

# WILKES

SPRING 2010

OPERATIC ODYSSEY | CLASS ACT  
STARFIRES GLOW AGAIN | PUZZLING PROGNOSIS

## What It Means to “Be Colonel”

**T**HE UNIVERSITY LAUNCHED AN ADVERTISING campaign last fall in support of our admissions efforts that asks “What does it mean to Be Colonel?” The answer to this question is at the heart of the undergraduate experience at Wilkes. To “Be Colonel” means going the extra mile, showing strength of character, being an innovator, mentoring and much more. I urge you to read more about the campaign in the On Campus section and to visit [www.BeColonel.com](http://www.BeColonel.com), where you can watch videos about students and faculty who personify what it means to “Be Colonel.”

The alumni featured in this issue of *Wilkes* magazine truly reflect what it means to “Be Colonel” in their lives and in their careers. Drew Landmesser '77, director of production for the San Francisco Opera, displays passion and innovation in his work. Whether bringing an opera to a baseball park or introducing new technology in the opera house, Drew's contributions to the arts make him a Colonel we are pleased to call our own.

Bonnee Breese '93, pictured on the cover, makes her mark in another field of endeavor—secondary education—but she too clearly knows what it means to “Be Colonel.” In her work as an English teacher at Overbrook High School in Philadelphia, she mentors her students to set high standards. A poster that

dominates her classroom states her expectations in bright red letters: “College is a given.” This fall, one of her students followed in her footsteps to become a member of Wilkes' freshman class.

Sometimes being Colonel means showing strength of character when we support a loved one who needs help meeting everyday challenges. The Joseph family, the centerpiece of our feature about autism, boasts three Wilkes alumni who have helped their brother, David, make his way in the world. The feature offers an overview of the challenges faced when a family member is diagnosed with autism.

In this issue of *Wilkes* magazine, we continue to inform, entertain and educate—while helping you to keep up with the achievements of former professors and classmates. We try to accomplish those things with good writing, outstanding design and creativity. I'm pleased to say we've been rewarded for our efforts: *Wilkes* magazine has earned a prestigious Gold Award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) for excellence in magazine publishing.



Drew Landmesser '77 began his theatrical career as a Wilkes student and continues it today staging works for the San Francisco Opera.

PHOTO BY SCOTT WALL PHOTOGRAPHY

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

### WILKES MAGAZINE

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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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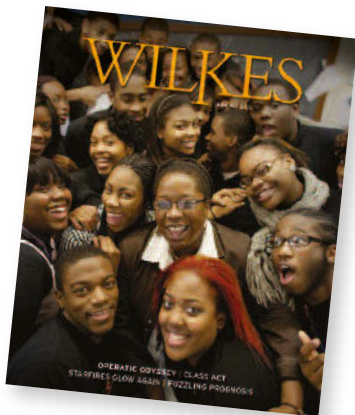
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Bonnee Breese '93 and her students at Philadelphia's Overbrook High School share a joy of learning that leads to a college education. PHOTO BY DOUGLAS BENEDICT PHOTOGRAPHY LLC



Have a story idea to share?

Contact us at [wilkesmagazine@wilkes.edu](mailto:wilkesmagazine@wilkes.edu) or *Wilkes Magazine*, 84 W. South St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18766.

## New Ad Campaign Highlights “Be Colonel”

Wilkes University’s new advertising campaign urges prospective undergraduate students to “Be Colonel.”

The campaign relates true student experiences through youthful, animated graphics and photos of Wilkes students, faculty and buildings. Last fall, a 30-second television commercial aired on MTV, VH1, ABC Family, ESPN and Spike in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area and in some regional movie theaters. The commercial encouraged viewers to visit BeColonel.com, where videos, produced in the same graphical style, highlight the experiences of individual Wilkes students.

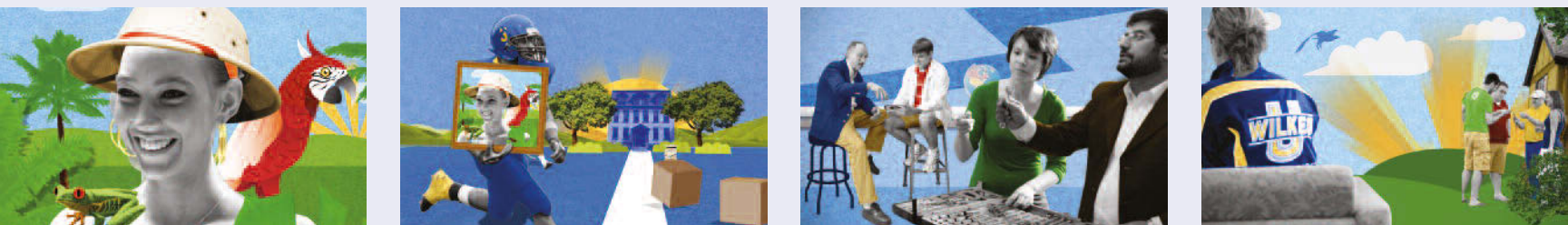
The campaign builds on the success of the previous award-winning

campaign, “A Majority of One.” The new campaign demonstrates how Wilkes’ culture of personal attention and hands-on learning helps students unlock their potential, find their purpose and reach their goals. Philadelphia advertising agency 160over90 produced the campaign.



**MORE ON THE WEB**

Check it out at [www.BeColonel.com](http://www.BeColonel.com).



## Education is an Adventure at Wilkes

Education at Wilkes University may involve lectures, books and laboratories. It also can include climbing a rock wall, navigating ropes courses and maybe even skydiving. These elements make up the adventure education program at Wilkes, a unique curriculum designed to engage students in fun, alternative learning experiences through physically demanding activities.

“A few years ago, we were looking for opportunities to expand the use of our recreation space,” says Mark Allen, dean of student affairs. This led to the installation of the Step Up rock wall, as well as high and low ropes courses. Step Up is a facet of the adventure education program designed to encourage team building.

Gabriel Lamberti was hired as the first adventure education coordinator in September 2009 and is charged with helping faculty incorporate adventure education into more traditional classes. Lamberti holds a bachelor’s degree in outdoor education from Prescott College. His professional experience includes work as an instructor for outdoor activities, from rock climbing to mountain biking, consultant for outdoor education programs, and facilitator for ropes and challenge courses.

Under Lamberti’s supervision, the Step Up rock wall and ropes courses provide practical leadership

tools, lessons on group dynamics, and opportunities to enhance communication and social skills. In addition to the indoor facilities, the adventure education program serves as a base of operations for off-campus outdoor trips. During the fall 2009 semester, Lamberti led a whitewater rafting trip in the Lehigh Gorge.

The adventure education program provides many unique opportunities for students in the classroom. Allen and the assistant director of the learning center, Blake Mackesy, have utilized the Step Up program in their first-year foundations classes. Step Up has also been used by several Wilkes University clubs and leadership classes, as well as a number of area high schools.

“One of the best things about the Step Up program,” says Lamberti, “is that it is flexible enough and diverse enough for people to run through different elements of the same course several times and get new experiences each time. The most interesting aspect of my work is to watch the personal and team-related growth that is achieved through adventure education.”



Adventure education coordinator Gabriel Lamberti shows student Kris Rivers the features of a new mountain bike purchased for the University’s adventure education program. PHOTO BY RACHEL STRAYER

## Wilkes Offers First Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree in Northeast Pennsylvania

Wilkes University offers northeast Pennsylvania's first doctor of nursing practice degree. This degree—deemed the industry standard for educating advanced practice nurses—will enroll its first class in summer 2010.

Wilkes will offer the degree online to accommodate the needs of busy health-care professionals. Only one weeklong residency is required to complete the program.

The new doctoral program meets a health-care industry need. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, all new advanced-practice nurses in the United States will be educated at the doctoral level by 2015. Advanced practice nurses include nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, nurse anesthetists and clinical nurse specialists. Master's degrees are currently required for those specialties.

Bernard Graham, dean of the Nesbitt College of Pharmacy and Nursing, says, "The change to require doctoral degrees puts nursing on a par with other health professions. In the future, nurses who take leadership roles in nursing practice will have doctorates like the one we are offering at Wilkes."

The program also responds to a continuing nursing shortage regionally and nationally. Demographic data in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties reflects an aging nursing population that will contribute to a shortage of nurses.

The program's directors are Deborah Zbegner and Bridgette Zielinski, both associate professors of nursing. Individuals enrolled in the program will be able to choose among three concentrations: gerontology, psychiatric/mental health and nursing management. Advanced-practice nurses who have completed a master's degree can earn the doctorate by completing 30 credits in about two-and-a-half

years. Nurses with a bachelor's degree enrolling in the program will complete 67 credits. Students with a bachelor's degree who enroll part-time will complete the degree in about five years.

For more information about the doctor of nursing practice degree, please call (800) WILKES-U, ext. 4234 or (570) 408-4234 or visit [www.wilkes.edu/dnp](http://www.wilkes.edu/dnp)



A news conference was held to announce the new doctor of nursing practice degree—the first such program in northeast Pennsylvania. Participating in the announcement were, from left, Bernard Graham, dean of the Nesbitt College of Pharmacy and Nursing; nursing doctorate program co-director Bridgette Zielinski; Mary Ann Merrigan, chair of Wilkes Nursing Department; Deborah Zbegner, nursing doctorate program co-director; and Reynold Verret, University provost. PHOTO BY RACHEL STRAYER

### \$2.9 MILLION GRANT FROM PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TRAINS HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Wilkes received a \$2.9 million grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide training for middle-school teachers in science or math. The training is provided in six regions which include school districts in Berks, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe and Montgomery counties. The classes are offered free of charge to teachers. Mary Kropiewnicki, associate professor of education and director of the doctor of education program, authored the grant.

Administered under the Eligible Partnerships Postsecondary Grant Program, it will train more than 200 teachers to be certified in math or science at the middle-school level. The certification ensures that teachers meet the criteria for highly qualified teachers as defined by No Child Left Behind. It also addresses Pennsylvania standards for certification of middle school teachers.



## Wilkes Crew Team Continues Legacy of Alumni Rowers

The rowers of Wilkes University's crew teams—past and present—share a legacy spanning more than two decades.

“Crew is a way of life,” says Amanda Gunther, a junior communications major from Boyertown, Pa., and the current president of the club.

Today's team, numbering about 15 members, meets behind the Henry Student Center before crossing the Market Street Bridge to get to their boatyard in Kingston. There the team hoists the massive four- and eight-man boats, weighing several hundred pounds each, in the air. They carry them down the dike alongside the Susquehanna River until they reach the water's edge.

It's a routine familiar to generations of Wilkes crew team members.

The club began in 1986, the brainchild of then-freshman Bruce Horn '89, now a math teacher in Savannah, Ga. It became a reality after he convinced his friend Matthew Beekman '89 to help recruit additional members and a coach. Its membership expanded as interest increased, but there were growing pains.

“One thing I do remember vividly is a new recruit who was really muscular,” explains Beekman, today a Scranton, Pa., resident and partner in the design and marketing firm Jump Motion Design. “He went out on the boat with the coach and was told it wasn't the amount of arm strength but how you used your entire body (that propelled) the boat. He obviously didn't listen and began huge pulls on the oars, which caused the entire boat to go under water!”

During the '90s, the challenges—and camaraderie—continued.

“We were the *Bad News Bears* of rowing,” recalls John Imperial '98, now a project engineer for Intralox LLC in Washington, D.C. “The team still tried hard and we pushed ourselves to show up for early morning practices, make up winter workouts, and even (conduct) fundraising events. We didn't know any better. We just wanted to row.”

The team persevered over the years as additional students took up the sport. Jennifer Fela '01, a freelance writer and editor based in San Diego, Calif., recalls the thrill that rowers experience working in tandem.

“There is a moment when...it suddenly feels like you aren't pulling anymore, that there is no resistance from the water,” she says.

Left: John Imperial '98 has been a member of the Capital Rowing Club in Washington, D.C., since leaving Wilkes and coached rowing for Bishop Ireton High School in Alexandria, Va. PHOTO COURTESY JOHN IMPERIAL

Above: The Market Street Bridge at sunset. PHOTO BY ALLISON ROTH

“The first time it happened to me I thought something was wrong, but when I glanced over at my oar it was moving through the water in perfect rhythm with the rest of the boat. The feeling of gliding along the water with your friends and feeling connected even without speaking is a great one.”

The current crew team participates in organized regattas throughout the year. They practice alongside the new River Common before and after classes, a lasting testament to the shared vision of two friends from over 20 years ago.

Alumni rowers say they take lessons learned on the river with them when they leave Wilkes.

“That moment of rhythm and balance between the rowers, the boat and the water is what I like most about the sport,” says Fela. “It reminds me to go with the flow to find balance and ease, and this carries over as a good life lesson as well.”

— By Daniel Kautz

*Kautz is a junior communication studies major.*



Members of the 2009-2010 Wilkes Crew Team hoist one of their boats.

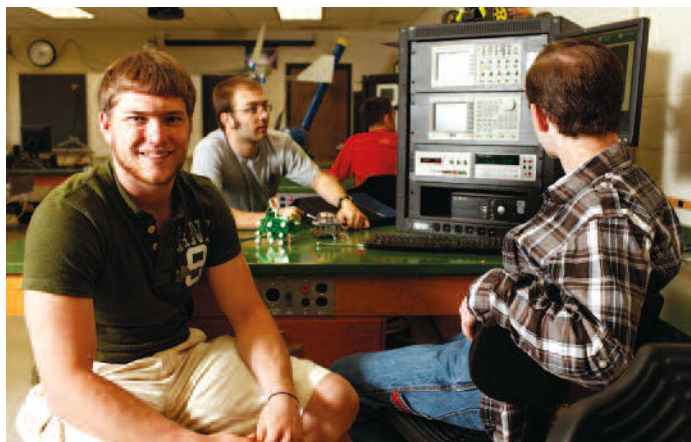
PHOTO BY ALLISON ROTH

## Adopt-A-Lab Program Supports Engineering Department

A new Adopt-A-Lab Program in Wilkes' Division of Science and Engineering is forging relationships between the engineers of today and tomorrow.

The program—introduced in fall 2009—pairs participating companies with one of the division's 16 engineering labs. The program brings real-world expertise to the University while offering companies opportunities to access the knowledge and resources of the engineering department and its students.

Sixteen laboratories offer hands-on experience in the engineering program. They include nanofabrication and microfabrication, robotics, fluids and wind tunnel, communications, design and mechanical testing, electrical power and control systems and 10 other subject areas.



Labs in the engineering division give students hands-on experience. PHOTO BY BRUCE WELLER

The first companies participating in the Adopt-A-Lab program are Fairchild Semiconductor, Ben Franklin Technology Center, Keystone Automation, DMI, Tobyhanna Army Depot, Emerson, Lightspeed Technology and Quardrant.

According to Rodney Ridley Sr., director of engineering for the University, companies solicited to Adopt-A-Lab are industry leaders knowledgeable about trends in their fields. "Their expertise, leadership and knowledge will be used to shape purchasing and curriculum decisions to keep Wilkes ahead of industry trends in electrical and mechanical engineering," he says.

Companies also will provide senior projects and internships for Wilkes engineering students.

For more information about the Adopt-A-Lab program, contact Ridley at (570) 408-4824 or [rodney.ridley@wilkes.edu](mailto:rodney.ridley@wilkes.edu).

## Going Green

### Graduate Sustainability Certificate Program to Launch in May

A graduate-level certificate program focusing on sustainability in the workplace will launch this May through the Department of Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences and the College of Graduate and Professional Studies. The program will address the needs of businesses striving to be more environmentally conscious.

The graduate certificate in sustainability management is a 12-credit program designed to give mid-level managers from diverse business backgrounds the knowledge and skills required to successfully plan and lead sustainability projects using national standards, such as LEED, LEAN and Green Guide for Health Care. Designed with busy professionals in mind, courses will be offered primarily online, with limited campus residency required.

For more information, visit [www.wilkes.edu/sustainability](http://www.wilkes.edu/sustainability) or contact the College of Graduate and Professional Studies at (800) WILKES-U Ext. 4235.

### Wilkes Students Offer Green Solutions in Sustainability Consulting Class

Business, environmental engineering and earth and environmental science students are working as consultants helping businesses adopt more sustainable practices and market themselves as "green" or environmentally friendly companies. The work is being done as part of a class called "Small Business Consultancy" for the business students and "Sustainability Consultancy" for environmental engineering and earth and environmental science students.

Started in 2003, the course is structured like a consulting firm. Teams of students are paired with businesses identified by Wilkes University's Small Business Development Center. The class is taught by Marleen Troy, associate professor and chair of the Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences Department, and Ruth Hughes, director of the Small Business Development Center.

Students conduct a needs analysis and an environmental inventory for the businesses that assesses business practices, utilities/energy use, materials use and other issues. They meet with the client to identify two to four areas that the student teams study in-depth to make recommendations for improving practices.

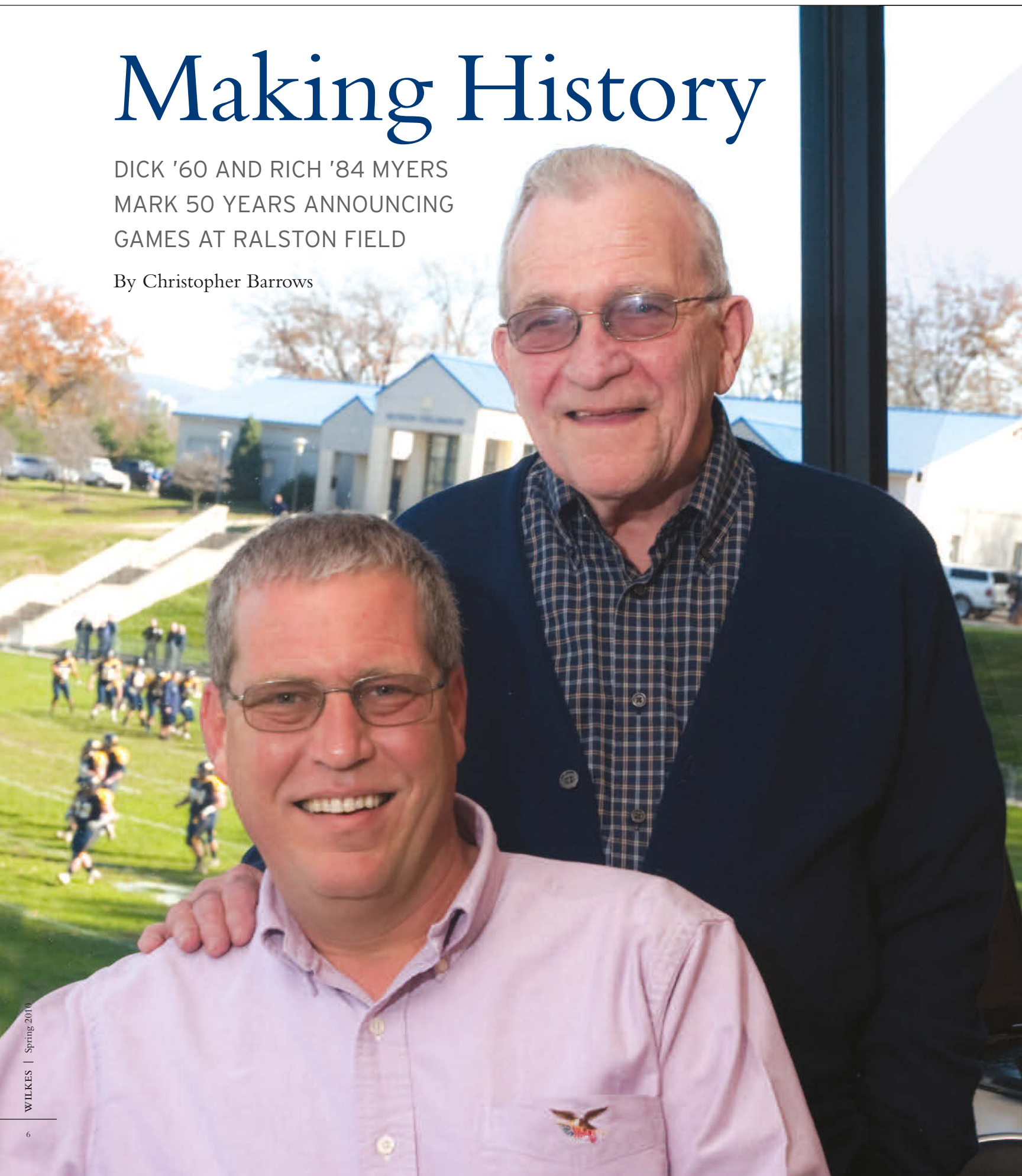
The kinds of businesses involved in the program since its founding have been diverse and include a retail florist, hairdresser, porta-potty business, family restaurant, furniture store, medical equipment distributor, wholesale greenhouse, pet food manufacturer and more.

Recommendations made to the business may include the introduction of more environmentally-friendly products, changes in manufacturing practices, improving energy use and more.

# Making History

DICK '60 AND RICH '84 MYERS  
MARK 50 YEARS ANNOUNCING  
GAMES AT RALSTON FIELD

By Christopher Barrows





**F**OR HALF A CENTURY THE VOICE of Wilkes football has been a member of the Myers family. The father and son team—Dick Myers Sr. '60 and Rich Myers Jr. '84—celebrated this milestone during the fall 2009 football season.

Dick began announcing during his college days at Wilkes. As a student working in the sports information office, he began doing public address work at basketball games and wrestling meets. In 1960, Wilkes football moved from Kingston High School Stadium to Artillery Park. Wilkes lost the stadium announcer and Dick stepped up to the mic.

Rich grew up attending many Wilkes basketball, wrestling and football events with Dick. When he was 12, he even began helping his father in the press box during football games, keeping an eye on substitutions and doing odd jobs.

"It was fun," he remembers. "You got a chance to really experience the game, talk the football talk. As a kid, you dream of doing that kind of stuff." Since most games took place on Saturdays, Dick was able to manage his public address duties and a full-time job. However, when he obtained employment out of town, he found the Wilkes commitment difficult to maintain. Unable to commit to working every game, he knew it was time to step down.

"When I got the call asking if I'd like to return, I told (John Reese, former athletic director and head wrestling coach) he should give one of his students a chance: a chance like I had." He also informed Reese that the answer was "right under his nose" and suggested that he ask his son.

Rich took his father's post in 1984. By that time, he was well-equipped to take the reins. According to his sister, Ellen

(Myers) Parmenteri, Rich "grew up listening to games on the radio," she says. "You could see how he picked up the announcing by helping and observing Dad." Rich's first assignment was calling an alumni football game.

Dick is now the one assisting his son on a variety of occasions at Wilkes in what he describes "a reversal of roles," performing some of the tasks he used to assign to Rich.

Although the pair has only announced together once, at a Wilkes game at the former Lackawanna County Stadium, now PNC Field, they share countless memories from their time in the press box. Both remember the Colonels' undefeated seasons including the Golden Horde years under coach Rollie Schmidt.

Some defeats—while best forgotten—also remain in their memories.

"Three years ago we lost to Rowan on a fumble when we had the game," Rich recalls. "Those are the toughest moments."

The strong family connection to Wilkes extends beyond the announcing booth. Ten family members attended the University. Dick met his wife, Lois (Tremayne) Myers '57, when they were students, along with her cousins William '57 and the late Ronald Tremayne '58. Both Tremaynes served on the University's Board of Trustees. Dick's brother Thomas is a graduate of the class of 1958 and his sister Barbara also attended Wilkes for a time. His brother-in-law James Speicher graduated in 1956.

The legacy continues into Rich's generation: His sister, Ellen, will soon graduate from Wilkes and her husband, Dale Parmenteri '89, and her brother-in-law David Parmenteri '79 provide other Wilkes connections. The third generation of this alumni family, Dale and Ellen's son, Matthew Parmenteri, is a Wilkes freshman.

Rich Myers receives a phone call at the end of every year, just as his father did, asking if he'd be interested in coming back. At the completion of this past season, he found himself tied with his father for a record 25 seasons as the voice at Ralston Field. That milestone gives him another reason to want to return next year.

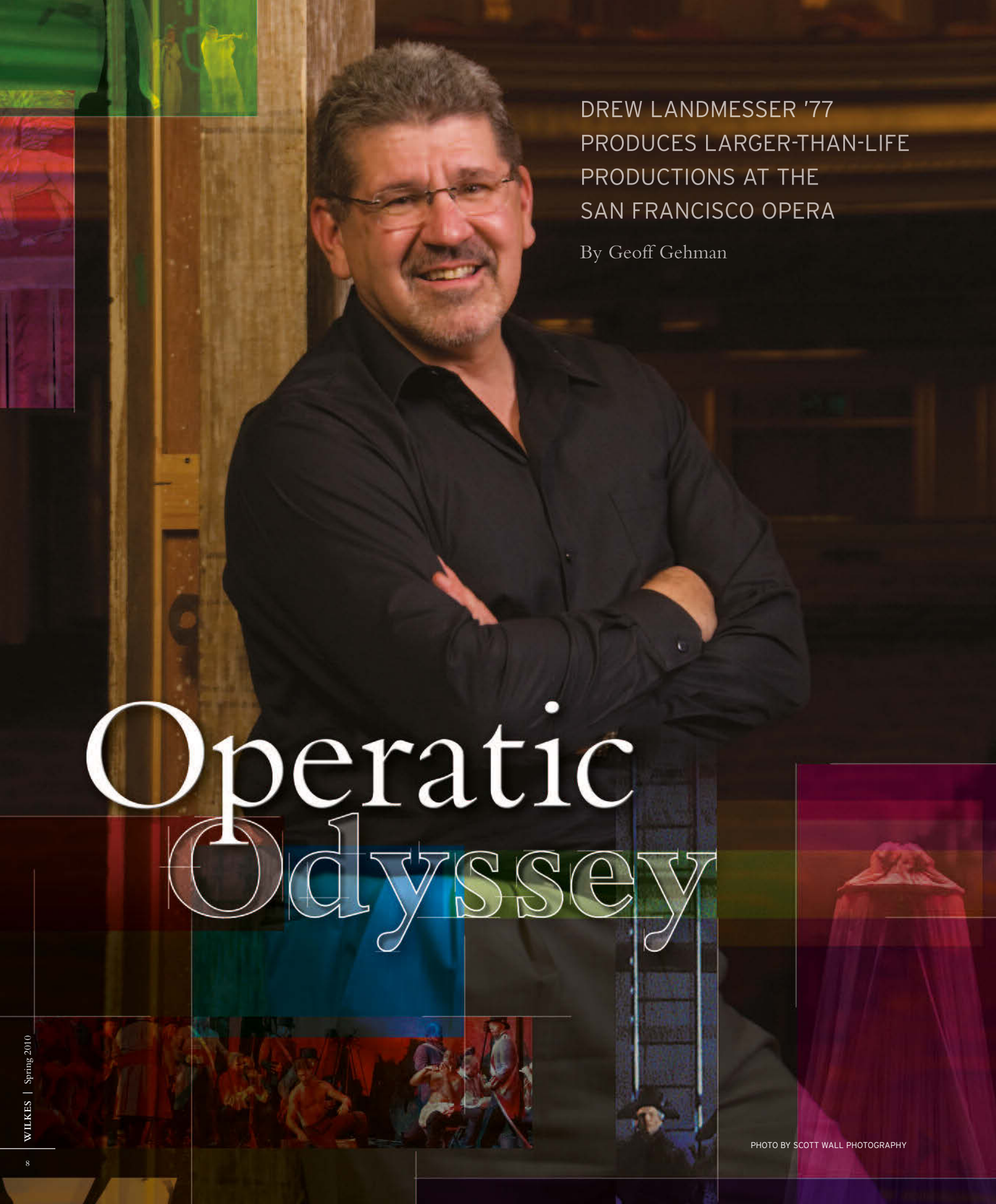
"I will break my father's record," he says. "It will really be neat."

“When I got the call asking if I'd like to return, I told [John Reese] he should GIVE one of his STUDENTS A CHANCE: a chance like I had.”

– Dick Myers Sr. '60



Dick Myers '60 and Rich Myers Jr. '84 marked a collective 50 years in the announcing booth at Ralston Field in fall 2009. PHOTO BY MICHAEL P. TOUEY



DREW LANDMESSER '77  
PRODUCES LARGER-THAN-LIFE  
PRODUCTIONS AT THE  
SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

By Geoff Gehman

# Operatic Odyssey

**D**REW LANDMESSER '77 IS SUPERVISING a simulcast of “Il Trovatore” at a major-league baseball stadium, a venue never envisioned by Verdi. The San Francisco Opera’s director of production is monitoring 12 cameras—eight of them robotic—that feed a live performance from the War Memorial Opera House, the company’s home, to the 103-foot-wide scoreboard at AT&T Park, home of the San Francisco Giants. He relishes the rollicking scene of more than 27,000 listeners eating garlic fries, cheering giant singers and turning a concert into a happening.

Managing ballpark broadcasts is one of Landmesser’s many roles as chief go-to guy for the country’s second-largest opera company. Props and sets, costumes and wigs, podcasts and union contracts—they’re all part of the third act of a 30-year career devoted to producing and popularizing expensive, exceptional entertainment. In San Francisco, Chicago and Houston, Landmesser has shepherded landmark new operas, renovated and built opera houses and made opera more democratic and—well—operatic.

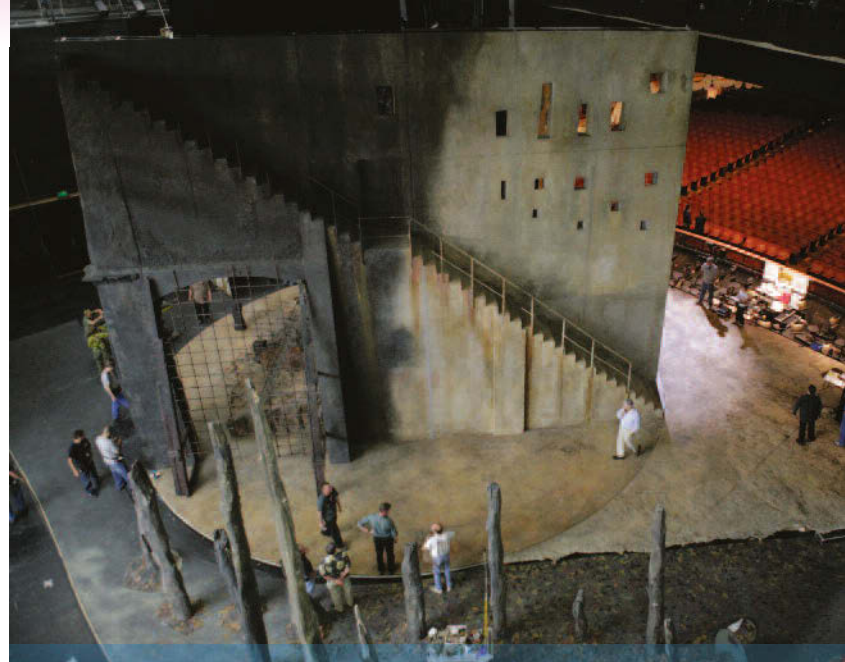
Landmesser was a freshman at Wilkes when he began his opera odyssey. The Wilkes-Barre native, the son of an electrician and a housewife and mother of six, quickly fell under the spell of theater professor and designer Klaus Holm, the son of renowned choreographer Hanya Holm. Impressed by Holm’s charisma and common sense, Landmesser switched majors from music to theater in his third week of school.

The next summer he worked with Holm at the Colorado Opera Festival. Already a classical music fan, Landmesser had never seen an opera until he built the scenery for Mozart’s “Cosi Fan Tutte” and Bizet’s “Carmen.” He had out-of-body experiences absorbing the soaring singers, stirring instrumentalists and levitating melodies. “It was phenomenal,” he says. “All my senses were wound up and going full time. I remember thinking: ‘How can you possibly beat this?’ Well, I learned you beat this by the next night being completely different. After all these years I’m still as affected by my 500th ‘Bohème’ as my first.”

Holm gave Landmesser three golden rules. No. 1: Keep It Simple Stupid, better known as KISS. “The perversity of opera is it’s prone to being too complex,” says Landmesser. “A more simple, more pure statement is often way more effective.”

No. 2: Precision is next to godliness. “Detail is the ultimate victor,” says Landmesser. “It’s what makes theater entertaining, exciting and enlightening no matter at what scale, whether it’s grand opera or a play at Wilkes with a college staff and kids who just walked in that week.”

No. 3: Cherish your family as much as you cherish your work. “I never forgot how devoted Klaus was to his three young daughters,” says Landmesser. “This job can suck up your life and drain you of it. There are so many times when you never want



Before and after: Above, behind the scenes during pre-production work supervised by Drew Landmesser '77 on the set of Verdi's *Il Trovatore*. Below, the same set is shown during a performance. PHOTOS BY CORY WEAVER/COURTESY OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA.



to leave the theater. The reality is that theater is temporary. But life is permanent.”

In 1980 Landmesser began testing Holm’s advice at the Houston Grand Opera, his first big gig. Assisting David Gockley, the company’s visionary general director, he introduced computerized projected English translations, or supertitles, and a new work in English inspired by former President Richard Nixon’s groundbreaking trip to China. He was a key member of the team that opened a \$72 million theater that officially transformed an oil-and-cattle town into a classical music capital.

“David managed to get money from virtually everybody for virtually everything,” says Landmesser of Gockley. “He could sell oil to a Texas oilman. He’s a snake-oil salesman, and I mean that as a compliment.”



Above left: Landmesser directed construction of the set for *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, a world premiere opera by Stewart Wallace and Amy Tan which San Francisco Opera created last season. PHOTO COURTESY OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA. Right: A scene from Act I of *The Bonesetter's Daughter* is dramatically lit in performance. PHOTO BY TERRENCE MCCARTHY/COURTESY OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Gockley returns the compliment. “Drew has a gift for working with major directors and designers and massaging them into confining or adjusting their ideas to our space and production capabilities,” says Gockley, currently the San Francisco Opera’s general director. “He is not pounding on the table. He works quietly, incrementally, patiently—so that he can be influential but not prominent.”

“It’s really a completely DIFFERENT STORY when you can see the incredible passion in the eyes of singers...You can see them getting ready to struggle; you can see them SWEAT and SPIT.”

Landmesser’s seven years in Houston were personally rewarding too. He coordinated the world premiere of “A Quiet Place,” co-written by childhood hero Leonard Bernstein. He met his first wife, mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer, in a traveling production of “La Bohème.” Together they had a son, Benjamin, now an actor in training. During another “Bohème” he bonded with renowned director-designer Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, his second mentor.

Like Holm, Ponnelle was remarkably sensitive to music, acting and communication. “Unlike a lot of opera directors, Jean-Pierre respected the music outright,” says Landmesser. “He was one of those truly wonderful people who directed from the score rather than the libretto. He was almost a clown in demonstrating to singers, in mimicking their actions. Yes, he was crazy. But he was crazy good.”

In 1987 Landmesser moved to the Lyric Opera of Chicago partly to collaborate more often with Ponnelle, a regular director with the Windy City company. He was devastated the next year

when his friend died after falling into an orchestra pit. Carrying on without his friend, Landmesser specialized in titanic, opera-sized projects. He managed a \$100 million renovation of the company’s home, an Art Deco/Art Nouveau treasure with more seats than any U.S. opera house other than the Met. He shepherded an acrobatic production of “The Ring of the Nibelung,” Wagner’s four-opera, 15-hour cycle, that featured trampolines and bungee cords.

In Chicago he began taking real vacations instead of vacations spent seeking precious time with Mentzer, who had become an international star and toured constantly. He met his second spouse, Fawn Ring, a public-television producer, and the couple travels for work and fun. In Australia, they went diving off the Great Barrier Reef, one of the world’s natural wonders, and took a 7 a.m. tour of the Sydney Opera House, one of the world’s architectural wonders.

Landmesser joined the San Francisco Opera in 2006 at the request of Gockley, the company’s new artistic head and his old boss. Over three years they’ve launched a series of technological wonders aimed at increasing audiences and reducing a deficit. In 2007 the company offered a free simulcast of Saint-Saens’ “Samson and Delilah” at a baseball stadium, a twist on the traditional venues of theater and park. Nearly 15,000 spectators at AT&T Park toasted the tragedy with hot dogs, hot-fudge sundaes and signs saying “Go, Samson!” and “Yeah, Delilah!”

The live pictures came from the opera house, courtesy of the first high-definition video production system installed at a U.S. opera house. The 12 cameras, hidden in walls and ceiling, provide the sort of startlingly clear, flexible images—close-up, panoramic, split screen—seen in movies. They’re particularly beneficial to patrons in the War Memorial’s upper balcony, who sit hundreds of feet from the stage. Tiny performing dolls become real people thanks to a pair of drop-down, 11-foot-wide screens.

“It’s really a completely different story when you can see the incredible passion in the eyes of singers,” says Landmesser. “You can see them getting ready to struggle; you can see them sweat and spit.”

The video setup makes a larger-than-life medium larger and smaller. “What we’re doing is imitating popular entertainment, fulfilling rock ‘n’ roll expectations, trying to capture the magic of TV,” he says. “The magic has to be transformable or we’re working in this historic arcane mode.” A wry guy, he adds: “In the theater and at the ballpark we do everything the scoreboards do—except replay and stats.”

Landmesser and Gockley are expanding their glory days in Houston by presenting a host of world premieres with local angles. In 2008 the company christened “The Bonesetter’s Daughter,” based on Bay Area resident Amy Tan’s 2001 novel about three generations of Asian women, including a levitating ghost named Precious Auntie. Landmesser recalls the production’s birth as pretty painful. The production budget was cut from \$3.9 million to \$1 million, the number of aerialists from 33 to 11.

Nevertheless, Landmesser was excited watching spectators thrill to Chinese acrobats whose moves were choreographed by Madonna’s stunt double. “I love that I get to sit in my [production] house and I get to see that first reaction by an audience to what we’ve been working on for three to four years,” he says. “When they are as taken by it, as moved by it, as you are, that’s great. That’s a life lesson you can use. You pay for a lesson like that.”

For Landmesser, front-of-house excitement compensates for

back-of-house pressures. As the company’s Swiss Army knife-negotiator, he tries to broker peace treaties with dreamy designers, diva directors and demanding unions. “I’ve been blessed by the chance to work with wonderful pros who understand their role,” he says. “We all understand that you do this as a team, or you don’t do this at all. One of the great gifts that theater gives you is that you sweat with, and cry with, and lose sleep with people who get to be good friends.”

Maybe that’s why he likes to roam the upper balcony of a sold-out War Memorial and observe listeners lying on the floor, hands crossed over chests, as if they’re dying for the Rapture. Maybe that’s why he cries every time the audience discovers that *Madame Butterfly* has a child.

“When that little boy comes out and you realize why she’s led her life the way she has, why she’s waited so long for that dolt Pinkerton [a U.S. Navy lieutenant who is *Butterfly*’s husband and the child’s father]—I just can’t handle it,” says Landmesser. “Maybe it’s because I have a son. Maybe it’s because I’m just human. I’m choking up now.”

“What can I say?” says Landmesser. “I’ve fallen into the best little niche in the world.”

*Geoff Gehman, a former arts writer for The Morning Call in Allentown, thinks there’s nothing grander than opera when it’s clicking on all cylinders.*

A scene from the 2001-2002 season production of Benjamin Britten’s *Billy Budd* was supervised by Landmesser during his tenure at Lyric Opera of Chicago. PHOTO BY ROBERT KUSEL/COURTESY OF LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO.

Barely, sir...

**Drew Landmesser, Production Director,  
San Francisco Opera**

**B.A., Theater/English, Wilkes 1977**

**Career:** Has served as director of production for three of the major opera companies in the United States: Houston Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago and San Francisco Opera.

**Notable:** Supervised installation of the first high-definition video production system at a U.S. opera house at the San Francisco Opera

**Favorite Wilkes Place:** The theater at the Darte Center. “I spent an obscene amount of time in the theater either backstage or in the green room. The theater was my hobby, my course of study, and—then and now—my mistress.”

**Continuing contribution:** Supports the Klaus Holm scholarship for theater students at Wilkes.



# Class Act

BONNEE BREESE '93 IS AN AWARD-WINNING TEACHER IN PHILADELPHIA

By Rachel Strayer



FOR VETERAN TEACHER BONNEE BREESE '93, TEACHING MAY INVOLVE THE USUAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND SAT PREP BUT ALSO THE OCCASIONAL ROAD TRIP. BREESE, AN ENGLISH TEACHER AT OVERBROOK HIGH SCHOOL, PHILADELPHIA, DROVE FORMER STUDENT ANTHONY THOMAS TO CAMPUS IN AUGUST 2009 FOR HIS FIRST SEMESTER AT WILKES UNIVERSITY.

Opposite Page: Bonnee Breese gives some one-on-one feedback to freshman Christopher Wilson.

Above, clockwise from top left: Bonnee Breese gets a warm greeting from senior Marsalis Chism, at a Scholars Academy lunch. Breese leads the academy, in which students set college as a goal. Top right, photos of her students at prom and graduation grace one of Breese's bulletin boards. Bottom right, sophomore Dejuene Height of the Scholars Academy gets a shout-out from Breese. Bottom center, the award-winning teacher strolls the halls between classes. Bottom left, Breese makes an energetic point during class. PHOTOS BY DOUGLAS BENEDICT PHOTOGRAPHY LLC

**T**HOMAS, NOW A FRESHMAN AT HIS FORMER teacher's alma mater, says he might never have gone to college if not for Breese. Only a few weeks before Wilkes' freshman orientation, Breese drove Thomas and another Overbrook student to campus so they could present their transcripts to admissions. "I liked what I saw and Ms. Breese graduated from Wilkes, so I trusted her decision that Wilkes would be a good choice for me," explains Thomas.

Going the extra mile—sometimes literally—is typical for Breese, and her commitment has not gone unnoticed. In 2008 she was recognized with the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching, the first time the award had ever been given to high school teachers. She also was honored as one of only 10 teachers chosen to attend a town hall meeting at the White House with President Barack Obama in March 2009.

Mentoring has played an important role in Breese's life going back to her elementary school days. After almost 30 years, she still keeps in contact with Naomi Johnson-Booker, her teacher in the third and fourth grades. "She was such a motivating force in my life," Breese says.

As an undergraduate communications major at Wilkes, Breese also found inspiration in communication studies professor Bradford Kinney's class. "Bonnee was the kind of student [we] always hope we will get to instruct, but rarely do," says Kinney. "She made my job more challenging and rewarding."

Teaching was not her first career choice. The Secane, Pa., resident began work as a freelance writer before spending three years as a youth development aide at North Central Secure

Treatment Unit in Danville, Pa., and another four years teaching adult basic education and creative writing for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections at Muncy and Graterford prisons. While working at the prisons, she also was a substitute teacher at Williamsport Area High School, requiring her to sometimes juggle three jobs at once. She decided to turn her attention to full-time high school teaching.

The young teacher made an impression on 77-year-old Philadelphia native Mary Silverstein, who coached second- and third-year teachers, including Breese, for Gear-Up, a federal college readiness program. "Bonnee was willing to try new things, caught on quickly, took initiative, and had few management problems," says Silverstein. Silverstein also is a field supervisor for student teachers in urban secondary schools. When it came time for her to recommend classroom mentors at Overbrook, Breese was at the top of her list. "It is very gratifying," says Silverstein. "I have watched her career soar with great pleasure."

Breese never expected her career path to lead her to the White House. She

“ I had to tell myself to breathe, **BREATHE**, breathe... [It was] **LIFE-CHANGING**, heart-stopping, and really inspiring as well. ”



Bonnee Breese '93 asks a question during a March 2009 town hall meeting at the White House with President Barack Obama.  
PHOTO BY RON EDMONDS/AP PHOTO





Left: Breese dismisses the senior honors English class.

Below: Breese calls on a student with an encouraging smile.  
PHOTOS BY DOUGLAS BENEDICT PHOTOGRAPHY, LLC



was stunned when she was chosen to attend President Obama's first online town hall meeting. When the president called on her to ask a question, she was floored. "I had to tell myself to breathe, breathe, breathe," says Breese. "[It was] life-changing, heart-stopping, and really inspiring, as well."

Breese's students cheered when Obama said hello to Overbrook students watching at the school before answering their teacher's question.

Breese was not the only one affected by the encounter. "This was a very emotional moment for me," says Breese's daughter, Bridgette, a student at North Carolina Central University. "To have a black president and to see my mother involved in the progression that African Americans are making...I will never forget it."

For Breese, the true rewards of teaching are not found in recognition, but in helping her students. She used some of the \$3,500 Lindback Award honorarium to play fairy godmother, helping three students attend prom. She covered most prom expenses, from dresses to hair appointments. One student, a senior, was not allowed to attend until Breese reassured his mother.

"Oh, yes, he was voted Prom King for the evening," says Breese. "A Cinderella male story this is!"

Breese received her master's degree in education from Chestnut Hill College. A proponent of life-long learning, she is researching doctoral programs. She is also a fellow at Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania, where she creates research-based high school curriculum units for publication on the Internet.

Despite the accolades, Breese insists that teaching is simply a part of who she is. "I feel as if I am not going to work each day [because] I love what I do," she explains. "Teaching is in my blood." Her students agree.

"Every time I speak with her, I learn something new...she is still my teacher," says Wilkes freshman Thomas. "Words couldn't explain how thankful I am to have Ms. Breese as a mentor but, most importantly, as a friend."

*Mary Ellen Alu, '77 is a freelance writer, editor and writing instructor. She previously worked in the newspaper industry as an editor and reporter.*

**Bonnee L. Breese, Secane, Pa.**

B.A., Communications, Wilkes 1993

M.A., Elementary Education, Chestnut Hill College, 2007

**Career:** English teacher at Overbrook High School in Philadelphia.

**Notable:** Received the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching awarded by the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation in 2008 and was one of only 10 teachers asked to attend President Obama's first online town hall meeting in 2009.

**Favorite Wilkes Place:** *The Beacon* office on the second floor of Hollenback Hall. Breese was the first black editor-in-chief of *The Beacon*. "I would catch catnaps there on the nights we put the paper to bed. Then, I would have to drive it over to Pittston for printing. Crazy hours I kept then."

**Favorite Wilkes Memory:** Eating dinner at the home of then-Wilkes president Christopher Breiseth with author and poet Amiri Baraka. "The opportunity made me bubble. He is so prolific and in tune with his words, and his reason for his words. I use lots of Baraka's work in the curriculum units I write."

# Starfires Glow Again



**AFTER THREE DECADES, WILKES ALUMNI  
REUNITE TO PLAY DANCE MUSIC**

By Helen Kaiser

**H**EARING A SNATCH OF AN OLD SONG can take you back a few decades to the precious years of your youth. Three Wilkes alumni of the mid-1960s can go one better: They still *play* the songs—together, as the Starfires.

Robert Gardner and Eddie Day Pashinski, both '67, and Johnny B. Hall '65 attended Wilkes College during the rock 'n' roll era. With the TV classic *American Bandstand* inspiring thousands of teenagers across the country, dance bands were all the rage. Gardner, Pashinski and Hall joined four friends to create a band that still is part of northeast Pennsylvania memories.

The Starfires were summertime fixtures at Hanson's

Amusement Park at Harvey's Lake, drawing several hundred fans every weekend. During the off-season they played at the Starfire Ballroom in Wilkes-Barre. Often they'd share the stage with notable artists like Chubby Checker, Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons, the Shangri-Las and others.

The group made several recordings, and their song "You've Done Me Wrong" scored in the Top 10 on local record charts.

Drummer Richard "R. Jay" Gumbravich, along with bass player Roger "Griff" Griffith, is credited with founding the group. Other regulars included Charles McCuen, the consummate "tough guy" vocalist with lots of stage presence, and Steve Aquilina, the newest band member, on keyboards.

After graduating, the friends went their separate ways.

Pashinski remained the most involved in music, playing in bands and teaching music for 38 years at Greater Nanticoke Area School District.

“I was offered a job to go on the road with Gary U.S. Bonds, but my father offered a ‘second opinion,’ ” recalls saxophone player Gardner, who is now assistant professor of education at Wilkes University. He earned post-graduate degrees in education and was a teacher and administrator at Northwest Area School District in Luzerne County for 36 years.

Hall, who graduated with a liberal arts degree, worked for 34 years as a caseworker and program advocate for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. He continued his interest in music, sometimes playing along with YouTube.

“I think we all missed performing—and we all missed playing together,” says Hall, a resident of Hummelstown, Pa.

In 2002, serendipity would help to reunite the musicians.

During a rainy summer afternoon, Starfires’ co-founder Griffith—by then an ordained Presbyterian minister—was driving near Harvey’s Lake and was overwhelmed by nostalgia. He turned toward the now-defunct Hanson’s Amusement Park to take a look at the old dance hall.

Griffith was approached by two strangers—reporters researching a story about defunct amusement parks. They asked Griffith if he knew anything about Hanson’s Park.

He smiled, saying, “I know what it used to be in its heyday!”

After they interviewed him, he contacted the band members he knew were still in the area to ask if they’d like to play again. Three of them wound up appearing later that summer at a benefit performance for the fire company at Harvey’s Lake.

It was, in ‘60s terminology, “a blast!” With the goal of reuniting all the Starfires, the Wilkes-Barre area musicians reached out to the others—except Hall, whom they couldn’t locate.

In yet another remarkable coincidence—he calls it his mother’s “last gift” to him—Hall traveled back to the Wyoming Valley for his mother’s memorial service. He mentioned to the presiding minister that he’d grown up in the area and played in a rock group.

The minister, a friend and colleague of Griffith, asked Hall the name of the group. When Hall answered “the Starfires,” the minister informed him that their mutual friend wanted to reunite the group.

Since then, the Starfires have been getting together several times a year to rehearse and perform.

Opposite: The Starfires performed with stars of the ‘60s. Pictured from left are Eddie Day Pashinski ‘67; Chubby Checker, who made “The Twist” famous; Roger Griffith; Bob Gardner ‘67, Richard Rodiger; and Richard Grumbavich.

PHOTO COURTESY ROBERT GARDNER

Right: The Starfires today are front, Eddie Day Pashinski ‘67 and Charles McCuen and back row, from left, John Hall ‘65, Steve Aquilina, Bob Gardner ‘67, Richard Grumbavich and Roger Griffith.

PHOTO GUY CALI ASSOC. ©2007

“We’re all different now. We’ve had interesting careers in life, but there’s still a love for the era that was *our* era. We enjoy performing essentially the same music we did before,” Gardner says.

“Before, when we were in our early 20s, we thought we were hot stuff,” Hall says. “It was about being cool and getting the girl. Now it’s about the music. We’re even more focused on the songs now.”

Pashinski, now a Pennsylvania representative for the Wilkes-Barre area’s 121st District, reflects on the audience regulars who came to see the Starfires during their heyday. “That was the thing to do back then,” he says.

People today still love that genre of music—and some of them are now bringing the next generation to see the Starfires.

Pashinski says, “To be able to come back and relive those days is really special.”

More on the Web: More information and music clips can be found at [www.starfiresforever.com](http://www.starfiresforever.com).



Upcoming gigs for the Starfires include the Potentate’s Ball at the Irem Temple Country Club, Dallas, Pa. on July 24, a benefit for Harvey’s Lake Fire Co. at the Irem Temple Country Club in Dallas on July 31, and a Generation to Generation Dance at the Genetti Ballroom in Wilkes-Barre on Sept. 26.

Alumni can catch up with the band at Wilkes Homecoming on Friday, Oct. 1, 2010.



“ I was offered a job to go ON THE ROAD with Gary U.S. Bonds, but my father offered a ‘SECOND OPINION.’ ”

– Robert Gardner ‘67

# PUZZLING Prognosis

RISING INCIDENCE OF AUTISM  
CHALLENGES PARENTS,  
SIBLINGS AND TEACHERS

By Mary Ellen Alu '77



David's Coffee Shop, which provides jobs for autistic youth, has been a family project for the Joseph family, pictured from left, mother Suzanne, father John Joseph Sr., Linda Joseph MS '05, John Joseph II '97, MBA '06, Megan (Joseph Yelland) '02 and David Joseph. Matt Joseph is not pictured. PHOTO BY EARL & SEDOR

JOHN JOSEPH '97, MBA '06 WAS ON HIS WAY HOME FROM JUNIOR HIGH BASKETBALL PRACTICE WHEN HIS FATHER BROKE THE NEWS ABOUT HIS YOUNGEST BROTHER, DAVID. DAVID, JUST 3 ½ YEARS OLD, HAD BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM. "YOUR FIRST REACTION IS, 'WHAT'S THAT?' " SAYS JOSEPH. "YOU DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT THEN."

**T**HAT WAS 1987, WHEN THE INCIDENCE RATE for autism was 15 in 10,000 children. Joseph's mother, Suzanne, bought books on autism, and family members took turns reading them, trying to understand the disorder affecting David's speech and development.

"I knew he was different," says sister Megan (Joseph) Yelland '02, who was 9 when David was diagnosed. "And he would learn things differently."

Today more families are learning what it means to have an autistic child. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in every 150 children in the United States has autism disorders, a group of developmental disabilities that can cause significant difficulties in communication and social behaviors. This dramatic increase has raised public awareness of the disorders and prompted Wilkes to start an autism endorsement program in the graduate education department. The 12-credit program addresses a need among educators and other professionals for techniques needed to work with children diagnosed with conditions on the autism spectrum.

"It's almost pandemic now," says Carl Charnetski, Wilkes psychology professor and behavior specialist consultant for Children's Service Center of Wyoming Valley. The increase is partly due to better diagnosis, he says, but autism remains "a real enigma."

Most scientists agree that genes are a risk factor, according to the CDC. Other factors could be environmental or biological.

The best guess is that autism has multiple causes, not one, Charnetski says. The most promising hypothesis is that a child's immune system is compromised early, possibly prenatally. Bacteria and viruses make their way to the brain and create the problems associated with the diagnosis, he says.

Once considered a severe emotional disorder, autism is now more broadly defined as a spectrum of disorders, says Carol Bubblo, educational consultant at Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18, and an adjunct professor in Wilkes' autism endorsement program. Each child is affected differently, from mildly to severely. Early intervention is key in improving development.

When a child is diagnosed, it affects teachers as well as families. "Kids are showing up in classrooms all over the place," says Bubblo. Wilkes education faculty developed the autism endorsement program in 2009 to help provide teachers with skills and strategies for working with autistic students.

The challenge is that no two kids are alike, says Suzanne Joseph, who has been an advocate for her son, David. "Teachers have to think on their feet," she says. "[The students] don't come with a manual."

People who have a disorder handle information in their brain differently than others. Those with classic autism have significant delays, while those with Asperger Syndrome or Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified (PPD-NOS)

have milder symptoms. No medical test determines a disorder; doctors examine behavior. Problems can include impulsive behavior, cognitive difficulties or speech delays.

Although autism has no cure, it is treatable. Charnetski says many can lead functional adult lives. He emphasizes applied behavior analysis, the science of applying behavioral principles to teach adaptive behavior. For example, if people provide a positive consequence to a behavior, they will increase the likelihood of that behavior.

Faced with the challenge of raising an autistic child, Suzanne Joseph and her husband pushed for services for their son. David's siblings helped with the therapy: hiding a toy for David to find in sand, or running a feather on his arms to help him get used to different textures. They worked on his speech too.

One day Yelland sang a favorite childhood song to him: "*If you're happy and you know it, say...Megan.*" He did! She repeated the line again and again, substituting other family names as the song went on.

Matt Joseph, the brother closest in age to David and now a medical student, shared a room with him until high school and provided the support of a close-in-age sibling. Another sister, Linda Joseph MS '05, took David for walks with her friends. He would pause at a particular church and trace the letters engraved in stone. One momentous day, he said the letters as he traced them. Those with autism are teachable, says Linda Joseph. "You just have to find out how."

Bubblo says autistic students are visual learners and rule-bound. Parent input is important. "Who knows that kid better than them?" she says.

As David got older, transitional services to help him in the workforce were scarce, Suzanne Joseph says. And when he finished in the educational system, he no longer had anywhere to go.

The Josephs had a vision for a new venture. They formed the non-profit Thru the Cracks Inc. and in 2007 opened David's Coffee Shop at 374 New Market St. about a mile from the Wilkes campus. David, now 24, cut the ribbon to open the shop. Students with autism disorders can get training there; they fill coffee bins, sweep the floor and wipe tables. "These kids are just amazing," Suzanne Joseph says. "It's a magical place."

I knew he was  
**DIFFERENT...**  
And he would  
learn things  
differently.

– Megan (Joseph) Yelland '02

#### MORE ON THE WEB

Learn more about autism:

[www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html)

[www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)

[www.researchautism.org](http://www.researchautism.org)



## Alumni Association Board Begins Strategic Planning

The Alumni Association Board of Directors completed the initial stages of a strategic planning process at their meeting in December.

At the meeting, 21 board members dedicated three hours to the creation of four overarching strategies. Each of the board's nine committees will be guided by these goals as they plan programs, events and initiatives to serve Wilkes' 30,000 alumni over the next five years. To read more, go to [www.wilkes.edu/alumni](http://www.wilkes.edu/alumni).

## Announcing the Nursing Reunion!

Mark your calendar now for the nursing reunion at Homecoming 2010. All alumni of the nursing program are invited to join the festivities, which will include social events, special receptions and a continuing education credit. Interested in helping to plan this reunion? Contact [alumni@wilkes.edu](mailto:alumni@wilkes.edu).

**Homecoming Hint:** Register early and receive a \$5 discount on ticket prices! Keep an eye out for more information on [www.wilkes.edu/alumni](http://www.wilkes.edu/alumni).



## Mentoring Program Holds First Luncheon

Student mentees had a chance to meet their alumni mentors during the mentor luncheon held on Friday, Dec. 11. The participants were part of a pilot program launched in fall 2009 pairing alumni mentors with students.

The mentoring committee of the Alumni Association is currently working with students and alumni of the communications studies and psychology departments. More majors will be joining the mentoring program soon.

Check [www.wilkes.edu/alumni](http://www.wilkes.edu/alumni) for updates. If you are interested in mentoring a current student, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 570-408-7787 or at [alumni@wilkes.edu](mailto:alumni@wilkes.edu).

More than 40 students and alumni mentors listen as Allyn Jones '60 gives an update on the Alumni Association's mentoring program.

## Wilkes on the Road

As *Wilkes* magazine went to press, alumni were getting together at social and professional networking events across the country. In January, alumni gathered in downtown Harrisburg, Pa., for a reception, as well as in Washington D.C. for a tour of the Capitol Building. In February and March, Wilkes was to travel coast to coast with events in San Francisco and Los Angeles, Calif. as well as in Florida, with events in Naples and The Villages. Alumni in northeastern Pennsylvania were to get together for a workshop on the professional uses of

popular social media programs such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

The events continue with a gathering in the Pittsburgh, Pa., area on Thursday, March 25. Alumni and parents will join Michael Speziale '78, Dean of the College of Graduate Education & Professional Studies at Wilkes, at SiBA Cucina, a Tuscan-inspired bistro.

Charleston, S.C. alumni are meeting on April 17. An event is also being planned in Denver on April 10.

Interested in planning a regional event in your area or want to check out photos of the events? Check The Colonel Connection for the latest updates at [www.wilkes.edu/alumni](http://www.wilkes.edu/alumni).



### MORE ON THE WEB

You can stay up to date with the latest Wilkes and alumni news by becoming a fan of the Wilkes Alumni Association's **Facebook** page or following us on **Twitter** ([twitter.com/wilkesalumni](https://twitter.com/wilkesalumni)).



Alumni in the Charleston, S.C. area gathered in October for a reception. Pictured back, left to right are: President Tim Gilmour, Dr. Bob Byrne '72, Bill Stinger '68, Rick Simonson '69, Phil Besler '76, Mike Wood and Ted Yeager '72. Front row, left to right, are: Carolann Gusgekofski Besler '72, Nancy Wanczyk Stinger '69, Susan Ryan Simonson '70.

The next gathering in the Charleston area is on April 17. Check [www.wilkes.edu/alumni](http://www.wilkes.edu/alumni) for more information on this event.



Christine Baksi '98, Andrew Eckert '07, Jake McCurdy '04, M'07, Laurie Agresti '07, Tim Mirra '07, Jennifer Snyder '07 and Tim Wagman '05 share a drink and some memories at Wilkes' alumni gathering in downtown Harrisburg. Over 20 alumni, as well as graduate faculty and staff, enjoyed an evening of networking and great conversation at Carley's Piano Bar.

More events are being planned in the Harrisburg area, so check out [www.wilkes.edu/alumni](http://www.wilkes.edu/alumni) for more information.

**1964**

**Richard Probert** is an adjunct professor of entrepreneurship and emerging enterprises at the Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University. A former music instructor at Wilkes from 1968 to 1973, he serves as music director for the Sackets Harbor Vocal Arts Ensemble. Probert lives in Sackets Harbor, N.Y., with his wife,

Carmelita Britton, a civilian physician with the U.S. Department of Defense.

**1973**

**Homer E. (Ned) Graham** is the vice president of business development at United Rentals Inc. He will lead the development of strategies and process improvements related to business expansion.

**1976**

**Gregg P. Collier** and his wife, Beth, recently celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary by touring Sweden. He is employed by Cadbury USA LLC, Parsippany, N.J. They reside in Macungie, Pa.

**1977**

**Andrew B. Durako** is the executive director of Little Flower Manor and St. Therese

Residence of the Diocese of Scranton in Wilkes-Barre. Durako manages the operations of the nursing and assisted-living facilities, which provide long-term care solutions for the elderly.

**1978**

**James D. Siberski** is an assistant professor and coordinator of gerontology education at Misericordia

## Marge Bart MBA '79 Turns Home into Safe Haven

Marge Bart MBA '79 says she wanted to work with animals for as long as she can remember. Ten years ago, the former Wilkes-Barre native turned her Dallas, Pa., home into a safe haven for unwanted animals. In 2006, it became the non-profit Blue Chip Farm Animal Refuge.

Bart began Blue Chip with her neighbor, Tanya Stankus, a registered nurse and the widow of Wilkes alumnus Joe Stankus '68. The farm is located on 25 acres and includes a horse barn, pig house and a cottage that houses cats. In addition to their passion for rescuing animals in need, the two women advocate against animal euthanasia.

"Blue Chip Farms does not euthanize animals as a solution for population control," reads their Web site. "We believe there is a more humane way to deal with the growing problems of improper pet care and unwanted animals."

As president of Blue Chip, Bart functions mainly as an animal caretaker. On some days, even that can be a challenge. At the age of 30, Bart was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, a debilitating disease that attacks the brain and spinal cord.

"It has changed my life dramatically, especially from a physical standpoint," says Bart.

Because of the disease, Bart, who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in business, was unable to continue her job as production superintendent at CertainTeed Products, a leading manufacturer of building materials in Mountain Top, Pa. She now focuses on her work with Blue



Marge Bart MBA '79 relaxes with two dogs at Blue Chip Farm Animal Refuge. PHOTO COURTESY MARGE BART

Chip, which continues through the generous work of other concerned individuals.

"I could not do this project without the support of my friends and volunteers," Bart says.

A number of improvements are planned for Blue Chip, including an animal hospital, doggie park and kennel, and horse exercise facility. The most significant goal is for it to become a self-sustaining facility so they never have to turn away an animal in need.

"The animals are unconditional love," explains Bart. "They help me maintain a good balance in life." She hopes to return the favor.

For more information on Blue Chip Farms, go to [www.bcfanimalrefuge.org](http://www.bcfanimalrefuge.org).

– By Rachel Strayer



University and was recently certified as a care manager by the National Academy of Certified Care Managers. He also is an adjunct instructor in psychiatry at The Pennsylvania State University and is certified in re-motivation therapy and gerontology instruction.

### 1982

**Kenneth Kalinoski** is president and general partner of 100 Hill Rock LLC, a technology consulting company. He works in technology transfer and commercialization for government, university and corporate customers.

### 1983

**Amy Elias** created The Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, a new international arts society, and hosted its launch conference in Knoxville, Tenn. The conference drew more than 115 speakers from the United States, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, Finland, Japan, China, Switzerland and other countries. Elias is an associate professor of English at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she works with her husband, Jonathan Barnes.

**Andy Mehalshick** served as master of ceremonies for the Luzerne County Community College Foundation Inc.'s 17th Annual Community Outreach Dinner on Nov. 12, 2009. Mehalshick has been reporting news in northeast Pennsylvania for more than 25 years on WBRE-TV. He

resides in Hazleton, Pa., with his wife, Mary, and their daughter, Jacqueline.

### 1984

**Gary Mack** M.S. '99 was named the 2009 Educational Leader of the Year by the Human and Civil Rights Commission of the Pennsylvania State Education Association. Gary is a math teacher at the Wyoming Valley West Middle School in Kingston, Pa., and works with students in both community and school-sponsored programs. Gary was previously awarded PSEA's Intergroup Relations Award for Promoting Leadership.

### 1987

**Christopher J. Brownawell** is the new director of the Farnsworth Art Museum in Rockland, Maine. He is married with three children.

### 1989

**Karen Ryan** joined the team of realtors at the Forty Fort, Pa., office of Prudential, Poggi and Jones. She lives in Forty Fort, Pa.

### 1991

**Dale Nat** and his wife, Valarie, welcomed their first daughter, Piper Raye, on Aug. 10, 2009. Piper joins big brothers, Nickolas, 11, and Tristan, 2. The family resides in Forty Fort, Pa.

**Amy (Schukis) Sheehan** is owner and principal of Sheehan Consulting, which provides compliance consulting services to banks

and credit unions in Connecticut and western Maryland. She lives in Simsbury, Conn., with her husband Jay and their two children, Emma and Braden.

### 1992

**Joseph Frank Budzilek** and Anita Marie Kasteleba were married on Sept. 19, 2009. The bride is employed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as an assistant manager for the wine and spirits stores and is sole proprietor of Shear Imagination Hair Salon in West Wyoming, Pa. The groom is employed by J. Bud Inc. The couple reside in Dupont, Pa.

**David Noyle, MBA '94**, is senior director of sales for Colonial Penn Life Insurance Company in Philadelphia, Pa. He oversees a sales department of 175 members. Last year, his commercial script was selected by Colonial Penn's marketing team for production. The commercial was shot on Noyle's sales floor, starring

two of his sales representatives and celebrity endorser, Alex Trebek. Noyle also has a cameo appearance in the commercial which runs on CBS, TV Land and the Hallmark Channel. Noyle lives in East Norriton, Pa., with his wife Karen and children, Alex, Andrew and Victoria.

### 1993

**Aaron Albert** – see 1995

**Melissa Margis Kapur** and her husband, Rajat, welcomed their first child, a son, John Margis Kapur, on Jan. 12, 2009. Melissa previously was employed as a customer promotions manager for General Mills. She is currently a full-time mother. The family resides in Avon Lake, Ohio.

**Stacy M. (Heck) Smulowitz** is an assistant professor of communications at the University of Scranton. She is president of Smulowitz Communications, Shavertown, Pa.



David Noyle '92, MBA '94, above right, appeared in a commercial for his company, Colonial Penn Life Insurance, with celebrity Alex Trebek. PHOTO COURTESY DAVID NOYLE

**1994**

Laurence Socci is a government affairs consultant and small business owner and has worked as a lawyer representing small businesses before Congress and federal agencies. He lives in Alexandria, Va., with his wife, Amanda, and daughter Margarita.

**1995**

Sabeth (Ryan) Albert and Aaron Albert '93 announce the birth of their son, Miller Ryan Albert, born Aug. 30, 2009. Miller is welcomed by his big sister, Madden. The family resides in Wilton, Conn.

Maj. Devin O. Licklider of the Marine Corps recently received his master's degree from the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif.

**1996**

Justin Fasulo – see 1998.

**1997**

Clayton E. Bubeck is regional vice president of RETTEW, a design firm that provides services in engineering, transportation, environmental consulting, planning and surveying. Bubeck is responsible for overseeing the firm's offices in Schuylkill Haven, Pa., and Bethlehem, Pa., and for leading

overall business development efforts in northeast Pennsylvania and New Jersey. He resides in Wayne Township, Pa.

**1998**

Kerri (Gosling) Fasulo and Justin Fasulo '96 welcomed a baby girl, Nicole Anne, on Sept. 17, 2009.

Christie Lynn Yurko and Daniel Francis Slagus were married on Oct. 10, 2009.

## Handley Sets Course for Lightspeed

For Mike Handley '97, one company's shortcomings became the foundation for his company's success. As vice president and partner for Lightspeed Technologies Inc., based in Wilkes-Barre, he specializes in finding technology solutions overlooked by other companies.

While pursuing a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at Wilkes University, Handley found a job with a local Internet service provider. The job

gave Handley experience, but the company's lack of professional engineering services gave him the desire to find better solutions.

Handley and his co-worker Stephen Cook were employed as network engineers when they saw the need for a company that utilizes convergence—a high-tech term for combining services—to reduce communications costs for their customers. In 1998, when he was 25, Handley and Cook formed Lightspeed Technologies Inc.

"It is hard to explain what Lightspeed does because most people don't see it," admits Handley.

Lightspeed brings together all forms of communications services—such as phone, Internet, and e-mail—into one, easy-to-use network. The company was an innovator in combining services for cost-savings and efficiency. This unification of media saves time and money, something Handley believes customers desire



from the technology of the future.

"We see customers looking for ways to use technology to reduce costs and keep their businesses operational in a time of emergency," Handley says. "You are going to see mobile devices become more integrated into daily business activities allowing employees to be productive from anywhere."

Handley provides guidance to both the sales and engineering teams. He also meets with clients to design a personal networking solution that works for them. "Think of it like building a house and meeting with your architect," he says.

"You tell him what you want and he comes back with a design and cost."

Lightspeed is working with a number of large corporations, including a local company that has several locations across the country, two call centers and over 500 users.

"New technology is always what keeps me going," says Handley. "It is changing constantly and is always bringing new challenges." The relationships in his company help him enjoy what he does. "The engineers act more like a family than coworkers," he says.

Handley is grateful for the guidance of educators like John Gilmer, professor of electrical engineering at Wilkes. "He really challenged me with the projects he came up with," says Handley. "He helped me learn how to think like an engineer."

Handley is married with three children and lives in Dallas, Pa.

– By Rachel Strayer

The bride is employed as a registered nurse at Moses Taylor Hospital, Scranton, Pa. The groom is employed as a machinist at Fastenal, Jessup, Pa. The couple reside in Scranton.

### 1999

**Joseph (J.J.) Fadden** opened Big House Tobacco Outlet, a traditional tobacconist and cigar lounge, in Scranton, Pa.

**Brian Edward Gryboski** and **Stephanie Ann Brown** were married on Sept. 11, 2009. The bride is employed by Cocciardi and Associates, Moosic, Pa., as a public health consultant. The groom is a pharmaceutical sales representative with Endo Pharmaceuticals, Chadds Ford, Pa. They reside in Plains Township, Pa.

**Maj. Deirdre M. Gurry** spoke about her experiences as a female aviator in the Air Force as part of a Veterans Day remembrance in Seguin, Texas. Gurry is an evaluator pilot on the C-17 cargo aircraft with the Defense Contract Management Agency, aircraft integrated maintenance operations, in San Antonio, Texas. She is one of only six women pilots in her unit and flies one of the largest aircraft in the Air Force inventory. She has received the Air Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and the Humanitarian Service Medal.

**James Spagnola** was promoted to veteran affairs director by Luzerne County Commissioners in October 2009. Spagnola is a six-year veteran of the U.S. Navy. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Nuclear Power School and the U.S. Naval Diving and Salvage Training School before serving as a nuclear power plant operator and ship diver onboard the USS Jacksonville, a nuclear-powered submarine.

### 2000

#### Reunion Oct. 1-3

**Ivan Bogan** and his wife, **Danielle**, announce the birth of a daughter, **Sarah June**, on March 18, 2009. The family resides in Wilkes-Barre.

**Anthony DaRe's** project for the Central Columbia School District in Bloomsburg, Pa., was featured on CNN's "The Situation Room" in September 2009. DaRe, agency principal of BSI Corporate Benefits, Southfield, Mich., handled the district's health insurance negotiations. District superintendent **Harry Mathias** credits DaRe and his team with saving the district over \$2 million over the last four years.

### 2001

**Dr. Rob Cooney** – see **Graduate Students 2004**

### 2005

#### Reunion Oct. 1-3

**Bridget McHale** and **Josh Turel** Pharm.D. '07 were married on May 9, 2009. The bride is employed by Wilkes University. The groom is employed by Pharmerica Pharmacy, Wilkes-Barre. The couple reside in Dallas, Pa.

### 2006

**Andrew Amoroso** is at the University of California Davis School of Law. He was named editor-in-chief of the *Law Review*.

### 2007

**Ryan J. Maghamez** – see **Graduate Students 2009**

**Josh Turel** – see 2005

### 2009

**Christine Stanishefski** was hired as an accountant for Jones Kohanski & Co., P.C. She works in the firm's Moosic, Pa., office.

## Graduate Students 1988

**Chadwick E. Tuttle**, MBA, is chief operating officer for the Americas for Clyde Union Pumps. The company is a manufacturer of engineered pumps and has its headquarters in Glasgow, Scotland. Tuttle resides in Victor, N.Y.

**Kevin M. Polifko**, Pharm.D. – see **Graduate Students 2005**

### 2004

**Stephanie Smith Cooney** Pharm.D. '01, and **Dr. Rob Cooney**, announce the birth of their daughter, **Adelay Carol**, on July 22, 2009. Stephanie owns Gatti Pharmacy in Indiana, Pa. Rob works as an emergency medicine physician at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center in Johnstown, Pa.

### 2005

**Vince Hartzell**, Pharm.D., received the Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Companies "Distinguished Young Pharmacist" Award from the Pennsylvania Pharmacists Association during its 2009 annual conference. He participates in the local immunization coalition and serves as a national faculty member for the American Pharmacists Association immunization program.

**Lt. Cmdr. Susan Elizabeth (Pellock) Polifko**, Pharm.D., was promoted from lieutenant to lieutenant commander on July 1, 2009. She is employed with the Food and Drug Administration Office of Regulatory Affairs, Harrisburg, Pa. She completes investigative work in drugs, medical devices, veterinary products, foods and biologics. Her husband, **Kevin M. Polifko**, Pharm.D. '01, is a pharmacy supervisor with CVS. They reside in Harrisburg, Pa.

**2006**

**Jillian (Lipinski) Zarnas**, M.S., married Michael Zarnas on Aug. 1, 2009. The bride teaches English at Emmaus High School in the East Penn School District. The couple reside in the Lehigh Valley with their Maltese, Duke.

**Kevin Zurawski** – see **Graduate Students 2008**

**2008**

**Shannon Nilon**, M.S., and **Kevin Zurawski**, M.S., were married on July 11, 2009. The bride is employed by the Crestwood School District as a high school special education teacher. The groom is employed by the Crestwood School District as a fourth-grade teacher. The couple reside in White Haven, Pa.

**Jillian (Lipinski) Zarnas** – see **Graduate Students 2006**

**2009**

**Kristina J. Burke**, Pharm.D., and **Ryan J. Maghamez** '07 were married on Sept. 19, 2009. The bride is employed by the Robert Packer Hospital, Sayre, Pa. The groom is employed by Global Tungsten and Powders Corp., Towanda, Pa. The couple reside in Towanda.

**In Memoriam****1936**

**Ruth Gibbons Morgan** of Bridgewater, Va., died Aug. 3, 2009. She taught for several years in Wilkes-Barre. She was a member of the Asbury

United Methodist Church, the Mizpah Bible Class, and United Methodist Women. She is survived by several relatives in Pennsylvania.

**1949**

**Ruth S. Davis** of Kingston, Pa., died Sept. 29, 2009. She was employed by the Wilkes-Barre Area School District as a teacher's aide. She was a member of the Green Acres Tuesday Morning Coffee Club and the Green Acres Over the Hill Gang. She is survived by her daughter, Elizabeth Benkoski, Dallas, Pa.; and son, Warren Davis, Haddonfield, N.J.

**Adam Orischak** of Roslyn, Pa., died Oct. 5, 2009. He is survived by his sons, David Orischak and Gregory Orischak; daughter, Karen Schmittinger; sisters, Mary Petro, Helen Zavada, and Elizabeth Serafin; and several grandchildren.

**1950**

**Rev. Gillard Evans** of Clifton Township, Pa., died Oct. 21, 2009. He was a Primitive Methodist minister for over 40 years. He was conference youth director and representative to Christian Endeavor International, as well as a faculty member of the Primitive Methodist School of Theology and district superintendent of the Schuylkill District. He was also a member of George Clay Volunteer Fire Company and Ambulance Association, chaplain and president of the Thornhurst Volunteer Fire and

Rescue Company, and member and chairman of the West Conshohocken Municipal Authority. He is survived by his daughter, Sandra Evans, Bethlehem, Pa.; and two grandchildren.

**Walter Maciejczyk** of Shavertown, Pa., died Nov. 14, 2009. He served in World War II and was a member of the American Legion, Post No. 672, Dallas, Pa. He worked for the Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot as a plastics technologist and the Picatinny Arsenal as a pyrotechnic engineer. He also worked for Air Products and Chemicals. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Germaine Waskie Maciejczyk; several nieces and nephews.

**1953**

**Michael Herman** died Sept. 9, 2009. He was a staff sergeant with the Army from 1946 to 1949. He was an accountant for General Electric in Schenectady, N.Y., for 35 years, until his retirement. He is survived by his wife, Lillian Herman; son, Steven M. Herman, Kalispell, Mont.; daughter, Shirley Ann Abrams, Clifton Park, N.Y.; sisters, Veronica Simonowicz and Elizabeth Suscavage, both of Plymouth, Pa.; two grandchildren and a great-grandson.

**1955**

**Roland E. Featherman** died Sept. 16, 2009. He worked for the Carbon-Monroe-Pike Mental Health/Mental

Retardation Agency for 35 years, serving as director of outpatient services and director of partial hospitalization and adult day care. He also had a private counseling practice for 30 years. He served on many boards of directors, including the Burnley Workshop Board of Directors; East Stroudsburg Area School District Board; the Colonial Intermediate Unit 20; Stroudsburg Lion's Club; Department of Welfare Board; and Office of the Aging Board of Directors, among many others. He co-founded the County Interagency Council and was appointed to the Governor's Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities. He is survived by three daughters, Jill McDonald, Butler, Pa.; Mari Wahlgren, Wind Gap, Pa.; and Barbara Mills, Colorado Springs, Colo.; a brother, Howard Featherman, Mechanicsburg, Pa.; and eight grandchildren.

**1958**

**Ralph Smith** of Dallas, Pa., died Sept. 25, 2009. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II and managed the Crawford Smith Lumber Company with his brother, Gordon Smith. In 1958 he joined Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania and served as president from 1965 until his retirement in 1983. Smith was a vice president of Wyoming Valley United Way, a past president of the Welfare Planning Council, member of the advisory

committee to the Department of Defense on Dependents' Medical Care, and a member of the board of directors and chairman of the board of United Penn Bank. He was also a past president of the Wilkes-Barre Little Theater. He is survived by his sister, Jean Ingling, Alexandria, Pa.; daughter, Susan Smith Lehrmitt, New York, N.Y.; son, S. Kerr (Sandy) Smith, New Orleans, La.; grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews.

### 1959

**Thomas Edward Reese** of Dallas, Pa., died Oct. 18, 2009. He was in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He was the former owner and operator of Glenview Coal Supply, Dallas, Pa.; Dallas Borough tax collector for 32 years; administrative assistant to Sen. Charles D. Lemmond; Fifth District Chairman Luzerne County Republican Party; and former coach and treasurer for Back Mountain Little League. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Martha Mae Hadsall Reese; children, Priscilla Evelyn Aldrow, Harrisonburg, Va.; Shirley Ann Shoff, Concord, N.C.; and Thomas John Reese, Blakeslee, Pa.; sister, Shirley Templin, Dallas; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews.

### 1960

**Eugene Brozowski** of Courtdale, Pa., died Sept. 11, 2009. He served in the U.S. Army. He was employed at Allied Chemical in Morristown, N.J., and Trillium Inc., in Coatesville, Pa. He was a member of St. John the Baptist Church, Larksville, Pa. He is survived by his wife of 19 years, Carolyn; three sons, Eugene Brozowski Jr., Neffs, Pa.; Joseph Brozowski, Allentown, Pa.; and Michael Brozowski, Reno, Nev.; a stepdaughter, Kelly Ney, Freeland, Pa.; and seven grandchildren.

**Julius Yurchak** of Hainesport Township, N.J., died Sept. 22, 2009. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean War. He worked for the Defense Personnel Support Center, Philadelphia, Pa., for 39 years. He is survived by his wife, Myra Stasukevich Yurchak; daughters, Lisa Yurchak, Green Brook, N.J.; Kira Montgomery, Mount Laurel, N.J.; and Nina Yurchak, London, England; brother and sister, Eugene Yurchak and Constance Quadrini, both of Wilkes-Barre; and two grandsons.

### 1962

**Cora Rood Porter** of Shavertown, Pa., died Sept. 22, 2009. She was a graduate of Nesbitt Hospital School of Nursing, where she also began her teaching career, and later became the assistant director

of nursing services at Nesbitt Hospital. She taught at Luzerne County Community College, where she was one of the five founders of the Nursing Education Program. During the Korean War, she served in the U.S. Navy as a nurse. After her retirement, she was a volunteer with the American Red Cross Blood Mobile and Meals on Wheels. She is survived by her son, R. Brian Porter, Fairport, N.Y.; daughter, R. Bonnie Pajka, Shavertown; sister, Naomi Holdredge, Shavertown; grandchildren; a nephew and three great-nephews.

### 1963

**Donald "Dayton" Long** died Sept. 6, 2009. He taught in the George Ross Elementary School, Lancaster, Pa., for 28 years, retiring in 1991. He was honored by the AAA of Lancaster County for outstanding service as supervisor of safety patrol and dedication to the safety of school children. He was a member of the Calvary Church in Lancaster, the Lancaster Education Association, the National Education Association, and the Pennsylvania State Education Association. He is survived by his daughter, Cynthia A. Crowl; brother, Dr. Jay Long; and two granddaughters.

### 1968

**Matthew Fliss** of West Pittston, Pa., died Nov. 13, 2009. He was a counselor and university lecturer.

**Joseph Stankus** of Dallas, Pa., died Oct. 21, 2009. He taught social studies at the West Side Vocational-Technical School, Pringle, Pa., for 36 years. He is survived by his wife of 41 years, the former Tanya Tadic; aunts, uncles, nephews and cousins.

### 1971

**Paul Andrew Hutz** of Mountain Top, Pa., died Sept. 18, 2009. He served in the U.S. Air Force as an airman first class. He was employed as a coordinator and inspector of the Housing Authority of Luzerne County. He was also employed with the Wachovia Arena, Wilkes-Barre. He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Mary Kozey Hutz; son, David Paul Hutz; sister, Ann Marie Bretz; several aunts, uncles and cousins.

### 1973

**James Kelly, MBA**, of Wilkes-Barre died Nov. 12, 2009. He worked for WGBI Radio and TV, later known as WDAU, as a television news, weather and sports reporter. Kelly served in the U.S. Army Reserves, graduating from the U.S. Army Information School as information and broadcast specialist. He was part of the 402nd Military Police Unit in Wilkes-Barre. He was director

of public relations for the United Way and later served as assistant business manager for the Wilkes-Barre Area School District. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Ruth Gates Kelly; sons, James Kelly, Buffalo, N.Y.; and Michael Kelly, Nashua, N.H.; daughter, Mary Ruth Burke, Wilkes-Barre; and several grandchildren.

#### 1974

**James C. DeSombre** of Trumansburg, N.Y., died Oct. 4, 2009. He worked for Borg Warner Automotive for 32 years, most recently as director of Global Supplier Development. He is survived by his wife, Bonnie Long DeSombre; parents, Everett and Edna Harrison DeSombre, Forty Fort, Pa.; sons, Jason DeSombre, Seymour, Conn.; and Jeff DeSombre, Newburgh, N.Y.; grandchildren, aunts, uncles and cousins.

#### 1985

**Mark Anthony O'Donnell** of Wilkes-Barre died Dec. 4, 2009. He was a member of the American Legion Post 0644. He worked in sales and was a former member of the Gate of Heaven Church, Dallas, Pa. He is survived by his father, Gerald F. O'Donnell, Dallas; daughter, Amanda Brown, Charleston, S.C.; son, Mark O'Donnell Jr., Charleston, S.C.; sister, Michelle Stavish, West Wyoming, Pa.; three brothers, Gerald F. O'Donnell Jr., Hummelstown, Pa.; Jeff

O'Donnell, Trucksville, Pa.; and Michael O'Donnell, Swoyersville, Pa.; a grandson; several nieces and nephews.

#### 1989

**Robert J. Boyle** of Plains Township, Pa., died Nov. 18, 2009. He is survived by his parents, Joseph M. and Regina Sullivan Boyle, Wyoming, Pa.; brothers, Joseph Boyle, Pa.; and Patrick Boyle, Calif.; sisters, Regina Furey, N.J.; Kathy Ventre, Pa.; and Mary Fino, Pa.; nieces and nephews.

#### 1993

**Diane Elizabeth Belusko** of Wilkes-Barre died Oct. 21, 2009. She was retired from the Wilkes-Barre Area School District. She is survived by her mother, Mary Richardson, Wilkes-Barre; son, Eric M. Richardson, Hanover Township, Pa.; sisters, Susan Fisher and Barbara Cunningham, both of Plains Township, Pa.; brother, Michael W. Richardson, Wilkes-Barre; several nieces and nephews.

#### 1994

**Michael J. Vesek III** of Wilkes-Barre died Nov. 5, 2009. He was employed as a deputy sheriff for the Luzerne County sheriff's department for 19 years. He is survived by his parents, Michael J. and Jacqueline Stillarty Vesek Jr., Wilkes-Barre; son, Michael J. Vesek IV, Dallas, Pa.; daughter, Hayley Ann Vesek, Dallas; mother of his children, Kara Vesek, Dallas; and sister, Terri Vesek, Wilkes-Barre.

#### 2002

**Joey Ruggiero** of Hazleton, Pa., died April 14, 2009. He began his career as a crisis worker at Turning Point Behavioral Health. He worked as a discharge specialist at UnitedHealth Group and most recently as a contract analyst at UnitedHealthcare. He was a volunteer with the First Person Arts Festival, the Philadelphia International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, Philadelphia Cares, the Human Rights Campaign, the Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society and the William Way LGBT Community Center. He is survived by his parents, Joseph and Carol Ruggiero; sister Lisa; and maternal grandmother Antonette Ruggiero.

#### 2007

**Andrea M. Cardell** of Kingston, Pa., died Sept. 21, 2009. She is survived by her mother, Linda McClure, Duryea, Pa.; brothers Ian, Joseph, Christopher and Jonathan; sisters Randi, Amanda, Regina, Cheryl and Betty.

#### 2008

**Cory Anthony Shultz** of Dallas, Pa., died Nov. 9, 2009. He was employed as a clerk by Lakeside Bistro, Harveys Lake, Pa., and worked with his father at Shultz Masonry. He was a member of the Shavertown United Methodist Church. Surviving are his parents, Stanley and Debbie Shultz, Dallas; paternal grandmother, Roseann Shultz, Swoyersville, Pa.; aunts, uncles and cousins.

## Friends of Wilkes University

**Edward P. Tabbitt** of Trucksville, Pa., died Aug. 1, 2009. He was a veteran of World War II, serving in the U.S. Navy. He owned and operated Tabbitt's Appliance Service of Forty Fort, Pa., for the past five decades. He is survived by his children, Diana, Edward Jr. and David, all of Trucksville; Robert, Wyoming, Pa.; Lisa, Forty Fort; nieces and nephews.

**David R. "Bud" Thalenfeld** of Naples, Fla., died May 19, 2009. He served in the U.S. Air Force during World War II. He was the CEO and founder of Trion Industries Inc., Plains Township, Pa. He was a member of Temple B'nai B'rith, Kingston, Pa.; Temple Shalom, Naples; a former member of the Jewish Community Center, Wilkes-Barre; a board member and treasurer of Family Service Association of Wyoming Valley, Pa.; and of many other organizations. He was a De Tocqueville Society member of the Wyoming Valley United Way. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, the former Lillian Stein; son, John Thalenfeld; sisters, Harriett Gray, Kingston, Pa.; and Freda Popky, Wilkes-Barre; and two grandchildren.



PHOTO FROM WILKES ARCHIVES

Past Beacon writers knew the value of getting a story right the first time as they worked dutifully at their typewriters. See anyone you recognize in this photo?

Share names or reminisce on The Colonel Connection message boards, found at [www.wilkes.edu/alumni](http://www.wilkes.edu/alumni).

Or send responses to *Wilkes magazine*, 84 W. South St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18766.

You can also e-mail [wilkesmagazine@wilkes.edu](mailto:wilkesmagazine@wilkes.edu).

### ENGINEERING CLASS

John Standish '58 and William Culverhouse '61 MS '73 identified this photo as Professor Edward Heltzel's engineering drawing class, probably in 1957 or 1958. John Standish '58 is in the upper left of the photo. Engineering students at that time took two semesters of engineering drawing. Professor Heltzel is standing in the center of the photo, helping a student. The classroom shown was on the third floor of Conyngham Hall.

Today's Beacon staff enjoys the luxury of computer technology while they work on producing Wilkes University's student newspaper.



PHOTO FROM WILKES ARCHIVES



PHOTO BY ALLISON ROTH

## calendar of events

### March

- Through 14** Brian Wood, Paintings, drawing, prints and photographs, Sordoni Art Gallery
- 24 Alumni event, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins game
- 25 Alumni gathering in Pittsburgh, Pa.

### April

- 10 Alumni event, Denver, CO.
- 15-17 Theatre Production, *Dracula*, Darte Center, 8 p.m.; April 18, 2 p.m.
- 17 Alumni event, Charleston, S.C.
- 22 Alumni event with communication studies professors, Baltimore, Md.
- 24 Dance Concert, Emerging Choreographers Showcase, 3 and 8 p.m, Darte Center  
Alumni Association Scholarship Dinner
- 25 The Max Rosenn Lecture in Law and Humanities featuring Greg Mortenson, author of *Three Cups of Tea* and *Stones Into Schools*
- 29 Jazz Orchestra Concert, Darte Center, 8:15 p. m.

### May

- 1 Scholarship Dinner honoring **XX**
- 3 String Ensembles Concert, 8 p.m.
- 22 Commencement

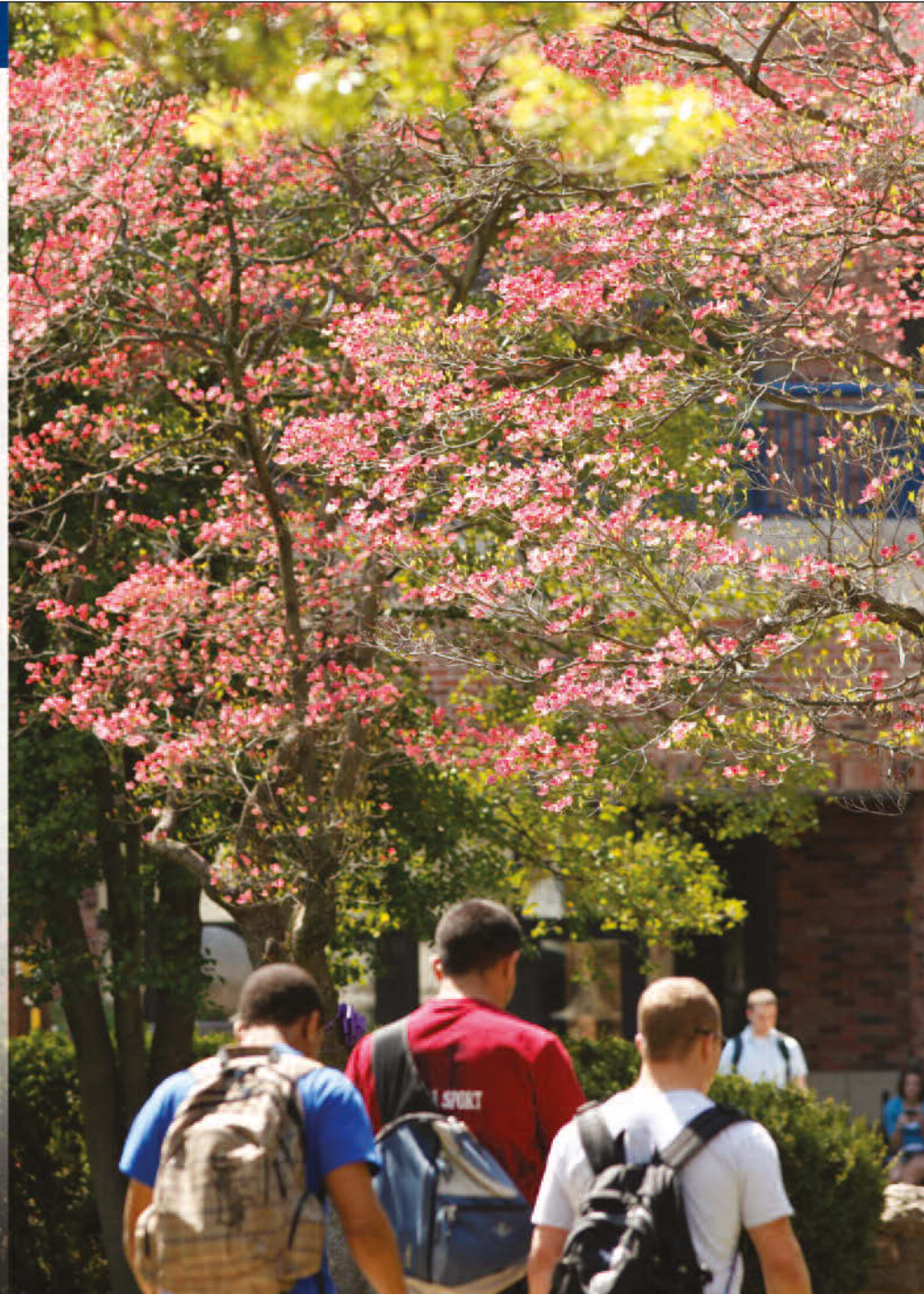


PHOTO BY BRUCE WELLER