between 1946 and 1960, honored Ralston with a plaque displayed at the football field that bears Ralston’s name.

Ralston also has served in several other capacities throughout his Wilkes career. He spent 10 years as the dean of men and enjoyed time as the dean of students. Ralston, dean emeritus of student affairs, continued to serve as special assistant to the Alumni Relations Office up until his recent illness.

“Dean Ralston will be deeply missed by all of us who were inspired by his humility, his level of service to others and his passion for Wilkes athletics,” comments Addy Malatesta, Wilkes director of athletics. “He will be remembered as a kind and caring gentleman who taught life lessons and valued students.”

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Helen; sons David, John, Thomas and James; and five grandchildren. Memorial donations may be made to the University’s George F. and Helen B. Ralston Scholarship Fund.

**Ralston's life and service to the university will be celebrated during homecoming festivities on Saturday, Oct. 6.** Watch The Colonel Connection and the next issue of *Wilkes* magazine for details and a more comprehensive commemoration of his contributions to Wilkes.



Recognize anyone from these photos? The annual Cherry Blossom Festival offered time for the campus community to collectively emerge from hibernation and celebrate spring.

Below, warm, spring sunshine draws students to the greenway for tanning and visiting.

To identify the students shown here, or to reminisce about the 1976 or other Cherry Blossom Festivals at Wilkes, visit [The Colonel Connection at community.wilkes.edu](http://TheColonelConnection.atcommunity.wilkes.edu) and click on Message Boards. Or send us a note at *Wilkes Magazine*, 84 W. South St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18766.



**Girl Crazy:** Gerry Lind '57 identified three of the cast members of *Girl Crazy* pictured in the spring 2007 issue. Third from left was Skinny Ennis, and to his right are Lind and Fred Cohen. "It was while participating in *Girl Crazy* that I met another cast member, Jane Obitz ('56). Jane and I have been married since my discharge from the U.S. Army in 1959. We reside in Sonoita, Ariz."





## May

26-27 "Last Hurrah" Wrestling Reunion,  
Wilkes University (Come celebrate  
Coach Reese's 80th birthday!)

## June

21-29 Alumni trip to northern Italy

## July

14 Alumni Beach Bash, Bar A, Belmar, N.J.

## September

TBA Alumni Mixer, Pittsburgh

## October

5-7 Homecoming/Reunion

## November

7-15 Alumni trip to Costa Rica

PHOTO BY MATT BEDNARIK, 1600VER90

For details on dates and locations, check  
[www.wilkes.edu](http://www.wilkes.edu) and **The Colonel Connection!**



**WILKES UNIVERSITY**  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766