WCU Tackles COVID-19
The West Chester Band posed with the West Chester State Normal baseball team and their opponents prior to a 1915-1916 game. Today’s Incomparable Golden Rams Marching Band has grown to more than 300 students from a variety of academic majors.
On the Cover: WCU Tackles COVID-19

WCU executed a warp-speed pivot from mostly in-class education to remote instruction to deal with COVID-19.

History and Heritage: The Music Tradition

The WCU archives is a treasure trove through which we can chronicle the institution’s 150-year history.

Donor Profile: Keith ’77 & Nancy Beale ’77

The Beales say they owe a lot to WCU for giving them education and skills for their professional and music careers.

Alumni Profile: Bob Curnow ’63

The day after he graduated from WCU in 1963, the 21-year-old began playing trombone — for Stan Kenton.
Demonstrating resilience and grit, West Chester University continues to be tested during an era that has prompted our educational community to pivot, stretch, and bend in ways that are making a significant difference for students living through the reality of an unyielding pandemic. Amidst an atypical back-to-school season marked by an increase in enrollment despite COVID-19, WCU is doing what it does best — meeting students’ needs wherever they may be. Thanks to the creativity and innovation of dedicated faculty and staff, an expansive framework for virtual and hybrid learning has evolved. What was once a traditional classroom bound by four walls is now a flexible paradigm for virtual and hybrid learning that has endless possibilities. I am proud of the collaborative way we have come together to make remote spaces centers of learning. At the same time, a series of new strategies and tools, like our technology lending program and our remote student support services, have been incorporated to ease the day-to-day transition.

A philosopher once said, “Change is the only constant in life.” Truer words were never spoken. As the days ahead will undoubtedly transform us in ways great and small, it will be important to remember what has made us who we are today. Standing at the threshold of our 150th anniversary, each issue of West Chester University Magazine will be dedicated to reminiscing about important moments in our University’s history. We are pleased to inaugurate this special section with a retrospective feature on the “incomparable” Wells School of Music and its tradition of greatness.

The page has been formally turned to our next chapter. We thank you for being an integral part of a compelling story that is destined to inspire future generations of Golden Rams.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Fiorentino
President
Pictured (L to R) immediately prior to the hoisting of the last steel beam needed to frame WCU’s largest and newest building, The Sciences & Engineering Center and The Commons: WCU Alumni Association President Bill Scottoline ’74; Founder, President, and CEO of ProMetrics Marc Duey; West Chester University President Chris Fiorentino; and Student Services, Incorporated Chair of the Board of Directors Bernie Carrozza ’66.
Senior Analyzes Tectonics of Mercury as NASA Intern

Abigail Keebler, a senior geoscience major, spent the last two summers as a research intern with the NASA Summer Undergraduate Program for Planetary Research. Working for the Smithsonian Institution’s Center for Earth and Planetary Studies, Keebler analyzed the planet Mercury’s tectonics.

Keebler is also minoring in physics and mathematics. She worked for NASA during the summer of 2019 in Washington, D.C., and, due to the pandemic, from her Boyertown, PA, home last summer. She analyzed data gathered from NASA’s MESSENGER spacecraft, which orbited Mercury for four years before plunging into the planet in 2015.

“My dream is to build a career in research exploring the planet on which we live, its neighbors in our solar system, and beyond,” said Keebler, who next year hopes to enter a Ph.D. program in planetary geology.
WCU Receives Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award

The University has received the 2020 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. WCU is featured, along with 89 other recipients, in the magazine’s November issue.

“Receiving the HEED award for the first time in West Chester University’s history is a clear indication that we are on the right track as we strengthen and enhance our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity in intentional ways,” said University President Chris Fiorentino. “This University is committed to creating an environment that celebrates and demonstrates our core values in real ways that live in our daily actions and interactions with one another.”

INSIGHT Into Diversity selected WCU as a result of its demonstrated resolve and innovative initiatives, including:

• The Golden Rams Initiative, through the Center for International Programs, which serves underrepresented minority, low-income, and Pell-Grant eligible students in study abroad.
• The engagement of undergraduate students in a 2019 national racial climate survey (National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates Survey).
• The placement of Student Success Coordinators in each of the University’s six colleges and two schools.
• Ram Shop, the only on-campus convenience store of its kind in the nation to provide workplace training for students on the autism spectrum to practice and master social and professional skills.
• A Resource Pantry provides food, personal items, school supplies, and career clothing throughout the school year, summer, and winter break. The pantry also coordinates programs about financial literacy workshops and cooking demonstrations.

“The HEED Award demonstrates engagement in an array of best practices, in addition to innovation and a collective commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion,” said WCU’s Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Tracey Ray Robinson. “This award recognizes how the University goes the extra mile.”
Iconic Activist Angela Davis Keynotes 2nd Annual Ruby Jones Conference at WCU

Angela Davis, the iconic activist, author, and professor, delivered the keynote address during West Chester University’s 2nd Annual Ruby Jones Conference on Race, Social Justice, and Civic Leadership. The three-day conference, which drew 999 participants, occurred virtually via Zoom September 30 through October 2.

Davis encouraged attendees to embrace the role of education in demanding radical change for racial justice. She spoke of the importance of voting. “I’m not voting for a single human being,” she said. “I’m voting for our own capacity to continue to make change.” She also highlighted the value of physical, mental, and spiritual health in the struggle for justice.

Participants included WCU students, faculty, and staff, as well as students from other regional colleges and universities, and community members. The conference underscored the University’s commitment to emphasizing critical thinking and problem solving to address systemic racism and inequities. The conference was designed to raise awareness and promote action-oriented dialogue about racial, cultural, and social issues that affect how students experience life on campus, in communities, and in society.

“Angela Davis’ voice inspired us to continue the important work toward impacting change for racial justice within the college setting and in our broader society,” said Dametraus L. Jaggers, Ph.D., senior director of the Dowdy Multicultural Center.

In addition to corporate sponsor State Farm, the conference was sponsored by the Multicultural Center, along with a conference planning team from various departments within the Division of Student Affairs.

The conference bears the name of Ruby Jones, who completed the bachelor program in teaching at West Chester State College, as a continuation of the legacy that she created. In 1961, she was the first Black faculty member hired at West Chester State College.

Wells Students, Faculty Participate in Prestigious National Conference

WCU Wells School of Music’s Voice Program was well represented at this year’s National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) conference. NATS is a bi-annual event that attracts voice teachers, professionals, and students from around the world to share in educational programs, demonstrations, lectures, master classes, and competitions that help celebrate the art of singing. This year’s conference was held virtually from June 24 – 30, 2020.

Three voice students were chosen as semi-finalists for the National Student Auditions, a program of NATS that is an annual adjudication process where singers perform and receive written feedback. Via video audition, the three vocalists from West Chester University were selected as the top 14 in their respective categories:

- Michael Bilik - Advanced Men’s Category
- Sergey Kravets – Advanced Men’s Category
- Matthew Quarles – Hall Johnson Spiritual Category

The students first competed in the NATS Regional Auditions, with Kravets and Quarles placing first and Bilik placing second. The three were then invited to submit recordings to compete in the national round. Bilik is earning a master of music in vocal performance, Kravets is a senior music education major, and Quarles just completed his freshman year as music education major. Kravets and Bilik study with associate professor of voice Stephen Ng and Quarles is a student of Mary Ellen Schauber.

During the conference Stephen Ng participated in the panel discussion “The Ethics of a Profession: Diversity and Inclusivity.” The panel discussed ways to create and sustain access for all in the voice profession through targeted efforts to remove barriers, promote diversity and inclusivity, and ensure a future where all voices are valued, welcomed, and appreciated.

Ng says, “It was my huge honor to be invited as part of this important panel with singers of all diverse backgrounds, including people of color, different cultures and beliefs, and the LGBTQ+ community. Through sharing personal stories and experiences of our own in building our teaching and performance careers, lots of difficult questions were asked and answered, and I learned so much about appreciating differences, and about how important it is for us to work together and to let ourselves be heard.”
Samantha Thompson Earns Fulbright Award to Teach in Taiwan

Senior Samantha L. Thompson, of Mansfield, NJ, has received a prestigious Fulbright U.S. Student Program award for an English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) from the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. An early grades preparation and special education double major, Thompson applied after talking with a high school friend who’d earned a grant to teach in Taiwan two years ago. After researching Taiwan, she said, “I fell in love with it. What better way to see the world while I build experience in my career?” Fulbright ETA awards usually cover a full academic year but, due to COVID-19, Thompson’s assignment will span January through June 2021.

STARS Sustainability Designation

WCU has a new silver designation under the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) program of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). The program rates colleges on sustainable outcomes across academics, engagement, operations, and planning and administration.

WCU documented enough STARS points to succeed from bronze to silver, highlighting, for example:

- New learning opportunities such as the Sustainability Pathway Certificate Program and an interdisciplinary sustainability minor.
- Training 93 WCU faculty members to develop courses that address sustainability.
- The efficient, low-carbon geo-exchange system that heats and cools nearly half of the campus buildings.
- WCU is also one of only 18 campuses in Pennsylvania — and the only public PA university — to earn Tree Campus USA distinction (our eighth year) from the Arbor Day Foundation. In addition, ArbNet, an international community of arboreta and tree professionals, granted the University Arboretum Level II status.
On September 26, nearly 200 people took part in a frank discussion about race sponsored by West Chester University entitled, “It’s Time for a Real Talk: Courageous Conversations About Race. An Open Discussion with the Public About Where We Go From Here ...” The diverse participants ranged from undergrads to grandparents. Half were WCU students, faculty, staff, or alumni, the rest community residents.

The three-hour Zoom program included small group breakout sessions to discuss fractious topics: bystander intervention, healing and restoration, implicit bias, workforce race relations, and white fragility.

Tracey Ray Robinson, WCU’s chief diversity and inclusion officer, noted that participants in similar events often are already comfortable discussing racial issues. “But that definitely wasn’t the case here,” she said. “Forty percent said they were typically uncomfortable discussing race. This was important to ensure we reached a broad audience.”

Another program organizer was Anita Foeman, professor of communication and media and the lead researcher of the DNA Discussion Project, a nationally renowned campus-wide project that continues to prompt very honest discussions about race. “We consider West Chester University to be a place where students get a full education,” she said, “and part of that is being able to discuss race in a way that doesn’t divide us but makes us respect one another more.”

Besides WCU, the program was sponsored by the WCU Alumni Association, the WCU Frederick Douglass Institute, and St. Paul’s Baptist Church in West Chester.

Courageous Conversations were originally coordinated in Chester County in 2015 by Foeman and Lisa Croft, family physician and wife of St. Paul’s Senior Pastor Wayne E. Croft, Sr. Five years later, the duo revived the program. Lisa C. Huebner, WCU professor of women’s and gender studies, and Justin Brown, resident director and president of the Diversity Awareness Program (D.A.P.), also led breakout sessions.
The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all WCU students. That’s particularly true for music and music education students, who rely heavily on in-person instruction, practice, and playing together with ensembles. However, said Kevin Scheetz, a trombonist and senior music education major, “The Wells School of Music Executive Committee and especially Dean Christopher Hanning have done an incredible job making sure we still have fun and enjoy the kind of learning environment that we need to actually make in-person music.”

For example, the students in the Wind, Jazz and Trombone Ensembles in which Scheetz plays all rehearse separated by plexiglass shields, with protective fabric stretched over the bells of the wind instruments.

“The faculty care so much about us being not only quality musicians but also quality educators,” said Scheetz, who spreads that message to prospective students as a Wells School of Music (WSOM) Ambassador. “And I’ve learned and grown so much playing in the ensembles and the Incomparable Golden Rams Marching Band.

“We perform at a really high level, and the education we get from our instructors and directors is so in-depth that it plants seeds for how to teach these concepts to our future students.”

Scheetz, from Red Lion, PA, transferred to WCU from West Virginia University the second semester of his freshman year. He is a member of the WSOM Student Advisory Board and parliamentarian for Rho Sigma Chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, the national music fraternity.

He is appreciative of the financial scholarship support he has received, including the Lee Southall Trombone Scholarship, the Fletcher Music Scholarship, and the Sophomore Instrumental Scholarship Competition, which he won. After graduating next spring, he hopes to direct a high school band. “Eventually,” he added, “I want to earn a master’s degree and possibly a doctorate in order to teach on the college level.”

Kevin Scheetz Continues to Grow as Trombonist
As West Chester University prepares to mark its 150th year, we will periodically feature a retrospective of some of the pillars on which our institution's foundation is built.

For this initial installment, the Wells School of Music and the music programs take center stage. Visit the WCU 150th website for a longer version of this feature.
The music program was part of the original curriculum when the West Chester Normal School opened in September 1871. Piano and melodeon lessons cost extra the first year but all elementary students were given vocal lessons free of charge.

Normal School student and faculty recitals drew public audiences. Student choruses and instrumental groups were regularly invited to perform at local social events.
THE ROARING '20S

The department of music was established when two faculty members were hired in 1921 as the Normal School’s director and assistant director of music, respectively: Claude Hausknecht and Gertrude Schmidt (for whom a residence hall is named). In September 1922, the first five students entered the brand-new music education program to become music teachers or supervisors.

In 1923, the Normal School established the state’s first summer music school for both the Normal students and public school teachers.

School bands played at dances that were held weekly in the gymnasium. Larry Ginter ’26 later became known as the father of The Criterions for forming the first campus jazz band, which was known in the 1930s as the Purple and Gold Criterions.

BECOMING A SCHOOL OF MUSIC

A year after the school became West Chester State Teachers College, the music curriculum expanded in 1928 to include a four-year bachelor of science in music education degree.

Lloyd Mitchell chaired the department of music from 1951 to 1967. During his tenure, the programs achieved accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Music in 1958; a graduate program in music education was added in 1959; a new music building — Swope Hall, now called 25 University Avenue — was completed in 1960; the Music Department introduced the bachelor of music and the bachelor of arts in music degrees, officially enabling the department to become the School of Music in 1967. Mitchell (for whom Mitchell Hall is named) became West Chester’s first dean of the School of Music, serving in that role until 1971. Charles A. Sprenkle succeeded him as dean 1971-1979.
As early as 1889, WCSNS documents reference a “Normal Band” and photos of some of that group’s iterations are in the University’s older yearbooks. The Marching Band benefitted from increased enrollment when the Normal School transitioned to the WC State Teachers College in 1927. In the 1930s, S. Powell Middleton assumed leadership. Following World War II, Mr. Paul Carson and Dr. Alexander Antonowich shared the directorship. The band gained exposure when the football team began playing college division sports. In the 1940s in particular, national audiences were treated to its performances when the band accompanied the football team to bowl games: 1947 Burley Bowl; 1948 Cigar Bowl; and later, the 1968 Tangerine Bowl.

In 1968, Dr. James Wells ’54 became the Director of the Marching Band, succeeding Mr. Richard Boerlin. Wells’ leadership corresponded with an era of significant change in marching style and drill design. In the summer of 1970, Wells founded the West Chester State College (later University) Marching Band and Band Front Conference for directors to develop effective teaching techniques. Soon, the band was regularly performing at Philadelphia Eagles home games each season. In the winter of 1970-71, the band shone at the American Football League Championships at Shea Stadium.

Perhaps the biggest change during this era occurred in 1974: The band admitted women for the first time.

Today’s Incomparable Golden Rams Marching Band numbers more than 300 students — more than half of whom are not music majors. The band has become the first Division II institution marching band to receive the Sudler Trophy since the first award was presented to the University of Michigan in 1982.
CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP

In 1979 the position of dean of the School of Music was replaced by a coordinator of the School of Music. James D. Sullivan served in that role from 1979 to 1982. The title was later changed to director of the School of Music and then, assistant dean for music. Irving H. Cohen was acting director 1982-1983, and Sullivan returned as director of the School of Music and assistant dean for music, 1983-1987.

The position of dean of the School of Music was reinstated in 1987 and has remained the title for the head of the School of Music.

During the tenure of Timothy V. Blair, who was dean from 1997 to 2017, the designation All-Steinway School was given to West Chester in 2006 and, in 2007, music faculty, staff, and students moved into the new School of Music and the Performing Arts Center adjacent to E.O. Bull Center. At that time, Blair was overseeing not only the music departments but also the departments of Art + Design and Theatre & Dance as dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

In the current arrangement, the Wells School of Music stands as one of WCU’s two schools, the other being the Graduate School.

Christopher Hanning became dean in 2017.

PRESENT DAY

Today, the school is known as the Wells School of Music (WSOM) after a gift of $3 million, the largest in WCU’s history, was presented by two brothers, Dr. James Wells ’54 and Richard Wells ’58, who were both music educators. James Wells led WCU’s Marching Band from 1968 to 1992.

The Wells School of Music offers one of the largest music programs in Pennsylvania and is one of the most respected in the nation. As the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education’s only music school, the Wells School of Music graduates more music teachers than any other Pennsylvania university.

Approximately 425 undergrad and grad students are enrolled in the WSOM’s five departments: Ensembles and Conducting; Instrumental Music; Music Education and Music Therapy; Music Theory, History, and Composition; and Vocal and Keyboard Music. Master of music programs lead to graduate degrees in music education, performance, music history or music theory/composition, and piano pedagogy.

The newest program, a bachelor of music in music therapy, welcomed its first students this fall (2020). The program is designed to train students to work with clients through the entire life span, from neonatal through hospice care.
When I was a student, I knew every faculty member because there were only 20 or 22. The instruction was excellent and we were always performing. My major instrument was piano, and I studied with Lloyd Mitchell, the dean of the School of Music, for whom Mitchell Hall was named.

“When I chaired the Music Education Department, rather than have student teachers start classroom observations in their senior year, we started sending them out into the public schools the second semester of their sophomore year and when they were juniors.

"Both the students and their supervising teachers out in the field said they were so much better prepared to actually teach.”

I came to West Chester after playing in a U.S. Navy band for three years. The old Swope Hall [now 25 University Avenue] had just opened, and it was so new that the professors had no chalk boards and we sat on the floor because there were no chairs.

“In my senior year, I led the Criterions Jazz Ensemble which was student-led then, and while I was a professor, I became the faculty director of the Criterions, started the WCU Jazz Festival, the WCU Friends of Jazz, and the Annual Criterions Alumni Reunion Concert, which has become such a joyous experience. Regardless of our age differences, we just have a good time playing the music we love.

“Also, when I go back to West Chester today and hear the various student ensembles, I’m just amazed. The quality keeps getting better and better. I think the school is really solid. There’s a unity among the faculty and Chris Hanning, the dean, is really respected by students and faculty alike.”
Wells School of Music Alumni and Retired Faculty Remember

Jim Sullivan ’66, B.S. Music Education
Faculty: 1967-2003,
Music Theory and Composition
Coordinator, Director and Dean of the School of Music: 1979-88

“W hen I was a student my major instrument was the organ, and the emphasis then, as it is today, was on building the musician first, no matter which degree program. If your students see that you are also a good performer, you will endear yourself to them.

"Important developments since I was a student include the addition of many majors that previously didn’t exist, such as percussion, guitar, saxophone, jazz, theory, and composition. The teaching has become much more specialized, with professors — many of whom are nationally recognized — no longer splitting their time between their areas of expertise and other classes. The performing ensembles are some of the finest nationwide, no doubt.”

Jane Pippart-Brown ’69, Music Education
Adjunct Faculty: 1980-87
Faculty: 1987-2004
Chair of Music Education Department: 2000-2004

“I felt all my School of Music teachers were fantastic. The atmosphere had more of a conservatory feel than that of an education school. When Dick Merrell arrived in 1968, he started to upgrade music education, as I and my music education colleagues did as well. It got to be as good on the educational practice side as the performance side, which, especially with the Criterions jazz band and the marching band, has always been a big deal at West Chester.

“‘There was a great collegiality between the music performance and education teachers, and I never felt more honored than when I was the chair of Music Education Department. I miss it. I loved it.”

Next issue’s 150th anniversary history feature will focus on the College of Health Sciences and the College of the Sciences and Mathematics.
The Classroom of the Future is Now

When the COVID-19 pandemic’s effects became apparent during the 2020 spring break, West Chester University spent the following two weeks executing a warp-speed pivot from mostly in-class education to remote instruction. The collective response by faculty, staff, and students last spring laid a strong foundation for the almost universal remote learning that is occurring throughout the 2020-21 academic year.

That effort has been spearheaded by both the Office of Information Services and Technologies (IS&T) and the Office of Digital Learning and Innovation (ODLI). Another key contributor has been the RamProfs Online Transition Group, a Facebook forum that has enabled nearly 450 faculty and staff to share instructional ideas for online teaching.

“At the time, we were offering about 10% of our courses online, and we had to quickly flip that to pretty much 100% online,” said JT Singh, senior associate vice president and chief information officer. “Understandably, there’ve been some speed bumps and yes, lessons learned that resulted in continuous improvements. However, I’m proud that, in response to this pandemic, the West Chester University community has left no stone unturned to ensure student success.”

Added Rui Li, assistant vice president for digital learning and innovation, “Normally you would think it would be impossible to execute such a transition in just two weeks, but — given the situation — we had to make the impossible possible.”
With IS&T and ODLI collaborating closely with the faculty advisory board and the faculty-oriented Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Center, that response has included:

**Extensive online training programs for both students and faculty to help them transition from in-person classes to remote learning. These have included:**

- Navigating Digital Learning — a resource site on the University's D2L Learning Management System that helped students gain digital skills necessary for remote learning.

- The Online Faculty Development Program, a two-week, asynchronous program that introduced the faculty to best practices for online and blended teaching.

- Early on, daily technology training webinars and workshops to help transition students, faculty, and staff to remote work life — which continued through the summer with a series of virtual technology roadshows and training videos that drew 1,600 faculty and staff members.

- A newly created website that, as an alternative to the training programs, offers faculty step-by-step instructions for making their classes virtual.

**Technology upgrades, including partnering with key software providers to ensure home access for students on both Windows and Mac platforms.**

- The University’s RamCloud system gives students and faculty access to a wide suite of specialized WCU-licensed software applications, from any device (Mac, PC, or mobile), and gives employees and students the flexibility to securely work, teach, and learn from anywhere.

- The retrofitting of 200 campus classrooms with cameras and microphones to support the “Hyflex” teaching modality for remote/hybrid learning.

**Implemented a technology lending program — particularly for students with unmet needs.**

- By the beginning of October, IS&T had lent students, faculty, and staff 816 laptops, 546 mobile hotspot devices for those without access to broadband internet and 130 webcams — with the overwhelming majority of the devices going to students. The lending program replaces on-campus resources like computer labs and the libraries that students readily accessed before the pandemic.

Jeanie Subach, associate professor of nutrition, and student
“I’m really grateful how the University has our backs,” said Daniel Engelbrecht, a junior who needed a laptop to continue his online classes while traveling for a family matter in September. He was stunned when a Lenovo laptop—fully loaded with software—arrived at his house the day after he requested one.

To make virtual learning possible, overall IS&T has invested $2 million in equipment, including the loaner program, software, HyFlex classrooms, and personnel.

Ola Kopacz, an associate professor of communication and media who studies online communities, launched the RamProfs Online Transition Group on March 11. Within a week, she had hundreds of participants. “Having a community like this during such a challenging time can be a big morale boost in knowing that one is not alone,” she said. “We’re physically not in one place, but we are still definitely a university, doing our work and being able to share what we are doing.”

Kim Doan, professor of special education, helped develop WCU’s online special education master’s degree, which first offered distance education classes in 2011. So, through RamProfs, she was able to offer demonstration workshops on how to use one feature of Zoom—via Zoom.

WCU professors have made online adaptations to preserve critical learning experiences in a variety of ways.

For example, in the College of Health Sciences, elementary physical education students are now teaching children at the Chester County Family Academy via Zoom, and graduate students are offering teletherapy sessions via Zoom to patients of the WCU Speech and Hearing Clinic. The human cadaver anatomy lab, a requirement for the master’s of athletic training degree, successfully moved online when Carolyn Jimenez, professor and chair of sports medicine, and Emily Duckett, instructor and athletic trainer, made a series of YouTube videos that recorded their own dissection of a cadaver.

Via a remote Zoom session, Martin Helmke, professor and assistant chair
of earth and space sciences, used sophisticated surveying equipment, a GoPro camera, and a drone to replicate the field experience portion of his engineering geology course — in his own front yard.

To create a genuine lab experience for the students in her upper level animal development course, Assistant Professor Jessica Sullivan-Brown sent them an inexpensive wireless, digital microscope with a camera, a petri dish and a few planaria (flatworms). The assignment: cut off the worms’ heads and, using the microscope, photographically record the regeneration of their heads over 7 to 12 days. “They really miss doing discovery-based projects in the lab, so they were really excited to be able to do science at home,” Sullivan-Brown said.

WCU professors do see some benefits to virtual learning that could, in some fashion, continue once the pandemic ends. For example, Sullivan-Brown thinks online teaching offers more flexibility. “This shows how a biology lab course could be taught online during the summer,” she said, “when most students aren’t on campus.”

Doan is one of many professors who cite greater student engagement. “I ask a question and everybody types their answer in the chat box. I’m even getting participation from shy, quiet students.”

Jacqueline M. Zalewski, professor of sociology and a RamProfs participant, is teaching both sections of her social contexts of substance abuse course via Zoom. “Because of breakout rooms at the beginning of class, and my instructions on what to talk about with their peers within them, my students are driving the discussions more than in my face-to-face classes,” she reported.

“There’s no question that face-to-face instruction, with human interaction in real time, is the best way to learn,” said Li. “But with advanced technologies, there is now greater flexibility and opportunity to facilitate students’ interactions with faculty and, even more so, among themselves.”

Agreeing, Singh said, “The pandemic has pushed the envelope, not only for our faculty but for our students to do things in a little bit of a different way and, for teaching and learning, I think the sky’s the limit now.”

Michael Rosario, an assistant professor of biology, is now pre-recording his anatomy and physiology lectures so he can interact with his students in the class chat room. “We’re all eager to teach courses the way we used to, but the pandemic has forced us to innovate and, personally, I don’t think I can ignore those innovations in the future,” he said. “It’s going to take a lot of thinking, but I really like the amount of interaction I am getting from my students before and during class. I want to figure out some way to retain that.”
Juah Toe ’20, former WCU women’s rugby All-American from York, PA, was named a finalist for the 2020 NCAA Woman of the Year Award. The nine finalists, three from each NCAA division, were selected for their outstanding achievements in academics, athletics, community service, and leadership.

Toe is the first student-athlete from West Chester University to be named a finalist for the award.

Toe’s selection marks the second consecutive year in which a WCU representative has made the Top 30 for the NCAA Woman of the Year Award. Last year, field hockey standout Kaitlin Hatch ’19 became the first Golden Rams student-athlete to reach the Top 30.

Toe was selected from a record 605 school nominees — a group that was then narrowed to 160 nominees by conference offices. Toe, the lone women’s rugby nominee among the 160, became the third West Chester University nominee in the last four years. Toe helped West Chester to an undefeated 11-0 fall campaign during the Rugby 15’s season. The Golden Rams capped off their memorable moment with a national championship in the National Intercollegiate Rugby Association (NIRA) Tier II.

Her community service and volunteer engagements read like a veritable who’s who list of accomplishments throughout her college career — everything from trips to South Africa to secretary of the Abbe Society to vice president of Omicron Delta Kappa to involvement in WCU’s Honors College and a member of the selection committee for the West Chester University 1871 Award.
Events are FREE. As we navigate this unconventional year, please note that changes to the performance calendar are possible. Our Department of Theatre and Dance continues to educate and produce work, and will soon announce virtual spring events. Visit www.wcupa.edu/arts and click on each event in the arts calendar for the most up-to-date information.
During their first day at WCU, alphabetical seating meant that Keith Beale was sitting directly behind Nancy Alexander in their music theory 101 class. By the spring semester, Nancy, a pianist, was accompanying Keith during his voice lessons, practices, and recitals. Two months after they both graduated in 1977 with B.S. degrees in music education, they married and have been in love with each other — and with music — ever since.

Initially, both taught music in public schools. Preferring to teach piano one-on-one, however, Nancy soon decided to teach privately — at their home, at Cairn University, and at the Beales’ church, the Church of the Open Door (COD) in Ft. Washington, PA, where they live. She also has accompanied vocalists, instrumentalists, and ensembles at several school districts, served as a children’s theater musical director, and judged some Miss America state pageants and the Miss WCU pageant.

Keith left teaching in 1979 to become a management trainee of Bell of Pennsylvania/Bell Atlantic/Verizon. During his 25-year career, he was involved in marketing, public relations, and regulatory affairs, and helped manage a merger with GTE. His broad knowledge of the company and his savvy for math, “which is very much related to music,” he noted, resulted in his final Verizon promotion: vice president/executive director in finance.

After retiring at 47, Keith became a part-time administrator for COD, then directed finance and marketing for CLC Ministries International.

He also continued using his musical skills. He sang lead in a few operas, sang with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and has been the core
soloist for many concerts with the Choral Arts Societies of Philadelphia and Montgomery County, the Ambler Choral Society, and the Abington Choral Club.

The son of a Methodist pastor, for decades Keith periodically was COD's choir and orchestra director. Nancy, who has been the church's pianist and director of music for 43 years, said, “We believe that God has blessed us with our gift of music and feel it's important to return our thanks by using our music to give glory to Him.”

The Beales have two sons. Both served in the Army in the Middle East and one is a WCU alumnus: Scott ’07, who is an Amtrak traffic controller in Wilmington. West Point grad Robert is a lieutenant colonel in Washington state.

Nancy has encouraged many of her students to attend WCU. Several took her advice and graduated with WCU degrees in music, including their niece and nephew.

Long-time WCU supporters, the Beales say they “owe a lot to West Chester for giving us the education and skills for our professional and music careers, as well as enabling us to meet each other,” said Keith. He served on the WCU Music Advisory Board (2001-08) and, for most of the years since 2004, on the WCU Foundation Board, for which he is currently student housing chair. He has also served as treasurer and was board chair from 2013-17.

The Beales spoke at the groundbreaking for the new Swope Music Building and Performing Arts Center and, when it opened in 2007, funded the main lobby and several practice rooms. In 2006, they jointly received the WCU President's Award for Donor Recognition and, in 2008, the Distinguished Music Alumni Award.

They have also endowed five annual music scholarships and plan to fund more. “We know the value of an education at West Chester and the value of encouraging and supporting young people to pursue their music careers,” said Nancy. “And Verizon matched all of my gifts up to $5,000 a year, which really helped WCU students tremendously,” added Keith.

A Message from the Alumni Association President

I hope that you and your families had a happy and safe Thanksgiving. We have a great deal to be thankful for as alumni of West Chester University. All of us were able to launch our post-education lives, in part, because of the knowledge gained, the relationships fostered, and the life experiences we had while students here. Many of you met the person whom you chose to spend your life with while here at the University. As you reflect on those years, be thankful for your experiences, positive and negative, that helped to shape the person you are today and contemplate what you, as an alum, may be able to do to assist a current student.

This fall semester is coming to an end. Due to the global pandemic, it needed to be a virtual one for the vast majority of students. I have spoken to many of them, and their resilience and dedication is to be congratulated as they navigate the Zoom world to complete their coursework. I hope that many of you had the opportunity to participate in our virtual Homecoming festivities during October. Those of you who did will agree that our Alumni Relations group did a superlative job providing us with ways to connect to each other and to the University.

Finally, I want to wish each of you and your families, a very joyous and restful holiday season.

Rams Up!
Bill Scottoline ’74
President, WCU Alumni Association
CHAPTER NEWS

For more information about any chapter or its events, contact the chapter directly or the WCU Alumni Office at alumni@wcupa.edu.

ALUMNI DANCE CHAPTER
The Alumni Dance Chapter is planning to celebrate our 13th year with a leap back in time to highlight some of our best alumni performances over the years from our annual Winter Dance Festival, which benefits the Barbara J. Lappano Dance Scholarship. Our chapter is committed to promoting the current dance programs at WCU and providing a network for alumni dancers. Are you a University Dance Company or Dance Team alumni/a interested in getting involved with this chapter? Email WCUADC@gmail.com or find us on Facebook: WCU Alumni Dance Chapter for our latest news.

BANDS ALUMNI
Homecoming took a different spin this year but it was certainly out of this world! The Bands alumni were excited to join in the festivities and are looking forward to our next performance together in person. Are you an alumnus of WCU Bands and interested in getting involved with this chapter? Follow us on Facebook: WCU Bands Alumni Association or on our website: www.wcubaa.com.

BLACK ALUMNI CHAPTER
Congratulations to our 2020 BAC Scholarship recipients: Chikayla Barriner and Ananiya Jones. We are so grateful to all those who have supported the chapter and allowed us to continue to provide much needed aid to our students. Check out our chapter page for mentoring opportunities and upcoming chapter events: www.wcu alumni.org/BAC. Follow us on social media for updates on future events. Facebook: WCU BAC or Instagram: BACWCUPA.

CHESTER COUNTY CHAPTER
Congratulations to our 2020 Chester County Scholarship recipients, Marissa Mowrer and Stephen Harvey, and our Johanna Havlick Memorial Scholarship recipient, Grace Citro. While our programming this year has had a different approach, we are grateful to everyone who participated in our Alumni Faculty & Staff Appreciation Luncheon and virtual Nutcracker Tea Party event. Please check out our chapter page to stay updated regarding our events and meetings: www.wcu alumni.org/ccc. We hope to see you at the next event! LIKE and follow us on Facebook: WCU Chester County.

COMMUNICATION ALUMNI CHAPTER
The Communication Alumni Network has been actively engaged in supporting our most recent graduates and is looking forward to welcoming them into the Golden Ram alumni family at our upcoming event. While we have boosted our virtual engagement and offerings, we look forward to continuing to grow and hope to see everyone in the spring. Interested in getting connected? Check out our chapter page: www.wcu alumni.org/CAN and join our group on Ram Nation: Communication Alumni Network.

HONORS COLLEGE ALUMNI CHAPTER
Calling all Honors College alumni! We are looking to build our alumni network and work with the Honors College to support our current students and programming. Find us on Ram Nation: Honors College Network. Interested in a leadership role? Email alumni@wcupa.edu to join our group and help us get started with spring programming.

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY ALUMNI CHAPTER
Are you an alumni veteran who is interested in getting involved, taking on a chapter leadership role, or joining us in supporting the efforts of the Student Veterans Group? Stay in touch with all that is going on within our alumni veteran community on the chapter page: www.wcu alumni.org/IMAC or contact the WCU Alumni Office: alumni@wcupa.edu. Mentor our current student veterans on our Ram Nation group: Military & Veterans.

LAW ALUMNI CHAPTER
The Law Alumni Chapter pivoted this fall by continuing to offer our Careers in Law event for prospective law students in a virtual format. As we grow our network, we encourage all alumni in legal-related fields to join our group on Ram Nation! To stay connected, check out our chapter page: www.wcu alumni.org/lawalumnichapter or, to get involved, contact our chapter representative: wcu.law.alumni@gmail.com.

LGBTQA+ ALUMNI CHAPTER
We are up and running, eager to re-engage our LGBTQA+ alumni and support our current students and the efforts of the WCU Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy. Seeking all alumni members and allies of the LGBTQA+ community of WCU to join us in order to create a network and support for all of our Golden Rams. Find out more on our chapter page: www.wcu alumni.org/LGBTQA.

MBA ALUMNI CHAPTER
Congratulations to one of our newest chartered alumni chapters! We’re excited to announce our founding members: Breanna Moynihan M’19 (president), Michael Statmore M’20 (vice president), Michael Dell ’09, M’20 (secretary/treasurer), Michael Sanko M’18, Tom Donnelly ’00, M’03, Christopher Rogers M’11, Melissa Woolfrey ’11, M’15, Chad Shank M’19, Jeff Cantwell ’91, M’93, Jason Caspersen M’19, and Tom Sost M’17. Thank
you to everyone who joined us for our recent kickoff event! We look forward to building our MBA network and hope that you’ll join. Find out more on our chapter page: www.wcualumni.org/MBA and join our group on Ram Nation: MBA Network.

**OMEGA DELTA**

Congratulations to our 2020 Dr. Walter N. Ridley Memorial Scholarship recipient, Ananiya Jones. The chapter is actively engaged and supporting our local communities through service opportunities. Thanks to everyone who has joined our efforts and for contributing to our scholarship fund, which makes it possible to aid our current students. Interested in getting involved? Check out our chapter page: www.wcualumni.org/OmegaDelta.

**PUBLIC HEALTH ALUMNI CHAPTER**

Congratulations to one of our newest chartered alumni chapters! We’re excited to announce our founding members: Gabrielle Davidheiser ’20, Mabintu Donzo ’20, Carli Freedman ’20, Madison Toney ’19, Madison Scalleat ’20, Nicole Adhimamo ’19, Chandler Stefani ’19, Vittoria Visco ’19, Casey McKlindon ’19, Brendan Sherwood ’20, Laura Bennett ’20, Amrit Baral ’20, Emily Matthews ’20, Jeff Gillingham ’20, and Kiersten Millward ’20. We look forward to connecting our public health alumni via networking events and opportunities to mentor our current public health students. Find out more on our chapter page: www.wcualumni.org/PublicHealth and join our group on Ram Nation: Public Health Network.

**YORK COUNTY CHAPTER**

Our 100th year and what a year it has been! Thank you to everyone who has supported our chapter and the WCU York alumni through the years. Congratulations to our 2020 scholarship recipients, Alyssa Lehnhart ’24 and Hydia Jada Jackson ’24. While celebrating in person has not been possible, we intend to keep the celebration going until we can all be together and look forward to recognizing our great chapter during the 2021-22 WCU 150th anniversary year. Check out our chapter page for the most updated information and to support our chapter scholarship: www.wcualumni.org/YorkChapter. Find us on Facebook and hear from us on our Ramblings Live! Feature next month: York County West Chester Alumni Association.

**ZETA PSI ALUMNI CHAPTER**

Calling all brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha to join us for our 50th anniversary. We are building our alumni network and looking forward to supporting the activities of our Zeta Psi Chapter at WCU. Help us to celebrate all the great history of our fraternity and to impact the future of our Zeta Psi Golden Rams. Check out our chapter page for all of our upcoming events and chapter meetings: www.wcualumni.org/ZetaPsi.

**UPCOMING CHAPTER ADDITIONS**

Seeking all interested alumni to join us in the creation of a Philadelphia Alumni Network. Contact Brigid Gallagher, assistant director of alumni engagement, at bgallagher@wcupa.edu.

Interested in getting involved in a local chapter or in starting a new one? Check our chapter page, www.wcualumni.org/chapters, to see how you can reconnect with your fellow Golden Rams! Contact the Alumni Office to find out how you can be a part of leadership in the WCU Alumni network: alumni@wcupa.edu.

**THE OFFICIAL ALUMNI SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING PLATFORM**

Have you joined Ram Nation yet? Ram Nation is WCU’s official social and professional networking platform! Connect with fellow alumni who are eager to hear your story and support your professional network.

New to your career? Request a mentor. Established professional? Mentor students and fellow alumni.

It takes minutes to sign up.

Register today at www.wcualumni.org/RamNation. Join a group and help strengthen the Golden Rams of today and tomorrow!
1950s
Iris Gray Dowling ’56, M’66 celebrated the 2020 release of her fifth picture book and 16th book, Toads: Friends You Never Thought You Had. The book explores the life cycle of the toad from egg to tadpole to the adult toad. Readers are challenged to study and take care of toads as friends. Illustrations depict how frogs and toads differ. Many pictures were photographed and painted by the author; other photographs were contributed by family and friends who photographed toads in places not often seen by humans. This year, she also wrote an article about the vast amount of work done for the seniors of southern Chester County by the Oxford Senior Center for the fall issue of Oxfordian Magazine.

Terry German ’59 earned 10 varsity letters during his time at West Chester State Teacher’s College. Since graduating, he has taken pride in giving back to his sports community, including coordinating a bike-a-thon and numerous golf tournaments to raise money for community efforts, including cystic fibrosis and cancer charities and educational scholarships. He also owned and operated Camp Olympic, a day/sports camp in Emmaus, PA, that provided scholarships to children in need. He is a member of the Emil Messikomer Hall of Fame and has enjoyed giving back to others because of the smiles it brings to their faces.

1960s
Lew Jones ’62 retired from the FBI.

Diane (Polkinhorn) Popma ’62, M’65 has retired and is loving it!

Robert Boney ’69 has practiced law for 45 years in Mays Landing, NJ.

1970s
Alex Murphy ’71 was named the 2020 Top Lawyer for entertainment law by Main Line Today magazine for the third consecutive year. He has more than 40 years of experience exclusively as an entertainment lawyer, representing clients nationally and internationally, and is based in West Chester, PA, after many years being primarily based in New York City. He has been an adjunct professor at Delaware Law School for 20 years, where he teaches entertainment law, and is the faculty advisor for its student Sports and Entertainment Law Association.

Linda Sue (Krumm) Walker ’71 retired as a deacon in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Peter MacGregor ’77 coached championship teams in football, ice hockey, and lacrosse at the Episcopal Academy and was a sales executive at Merck & Co. for 25 years.

N. Jacquelyne North ’77 retired as chief of staff and director of strategic projects after 22 years at GlaxoSmithKline and 16 years at GE/Lockheed Martin, where she was a project management professional. She is now volunteering as the Rector’s Warden at Christ Church Ithan Episcopal Church in Villanova and on the WCU Business Advisory Council.

Joseph Pitura ’78 retired as an educator after 42 wonderful years. His nine-year career in Georgia and 33 years in Fort Myers, FL, included all three levels: elementary, middle, and high school. Positions included teacher, coach (football, wrestling, track, baseball), assistant principal, principal, and district coordinator. He credits his teachers at West Chester for preparing him to be successful.
Theresa E. Loscalzo ’79, co-managing partner of Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis LLP, has been elected to the board of directors of The Forum of Executive Women, the Greater Philadelphia region’s premier women’s leadership organization of more than 450 influential women. Loscalzo, a longstanding member of The Forum, previously served on the board from 2014 to 2018, and from 2018 to 2020 was chairman of the board of The Forum Foundation, a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

1980s

William Scott ’81 recently published The Essential World War II Quiz Book.

Thomas Verchot ’83 was commissioned to make a video of solo works for trumpets for a series called “The World,” produced as a weekly project during the global pandemic by the Virchow Ostrava Center for New Music in Ostrava, Czech Republic. He also recorded solo works by Giacinto Scelsi, Stefan Wolpe, Olga Neuwirth, and Elliot Carter.

Thomas A. Boulden ’84 has been named, for the 14th straight year, to this year’s Best Lawyers list for his trust and estate litigation practice at Timoney Knox, LLP, in Fort Washington, PA. Since 2014, he has also been recognized annually by Thomson Reuters’ Super Lawyers rating service.

1990s

Mark Salmi ’91, who was inducted into the Neshaminy Hall of Fame in 2012 for baseball, has been the athletic director at Neshaminy Middle School since 2001.

Karen Skolfield ’94 won this year’s Massachusetts Book Awards poetry prize for her collection Battle Dress (W.W. Norton, 2019). The Massachusetts Book Awards recognize significant works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and children’s young adult literature published by Massachusetts residents or about Massachusetts subjects. Her book also won the Barnard Women Poets Prize. Skolfield is the poet laureate of Northampton, MA, for 2019-2021.

2000s

Brian Gibson ’01 published his first fiction book, Into the Shadows, on Amazon and is currently working on a sequel.

Jennifer (Bollinger) Licate ’01 published her first book by Boys Town Press in September 2020. He’s Not Teasing! is the first title in the Navigating Friendship Series. It is a quick read chapter book for grades 4 through 7 that examines the differences between bullying and teasing, the fragile friendships of children, and the power of kindness.

Nicole Albright ’03 recently became the band director at Chambersburg (PA) Area Senior High School and is also teaching high school music classes.

Christopher Mullen ’03, M’05 was appointed executive director of The Workforce Institute in July 2020. The Institute is a think tank that helps organizations drive performance by addressing human capital management issues that affect both hourly and salaried employees. Through education and research, it empowers organizations with practical ideas for optimizing the 21st-century workplace.

For the fourth consecutive year, Ethan F. Abramowitz ’05 has been selected to the Pennsylvania Rising Stars list for 2019. Each year, no more than 2.5 percent of the state’s lawyers are selected by the research team at Super Lawyers to receive this honor. Abramowitz is nationally recognized for his representation of disabled professionals.

Maria (Hartz) Duerson ’06 found herself working in the behavior specialist field and went on to receive her master’s and graduate certificate in ABA and special education. She is now a lead clinician and owner of the Umbrella Functional Consulting & Support Team in Croydon, PA.

Rob Williams ’07 accepted the position of director of outreach at Seminary Ridge Museum and Education Center in Gettysburg, PA.

2010s

Diana (Gomola) Miller ’10 published her first work of fiction, Descent: The Demon Chronicles. It and its sequel will be published through FyreSyde publishing in August 2021, but is available currently on Amazon.

Jon Kuklis ’11 graduated in May 2020 from Johns Hopkins University with a master of science in cybersecurity.

Colleen Tewksbury M’13 was appointed by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the world’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals, to a three-year term as a media spokesperson.
Jonathan E. White ’13, special events production coordinator at the Philadelphia International Airport, was presented with a citation from the Philadelphia City Council and the Philadelphia Office of Veterans Affairs. He was recognized after retiring from the U. S. Armed Forces with over 20 years of service in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, U. S. Air Force Reserve, and U. S. Army. He also received the Air Force Commendation Medal from the 111th Operations Support Squadron for responding to an accident in which he rescued a father, the man’s five children, and their dog from an overturned, smoking minivan on I-295 in New Jersey.

Courtland Bragg ’14, an Emmy Award-winning associate director/producer at NFL Films, was named to The Athletic’s NFL 40 under 40.

Lauren Grow ’16 was elected to the West Chester University Alumni Association Board of Directors and named to Main Line Today’s Emerging Leaders Under 30.

Calvin Mahony ’18, M’20 accepted a position at the University of New Hampshire in Durham as a residence hall director.

Tanner Barretta ’19 was promoted to staff II accountant at Belfint, Lyons & Shuman, PA. Barretta joined the firm as an intern in the summer of 2018 while completing his degree, and continued with the firm as a staff I accountant upon graduation. He has been able to experience many services, including nonprofit organizations, individual and business tax return preparation, and employee benefit plans. He has also passed all parts of the CPA exam and has submitted his application for licensure.

Elefteria “Ellie” Zerefos ’19 is the senior band director at Pottsgrove High School. The school had never had a female music instructor and the entire district has only two other female band directors. She is the youngest high school instructor, hired at the age of 21. In addition to achieving her career goal, Zerefos is currently enrolled at Pennsylvania State University and is working on her graduate degree in curriculum and instruction with a minor in educational leadership and principal certification.

2020s

In June 2020, Joseph D. Bittner ’20 proudly represented the ROTC Dauntless Battalion during the virtual National Commissioning Ceremony, one of the most prominent adaptations to conducting Army ROTC training during COVID-19.

Kathryn Roncoroni ’20 is heading to Wales to earn her master’s degree while continuing to play field hockey at Swansea University.

IN MEMORIAM
1941 Jane (Beeby) Umstead
1949 Eleanor (Pengelski) MacNicoll
1950 Jeanne Marie Brierly
1955 John L. Measley
1955 Norma Jean Koch
1964 Alice (Frye) Welker
1965 Paul Eyanson
1972 Eleanor (Rubbo) Donaldson
1973, M’91 Paula Jean Miller
2018 Troy Hughes
2020 Nele Van Hees

SUBMIT your class notes to the Office of Alumni Relations to alumni@wcupa.edu.

DEATH NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE
Contact the Alumni Relations Office with a copy of the decedent’s obituary from a newspaper or the internet, or a copy of a letter or email from a family member of the deceased. Please note: Death notifications will not be accepted via telephone.

Photo Submission Guidelines

Photos should be no less than 300 DPI and in JPG format.

If you are scanning a printed photo, please set the scanning resolution to at least 300 dpi.

Digital camera and/or cell phone shots should be taken on the highest resolution setting available.

Photos should be emailed as an attachment, not pasted into the email or document.

We reserve the right to not publish a photo of low quality, and not all photos can be published.

Please send your photos as email attachments to the attention of the WCU Alumni Relations Office at alumni@wcupa.edu.
ENGAGEMENTS
(1) Danielle Rohaly to Bradley Moyer ’11

MARRIAGES
(2) Josh Winter ’05 to Lauren Sacher ’16 in June 2019
(3) Brittany Jones ’14 to Ryan Gatta ’14, M’17 in July 2020

FUTURE ALUMNI
(4) Josh Winter ’05 and Lauren Sacher Winter ’16 welcomed Savannah Noelle Winter in May 2020.
When he was a ninth grader in Easton, PA, Bob Curnow started listening to recordings of the Stan Kenton Orchestra, one of the great big bands. The day after he graduated from WCU in 1963, the 21-year-old began playing trombone — for Stan Kenton.

“It was remarkable,” said Curnow. “At a very young age, I was able to attain a big dream of my life, getting to play with Stan.”

Two years earlier, Curnow had attended a summer jazz camp run by Kenton, and then — at Kenton’s request — the next summer had been a camp counselor. En route to London in 1963, Kenton asked Curnow to write an arrangement of “God Save the Queen.” After writing and arranging a lot as the student leader of WCU’s fabled Criterions jazz band, an unfazed Curnow delivered.

“I don’t think the opportunity to write so much would have happened at any other institution,” said Curnow.

Returning to Kenton’s organization in 1971, Curnow served as chief arranger, conductor, and record producer, as well as general manager of Kenton’s record company.

In the interim, he had earned master’s degrees in music education and theory & composition, and completed all but his Ph.D. dissertation at Michigan State University. He then taught music for six years at Case Western Reserve University. After again leaving Kenton, beginning in 1976 he taught and conducted jazz at California State University, Los Angeles for 11 years and, throughout the 1980s, directed the McDonald’s All-American High School Band.

In 1976, Curnow also founded Sierra Music Publications, which today is one of the foremost providers of arrangements for high school, university, and professional jazz bands. The firm is now based in Liberty Lake, WA, where Curnow and his wife Darlene ’64, moved with their children in 1987, and where Curnow led his own band for 30 years.

Of Sierra’s 900 pieces for mostly 17-piece jazz bands, he wrote the individual instrument notations for 80 percent of them. While much of the catalog is traditional big band, it also includes arrangements for more contemporary artists, such as Pat Metheny and Radiohead.

“I’m really proud of having created such a large library of music that’s available to anyone around the world in order to ‘raise the game’ for big band music,” he said.

Over the past 16 years, the WCU 2005 Distinguished Music Alumnus Award winner has donated almost $60,000 worth of musical compositions, CDs, and books to the Wells School of Music.

“I want to help in any way I can to pay back West Chester for the wonderful education I received,” he said.
During last winter’s academic break, Marci Major ’01, associate professor and chair of the Department of Music Education and Music Therapy, spent an intensive two weeks touring Israel with other U.S. college professors. She met with Israeli music educators and explored the broader culture and society as part of the 2019/20 Winter Faculty Fellowship Program funded by the Jewish National Fund.

“It was life-changing and so motivating,” recalled Major. “I learned that the late Shimon Peres, the former president and prime minister of Israel, said that ‘My only regret is that I didn’t dream big enough.’”

That inspired Major, who coordinates field experiences and student teaching for music education majors, to consider how such experiences could be broadened through service learning. When the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown hit in March, that brainstorming quickly became Music Service Learning (MSL), her nonprofit organization that pairs collegiate music students wanting teaching and real-life experiences with music teachers who desperately need help reacting to the pandemic’s challenges.

More than 100 student volunteers and 13 volunteer professor mentors from 12 universities have helped teachers from 20 states and six countries on over 70 projects. Students from WCU and elsewhere have curated a website of 200-plus resources and created a YouTube channel with more than 100 videos for music teachers.

Other projects include meshing videos of elementary school singers in Michigan into a virtual ensemble video performance; making professional recordings of string compositions created by Lower Moreland High School students; and working with an Iranian music teacher to create a series of YouTube videos that will be understandable worldwide.

“MSL projects don’t replace in-depth student teaching or other field placements, but expand students’ breadth of experience,” explained Major, “such as working with urban students … seeing and experiencing lots of different music programs from around the world.”

After earning her B.S. in music education from WCU in 2001, the Pottstown native focused on chorale conducting while earning her master’s degree from Michigan State University (2007) and Ph.D. from Ohio State University (2010). She taught middle and high school choir in Michigan, and then was an assistant professor and assistant director of choral activities at the University of Missouri before returning to WCU in 2015.

“I love creating innovative ways to inspire students to think about big picture, social justice issues like diversity, equity, and inclusion,” said Major, “and how they can use their talents in music education to be agents of change in meaningful ways.”
Past guests include:

**Conor Hepp ’08,**
Executive Director of the Chester County History Center

**Chris Heivly ’82,**
Co-Founder of Mapquest and current Senior Vice President of Ecosystem Development at Techstarts & Managing Director at Build the Fort

**Sue Weldon ’86,**
Founder & CEO of Unite for Her

**Anita Foeman,**
WCU Professor of Media/Communication & Director of the DNA Discussion Project

Access upcoming events and recordings by visiting wcualumni.org/RamblingsLive.