

RIDER

SPRING 2023

NO HURDLES IN SIGHT

Her parents were unsure she'd ever walk. Now, freshman Valencia Gosser is an NCAA Division I sprinter.

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A MOMENT OF ZEN

This fall, a new space was created in the Bart Luedeke Center dedicated to fostering peace, calm and well-being. In the Zen Den, students can be seen coloring, listening to music or enjoying aromatherapy. The space was funded by the Student Government Association and designed in collaboration with the Counseling Center, Student Accessibility and Support Services, Facilities Management, and the Office of Information Technology.

PHOTO BY PETER G. BORG





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CLASS NOTES



Dear alumni and friends,

It is abundantly clear that Rider students and alumni have a deep passion for their careers. During their collegiate years, they immerse themselves in their chosen fields through internships and other engaged learning opportunities. So many alumni say that those experiences were invaluable in providing a solid foundation for their blossoming careers.

I've found that some of the most passionate alumni tend to work in education. While it is true that educators today face extraordinary pressure amidst a nationwide teacher shortage, they remain undeterred. Our Broncs have never been afraid to face the obstacles in their path. In this issue of *Rider* magazine, you'll hear from alumni who remain devoted to this challenging but rewarding profession. You'll also learn about new strategies Rider's College of Education and Human Services is implementing to increase the pool of up-and-coming teachers.

Freshman Valencia Gosser is also no stranger to working through difficult circumstances. Seeing this NCAA Division I athlete sprint across a track, you'd never know that she faced unbelievable challenges from birth that left her parents wondering if she would ever walk. Through fierce determination and passion, our Broncs rise to the occasion.

This issue will also take a look into Rider's archive, a spot on campus the majority of students and alumni have probably never



visited. Through a selection of items, explore Rider's history from its earliest days to more contemporary traditions, like our beloved Cranberry Fest.

This fall, the University continued to add to its history when we publicly announced Rider's most ambitious philanthropic campaign, *Transforming Students - Transforming Lives*. Since then, we've made tremendous progress. I am incredibly grateful to our campaign supporters, many of whom are Rider alumni. Our goals to invest in campus facilities, to increase scholarship support and build the University's endowment, and to fuel student success through gifts to the Annual Fund will make a resounding impact for current and future Broncs. Let's keep the momentum going!

Sincerely,

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

RIDER

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Rider (USPS 892-560) is published for the Rider University community, including alumni, parents, faculty and staff, by Rider University.

Members only

Classes are only one part of the college experience. It's the hours spent with fellow Broncs bonding over shared interests that create lifelong memories. Clubs and organizations help students discover new passions and build friendships, whether it is joining Greek life, participating in intramural sports or connecting through niche hobbies.

We asked alumni to tell us about their favorite club or organization. Here's what they said.

"Rider Ice Hockey provided so many incredible experiences that transcended just playing. It brought a lot of joy to myself and my teammates. Thanks to all those that contributed to making it such an awesome time."

Myles Grady '96, history major

"Alpha Phi Omega! We did amazing work together, and I still have lifelong friendships with my APO brothers. We used to help often at the Trenton Mission and hosted a sectional conference with other colleges and universities when the business building was first opened."

Kathleen Zarzycki '90, journalism major

"Model United Nations — the best memories were made there at our week-long conference in New York City."

Andrew Dimino '15, management and leadership, entrepreneurial studies double major

"Working for Admissions during my time at Rider was most memorable. I am still in touch with many people who still work in the office!"

Jill Loveland '07, biopsychology and marine science double major

"Delta Phi Epsilon! So many people view Greek life as a party; however, I entered that house a young, quiet sophomore and emerged a confident leader having served a term as president, which I never would have imagined myself doing. I am the leader I am today because of my time in that house."

Kristie Kahl '10, journalism major

"Badminton Club is always fire."

Loup Cantareil '18, arts administration major

Want your answer to appear in the next Rider magazine?

We want to know what your most memorable on-campus job was and why? Send your response to magazine@rider.edu for consideration.

Illustrations by Megan Rosanova





TRANSFORMING STUDENTS TRANSFORMING LIVES

THE CAMPAIGN FOR RIDER UNIVERSITY

Campaign progress

This academic year, Rider's largest campaign ever, *Transforming Students – Transforming Lives*, continued to gather momentum with the University receiving a number of major gifts.

Paul Muller Jr. and Beverly Deren Muller '71 made a \$500,000 gift in support of the Rider Arena Project, a multimillion-dollar project to transform Rider's Alumni Gym into a modern NCAA Division I facility. In recognition of their generous gift, the University renamed the campus pub Muller's Pub.

Trustee **Keith DiGrazio '84** and **Christine Pindale DiGrazio '85** committed \$1 million to the campaign. The couple requested that their gift be split between the Rider Arena Project and the University's Annual Fund.

Former All-American wrestler **Tim Morrison '83** and his family made the largest gift in Rider wrestling history. The \$500,000 gift will be used to expand the current wrestling training facility. It was made in honor of **Gary Taylor '82**, the esteemed former Rider wrestling head coach who died on Sept. 14, 2022, at 73. The enhanced facility will be named the Gary Taylor Wrestling Center.

Former Trustee **Christopher Nikolich '92** made a \$50,000 unrestricted gift to the University in honor of his wife, **Bethann Fleming Nikolich '93**. In gratitude, Rider named the Bethann Fleming Nikolich '93 Lounge in Bierenbaum Fisher Hall after the Berkeley Heights, New Jersey, teacher.

James G. Carlson '75 and **Mary Anne Carlson** made a \$200,000 commitment to support the campaign's greatest needs.

To learn more about *Transforming Students – Transforming Lives*, visit rider.edu/transform.



PEACE PRIZE

Four Rider University students traveled to Oslo, Norway, to attend the Nobel Peace Prize awards ceremony on Dec. 10, 2022. The students — **Sydney Tierney**, **Anjali Chennapragada**, **Ranai Morgan** and **Paola Carlesso** — were participants in a special topics course about the award that culminated with submitting an official nomination for the following year. They were accompanied by **Dr. Roberta Fiske-Rusciano**, who taught the course, and **Dr. Frank Rusciano**.



Ph.D. pursuit

Rider received a \$1.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to continue funding the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program over the next five years. The program prepares students from under-resourced and underrepresented backgrounds for the pursuit of post-baccalaureate studies leading to a doctoral degree.

“ LARRY HAS POSITIVELY **INFLUENCED THE LIVES AND CAREERS** OF THOUSANDS OF BRONCS. HE POSSESSED A STRONG LEADERSHIP APPROACH, A SHARP SENSE OF HUMOR AND A FIERCE DEDICATION TO OUR STUDENTS. ”

- Dr. Eugene Kutcher, dean of the Norm Brodsky College of Business, reflecting upon Dr. Larry Newman's impact on the Rider community. Newman, the former dean and a beloved, longtime faculty member, died on Aug. 29, 2022. He was 71.



TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Assistant professor of biology **Dr. Kerrie Sendall** was awarded a three-year \$503,000 grant from the National Science Foundation. The grant will allow her to implement a new undergraduate plant-biology research course at Rider and create a summer research experience for students to stay onsite at the University of Minnesota.



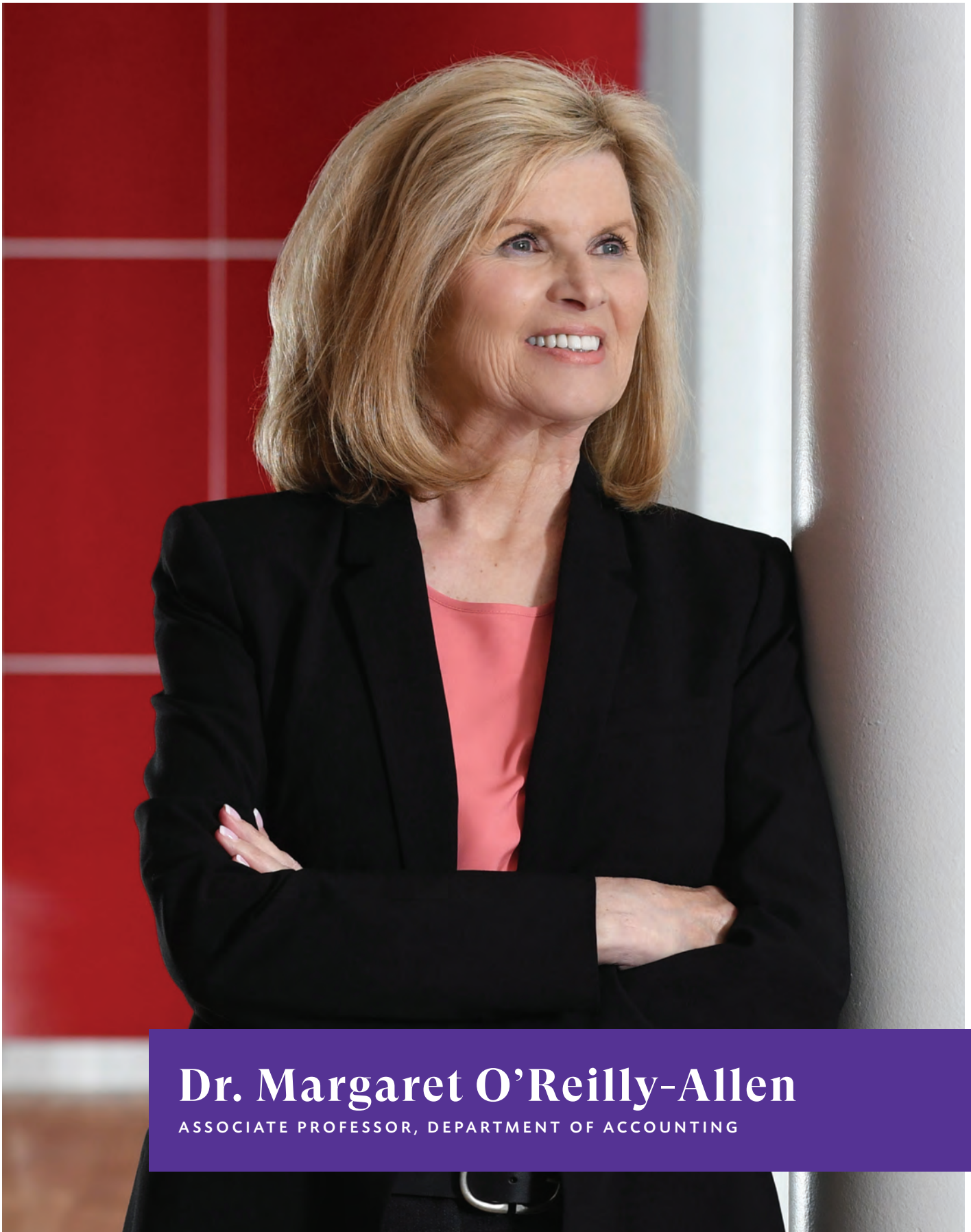
Musical milestone

Westminster Choir College celebrated the 30th anniversary of An Evening of Readings and Carols. The cherished holiday event was recorded for television and featured performances by Westminster Chapel Choir, Westminster Symphonic Choir, Westminster Jubilee Singers, Westminster Concert Bell Choir, Westminster Choir and Westminster Alumni Choir.



BROADWAY HISTORY

Kanisha Feliciano '17 became the first Latina to play the leading role of Christine Daaé in the Broadway production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*. Feliciano, who earned a bachelor's in voice performance from Westminster Choir College, was also only the second Black woman to play the role.



Dr. Margaret O'Reilly-Allen

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING

“ I TEACH BECAUSE

I LOVE KNOWING THAT I CAN
HAVE AN IMPACT ON PREPARING
STUDENTS TO **ACHIEVE THEIR
CAREER GOALS AND SUCCEED**
AS A PROFESSIONAL.

Dr. Margaret O'Reilly-Allen has returned to the classroom after a successful 15-year run as the Department of Accounting chair.

O'Reilly-Allen led the department through three successful AACSB re-accreditations, oversaw the launch of the online Master of Accountancy program and spearheaded the development of the accounting internship and co-op program. In her more than 30 years at Rider, O'Reilly-Allen has been the recipient of numerous summer research fellowships, grants and awards. In 2022, she was inducted into the Norm Brodsky College of Business Hall of Fame.

Now as a full-time faculty member, she has also assumed the role of accounting internship and co-op director.

"I enjoy helping our students decide what types of firms they hope to work for," she says. "It's important to make sure it's a good fit all around because, for a lot of our students, this is where they'll get their first job offers."

O'Reilly-Allen has also taken Broncs abroad via study tours to Spain, Italy, Prague, Costa Rica, Cuba and more. Since 2018, she has led the Business of Sports in Ireland program, a three-week experience that allows students to study the economic impact of the sports industry abroad.

"Sports in Ireland are significantly different than in the U.S.," she says. "The Irish model is an excellent representation of the European sports business as a whole."

By Tatiana Sciancalepore
Photo by Peter G. Borg

HAS MANAGING SO MANY DIFFERENT ROLES WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY HAD ANY IMPACT ON YOUR RESEARCH OR TEACHING GOALS?

My research interests are tied to the courses I teach and vice versa. I enjoy researching timely issues and integrating the findings into my courses so that our students are always one step ahead of the curve. I think relevancy is so important in teaching. My research areas vary over time so that I am able to bring a well-rounded blend of theory and the real world to the classroom.

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT RESEARCH FOCUS?

I am researching in the area of business sustainability. Over the past two decades, this area has matured to include specific criteria and measurable sustainability outcomes that have become known as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG). It's become a very timely topic as there is pending regulation from the Securities and Exchange Commission that would require publicly traded companies to report ESG information in their registration statements and annual reports.

WHAT KIND OF IMPACT DOES YOUR RESEARCH HAVE ON YOUR STUDENTS' CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE?

One of our jobs as educators is to help students better understand real-world issues. One of the ways I accomplish this is by researching and developing student instructional case studies. A good example would be teaching the accountant's role in ESG reporting. Accountants know how to measure and report financial information, but, with ESG reporting, we will need to collect and evaluate sustainability data, including measuring, analyzing and reporting greenhouse emissions. By providing students with these in-depth case studies, we're helping them apply classroom skills to real-world business and giving them a competitive edge with which to enter the workforce.

ATHLETIC

HIGHLIGHTS

“

FOR ME, IT MEANS A WHOLE LOT TO SEE MY NAME AND MY NUMBER UP THERE, AND TO **INSPIRE THE REST OF THE GIRLS** WHO COME INTO RIDER'S PROGRAM.

”

No. 4, worn by **Stella Johnson '20**, was retired on Nov. 7. Her number was the first to be retired by the women's basketball team and joins two men's basketball numbers in Alumni Gym — No. 1, worn by **Jason Thompson '08**, and No. 4, worn by **Darrick Suber '93**.





» 2 CHAMPS

Men's swimming and diving captured its 11th-straight Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) Championship. Field hockey earned its eighth Northeast Conference (NEC) Championship.

» 21 NCAA DIVISION I SPORTS

Women's lacrosse joined Rider's program lineup with inaugural Head Coach **Evan Mager**, formerly of Fairleigh Dickinson University-Florham. The team is expected to begin competition in the spring of 2024.

» THANKS, COACH

Two longtime head coaches retired at the end of their seasons, Men's Soccer Head Coach **Charlie Inverso** and Field Hockey Head Coach **Lori Hussong**.

» FIELD HOCKEY

Senior **Kaitlyn Tomas** was named NEC Goalkeeper of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year and NEC Tournament MVP. Freshman **Valeria Perales** earned Second Team All-Mid Atlantic Region.

» WOMEN'S SOCCER

Junior **Ellie Sciancalepore** earned the newly named MAAC Golden Glove after posting a 1.32 goals against average and an .829 saves percentage.

» VOLLEYBALL

Senior **Morgan Romano** became the first four-time All-MAAC honoree in program history. She finished the season ranked third in the MAAC with 353 kills, hitting .220 for the season.

» WRESTLING

Graduate student **Ethan Laird** went undefeated in the fall with a dramatic sudden victory over the No. 1 wrestler in his weight class, Max Dean of Penn State.





NO HURDLES

IN SIGHT

FRESHMAN VALENCIA GOSSER OVERCAME SEVERE EARLY-LIFE CHALLENGES TO EARN A SPOT ON RIDER'S TRACK TEAM

By Adam Grybowski

PHOTO BY PETER G. BORG

When Richard and Terry Gosser adopted their sixth child, a 14-month-old girl named Valencia, they weren't sure if she would ever walk.

Valencia was born premature and addicted to multiple drugs. As a newborn, heroin, cocaine and barbiturates were in her bloodstream — the result of her birth mother's drug use.

During their first few days of life, babies like Valencia suffer withdrawal symptoms, including shaking, fever, vomiting and excessive crying. Withdrawal may cause a host of long-term problems too, including delays in developmental milestones, such as walking and talking, and disruption of motor-skill development.

"Valencia couldn't walk," Terry says, recalling her memories of Valencia as a toddler. "She could hardly do anything. She was very stiff and couldn't bend at all."

Now a freshman at Rider, Valencia was recruited to run NCAA Division I track after a standout high school career. At Barnegat High School in New Jersey, she broke multiple school records for both winter and spring track. She received honors for all-state and all-county, and became a Shore Conference champion during her senior year. She was named team MVP a total of seven times.

Valencia attributes her success to nothing more than an optimistic attitude and competitive spirit. "I'm always positively happy when I'm running," she says. "I don't give up, I don't get upset, and I don't complain.

But I'm also not running just to run. I want to win. I want those records."

Despite all of her early challenges, by the time she reached second grade, Valencia began playing basketball, showing the first signs of athleticism that would blossom in middle school and eventually lead to her uncommon success in high school.

"She was very fast on the court, and she had great hand-eye coordination," says her father.

Valencia fell in love with the game and soon began to branch out into other sports. She ran in her first track meet in sixth grade and, the following year, joined the middle school team. For the next two years, she did not lose a single race.

"She's determined, and she just goes for it," Terry says. "She doesn't let anything stand in her way. There are no roadblocks in front of her."

At Rider, Valencia is adapting to higher stakes athletically as well as academically. She wants to major in criminal justice and, after graduating, begin a career in law enforcement. Living on campus, she has been motivated to seek out the strong support system Rider provides for all of its students, especially those in their first year. She says she is spending as much time studying as she is working out.

Discussing the transition one day last fall, Valencia, as bright and cheerful as ever, says, "Thinking about it right now, I'm pretty happy. I'm overcoming more obstacles, and I'm getting better at track. I'm also learning more about how to be an adult."



THE BIG SHORTAGE

GRADUATES OF RIDER'S EDUCATION PROGRAMS
GRAPPLE WITH THE ONGOING TEACHER SHORTAGE

By Adam Grybowski

ART BY NATALIE NGUYEN



A FEW YEARS AGO,

Danita Ishibashi '86, who is the assistant superintendent of the Ewing School District in New Jersey, noticed a worrisome trend among applications for teaching positions.

Like many districts across the country, Ewing has long faced a dearth of qualified applicants for teachers of certain subjects. Positions for teaching world languages and the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), as well as those that require dual certification, such as special education, have traditionally been hard to fill. While Ishibashi was accustomed to those challenges, she was startled by the dwindling number of applications for what has normally been one of the most popular openings for teachers: elementary education.

"I can remember 15 years ago having hundreds of applications for elementary positions," she says. "Now we can post elementary positions and sometimes the pool is under 20."

While it is not evenly distributed across the country, the United States faces a critical shortage of qualified teachers. Part of the reason why stems from the fact that since the 1970s fewer and fewer students have chosen to enter teacher preparation programs. The number of bachelor's degrees in education conferred by postsecondary institutions has dropped from 176,307 in 1970-71 to 85,057 in 2019-20, according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics. At the same time, schools face growing attrition among current teachers. Nationwide, 55% of educators said they were ready to retire earlier than expected, according to 2022 survey results by the National Education Association.

In interviews, administrators and teachers say the challenge of filling open positions is not limited to teachers. Their districts are struggling to hire for other jobs that help schools function, such as bus drivers, substitute teachers and substitute nurses. "The situation is pretty dire," says Mike DeLorenzo '20, a third grade teacher at Hopewell Elementary School in New Jersey.

What's driving so many people away from working in education? In the United States, where there is no national teacher labor market, the answers to this question would surely differ from community to community. But the big picture reveals some common themes, such as middling compensation, rising workloads and the profession's lowered reputation.

Dr. Rashaan Monroe '12, '22, the principal of Klockner Elementary School in Hamilton, New Jersey, places the cause of the shortage most directly on inadequate salaries. Teachers must earn credentials through years of costly education, including months of unpaid student teaching, before they can earn their first paycheck. Then, once they find work, a teacher's salary — even in places where it has recently risen — generally does not match what individuals can earn in private industry.

"In some people's experience, it's not worth the cost to go to college to become a teacher and then work so long to pay off a loan," Monroe says. "As a society, we require a lot of our teachers. We should compensate them for the hours they put in."

Increasingly, the delivery of curriculum is only one part of a teacher's charge. Psychological and behavioral problems are commonly diagnosed in children, and depression and anxiety continue to increase among them, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As young people's mental health concerns continue to mount, teachers can be put in the position of having to treat the social and emotional lives of their students on top of teaching.

"The expectation is that the classroom teacher is a one-stop shop academically and socially," DeLorenzo says. "We're happy to do it, as we care deeply about our students' success both inside and outside of the classroom, but ensuring that all students receive the support they need can be challenging given the volume of students in need of support."

Additionally, teachers are now handling politicized topics, from evolving sex



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**Teachers
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education standards to mandates requiring or restricting the teaching of lessons related to diversity and inclusion. These subjects can flame the anger of parents, adding to the pressure teachers are under. “These were not conversations we were having 10 years ago in regard to schools,” Ishibashi says.

The way society perceives teachers has also changed. A 2022 study from Brown University concluded that perception of teacher prestige was at its lowest recorded level in 50 years. “I’m not sure if all people feel the profession is as noble as it once was,” Ishibashi says.

Over the years, many efforts have been made to strengthen the workforce and make the profession more attractive. Last August, the Biden Administration announced a slew of actions meant to help schools fill vacancies. Dozens of schools and institutions across the country, including Rider University, participated in an Obama-era initiative called 100Kin10 that aimed to prepare 100,000 new STEM teachers over a 10-year period. While 100Kin10 hit that goal and continues on as Beyond100K, administrators face a growing imperative to do even more as they look ahead to a potential labor crisis.

“You’re going to start to see districts be much more creative in how they provide programs for their students,” says Dr. David Adam ’21, the principal of Lawrence High School in New Jersey. “School systems are finding ways to grow their own educators or bring back those who retired.”

Rules governing how people become teachers limit just how creative they can get, notes Dr. Jason Barr, the dean of Rider’s College of Education and Human Services. Still, the College has been working to provide alternate pathways for new educators for years.

Since 2013, Rider has participated in a program called Tomorrow’s Teachers that allows high school students in New Jersey to explore what it means to be a teacher while earning college credit. More recently, the University has been working directly with some districts to help them create “grow-your-own” programs, which aim to identify promising future teachers and create distinct programs of study tailored to their needs. Such programs have existed



for years, originally as a way to diversify the workforce. The newer iteration focuses on teacher aides and other paraprofessionals who already have connections to the school and the communities they serve.

“Rider’s program would help these individuals get or finish a bachelor’s degree and then get them into our alternate route teaching program, where they could earn their teaching certification while working as a teacher in the school,” says Barr.

Teacher aides are among the lowest paid employees in a school district. Since their salaries can prevent them from pursuing the credentials required to become a teacher, Rider offers a tuition discount to these individuals in addition to working with them to carve out a unique path to obtaining a degree.

Donor support has also helped Rider deepen its support of aspiring teachers. This year, the new Elsie Varga ’39 and James H. McGordy ’39 Endowed

Scholarship was created as part of a \$2.35 million planned gift Rider received after their passing. The scholarship is dedicated to students majoring in education who are also commuters. The couple’s gift also partially funded the new Teacher Education Scholarship, a \$2,000 annual award for eligible undergraduate education majors. Prioritizing the growth of the University’s endowment to make scholarship support available to students is a critical component of Rider’s comprehensive fundraising campaign, *Transforming Students - Transforming Lives*.

As the efforts continue to adequately prepare enough teachers, the stakes remain high. “Teachers are the backbone of our country and they are critical for the success of our country,” Monroe says. “We have to invest in the educational needs of our young people so that they can have a future and our country can maintain its position in the world.”





in the Vault

HIGHLIGHTS FROM RIDER UNIVERSITY'S ARCHIVE

BY ADAM GRYBOWSKI | PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER G. BORG

Rider University's archive, composed of some 30,000 items, dwells under the roof of Moore Library. There are letters and photos, advertisements and brochures, diplomas and documents. The oldest item is from 1866, a page from *Harper's Weekly* depicting the local owners of a chain of business schools that formed the foundation of what Rider University is today.

Housed within the archive, which is officially called Riderana, are the University's special collections. They include groups of noteworthy objects, such as the historic business machine collection and Talbott Library's Julia A. Perry collection. The latter gathers personal effects related to Perry '47, '48, a graduate of Westminster Choir College who struggled to overcome barriers of race and gender during her career as a composer. As the Perry collection shows, the archive occasionally stretches its institutional boundaries to showcase shifting societal mores and cultural conventions, as well as historical moments. Presented here are some highlights from the archive.

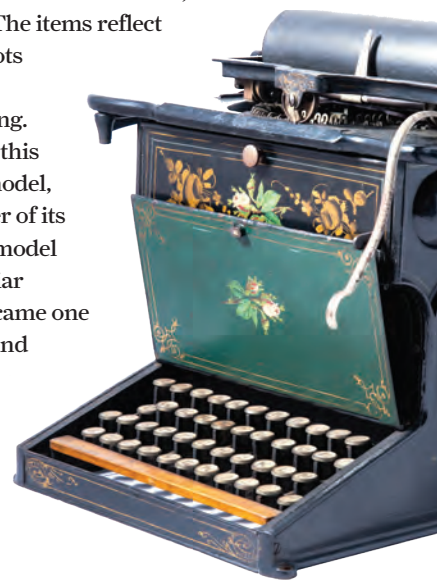


RIDER BEANIES

For much of the 20th century at Rider, student-created regulations mandated all first-year students to wear purple and gold beanies. Students called the caps “dinks.” Their earliest mention on record comes from the 1928-29 student handbook. The tradition was put on hold in 1942 for World War II and wasn’t reinstated until 1950. Dinks continued to be worn until the early 1970s when many changes were made to student regulations regarding dress, visitation and socializing. The last beanie in Riderana is from 1971.

BUSINESS MACHINE MUSEUM

More than 200 typewriters, computers, stenography machines and other forms of technology make up Rider’s Business Machine Museum, located in Moore Library. The items reflect the University’s earliest roots as a business school that taught shorthand and typing. Among its crown jewels is this 1874 Sholes and Glidden model, the fourth oldest typewriter of its kind in the world and the model that created the now familiar QWERTY keyboard. It became one of the first typewriters to find commercial success.



CRANBERRY FEST MEMORABILIA

Cranberry Fest began life as “Cranberry Day” on May 1, 1979. Since then, the event has been held on campus every year (except 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic). Today, it is a way to celebrate Andrew J. Rider, the University’s namesake. Dr. Frank N. Elliot, who served as Rider’s president from 1969-90, claimed in a 1990 letter that the students who first proposed the event had no idea Rider was a cranberry grower when they suggested the name. Riderana is replete with other Cranberry Fest memorabilia, including buttons, pins, pennants and T-shirts, such as this one from the original event.

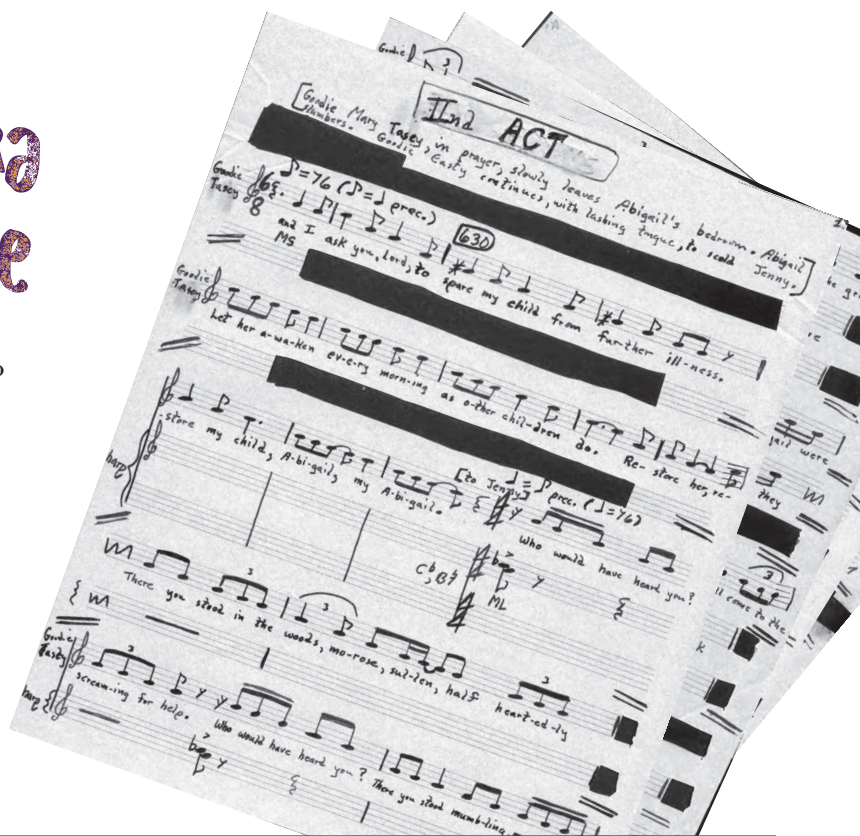
EARLY COURSE CATALOGS

Rider’s earliest course catalogs served as advertisements. Even in the 19th century, testimonials were used to instill confidence in potential buyers, as evidenced by Alpheus Swayze, a banker, who was quoted in the 1871 catalog as saying, “I am acquainted with your institution, and can speak with confidence of its merits.” This same catalog also prints the names of graduates from the Class of 1870, listings of faculty and courses (among them: penmanship, correspondence and commercial arithmetic), rules and regulations, and tuition rates (\$40 for six months of instruction).



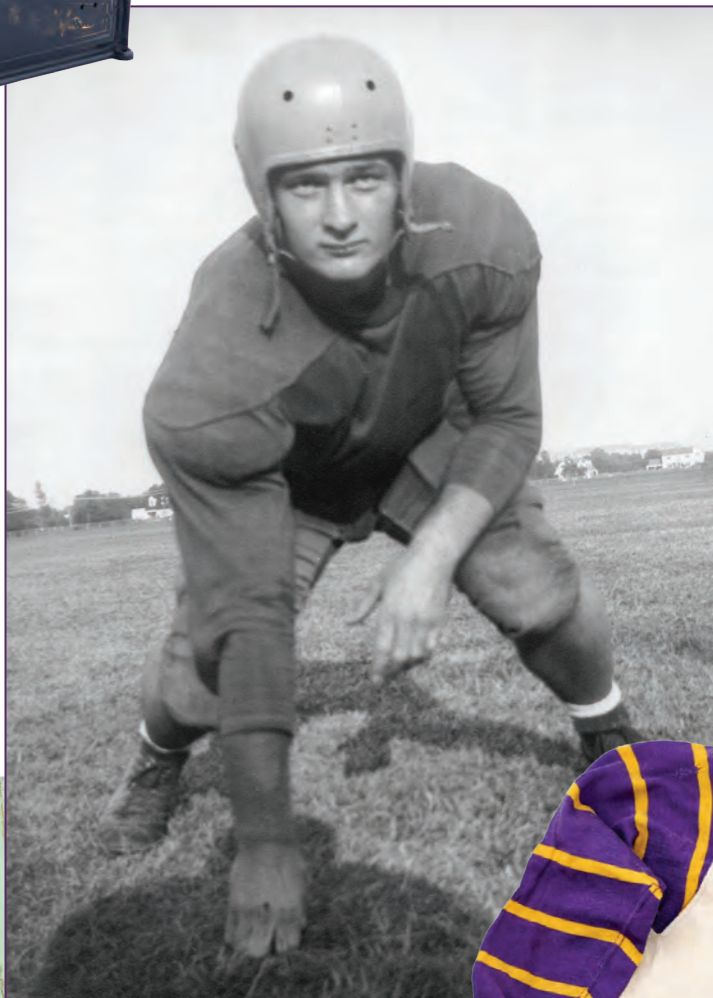
UNFINISHED OPERA MANUSCRIPT PAGE

As a composer, Julia A. Perry '47, '48 created music for full orchestra, band, solo voice and more. She also began this unfinished opera, the full manuscript of which is stored in Rider's archive. In the 1950s and '60s, Perry, a Black woman, gained recognition as a talented composer. Her works were performed by the New York Philharmonic and other orchestras. She won many awards for her work, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and the National Institute of Arts and Letters Award.



HARRY GAMBLE '52 FOOTBALL JERSEY

Rider Athletics may never have fielded a football team in Lawrenceville, but back when the institution was located in Trenton, student-athletes took to the gridiron, off and on, for several seasons during the 1920s to play against high schools and other local teams. Rider's football squad played its first intercollegiate game in 1928 under Coach Clair Bee '29, the founder of intercollegiate athletics at Rider. This No. 21 jersey was worn in 1950 by Harry Gamble '52, a team leader who went on to become general manager and president of the Philadelphia Eagles. The following year, the program was cut indefinitely because of expenses.



How can you support Rider students?

MAKE A GIFT TO
THE ANNUAL FUND.

RIDER.EDU/MAKEADIFFERENCE



CLASS NOTES

Tell us about your professional and personal achievements. Submit your class note to magazine@rider.edu.

'60s

Betsy Rydell Roll '66 sang with the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra chorus for its Holiday Pops concert. John Morris Russell and Michael Schwartzkopf were the conductors.

Dr. William Payn '68 wrote a new, original work called *LOVE*. It was performed during a concert by the Susquehanna Valley Chorale last October. Payn serves as the chorale's conductor and music director.

'70s

Mark Braff '77 wrote his first book, *Sons of Baseball: Growing up with a Major League Dad*. Published by Rowman & Littlefield, the book features a foreword by Cal Ripken Jr. and interviews with 18 sons of former MLB players, including Yogi Berra, Mariano Rivera, Gil Hodges and more. Braff received his bachelor's in journalism from Rider and enjoyed a successful 40-year career in public relations before retiring in 2020.

'80s

Eric J. Matluck '81 authored a new novel, *The Judges*, published by Next Exit Press in January. It is about the mind of a classical pianist, a mysterious tribunal and the ethics of everyday choices. His first book, *Notes for a Eulogy*, was published in 2020.



Dear alumni and friends,

It has been a busy year with many events! Thank you to all those who enjoyed our baseball spring training trips, networking events in Muller's Pub and informational lectures. Also, I want to warmly welcome our newest Alumni Association members – the Class of 2023!

Continue to check your email for information about alumni events this fall, such as travel to Italy, sporting events and, of course, Homecoming! You can also set up a tour of campus through Alumni Relations and see for yourself all that is happening at Rider.

If you are interested in becoming more actively involved, nominations to join the Alumni Board of Directors are being accepted. Visit rider.edu/alumni or email alumni@rider.edu for more information.

My best wishes to everyone for a wonderful spring and summer!

Eileen Wirth '88, '95

President, Alumni Board of Directors and Alumni Association



39th Annual Golf Gala

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

TRENTON COUNTRY CLUB

201 Sullivan Way, West Trenton, NJ 08628

For additional information, visit gobroncs.com.

Online registration opens on July 1.





Weddings, births, engagements and gatherings

- 1 **Michael Pastor '18** proposed to **Gabriella Pasquini '18** on July 23, 2022, on campus where they met freshman year.
- 2 **Chris Caruso '12** and **Allison Russo '12** were married on May 14, 2022, in Manalapan, New Jersey. Many fellow Rider alumni were in attendance to help the couple celebrate.
- 3 **Bill Eismann '07** and **Alexis Mele '13** were married in Laguna Hills, California, on Sept. 23, 2022, and celebrated with family and friends on Oct. 21, 2022, in Long Beach Island, New Jersey. Eismann earned his bachelor's in business administration and Mele earned her master's in counseling services.
- 4 Sigma Iota Chi sorority sisters (clockwise, bottom left) **Rita Prus Kobesky '57**, **Jane Grundahl Allen '58, '61**, **Jean Rodamer Stroff '55**, **Joan Hatcliff Young** and **Cynthia Rork-Laird '57** met for lunch over the summer.
- 5 **Brandon Roffina '14** and **Kathlyn Roffina '16** welcomed Daniel James Roffina on Dec. 22, 2022.
- 6 **Sarah Kormuth '22** and **Garret Potter '21** were married in Jobstown, New Jersey, in September 2022. The couple met at Rider while working out in the Student Recreation Center. They now reside in Surf City, North Carolina, where Potter is a second lieutenant in the Marines and Kormuth is a CrossFit coach.
- 7 **Alex Solomon '19** and **Madison Becker '20** were married in Lambertville, New Jersey, on Sept. 4, 2022. The couple met at Rider while working as tour guides.
- 8 **Justin Dennis '13, '17** and **Elizabeth Swain '15** became engaged last April, with their dog, Rider, serving as a witness. The couple met while attending the University and pursuing degrees in political science.
- 9 **Lee Casperson '18** proposed to **Kelsey Guenther '18** on campus on Nov. 12, 2022.
- 10 **Kevin Noon '12** and **Jaclyn Noon (née Giameo) '13** welcomed a baby boy, Derek Ryan Noon, on July 27, 2022.

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Dr. Donald Nally '87, won the Grammy for Best Choral Performance for *Born: Music of Edie Hill and Michael Gilbertson* at the 65th Annual Grammy Awards on Feb. 5. The recording features several Westminster Choir College alumni including **Katy Avery '18**, **Steven Hyder '12**, **Lauren Kelly '16**, **Rebecca Myers '02** and **Daniel Spratlan '05**. This is the group's third award and eighth nomination since its founding in 2007.

'90s

William Farley '91 has been named West Orange High School's Teacher of the Year for 2022-23. He has taught at the New Jersey high school for 22 years, serving as music director for the honors chamber and tenor/bass choirs, piano lab instructor and teacher of general music classes. Farley will retire in June.

Doreen Laskiewicz '92 launched a new magazine for women called *Grit & Goals*. An internationally published photographer, Laskiewicz is passionate about empowering women in business. She believes grit and goals are two key traits that every successful businesswoman possesses. Laskiewicz hopes the magazine will inspire and empower other women to embrace these values and achieve their own entrepreneurial goals.

Craig Carpenito '96 was inducted as a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, one of the premier legal associations in North America. He is a government matters partner at the international law firm King & Spalding. A former U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey, Carpenito has over two decades of experience as a litigator in private and public practice.

Heidi Vass '98 and **Emma Grace Roche '09**, founding members of the classical vocal quartet Seraphour, were commissioned to premiere a new piece by Los Angeles composer Mia Ruhman. The composition, specifically written to highlight the beauty and richness of the female voice, is a setting of the iconic Christmas text *O Magnum Mysterium*. Vass and Roche are both graduates of Westminster Choir College.

Jason Iannuzzi '99 was named the new artistic director of the Cantemus Chamber Chorus last July. He also currently leads a thriving choral program at Lexington High School in Lexington, Massachusetts. His school choirs have performed at Carnegie Hall, as well as in Sweden, Finland, Estonia, China, Greece and Bulgaria.

'00s

Dr. W. Bryce Hayes '01 was named the new artistic director at Winchester Musica Viva, a chamber choir based in Winchester, Virginia. He earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the University of Minnesota, a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Temple University and a Bachelor of Music in Music Education with honors from Westminster Choir College.

Gina Rothe (née Monari) '01 was appointed marketing and communications manager for the Vascular Birthmarks Foundation (VBF). VBF is an international charitable organization that supports and empowers those affected by a vascular birthmark, anomaly, tumor or syndrome. "Living with a vascular birthmark and working with the VBF enables me to help make a difference and contribute to a special kind of advocacy," she says.

Joseph A. Capone '04 was named executive director of the Greater Princeton Youth Orchestra. He has more than 20 years of experience in public and higher education, and the cultural sector. Previously, Capone served in leadership positions at the Philadelphia Opera Company, Bristol Riverside Theatre and the Princeton Festival.

Shaun Clarida '05 won the 2022 Mr. Olympia bodybuilding competition in the 212-pound weight class. This is the second title he has won in the competition, winning the 2020 competition in the same weight class.

Dr. Jennifer Diszler '06, '21 was appointed superintendent/principal for the Cranbury School District in New Jersey. She is the former assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction and administration for the South Brunswick School District. She earned her master's in educational administration and her Doctor of Educational Leadership from Rider.

Ayo Owodunni '06 was elected to city council in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. He earned his bachelor's degree in psychology from Rider.

Matt Cook '06 was cast in a leading role in the film *Champions*, starring Woody Harrelson. Previous credits include *The Greatest Beer Run Ever*, starring Zac Efron and Russell Crowe, and *Man with a Plan*, starring Matt LeBlanc. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Rider.

Daniel Florio '07 won Best Director at the Austin Revolution Film Festival for his film *The Improviser*. The dark, independent thriller is centered around Brett Sugarman, a not-so-funny comedian who dreams of becoming the next big star and is determined to do so, no matter the cost.



Crypto keeper

Rob Behnke '06, '07 attracts \$90 million for cybersecurity firm

By Rachel Stengel '14, '20

Rob Behnke '06, '07 has created business startups ranging from an organic salsa company to an iOS app for musicians to his latest venture — cybersecurity for organizations using blockchain technology. His company, Halborn, recently secured \$90 million in funding to support the burgeoning, niche organization.

Behnke's world can be deeply technical, but he explains it simply as "the bank robbery prevention business" for blockchain organizations. A blockchain is a shared, immutable, digital ledger that records transactions of assets — most notably, cryptocurrency. Unique information about the transactions is stored in groups, called blocks. The blocks are then connected chronologically as transactions occur, forming a permanent chain of secure data.

Halborn, which Behnke founded in 2019 with Steven Walbroehl, employs 100-plus ethical hackers. "They can do all the bad things that hackers do, but they've chosen a life of good," he says. The hackers work with organizations to identify cybersecurity risks for their digital assets and cryptocurrency.

"A company will give us full authority to try to hack their systems. Then, we give them a report of the vulnerabilities, how we infiltrated their bank, robbed it and their people, and ways to remediate it," he says.

Behnke recognized a need for increased cybersecurity for businesses dealing in cryptocurrency when he founded the marketing company Token Agency in 2017. His clients — all startups using blockchain technology and cryptocurrency — were continually getting hacked, he says, sometimes for tens or hundreds of millions of dollars.

"Imagine having money in a crypto wallet, then waking up and realizing it's all gone," he says.

After earning a bachelor's degree in management and a Master of Business Administration from Rider, he entered the workforce right before the 2008 recession. It gave him an appreciation for Bitcoin when it was introduced the following year.

"A dollar today is not worth a dollar tomorrow. Bitcoin really attempts to solve that by creating a deflationary monetary policy where there will only ever be 21 million Bitcoin," he says. "It's not issued by a government and it's internet-first. There are no physical coins. It's just code. Your digital wallet can go anywhere in the world. It's empowering."

Behnke attributes Halborn's rapid success to the "white-glove touch" his company brings to a space that has few other businesses capable of doing the work correctly and professionally. With the \$90 million in financing, Behnke says Halborn plans to release a few new products, including a blockchain notary platform and an operating system for blockchain applications. Halborn is also on track to have an initial public offering in the next three to five years.

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Jason Thompson '08,

Director of player development
Honorary chair, Rider Arena Project
Former NBA player



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Dr. Sheirenne Sherman '08, '14

has received her doctorate in industrial organizational psychology from Northcentral University. At Rider, Sherman earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Arts in Applied Psychology. She is a board certified behavior analyst and has been with her current agency, Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health, for 12 years.

Joel Green '08

published his first book, *Filtering: The Way to Extract Strength From the Struggle*, last August. The former professional basketball player is the founder and CEO of Pro Level Training, national director of Nike Sports Camps and a highly sought after motivational speaker.

Ty Parrish '08 has been steadily climbing the ranks at Enterprise Rent-A-Car since 2009. In his 16 years with the company, he's been promoted several times, serving as assistant manager, branch manager and, most recently, area manager. Parrish earned his bachelor's in business administration from Rider.

'10s

William C. Smitheman Jr. '11

was honored by the New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants (NJCPA). He received a 2022 Ovation Award in the Emerging Leaders category. The annual NJCPA Ovation Awards honor professionals whose efforts and achievements are advancing New Jersey's accounting profession. Individuals are recognized for the variety of ways they contribute time, energy and intellect to developing the accounting profession and fostering its success.

Jacqueline Engelsman '12

served as a panelist for “Herstory: Being the Boss of Your Own Life” as part

Ruth Schmidt Wigand '42	Gale N. Enger '58	Stanley A. Bishop '68	Barbara Salvatoriello Pawson '83, '86
John F. Misyko '43	Ernest H. Henkel '58	Robert L. Glywa '68	Frances A. Sheffler '83
Christine Ziegenfuss Lynn '44	Robert J. McLean '58	Phyllis A. Reed '68	Kurt R. Palek '86
Leatrice Straub McSherry '45	Julian L. Ross '58	Bradford R. Bigioni '69	Ann Kuan '87
Rena Voltolina Priolo '46	Richard F. Gray '59	Robert J. Conner '69	Frank D. Luther '87, '92
Anita C. Smith '46	John R. Bednarski Sr. '60	Raymond H. Dunham '69	Christine M. Cathcart '89
Marjorie Stieg Miller '47	Ruth G. Bunn '60	Philip R. Zoda III '69, '75	Anthony C. Ciliberto '89
Bertha Ropeik '47	Barry E. Wiener '60	Barbara Billings '70	Barbara Mikrut Bielinski '90
Berkeley Stevenson Stonebraker '47	Raymond A. Cevera '61	George R. Saylor '70	Sheila Maguire '91
Betty Holter Kemak '48	Elmer S. Kollar '61	Gregory J. Bac '71	Armando I. Damiano '92
John W. Vanderlock '49	Stephen A. Miller '61	Anthony T. Degatano '71	Carol Ruisi Zielinski '92
David C. Evans '50	Francis A. Schuessler '61	Leonard V. Dimenna '71	Robert V. Aceto '94
Norman E. Quinn '50	John F. Abel '62	James P. Ryan '71	Steven P. Updegraff '96
Hal Reichard '50	Judith Baronoff Covon '62	Grant A. Schneider '71	Warren D. Jones '97
Effie Daiker Wysocki '50	Joan Lee Kerssenbrock '62	John R. Beebe '73	Natalie A. Maguire '98
John C. Hellyer '51	Frank E. Lewallen Jr. '62	Christopher Jones '73	Fredric J. Holub '99
Ernestine Benson Crum '51	James R. Marano '62	Frederick K. Kleen III '73	Crystal Jones Davis '01
Mary Dodge Emery '51	Eugene M. May '62	Barry L. Schaffer '73	Roberta Loppnow Morales '01
Harry G. Reinmuth Jr. '51	Edward H. Navlen '62	Frederick L. Fishback '74	Danielle Morrone Munger '02
Warren A. Schantz '51	Vincent J. Vicari '62	Bruce J. White '74	Christopher L. Fleming '03
Jane Strieby Alger Simmons '52	Lois Alpert Weaver '62	Richard H. Wildnauer '74	Erica D. Brewington '04
Samuel Coleman '52	Barbara Piller Borges '63	Thomas J. Finn '75	Edwina M. Downs '05
Margaret Dupont Hodge '52	Charles M. Case '63	Mary Wagner Hliwski '75	Betty Bright '10, '14
Frank A. Pederson Jr. '52	Elizabeth Drosnock Dietz '63	Andrea Simon Katz '75	Richard B. Stewart '12
Ivor D. Griffith '53	Alexander F. Kress '63	Linda S. Finkle '76	Shontisha L. Haynes '21
Ann Merkle Lytle '53, '55	William V. White III '63	Gayle Shemansky Harmer '76	
Francis B. Schroeder '54	Eileen J. DeSantis '64	Patricia Carey Harris '76	Faculty / Staff
Suzanne Marlow Zwick '55	Mary Tokoly Dougherty '64	Kathy Geyer McNeil '76, '80	Gerald F. Clark Jr.
Frank J. Boniewski Jr. '55	Lance C. Hewitson '64	Claire Hofmann Knowles '78	James K. Guimond
Robert H. Lambert '55	George Robert Huzinec '64	Darleen N. Wheeler '78	Henry Halpern
Elwood I. Lerman '55	Frank A. Kopp '64	Vicki Schlosser '79	James H. Litton '56, '58
Jean Hedden Murray '55, '59	Doreen Dieckhoff Warner '64	Kenneth G. Zimmer '79	Thomas P. LoPresti
Richard K. Stafford '56	Michael Perlmutter '65	Leonard S. Kaminsky '80	Donald McDonald
Ronald C. Jacobs '56	Peter A. Antonuccio '66	Gary W. Thorp '81	James E. Morley Jr.
John S. Moncrief '56	William F. Campbell '66	Nancy E. Booth '82	Larry M. Newman
Alfonso A. Ragnoli Jr. '56	Frank C. Dougherty '66	David A. Corey '82	Thomas Petroff
David C. Yap '56	Robert C. Richmond '66	Eileen Moore Smith '82	Carlos J. Ramirez
Eleanor Mapes Lemoine '57	Myles R. Callaghan '67	Robert W. Bauers Sr. '83	Gary W. Taylor '82
Hedley E. Yost '57, '59	Theodore F. Hiller '67	Cynthia M. Burd '83	
Susan Blumer '58, '59	Alexander D. Hubb '67	Zelda L. Hitchcock '83	

This list represents individuals who passed away from Aug. 1, 2022, through Jan. 31, 2023.



of an event hosted by the Women's Philanthropy Division of the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties. Engelsman is the director of marketing and business development at RRBB Accountants and Advisors. She is an active member of the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties, serving on both the Women's Philanthropy and Business Networking Group Committees.

Dan Petrino '12 was promoted to vice president of hockey administration for the ECHL, the leading professional developmental league for the American Hockey and the National Hockey Leagues. Prior to joining the ECHL, Petrino spent three years with the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, including a year as the conference's assistant commissioner for championships.

Joe Forte '13 was appointed chair of the Lawrence Township Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee in New Jersey. He is also currently a national member of the Victory Fund Campaign Board, which recruits, trains and fundraises for LGBTQIA+ candidates running for public office. Additionally, he is the vice chair of the New Jersey LGBTQ Democratic Caucus and was recently awarded the Community Advocate award by the New Jersey Pride Chamber.

Justin A. Williams '13 is the author of *Virtues Constellation (Reborn)*, a book of magical realism published by Traitmarker Books. Imbued with Greek mythology, the book follows the journey of Parthenon University senior Christian Belvedere as he struggles with his mental health and the sinister happenings taking place on campus.

Jim Vasil '14 joined PIX 11 News as a reporter and multimedia journalist. He is the recipient of two Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards and one AP Award. Vasil earned a Bachelor of Arts in Radio and Television from Rider and and received national

recognition for his reporting on the University's student-managed television network.

Kimberly Carl '14 was appointed special education supervisor for the Council Rock School District in Newtown, Pennsylvania. Before joining Council Rock, Carl was a school psychologist in the Pennsbury School District. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Rider.

Petra Gaskins '15 became the first Black woman elected to the New Brunswick City Council in New Jersey. She serves as chief of staff for State Sen. Andrew Zwicker, focusing on engaging with the community and ensuring proposed legislation is relevant and impactful to all constituents. Before joining the senator's office, Gaskins served as outreach director to U.S. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman.

Catherin MacDuff '16 was appointed to the Lawrence Township Council in New Jersey. She is an attorney with the Lawrence Township-based law firm of Stevens & Lee and earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Rider.

Ariel Matos '16 is the new associate director for diversity, equity and inclusion programs at Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA). In this role, he is responsible for developing and supporting inclusive co-curricular programming for SPIA students. He provides mentorship and advice, and supports SPIA affinity graduate student organizations and the SPIA Peer Advising Program. He also serves as director of Princeton's Junior Summer Institute.

Ashley Condo '17 joined RRBB Accountants and Advisors as a tax supervisor. She brings mentorship and technology advancement to RRBB as part of the firm's technology committee. Condo received her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Rider and is currently working toward her CPA license.

Meg Kerper '17 was promoted to vice president of clinical operations at Behavioral Framework. She previously served as a clinical supervisor and was subsequently promoted to clinical director. Kerper earned a Master of Arts in Applied Psychology from Rider.

Ronetta Hunter '19, '21 is currently pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy at Marist College. She received her Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences and her Master of Arts in Athletic Leadership from Rider.

'20s

Anthony Bailey '20 successfully completed the Pathways Program, a student internship initiative with the United States Secret Service. He was subsequently offered a permanent position as an investigative analyst and accepted.

Olivia Hayenhjelm '21 is a graphic artist at Tiffany & Co. where she creates artwork to be etched on crystal awards and mementos. She recently played a large role in the design process of a new, mass-produced stemware line.

Rikiyah N. Mixson '22 was awarded the Health Resources & Services Administration Public Health Scholarship for the 2022 cohort at The George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health. Mixson was chosen for her passion for public health and dedication to strengthening the public health workforce. She is committed to working in a local or state health department after the completion of her Master of Public Health program.

Anthony Corbi '22 was appointed assistant athletic director for video and live event production at Rider. He previously served on Rider's BroncVision event production crew and interned with the Philadelphia Union. Corbi received his bachelor's in sports media from Rider.



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Looking back

The Class of 1973 is celebrating its 50th reunion at Homecoming this fall. Reminisce with your classmates about your favorite collegiate memories — maybe even some captured on an Instamatic.

Mark your calendars for Oct. 27 to 29. Visit rider.edu/homecoming for more information.





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