

RIDER

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS | FALL 2021

AMERICAN PARADOX

New research about Benjamin Van Cleve, whose
18th-century house stands on Rider's campus,
illuminates the history of slavery in New Jersey





FRIENDS REUNION

As a worldwide pandemic kept many students apart for a year and a half, joyous (COVID-compliant) reunions with fellow Broncs were common this fall. Now back on campus, friends Angel Sanches (left), a senior political science major, and Faythe Morales (right), a junior health sciences major, picked up where they left off.

PHOTO BY PETER G. BORG



Van Cleve House

14

AMERICAN PARADOX

The story of Benjamin Van Cleve, whose home resides on campus, reveals the local history of slavery in New Jersey.

22

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

More than 100 species roam the land, air and water at Rider. From the Egyptian goose to the snapping turtle, meet some of our favorite residents.

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Editor

Adam Grybowski

Associate Editor

Rachel Stengel '14, '20

Art Direction and Design

Tiffani Angelone

Photography

Peter G. Borg

Contributing Writers

Diane Cornell

A.J. Moore

Gregory Ott

Contributing Illustrators

Natalie Nguyen

Megan Rosanova

President

Gregory G. Dell'Omo, Ph.D.

Vice President for

University Advancement

Karin Klim

Associate Vice President

for University Marketing

& Communications

Kristine A. Brown

Alumni Association President

Stephen Brill '01

To reach us, write to:

2083 Lawrenceville Road
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-3099
609-896-5000
magazine@rider.edu
rider.edu/ridermagazine

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Dear alumni and friends,

THE CALENDAR DOESN'T OFFICIALLY MARK THE NEW YEAR UNTIL JANUARY. FOR MANY OF US THOUGH, RETURNING TO SCHOOL IN THE FALL, AND SAYING GOODBYE TO SUMMER VACATION, OFTEN FEELS LIKE THE TRUER MARK OF ONE YEAR ENDING AND A NEW ONE BEGINNING.

As we experience this moment at Rider, I'm grateful for the consistency of our rich traditions, our faith in the transformative power of education and our pursuit of scholarly inquiry. I'm equally grateful for our courage to embrace what's new.

This issue of *Rider* magazine brings to light some instances where embracing change is particularly meaningful.

In the faculty spotlight, Dr. Elizabeth Hawthorne discusses how she's working to change the cybersecurity workforce. She shares that a shortage of cybersecurity professionals is predicted to exceed more than three million people, making the world more vulnerable to cybercrime. Hawthorne has worked to help increase the number of women working in the field of cybersecurity from 11% to 25%, a change that she hopes continues to grow.

In a profile, we learn about how a young alumna's life changed dramatically with a cancer diagnosis. In response, Lorelei Colbert '14 launched a kindness challenge to coincide with her chemotherapy treatments, hoping to change the



world with thousands of simple acts.

In the cover story, we finally see Benjamin Van Cleve in his full complexity. The namesake of a centuries-old house on campus, Van Cleve

lived in the age of the American Revolution. He fought and worked for liberty while also, we have recently learned, owning enslaved people. For too long this insightful history has remained obscure and unexamined. I'm encouraged by those who want to face these painful truths of our shared history, learn from them and grow.

As we look ahead to the many new school years to come, these are the kinds of change I hope we can all embrace with courage, openness and hope. These are the kinds of change that will make Rider, and our greater society, a truer and more compassionate place.

Sincerely,

Gregory G. Dell'Omo, Ph.D.
President, Rider University



A job or grad school — we guarantee it

The Class of 2022 will be the first to experience Rider's new Cranberry Investment program. The investment reinforces the University's longstanding commitment to providing transformative student experiences that lead to career success.

The program guarantees that undergraduate students who fulfill their responsibilities will obtain an entry-level job related to their field of study or be accepted into graduate or professional school within six months of graduation. The Office of Career Development and Success will support current students, prior to graduation, by helping them find internships, co-ops, field work and other professional opportunities.

For any eligible student who does not acquire an entry-level position in their field of study or acceptance into graduate or professional school within six months of graduation, Rider will provide focused career coaching and/or either additional undergraduate coursework (up to nine credits for free) or a paid internship to gain experience in their field of study.

Opportunity brewing

Rider welcomed a new entirely student-run Saxbys cafe to Sweigart Hall this fall. In partnership with the popular Philadelphia-based coffee company, each semester a student cafe executive officer will oversee all operations of the cafe. As the inaugural student CEO, senior management and leadership major Anna Corelli is earning a full semester's worth of credit and a wage.

"This partnership is tailor-made to provide the kind of engaged learning experiences we prioritize for our students," says President Gregory G. Dell'Omo, Ph.D.



NEWSWORTHY

The University's student newspaper, *The Rider News*, raked in awards for the 2020-21 academic year. On the state and regional level, the paper won eight awards in the New Jersey Press Foundation's NJ College Newspaper Contest and five awards in the Society of Professional Journalists' Region 1 Mark of Excellence Awards.

Executive editor Stephen Neukam '21 went on to win the national Society of Professional Journalists' Mark of Excellence Award for In-Depth Reporting for small schools. The journalism and political science double major also earned a full tuition scholarship to attend his top choice for graduate school, the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland.

ONCE, TWICE, THREE TIMES A BRONC

Iram Khan '12, '13, '21 became the first student ever to earn a bachelor's, a master's and a doctorate all from Rider. Khan, assistant director of Rider's Office of Career Development and Success, earned two previous degrees in accounting and in May became a member of the second class of Doctor of Educational Leadership graduates.

Rider is a family affair for Khan. She and her sisters, Anam '12, '13 and Komal '18, '19, have earned seven degrees from the University. Her husband, Ali Raza Khan '19, also graduated from Rider.



GIVING BACK

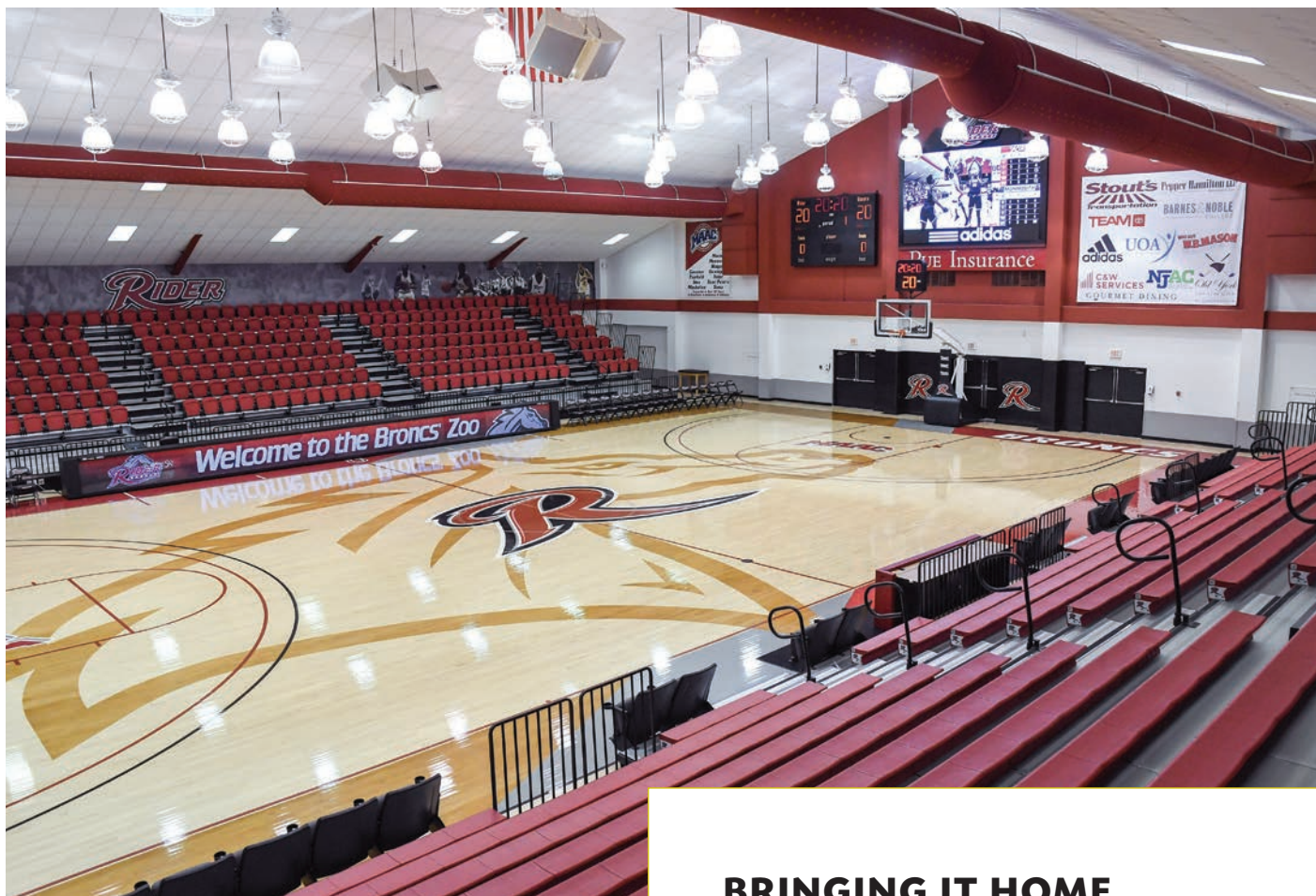
Strong support from alumni, faculty, staff and friends led Rider University to another solid year of fundraising, securing more than \$13 million during this last fiscal year. The total included the largest gift the University ever received for the sciences and contained a record \$3 million in gifts and pledges for Rider's NCAA Division I Athletics program.

Additionally, since the pandemic began, the University has raised \$31 million from its supporters. "This year has seen an extraordinary demonstration of commitment to Rider and its students," says President Gregory G. Dell'Omo, Ph.D. "Having such a strong level of support during this pivotal time is inspiring and demonstrates the confidence of our community in Rider's mission to provide an affordable, inclusive and enriching education for all of our students."

Choral ambassador

Joseph Beck '59, a student of Westminster Choir College Founder John Finley Williamson, died on Aug. 2. He was 86. Beck was committed to the preservation of his teacher and mentor's musical legacy, writing *America's Choral Ambassador: John Finley Williamson* and editing and publishing *Selected Writings of John Finley Williamson*. On several occasions, Beck, pictured below with wife Sara, who survives him, visited Westminster students to discuss Williamson's legacy and the importance of his choral vision. A regular fixture at Westminster alumni reunions and a generous supporter of many patron events, Beck received the Westminster Alumni Merit Award and Distinguished Alumni Service Award and was a member of the Dean's Advisory Council.





In his lane

Greg Meehan '01 was the head coach of the 2020 U.S. Olympic women's swimming team. He served as an assistant coach at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

A Rider University Athletics Hall of Famer, Meehan swam the second-fastest 200 backstroke, the third-fastest 100 backstroke and the fifth-fastest 1,000 freestyle at the time he was a student.



BRINGING IT HOME

Dream of having your name in Alumni Gym? Now you can as Rider plans to turn the space into a modern Division I NCAA facility. Supporters can name an arena seat for \$500, a locker for \$1,000 or a courtside padded seat for \$2,500 or join other prominent donors on a planned Donor Wall for gifts of \$5,000 or more. Additional naming opportunities may be found at rider.edu/bringing-it-home.

Soothing sounds

A new program is bringing performances by Westminster Choir College students to local medical centers. Music for Healing, directed by Professor of Music Education Emeritus Frank Abrahams, is a collection of three videos available for patients to watch on a television channel available at Capital Health and Penn Medicine/Princeton Health.

"Music is healing and we appreciate having the opportunity to share such wonderful performances with our patients and guests," says Elizabeth Upham, director of patient experience at Capital Health.



Marquee name

Judith Persichilli '80 leads the state of New Jersey in the fight against COVID-19 as health commissioner. A new Department of Health building in downtown Trenton will be named in her honor.

"Now all those who pass through the halls of the Judith M. Persichilli Building will be reminded of Judy's selfless, honorable and dedicated service to our state and its residents during the greatest public health crisis in New Jersey's history," says Gov. Phil Murphy.

FINE DINING

Rider Dining was recognized nationally for excellence in dining services. It received a gold award from this year's Loyal E. Horton Dining Awards in the category of Residential Dining Concepts. The criteria upon which entries were judged included menu; merchandising and food presentation; marketing; and nutrition and wellness.



Chief diversity officer

Barbara J. Lawrence was appointed Rider University's inaugural vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion/chief diversity officer. In this cabinet-level position, Lawrence is charged with leading Rider's strategic direction as it relates to inclusive excellence.

Lawrence previously served in a similar role at Guilford College in Greensboro, N.C., where she developed the institution's five-year strategic diversity, equity and inclusion plan and served as an associate professor. Prior to working in higher education, Lawrence spent 12 years serving as a police officer in the New York Police Department. She is also certified as a Title IX coordinator and investigator.



Dr. Elizabeth Hawthorne

LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE & PHYSICS
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, ONLINE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CYBERSECURITY

“ I TEACH BECAUSE I ENJOY INSPIRING OTHERS TO STAY CURIOUS. ”

Dr. Elizabeth Hawthorne is in the 25% — the percentage who are women working in the cybersecurity field. Hawthorne is proud to have seen that number grow in the past few years, especially as a founding advisory board member of the organization Women in Cybersecurity (WiCyS).

“I’ve been to all of the WiCyS conferences and have all the T-shirts,” she says. “When WiCyS started eight years ago, women were only 11% of the cybersecurity workforce. The national WiCyS initiative has really moved the needle for women in cybersecurity.”

Hawthorne is dedicated to educating the next generation of “cyber warriors,” as she calls her students. As a cyber forensic expert, she teaches her warriors to investigate and solve cybercrimes.

The need for cybersecurity professionals is crucial, Hawthorne says, with a projected shortage of 3.5 million workers.

“Our country is not producing enough cybersecurity professionals,” she says. “Because we’re so connected through technology, it provides an opportunity for those who want to do harm. This is the new era of crime.”

WHAT ARE SOME UNDERLYING CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN WORKING IN CYBERSECURITY?

Definitely overcoming the imposter syndrome, which essentially states that women lack the confidence despite having the credentials and experience. Research indicates a woman will look at a job description and think, “I only have

60% of the requirements. I better not apply.” While a man will see the same job requirements and say, “Oh, I’ve got 50-60%. I’ll apply.” We need to coach young women interested in cyber to think, “Go for it! Don’t tell yourself no. Don’t let anybody else tell you no.”

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CYBER THREATS?

The most serious cyber threat today is ransomware. Cybercriminals lock up your system using encryption and demand a ransom before handing over the decryption key. An effective countermeasure to ransomware is a daily backup. If you backed up your information and the criminals hold your computing system hostage, you can restore your applications and data onto a new system, which is cheaper than paying the ransom.

HOW ARE MOST PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO CYBERCRIME?

Cybercriminals use bots to automatically crawl through the internet, looking for virtual computer ports unwittingly left open to exploit with malware. There are about 65,000 virtual ports per internet connection. When you connect your computer to the internet, most ports are open by default. You may use about seven of them while surfing the internet and sending email. By not closing the unused ports, it’s like leaving your home windows and doors wide open for criminals to help themselves.

By Rachel Stengel '14, '20
Photo by Peter G. Borg

SPRING

2021



ATHLETIC HIGHLIGHTS



“

I WAS JUST TRYING TO KEEP AS CALM AS I COULD. I COULD SEE MY TEAMMATES READY TO RUN OUT OF THE DUGOUT, AND I WAS TRYING TO NOT LOOK AT THEM. YOU KNOW WHAT MAY BE ABOUT TO HAPPEN AND **YOU'VE JUST GOT TO STAY FOCUSED** ON THE LAST OUT.

”

Graduate student **Cal Stalzer** closed out Rider's game against top-seeded Fairfield University on May 28 to win the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championship, the team's first since 2010. Stalzer pitched four shutout innings, allowing only two hits and striking out three batters. The June trip to the NCAA tournament was the team's 14th overall.

VOLLEYBALL

In April, the team won its first-ever MAAC Championship. The Broncs then made their first NCAA Tournament main draw appearance since 1994. Junior **Morgan Romano** earned MAAC Player of the Year, while senior **Anilee Sher** was named MAAC Championship MVP and MAAC Co-Setter of the Year. Head Coach **Jeff Rotondo** was selected as MAAC Coach of the Year.

FIELD HOCKEY

Also in April, the Broncs won their seventh league tournament championship under Head Coach **Lori Hussong**. Senior **Julia Divorra** was named Northeast Conference (NEC) Player and Offensive Player of the Year. Hussong was selected NEC Coach of the Year. Six Broncs were named to the All-NEC Teams.

SOFTBALL

Softball qualified for the MAAC Championships for the first time since 2006, with junior **Elena Gonzalez** becoming the Broncs' first All-Region selection since 2004.

TRACK & FIELD

Sophomore **Zach Manowitz** and **Kristin Siegle '20, '21** of track & field each qualified for the NCAA East Preliminary Championships after Siegle broke the school records in both the 800 and 1500 this spring.

Lindsay Bauer '20, '21 and senior **Darnell St. Clair**, also of track & field, both earned MAAC Field Most Outstanding Performer.

A Whole New Ballgame

A.J. MOORE ON SPORTS AND MEDIA

Bada-bing

What will it take to lure audiences off their couches and back into stadiums and multiplexes?

By A.J. Moore



Associate Professor of Journalism A.J. Moore is the director of Rider's program in sports media.

If you are a sports fan, keep an eye out for what happens following the October release of the Sopranos prequel, *The Many Saints of Newark*. It is going to be one of the important events in the post-COVID media and entertainment marketplace.

How audiences — particularly older audiences — react to a young Tony Soprano may signal how difficult it will be for viewers to give up the comforts and control of home and go back to live or other in-person events, including sporting events.

With the onset of COVID, people essentially were prevented from attending events and being part of an audience. But even prior to the pandemic, moviegoing was on the decline, especially for the “older demographics” (that is, anyone over the age of 22; yes, in the movie industry, old age starts setting in around then). Professional sports were suffering a similar overall decline in attendance. Make no mistake: Sports and movies both remain extremely popular, it's just that fewer people seem interested in going through the trouble to watch them in person.

On the movie side, the studios were already bypassing huge segments of people by going all-in to satisfy young viewers. They have always been a target audience for the industry, and they are even more vital in an age of fantastic home theaters and a multitude of streaming services.

Then — bada-bing — comes *The Many Saints of Newark*, a real opportunity for adults to put down the remote and return to theaters for a movie made with them in mind.

Strong demand would be a positive indicator that people of wide-ranging demographics are still willing to pay for entertainment experiences outside of their home. Perhaps more movies catering to an older audience will follow. It could create a spark, the same way a winning sports team could bring fans back to the stands.

But if people choose to watch Paulie Walnuts during his formative days by streaming the movie at home, it might be the final lifeline movie studios toss to their graying audience.

Part of *The Sopranos* allure in the early 2000s was that this novelized story of Tony's different families and lives could be viewed at home. No tickets needed to be purchased. At home, parking was not a concern. And there were no lines for the bathroom or concession costs that made you truly question the need for popcorn and a soda.

Skipping the trek to the stadium has the same benefits.

When *Saints* hit theaters, I expect many, like myself, will put on their Members Only jackets and then sit down, not in the multiplex, but at home, even though we've enjoyed the big screen so many times in the past. Likewise, who knows when the next time I'll don my vintage Mike Schmidt jersey and head for the cheap seats at Citizens Bank Park.

SETTING



A NEW

STANDARD

SENIOR ANILEE SHER TRAINS ABROAD WITH PROFESSIONAL HOPES IN SIGHT

By Rachel Stengel '14, '20

Anilee Sher is getting used to being uncomfortable. For seven weeks this summer, the senior volleyball player trained with Israel's women's national volleyball team, which challenged her to play faster and train harder, all while acclimating to a different country.

"The biggest things I took away from the experience are the emotional and mental toughness aspects of everything," she says. "I really learned what it would be like playing professionally and saw what it will take for me to be in a foreign country on my own."

While Israel isn't completely unknown to Sher (she was born there and holds dual citizenship), the experience brought her squarely out of her comfort zone.

"I know the language, but it's difficult to be able to express yourself and show who you are in such a foreign place," she says. "I talked to a lot of the girls that play professionally and overseas and they said it's just something you have to get used to. You're always uncomfortable."

Early mornings, weight training, conditioning and even some beach training were part of the practice regime for Sher. She also had the opportunity to train with American Olympian Logan Tom, who is coaching the Israeli team.

"There were a lot of things I learned just off the bat, different movements that I didn't have before, different vision because the pace that they're playing at is extremely

fast, a lot faster than I'm used to," she says.

After an historic season for Rider volleyball, when the team won its first ever Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championship and advanced to play UCLA in the NCAA Tournament, Sher is ready to raise the bar this fall.

"I'm excited to bring a new speed to the team and let my teammates know that we can bring a new level to our game. We can rise," she says.

Individually, Sher amassed a number of accolades last year, including MAAC Championship MVP, MAAC Co-Setter of the Year, and membership to the All-MAAC and MAAC All-Academic Teams. She also led the MAAC and ranked 13th nationally with 11.17 assists per set.

Sher describes the past year as having come "full circle" for her family. Her father, Oren, was an outside hitter on UCLA's 1989 national champion men's volleyball team and a member of Israel's men's national team. Though the sport has been a family affair for Sher, she's focused on what's next after her senior year ends this spring. Playing professionally is the ultimate goal, but having been granted a fifth year of eligibility because of the pandemic, the psychology major may pursue a graduate degree in athletic leadership first.

"This season for me is about the team, but also for getting myself prepared for the next step," she says. "There's going to be a lot of individual work I have to put in."



A M E R I C A N P A R A D O X



THE STORY of Benjamin Van Cleve, whose 18th-century house stands on Rider's campus, illuminates the local history of slavery in New Jersey and the ongoing quest for racial justice.

By Adam Grybowski • Photography by Peter G. Borg

PILLARS OF THE COMMUNITY

SOMETIME IN THE LATE SPRING or early summer of 1792, a man named Samuel Hunt Sr. and his nephew Elias sat in jail after pleading guilty to manslaughter.

Samuel and Elias were descendants of one of the founding families of New Jersey's Maidenhead Township, the forerunner to what is called Lawrence Township today. Samuel and his wife, Sarah, had five children and also owned two enslaved boys, Peter and Charles, and a 16-year-old enslaved girl named Hagar.

According to testimony in the manslaughter case, on the morning of June 4, the Hunts tied Hagar to "a plum tree near the house." Elias claimed that Hagar had been caught in a scheme to poison the Hunts. As punishment, Elias and Samuel whipped the young woman with "six or seven thick hickory sticks," according to a witness. The thrashing produced a confession of guilt under extreme duress, and Hagar also professed where the poison could be found. (No poison was ever located.)

It's not clear how long the whipping lasted, but by nightfall, Hagar was dead.

An inquest ensued, and without dissent, witnesses concluded that Hagar's death was the result of a brutal whipping. An autopsy determined the cause of death as blood in the lungs, which the doctors attributed to Hagar's manic screaming during the beating. Samuel and Elias were indicted, and a 24-person jury then ruled that the severe whipping killed Hagar. Samuel's wife was accused of being an accessory to the crime.

After serving at most two months, Samuel and Elias were both released from jail in early August. Samuel's £300 bail was paid by two pillars of the community, a man named Joseph Brearley, whose distinguished family included a signer of the U.S. Constitution, and a Revolutionary War veteran, statesman and fellow slaveholder named Benjamin Van Cleve.



A house bearing the name "Van Cleve" was part of the 140-acre farm that Rider purchased in 1956 as it planned to move its campus from Trenton to Lawrenceville. This photo, dated 1954, shows the house in the bottom left-hand corner.

A FAMILIAR NAME

THE NAME "VAN CLEVE" is probably familiar to many people who are or have been associated with Rider. A house bearing the name was part of the 140-acre farm that Rider purchased in 1956 as it planned to move its campus from Trenton to Lawrenceville. The house has been part of the University's campus ever since, first as a student residence, then as the Admissions building and, since 1993, as the location for Rider's Office of Alumni Relations.

Born in Maidenhead in 1739, Van Cleve originally purchased the property on which the house was subsequently built in the early 1770s. During the Revolutionary War, he served as captain and major in the First Hunterdon militia. Less than two months after the U.S. declared independence, he fought in the Battle of Long Island in August 1776.

His military service ended on Nov. 13, 1777, following his election to the New Jersey Assembly — a body he served in almost continually until 1802, including four times as speaker. His political career also included serving as a justice of the peace, a judge on the Court of Common Pleas for Hunterdon County and the head of Maidenhead's government.

While in one sense he was devoted to liberty and justice, the fullness of Van Cleve's life story has remained obscure until only recently. In July 2020, Rider formed a task force charged with proactively researching the institution's historical relationship and connection with slavery and enslaved people. Dr. Brooke Hunter, an associate dean of Rider's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, where she is also an associate professor of history, and Dr. Evelyn McDowell, the chair of Rider's accounting department, co-chaired the task force. Its work, so far, has centered on the only known connection between the University and slavery: Benjamin Van Cleve.

Although his stature is minuscule compared to the Founding Fathers, like them, Van Cleve embodies the inherent contradiction of the American experiment: He simultaneously fought for the ideal of liberty while participating in and championing the cruelty of chattel slavery and the degradation and dehumanization of Black Americans.

"The story of Benjamin Van Cleve forces us to confront the paradox of liberty and slavery in American history," Hunter says.

Uncovering the Van Cleve story has placed the University into the national conversation about who we as a country choose to honor and memorialize, especially as it relates to slavery, the ongoing effects of systemic racism and the contentious quest for racial justice. But Van Cleve's story also serves to illuminate the often-misunderstood history of slavery in northern states like New Jersey.

"The violence of slavery was certainly not confined to the South," Hunter says.

LIFE ON THE FARM

ON DEC. 31, 1778, the *New Jersey Gazette* ran an advertisement announcing a reward for an enslaved woman named Dinah who had run away from Van Cleve on the day after Christmas. Van Cleve had purchased her only recently from a clergyman in Springfield, N.J.

Van Cleve was willing to offer a reward for what he considered substantial "property." The advertisement suggested Dinah may have been seeking out her brother in Freehold, N.J. Her fate, whether she was returned to bondage or not, remains unknown.

Because of a lack of historical sources, we don't know exactly what the experience of enslaved people like Dinah was like in Maidenhead. But if it resembled other rural areas in New Jersey, Hunter, who is also the current Lawrence Township historian, says it would have been on a much smaller scale than Southern plantations. In general, slavery in the North did not play the same central role in the economy as it did in the South.

By 1799, Van Cleve owned about 254 acres, making him the seventh largest landowner in the township. (His brother Aaron, who was also a slave owner, was ahead of him at number six, owning about 275 acres of land.) At the time, Van Cleve's house was surrounded by fields that grew wheat, rye, oats and corn. The crops were destined for markets in Philadelphia and New York, though some may have been exported to Europe and the Caribbean, where they would have been used to feed enslaved people working on sugar plantations.

Hunter says slave quarters did not exist in the township, meaning Van Cleve and the men and women he enslaved lived together in his house. Enslaved men worked alongside their masters, and also perhaps white indentured servants, as agricultural laborers. Enslaved women, like Dinah, primarily worked at domestic tasks like cooking and cleaning.

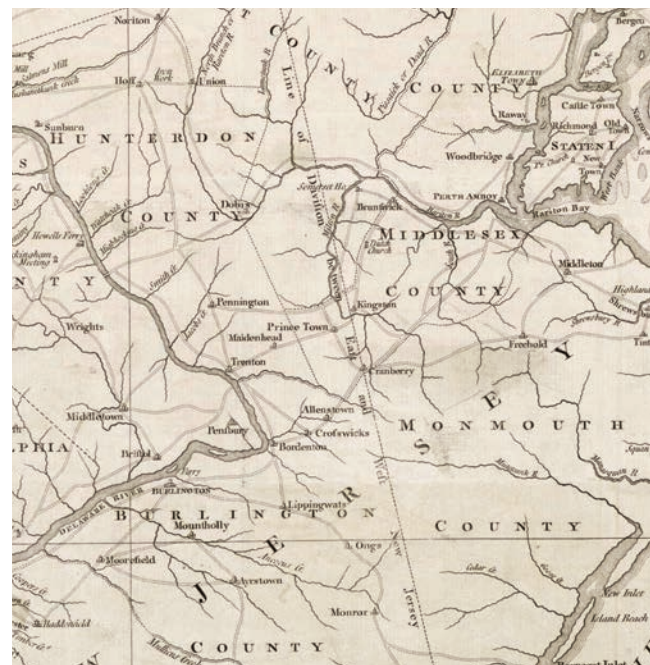
Despite the smaller scale of slavery in places like Maidenhead compared to Southern plantations, enslaved people suffered equally in the North and South, says Hunter. "Slavery in the North was just as dehumanizing as in the South. There are clear cases of brutality in the North, including in New Jersey and Lawrence Township. Evidence documents conflict and physical violence between masters and enslaved people and reveals the oppressive and dehumanizing character of slavery."

“THERE ARE CLEAR CASES OF BRUTALITY IN THE NORTH, INCLUDING IN NEW JERSEY AND LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP.”

Below, left: Dr. Brooke Hunter, an associate dean and associate professor of history, is also the Lawrence Township historian.

Below, right: A map, dated 1777, shows Maidenhead Township, the forerunner to Lawrence Township, in then-Hunterdon County.

SOURCE: Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library.



Page No. 1

SCHEDULE 1—Free Inhabitants in Lawrence Township **in the County of** Mercer **State of** New Jersey
enumerated by me, on the 12th **day of** July **1860** Edw. P. Hunt **Agent Marshal.**
Post Office Lawrence Township

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Above: The last known living enslaved person in Lawrence Township was Sylvia Hunt, age 95, according to U.S. census data.

SOURCE: 1860 U.S. Census, Lawrence Township, Mercer Co, New Jersey, Ancestry.com.

Left: A collection of birth records for the children of enslaved people born in Maidenhead Township. At bottom center, the earliest surviving local birth record under the 1804 Gradual Abolition Act. Under the Act, Robert, who was born to an enslaved woman on July 6, 1804, was eligible for freedom in 1829 once he turned 25.

SOURCE: Hunterdon Co., Birth Certificates of Children of Slaves, 1804–1835, Imaged Collection, New Jersey State Archives.

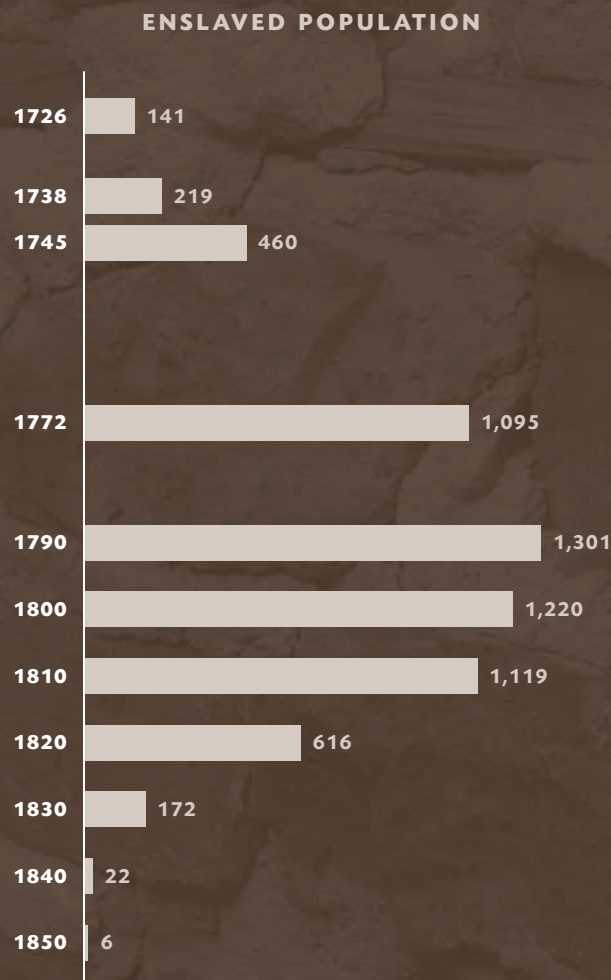
In 1846, “An Act to Abolish Slavery” reclassified the status of enslaved people as apprentices for life. Far from achieving emancipation, the act, in essence, gave slavery a different name. These apprentices continued to be listed more accurately as “slaves” on the 1850 and 1860 federal censuses.

Slavery persisted in New Jersey up to and through the Civil War until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. In Lawrence, the last known living enslaved person was recorded in 1860 — Sylvia Hunt, age 95.

For Van Cleve, it appears he lived with individuals who were not free up until the day of his death, Aug. 31, 1817. Court records from earlier that month show his residence included a nameless woman and boy, both Black, and a “bound” 16-year-old named Abigail Coulter. It’s possible all three were either enslaved or, at a minimum, indentured servants.

The rise and fall of enslaved populations in Hunterdon/Mercer counties

IN THE 18TH CENTURY, slavery grew substantially in Hunterdon County* until peaking in 1790. Reflecting the state’s gradual approach to abolition, the numbers only slowly declined over the decades. Slavery persisted in New Jersey up to and through the Civil War until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865.



*Mercer County was created in 1838. Prior to that time, Maidenhead/Lawrence Township was part of Hunterdon County.

In 1778, the *New Jersey Gazette* ran an advertisement announcing a reward for an enslaved woman named Dinah who had run away from Benjamin Van Cleve.

SOURCE: *New Jersey Gazette*, 31 Dec 1778,
Genealogybank.com

30 DOLLARS Reward.
RAN AWAY from Benjamin Vancleave's Esq. in Maidenhead, the 26th instant, (Dec.) a Negro WENCH named Dinah, 28 or 30 years of age, five feet six or seven inches high, black and very lusty. She was lately bought of Parson Van Arsdall at Springfield, and lived formerly at Rocky-Hill, and hath a brother living with Colonel Scudder, in Freehold, and its likely is gone there. Any person apprehending said wench and applying to Mr. Phillips, innkeeper, in Maidenhead, shall be entitled to the above reward and reasonale charges, paid by
WILLIAM CRAB.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

THE VAN CLEVE HOUSE passed out of the family's hands in 1824. Since then, it has withstood significant changes over time.

Its current form — a distinctive Italianate style — would probably be unrecognizable to its original builder. In fact, an inspection in the 1970s by the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry concluded there was little evidence of it being an 18th-century house at all. The report surmised the current house was in essence built around the original building — a project likely undertaken by one-time owner Benjamin White sometime before Rider purchased it.

Recently, more changes to the house have been proposed. The task force has prepared and submitted a report of its findings to President Gregory G. Dell'Omo, Ph.D., and presented to the Board of Trustees. The report includes a set of recommendations on how Rider can recognize this history and increase educational opportunities around it.

These efforts would include acknowledging Van Cleve's story and the story of slavery in Lawrence Township, as well as adopting historical markers in and around the house that memorialize

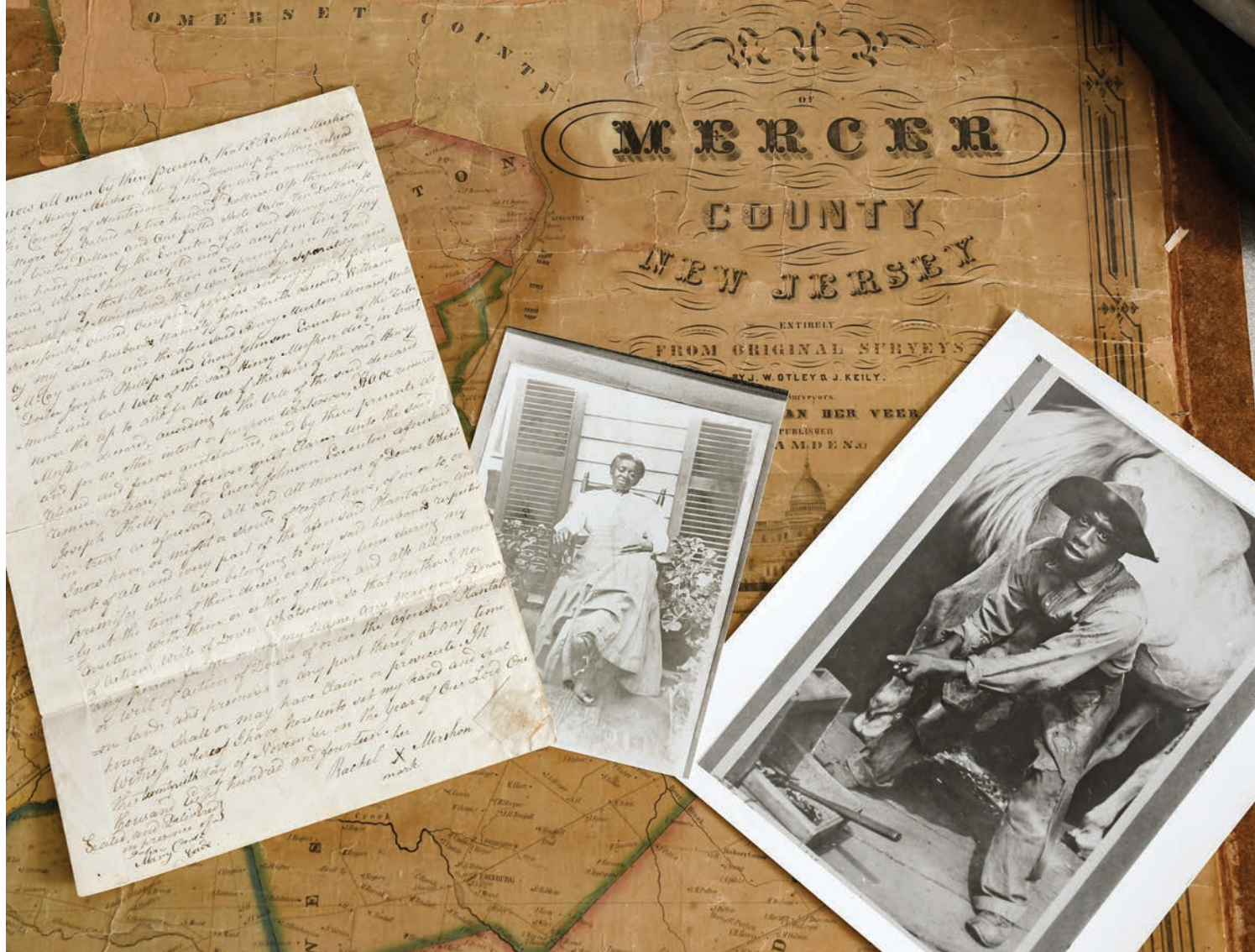
the enslaved people who suffered from the brutalizing institution of slavery on the surrounding land. Also among the proposed actions is removing the name "Van Cleve" from the building.

"These actions would represent a clear sign of respect for our University community, especially the students, faculty, staff, alumni and donors who are descendants of enslaved people," says McDowell, who in addition to co-chairing the task force is also a founding board member of the National Society of the Sons & Daughters of the United States Middle Passage, a lineage society that works to preserve the memory and history of slavery.

Both the Board and President Dell'Omo have expressed support and gratitude for the task force's work, and the Board is set to vote on a resolution to accept the recommendations of the task force in October (after this issue of *Rider* magazine went to print).

The task force's recommendations would elevate some of the people who have traditionally been subsumed in the shadows cast by those who held power over them, including the power of life and death. At Rider, this would include people like the enslaved woman Dinah, who courageously sought her freedom at great potential peril.

"For centuries, names like Van Cleve have been held up as exemplary while the people who suffered at their hands have remained nameless and unknown," McDowell says. "Hopefully, our actions could help to right this injustice and help create a truer portrait of our history, especially locally. We still have a lot to learn about the American story — and a lot to gain from that knowledge." ■



“FOR CENTURIES, NAMES LIKE VAN CLEVE HAVE BEEN HELD UP AS EXEMPLARY WHILE THE PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED UNDER THEM HAVE REMAINED NAMELESS AND UNKNOWN.”

Above, top: Archival materials related to African American history in Lawrence Township and the surrounding region helped inform new research into the life of Benjamin Van Cleve.

Above, bottom: Rider has used the Van Cleve House in various ways over the years, including as a student residence, the Admissions building and, since 1993, as the location for the Office of Alumni Relations.



Flocks of **Canada geese** (*Branta canadensis*) fly in V-shaped patterns.

Where the wild things are

More than 100 species roam Rider's 280-acre campus, from the Egyptian goose to the red fox to the blue heron. Timothy Forrest '18, in collaboration with Dr. Kathy Browne, an associate professor in the Department of Geological, Environmental, & Marine Sciences, Amanda Schopf '18 and senior geosciences major Jack Sangillo, created a wildlife guide to help appreciate the creatures who call Rider home.

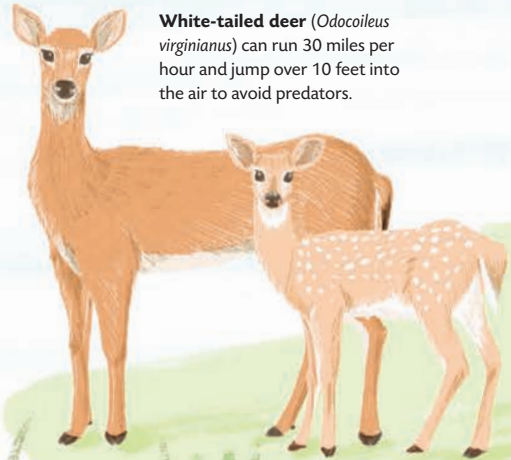
This map, which shows off some favorite campus inhabitants, is inspired by their work and informed by their research.

Illustration by Natalie Nguyen

Cottontail rabbits (*Lepus sylvaticus*) are crepuscular, meaning that they spend their time awake during dusk and dawn.



Once **red foxes** (*Vulpes vulpes*) reach a certain age, their mothers will bring them small prey to play with while they feed, building up their hunting skills.



White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) can run 30 miles per hour and jump over 10 feet into the air to avoid predators.



Newly hatched **mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) ducklings are ready to leave the nest within 13 to 16 hours.




Devotion to their lifelong partners has made **mute swans** (*Cygnus olor*) a symbol of love in many cultures.


The **Egyptian goose** (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*) is native to the Nile River Valley, but many self-sustaining populations in the U.S. are derived from birds who escaped private collectors' residences.




The **northern green frog** (*Rana clamitans melanota*) is known as the loud mouthed frog.




Blue jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) are known to mimic the calls of hawks, thought to be a method of warning other jays in the area.




The **northern cardinal** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) is one of the more recognizable examples of North American songbird species with females that sing.



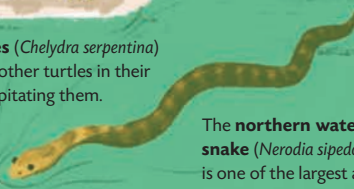
Eastern grey squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*) will live about 12 ½ years on average in the wild.




Red-bellied woodpeckers (*Melanerpes carolinus*) can extend their barbed tongues up to 2 inches to catch prey.




Snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*) will hunt and kill other turtles in their territory by decapitating them.




The **northern water snake** (*Nerodia sipedon*) is one of the largest and most common snakes in North America.




Pumpkinseeds (*Lepomis gibbosus*) mainly eat snails, worms, insects, mollusks, small fish and bits of vegetation.



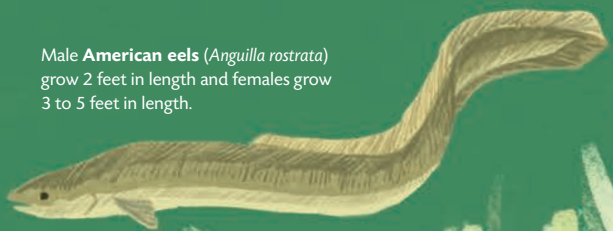
Golden shiners (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*) can spawn four to five times in a single season.




The **bluegill** (*Lepomis macrochirus*) is also commonly referred to as sunfish, bream or copper nose.



Of the catfish in New Jersey, **brown bullheads** (*Ameiurus nebulosus*) are the smallest and most common.



Male **American eels** (*Anguilla rostrata*) grow 2 feet in length and females grow 3 to 5 feet in length.



The neck of the **blue heron** (*Ardea herodias*) is specialized to allow them to attack quickly from a long distance.





3

Weddings, births, engagements and gatherings



7

1

Michaela Hady '16 and Nicholas Caminiti were married on March 20. At Rider, Hady studied secondary education and English. Two of her bridesmaids were fellow Rider alumnae, **Madison Keefrider '15** and **Allyson Galano '16**.

2

Samantha Ottavi '18 and **Caleb Miller '18** are engaged with plans to marry in 2024. The couple met as biochemistry majors at Rider and started their relationship in 2016.

3

Julia Muziani '19 welcomed daughter Natalia Marie Desinor on July 22. She weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces and was 20 inches long. Muziani says she loves being a mom to her sweet girl.

4

Maggie Brennan '20 and Joey Murdaco are engaged. During a trip to Disney World to celebrate Brennan's graduation, Murdaco proposed in front of Cinderella's Castle. Disney has held a special place in the couple's hearts. Nearly every weekend Murdaco visited Brennan on campus, they would watch a Disney movie. They are excited to continue making magical memories with a wedding planned for March 19, 2023.

5

Jennifer Patchett '20 and Bryce Harrigan are engaged. The couple met at Brookdale Community College and have been dating for seven years. They love to travel, cook and hang out with their dog. Harrigan proposed at Allaire State Park on June 13. Patchett studied public relations at Rider.

6

Nick Micciulli '15 and **Brittany Gilstein '14** were married on Nov. 15, 2020, at Falkirk Estate & Country Club in Central Valley, N.Y. A number of Rider alumni were members of the bridal party, including **Michelle Caravaglio '15**, **Rhea Phipps '14**, **Jared Theaman '15** and **Derek Rosengarth '15**. The couple met at the Student Government Association booth during an event in 2012 and began dating the following year. They were engaged on Dec. 12, 2018. In 2021, they relocated from Westchester, N.Y., to Cork, Ireland, to work abroad and travel the world.

7

Johnathan Jackson '17 and **Victoria (née Brewer) Jackson '18, '20** were married on April 24 in Bensalem, Pa., surrounded by a number of fellow Broncs. The couple met while running on the Rider track & field team and after 5 1/2 years of dating, they were engaged in June 2019. Johnathan studied human resource management and health care management as an undergraduate. Victoria studied public relations and earned her master's in business communication.



Dear alumni and friends,

I hope you and your families are well and enjoying the fall. As the campus becomes alive again with students, faculty and staff, I hope to have the opportunity to see you at Homecoming in November!

Because each of us received our start at Rider, I also want to let you know how we can help others start their journeys as Broncs. Alumni can now offer a special referral code to high school seniors that will waive the \$50 application fee. Instructions and more information can be found at rider.edu/refer.

Thank you for helping us welcome prospective students to the Rider family and showing them what a wonderful place this can be to spend their college years.

Stephen Brill '01

President, Alumni Board of Directors and Alumni Association

'60s

Dr. Alan L. Moss '65 published a new novel, *The Choices: A Treasure Hunt Thriller* (Cresting Wave Publishing), in October. He is the author of five published novels and two works of nonfiction. Before turning his attention to writing, Moss was a congressional fellow in the U.S. Senate and agency chief economist.

'70s

James F. Bass Jr. '72 retired in December 2020 as a full-time judge for the Chatham County Superior Court of the Eastern Judicial Circuit of Georgia. After 25 years on the bench, he assumed senior judge status in January. He says, "Though being able to serve when needed but at my discretion has lightened my calendar, I regularly preside over the Savannah-Chatham County Drug Court, which I established in October 2001. It's gratifying to continue with the program that was the first accountability option of its kind in the area and has been recognized on the state and national levels as a model diversion alternative. I'm also continuing to serve in Veterans Treatment Court and am active in various community leadership and service roles. As I'm settling into my new work pattern, my wife, Janice, who retired a couple of years ago, and I are enjoying time spent with our son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren."

John K. Smith '77 was appointed to the board of directors of the St. Baldrick's Foundation, the largest non-government funder of childhood cancer research grants. Smith is the president and CEO of Pennsylvania Lumbermen's Mutual Insurance Company. He



received a Bachelor of Science in Commerce from Rider and a Master in Business Administration from the University of Pittsburgh, in addition to many professional designations.

'80s

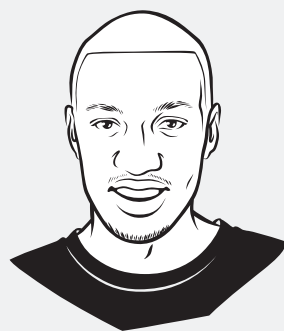
Vincent Milano '85, chief executive officer of Idera Pharmaceuticals, was appointed to the board of directors of BioCryst Pharmaceuticals in July.

Janine Kiriluk '89 joined Alloy Silverstein as director of small business services. The position is the result of a merger between Alloy Silverstein and JB Financial Associates LLC, a bookkeeping company Kiriluk founded in 2013. She has nearly 30 years of accounting, business and bookkeeping experience. She received a bachelor's in accounting from Rider.

'90s

Mike Johnson '90 was named a senior vice president and regional commercial executive of Riverview Bank in Susquehanna Township, Pa. He brings 34 years of banking experience to the job. Johnson received an associate degree from Bucks County Community College, a bachelor's from Philadelphia University and a master's in business administration from Rider.

Robert Braubitz '95, '12 was appointed to the role of vice president of finance at Valley Forge Casino Resort, a full-amenity gaming and entertainment resort. He received a bachelor's in business administration with a major in finance and his executive master's in business administration from Rider.



Home cooking

Dera Nd-Ezuma '13 opens a West African fast-casual restaurant

By Diane Cornell

Last year, as many business owners struggled through a tough year, Dera Nd-Ezuma '13 was busy making plans to open his very first restaurant, Suya Suya. The West African fast-casual restaurant officially opened its doors in Philadelphia's Northern Liberties neighborhood in April.

It's a risk to be a first-time restaurateur, one that becomes exponentially larger when you open during a global pandemic. But Nd-Ezuma is used to taking big risks, beginning when he was 16 years old and made the decision to leave his home in Nigeria to attend high school in New Jersey.

A big fan of Hollywood action movies, he thought life here would resemble what he saw on screen. But when he arrived in suburban Burlington County in New Jersey to enroll in Life Center Academy, a prep school and regional basketball powerhouse, he realized his mistake. Though he quickly adjusted to the scenery, the food was yet another surprise. He found nearly everything he tasted either overly salty or sweet. Living with a guardian and four other high school students, he was perplexed by the unfamiliar processed foods he was offered, like cold cuts. Nigeria, a West African country with a wide variety of ethnic communities, is known for its spicy and fragrant soups, sauces and rice-based dishes.

"I was eating not for flavor but to fill my stomach up," he recalls.

So he learned to cook for himself, beginning after college, where the 6-foot-10-inch Nd-Ezuma earned a degree in accounting and finance while playing center for Rider's basketball team. With the help of his mother, who guided him over the phone from Nigeria, he learned to make the dishes he grew up eating.

He found he had a knack for cooking, eventually straying from recipes to add his own spin to traditional dishes of jollof and uto rice and yaji spice-seasoned meats, now staples at Suya Suya. The name comes from grilled meat that his father would bring home as a treat for the family, and it is the centerpiece of most bowls and platters on his menu.

Nd-Ezuma turned to cooking after working as a certified public accountant, a job he found lacked the activity he had grown accustomed to as an NCAA Division I athlete. Although his timing proved problematic (he signed the restaurant's lease just months before Pennsylvania's stay-at-home orders were issued), he used the down time to plan how to share his culture through food before finally opening.

Despite the uncertainty of the ongoing health crisis, he remains encouraged by the response so far to the Nigerian street foods he loved as a child. Word is spreading in Northern Liberties, and among his former teammates too. Patrick Mansell '10, '13, Brandon Penn '12, Daniel Stewart '14 and Coach Kevin Baggett have all dropped by to show their support.

"I am 100% excited to be doing this," he says. Once again, Nd-Ezuma has found that risk has its rewards.



"When I arrived at Rider, I was an isolated, closeted gay man. Rider allowed me to find my authentic self and gave me the foundational skills to confidently find my place in the world. It's my privilege to give back."

- Brian Norton '98

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Nicole Woodland '98 was elevated from chief organizational effectiveness officer to president of Compas, Inc. She has been with Compas since 1998 and has held various positions throughout her career with the pharmaceutical media planning and buying firm. Woodland earned a bachelor's in business administration from Rider.

'00s

Paola Canepa '01 has been employed with Cadwalader, a law firm, for more than 11 years, most recently as an art director. At Rider, she received a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism.

Audrey Peterbark Ross '01, '03 was named Lake Ridge Elementary Teacher of the Year in Texas for the 2020-21 school year. A music teacher, she is currently working toward a doctorate in educational leadership from Liberty University in Virginia. Peterbark Ross received a bachelor's and a master's from Westminster Choir College.

Dr. Lynn Gary Atkins '04 was named the new artistic director of the Philadelphia Handbell Ensemble. He is the director of choral activities of the Pinelands Regional School District in Tuckerton, N.J., and a member of the music staff for All Saints Church of Princeton, N.J. Atkins received a Bachelor of Music in Music Education from Westminster Choir College and is a member of the first cohort to obtain the dual Master of Music/Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting from James Madison University.

Warren E. Moore '05 was appointed executive vice president, chief operating officer of Inspira Health in June. He

received a bachelor's in business management from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a master's in health and human services administration from Rider. Moore received Rider's Harold L. Conover Leadership Award in 2018.

Dr. Adam Angelozzi '06 was appointed superintendent of schools by the Point Pleasant School District Board of Education in New Jersey in June. His term began on July 1. Angelozzi previously served as principal of Manalapan High School in the Freehold Regional High School District. He received a Bachelor of Science in Physics (Secondary Education) from The College of New Jersey, a Master of Arts in Educational Administration from Rider and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Rowan.

Alexis Rastiello (née Lyon) '07 was promoted to P&O Business Partner, M&M'S Retail U.S., in April after six years with Mars, Inc.

'10s

Ryan LaBoy '10 is the new director of the Berkshire Children's Chorus. In addition to his new appointment, LaBoy will also serve as a virtual music instructor (conducting and voice) this season at the Shanti Bhavan Children's Project in Tamil Nadu, India, as part of a partnership with the New York-based organization Broadway for Arts Education. He received degrees in choral conducting and music education from the University of Minnesota and Westminster Choir College.

Dwight Sawin '11 was named vice president of finance of Lexington's Netgain

Virginia Roberts Colaguori '42	C. Richard Lusardo '56	Robert W. Zefutie '69	Barbara Kreidler Schuch '82
Dorothy Ballinger '43, '54	Daniel P. McDevitt '56	Joseph J. Goromboly Jr. '70, '81	Marie Pelli Wheaton '83
Frances Mumford Child '45	Frank N. Van Gelder '56	Alexis Crimi Mauriello '70	James M. Burke '84
Ruth Rice McCargo '45	Irv T. Gordon '57	David C. Hillsley '71	Keith J. O'Rourke '85
Virginia Bruzakis Andrews '46	Donna Postpichal Hochstetler '57	Steven B. Kalafer '71	Edward S. Horvath '86
William K. Dooley '46	Donald R. Reber '57	David M. Romanko '72	Candace I. Lomonaco '86
Donald Herkowits '47	Joseph G. Beck '59	John M. Anderson '73	Thomas F. Carey '87
Jean M. Everitt '48	Alice Jenkins Lehnies '59	Charles W. Frazier, Jr. '73, '77	Edgar Russell III '87
Thespina Terzis Gilbert '48	Norman L. Meyers '59	Robert J. Palermo '73	John R. Russell '88
Gerald W. Huff '48	William H. Sheil '59	William J. Dingethal Jr. '74	Robert D. Klitzberg '89
Clarke T. Merwin '49	John M. Todd '59	Frank J. Brennan Jr. '75	John S. O'Brien '89
Mary Stapler Nystrom '49	William L. White III '59	Karen Champlin Chiappini '75	Angeline Oddis '91
Anna-Lisa Olsen Ray '49	Sanford Jones '60	Grace K. Ho-Heim '75	Kathleen R. Ravenel-Olson '92
Florence Di Pastina DePativo '50	Judith Pitman Reed '61	Lloyd H. Howell '75	Sandra P. Dorner '93
William G. Stratis '50	Michael C. Viggiano '61	Joanne K. Kiehl '75	Richard E. McCarron '93
Jerry L. Delson '51	Mary Jane Bukowy Whitesides '61	William S. Meszaros '75	Marsha Hostetter Nix '93
Joan Pocher Green '51	Ted E. Felton '62	Gary R. Beers '76	Christine Rasmussen Obaid '93
Avis B. Hance '51	William R. Olear '62	David S. Cullingham '76	Dianna R. Dennis '94
James J. Heim '51	Peter Pawlack Jr. '62	Paul M. Teti '76	Erinn Murphy Moane '95, '01
Shirley Cobb Phelps '51	Andrew B. Barkocy '63	Jerry J. Wagenhoffer '77	Carol M. Lawyer '99
Frank J. Sullivan '51	Grace Mary Loquasto Vogrin '63	Mark D. Allegretti '78	
Lorraine Moroz Franklin '52	Fred J. Kamm '64	William J. Cody '78	Faculty / Staff
Shirley Platt Hammell '52	Nancy Steeble Miller '64	Bertha Gronikowski Cook '78	Edward J. Barboni
John F. Laezza, Jr. '52, '74	James W. Shetler '64	Daniel J. Jordan Jr. '78	Elizabeth B. Counselman
Thomas E. Lash '52	Thomas V. King Sr. '65	Sandra Reed '78, '82	Maria P. Donnelly
John T. Morris '52	William L. Rabberman '65	Steven U. Sandford '79	Nydia R. Gloeckner
Katherine Boyd Nogare '52	Robert A. Forczek '66	George J. Simko '79	Robert Kramer
Dorothy Shell Satterthwaite '52	Joseph A. Boccuzzi '67	Saleem Barkat '81	Margaret L. MacLaren-Ulrich
Robert H. Smith Sr. '52	William M. Carazo '67	Mark W. Cortelyou '81	Stephen P. Philips
Marion Uddin Jones '53	Robert B. Anderson '68	Mary Jane Veldof '81	Geoffrey C. Scott
Barbara Gauck Hough '54	Michael E. Kemp '68	Michael A. Falzone '82	
Robert E. Oliver '54, '70	James J. Lytton '69	David J. Moore '82	

This list represents individuals who passed away from March-August 2021.





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Technologies. Prior to joining NetGain, Sawin was the chief financial officer at Beneco, a specialty provider of retirement plans, compliance services and employee benefits. He received a bachelor's in accounting from Rider and a master's in business administration from Grand Canyon University.

Shannon Murphy '12 announced in June that she will begin a new position as the assistant director of music and organist at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Montgomery, Ala.

Joe Forte '13 was voted president-elect of International Public Management Association for Human Resources NJ, a professional organization of public-sector human resources professionals who live and work in New Jersey. Forte is employed with the New Jersey Civil Service Commission in the Office of Diversity Programs.

Rebecca Hoppe '14 was awarded the Dean Christine Conaway Graduate Fellowship from Alpha Lambda Delta. She was one of only 26 applicants nationwide to earn a graduate fellowship from the organization. She is currently a doctoral student in developmental psychology and research assistant at Virginia Commonwealth University. Hoppe earned a bachelor's in psychology and Spanish from Rider.

Dr. Tiffani F. Methvien '14 was recognized by Continental Who's Who as a top optometrist. With several years in the field, Methvien treats common and complex eye conditions. She received a doctorate from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, along with a certificate of excellence for inpatient care. She earned a bachelor's in liberal studies from Rider and has worked as an ophthalmic assistant and technician for eight years and

as an optometrist for two years.

Rebecca Smith '15, '16 has been promoted to account supervisor at R&J Strategic Communications, a full-service, integrated marketing and public relations agency. In her new role, Smith will take on a greater leadership position with her accounts as well as play a vital role in the continued growth of the agency's health care and human services practice area. Smith graduated summa cum laude from Rider University, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and a Master of Arts in Business Communication. She served as one of the founding members of Rider University's Public Relations Student Society of America and was also recognized by the New Jersey Advertising Club as one of New Jersey's Best Marketing and Communications Professionals under 40 in 2020.

Alexis Bailey '19 joined the New Jersey Business & Industry Association (NJBIA) as director of government affairs. Bailey, a former NJBIA intern, will complement NJBIA's government affairs team conducting research and legislative policy analysis, with a strong focus on employment and labor issues. She worked as a legislative research associate with the Kaufman Zita Group before returning to NJBIA. Bailey graduated with a bachelor's in political science from Rider.

'20s

Michael DeLorenzo '20, a first-grade teacher at Hopewell Elementary School in Mercer County, N.J., published his first book for children, *The Super Guide to Becoming a Superhero* (Atmosphere Press). At Rider, DeLorenzo was a double major in elementary education and integrated sciences and math.



Simple acts

Lorelei Colbert '14 inspires kindness during chemo

By Rachel Stengel '14, '20

There have been so many milestones for Lorelei Colbert '14 in 2021. She celebrated her first wedding anniversary to fellow Bronc Andrew Pozo '15, one year of owning her first home, one year since she adopted her dog, Charlie Mei, and one year of being diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer.

Just 28 years old at the time of her diagnosis, Colbert was planning to move to Japan on her husband's military orders. During a physical exam, per military protocol, she met a nurse who encouraged her to have a breast exam even though she was young and recently had one. Because of the nurse's vibrant personality, Colbert agreed. That day, a 3.6 centimeter lump was found.

"I really attribute a large part of my journey to my nurse and her kindness," Colbert says. "It was pretty aggressive in that it was the highest grade of cancer. If I had waited, who knows what would have happened."

Facing 16 weeks of chemotherapy, Colbert wanted to find a way to raise awareness, and she couldn't stop thinking about the influence the nurse had on her life.

"I thought about how impactful one act of kindness can be," she says.

Colbert launched the Chemo to Kindness Challenge on her first day of chemotherapy treatment, posting about it on her social media accounts. Colbert hoped to see 100 acts of kindness for each week of chemo encouraging people to #1600acts.

The outpouring was so expansive, she couldn't keep up at first. She quickly launched loreleicolbert.com where people could submit their acts, recognizing the halo effect she created.

Her elementary school art teacher taught a lesson about kindness and coloring cancer ribbons. A Rider professor had students track their acts of kindness to submit. Friends, family and strangers made donations to more than 70 organizations worldwide. She exceeded her original goal with more than 1,700 acts of kindness completed, and counting.

"This challenge lifted me up so much during challenging times, especially with the hard side effects from chemo," she says. "Being able to read, or to have stories read to me, about the good going on in the world was really uplifting and empowering."

Now a survivor, Colbert has inspired other women facing breast cancer to create their own challenges, without the stress of the numerical goal, she says. One woman asks for acts of kindness during each chemo session, another requests new goals for each session like learn a new skill and practice self-care. Colbert says, it is a model that uplifts everyone involved.

Being so open about her cancer journey is something she struggled with initially, but she hopes her vulnerability has inspired others.

"Never did I think I'd be talking about my breasts online, but if it can save someone or help someone else show up for their loved ones better, then I'll be vulnerable," she says.

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Course selection

There is always that one class you'll never forget. It may be because of a professor's enthusiasm or a mind-expanding new idea, but whatever the cause, a single course has the power to leave a lifelong impression on you.

We asked alumni to think back to their favorite class at Rider. Here's what they said.

"I knew that being an accounting major was my path after classes with Professor Bob Edney and Dr. Marianne Battista '56, '70. They made the information 'make sense' and kept us thinking and wanting to learn how it all 'worked.' Notably, Professor Al Smutka's '72 taxation class was pivotal for me. I really worked my brain in that early morning class and am a proud CPA with her own tax practice today!"

Kirsten Toler '94, accounting major

"Undoubtedly my fine art courses with Deborah Rosenthal — those were such transformative experiences. As an artist, as well as a [current] professor, those courses taught me the significance of remaining a student for the rest of my life — staying curious and seeking out new resources and passions."

Louis Esposito '15, fine arts major

"Intro to Basic Programming' in 1977 with Dr. James Dailey. He got me interested in computers, entrusted me with being his teaching assistant and majoring in computer science (at that time, the major was called decision sciences and computers). That helped me to land my first job with AT&T as a computer programmer, and I just retired after a 40-year career. Thanks Dr. Dailey!"

Ron Sedlak '79, '86, decision sciences and industrial relations double major, MBA

"My favorite class by far was psychology with Dr. John Suler! As a business major, I was confused about why I needed to take a class like this; however, that feeling faded away quite rapidly."

Anthony Antonelli '92, finance major



Illustration by Megan Rosanova



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