IGNITING A NEW ERA

DUQUESNE LAUNCHES AMBITIOUS, HORIZON-EXPANDING CAMPAIGN

In this issue:  Big Stakes ♦ Career Connections ♦ Impacting at all Levels
For generations, Duquesne University has provided a world-class education, helping students grow as individuals, as professionals and as ethical decision-makers. The spark that first lit the way for our founders in 1878 has grown into a brilliant flame, tending by subsequent generations. That flame—the Spirit of Duquesne—has transformed our region—and our world. I’m proud that the torch has been passed to us, and that we have the privilege of blazing exciting new trails here in Pittsburgh, and far beyond.

On Sept. 7, thanks to the incredible generosity of an esteemed alumnus, we announced an unprecedented gift and the naming of the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University. A month later, we lit the night sky ablaze with a grand fireworks display, as we launched Ignite: The Campaign for Duquesne University. These pivotal moments will go down in the Duquesne history books—and you’ll learn more about these game-changing developments as you read this magazine. We’re also proud to include stories of other alums, students, faculty and staff who are determined to change lives, just as a Duquesne University education has changed their lives.

You’ll read about Raheem Perry, an alum of our Digital Media Arts program, who is now pursuing his MFA in Media Arts and Technology at Duquesne. Raheem credits much of his academic success to mentorship he received through our Gussin Spiritan Division’s Summer Passage Program—support he later paid forward as a mentor to subsequent classes of Summer Passage students.

You’ll also meet History Professor Robin Chapdelaine, who inspires her students to engage personally with history so they are “empowered to know their voices matter.” Voices will always matter at Duquesne University. Our many diverse voices ring true as one vibrant Spirit of Duquesne—an entrepreneurial spirit that leads us forward with energy, wisdom and compassion. We seek to find solutions—as did the biomedical engineering and nursing alumni you’ll read about, who created an award-winning prototype with the potential to save lives in hospital settings.

I’m proud to lead this special University at a pivotal moment in our history. Each day, I learn of new stories like these, and I’m filled with pride. Our Duquesne community is filled with extraordinarily talented individuals who give their all, in every field imaginable. I never cease to be impressed, and amazed. I hope you enjoy reading and learning more about just how committed, how driven and how passionate our Duquesne University community continues to be, as we light the spark for future generations.

Sincerely,

Ken Gormley
Duquesne University President
On Friday, Sept. 7, Duquesne announced that one of its most prominent graduates had committed $50 million to a law school that would bear his name: the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University. Dozens of news outlets across the nation covered what is among the largest gifts ever made to any law school, and the largest gift to Duquesne University in its history. Hundreds gathered for the announcement and celebration, shaking hands with Kline and getting some gear at the exciting moment of unveiling. Later the same day, Kline taught an impromptu class.

A picture-perfect moment, it was also decades in the making, built from a career dedicated to the welfare of others. President Gormley shares Kline's story for Duquesne Magazine.

Tom Kline's Philadelphia office occupies the top floor of a 19-story building near Rittenhouse Square and offers a spectacular view of the city below. Amid such fine trappings, Tom says, "I take every opportunity I can to remind myself where I came from." In that office, Tom keeps his well-worn baseball mitt, along with a ball signed by Red Sox slugger Ted Williams that his dad caught in Yankee Stadium. On the wall hangs a typed letter his dad sent in 1969 that reads, in part, "I don't want to get mushie or anything but what more can I say than I know you are good and I know Mother and I will always be proud of you."

Tom Kline truly embodies the Duquesne story, the mission of our Law School, and the Spiritan ideal of service to others that first built the Law School in 1911. Tom's journey, from working-class roots in Hazleton, Pa., to high school teacher in his hometown, to stand-out at Duquesne Law School, to nationally acclaimed trial lawyer in Philadelphia, recognized for working tirelessly to achieve justice for ordinary citizens and his unyielding commitment to the highest standards of ethics, is the story of our Law School itself.

Left and middle: Students don new Duquesne Kline School of Law gear and talk with Tom Kline.
Right: From left, Pennsylvania State Sen. Jay Costa, President Gormley, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, Duquesne University Board of Directors Chairman Jack McGinley, Kline with the late Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Max Baer, L’75.
And in his 44th year of practicing law, Kline still immerses himself in each case, keeping a notebook next to his bed so he can scribble down notes as his mind grinds through all of the evidence he plans to present to the judge and jury.

“Every time I stand up to give an opening speech I know someone’s future is riding on what I do,” he told one reporter. “Those are big stakes.”

On Sept. 7, I had the privilege of announcing that Tom Kline committed $50 million to the Law School—a transformational gift and the largest gift in Duquesne’s 144-year history. In thanks, the Law School has been renamed the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University.

It’s a true honor for any president to name one of the University’s flagship schools after a generous philanthropist who wishes to advance its mission and upward trajectory. In this case, the privilege is even more profound. In naming the School of Law after Tom Kline, we are honoring the past, present and future of this special institution.

Tom’s vision is simple: give present and future generations of law students and graduates the same opportunities that he enjoyed in order to enrich the legal profession that he cares so deeply about. In the 15 years in which I’ve gotten to know and admire Tom, he and I have discussed his desire to give back meaningfully to the Law School that made his extraordinary career possible.

Tom’s transformational gift will create scholarships to help students repay the benefits of an education from this distinctive Law School; aid in the recruitment, retention and upward mobility of law students and graduates; continue emphasis on public service as a critical aspect of myriad legal careers; and fuel a continued rise in our academic excellence of Law School faculty; expand our prized distinctive Law School; aid in the recruitment, retention and help students reap the benefits of an education from this career possible.

No matter what area of law practice or civic engagement future classes of our students embark on, they will bear the imprimatur of the gold standard of skill, ethical practice, high ideals and commitment to justice, as graduates of the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University. Even among those who have heard of Tom Kline’s stellar reputation as one of the top trial lawyers in the nation, many do not know his personal story.

EARLY HISTORY AND DUQUESNE LAW TRAINING

Born in December 1947, Tom Kline grew up in Pennsylvania’s anthracite coal region, the son of a dress factory manager whose grandparents emigrated to America from Lithuania. As a boy, “Tommy” worked summers slinging bundles of fabric from machine to machine at rival Dress Co. He learned to play the accordion, earning a spot in Rosebud’s All Accordion Band, performing in Moose Clubs, Polish wedding halls and local parades. Having developed an interest inbowling from his mother, Jeanne, he joined a league at the Hazleton Jewish Community Center. In school, he excelled at every stage and was elected class vice president at Hazleton High School.

When working with his hands, his skills were more limited. Tom returned from shop class and presented his dad with a funnel he had made, and his father, Isadore, said, “It’s clear you’re going to have to make your career with your head, rather than your hands.” Tom enrolled at nearby Albright College, where he studied liberal arts. As the Vietnam War raged overseas, Tom became interested in political science and pre-law. Although his father, “Ikey,” urged him to attend law school, Tom opted to teach sixth grade social studies near home, putting law school on hold for six years. Tom relished striding into his classroom wearing a wide paisley tie, thick leather belt and aviator glasses, especially on days he taught Pennsylvania History and Geography, a class that covered the founding by William Penn and the evolution of all 67 Pennsylvania counties.

Intent on advancing his education, Tom enrolled in a graduate program at Lehigh University, traveling over the mountains to take classes on evenings and weekends, studying American history with an emphasis on 19th and early-20th century social and urban history. He already had begun dating his future wife, Paula Wolf, who grew up in Mount Carmel, close to Hazleton.

Paula had just graduated from Boston University and was beginning her own teaching career in the Hazleton School District when the couple married in late 1972. They both loved their work in their respective classrooms. Yet, Paula urged Tom to pursue his dream of attending law school; she was prepared to work full-time as an elementary school teacher to support both of them. Paula’s stepfather, Leonard, advised Tom that he should consider his own alma mater, an excellent school in Pittsburgh.

Tom and Paula made the trek to check out Duquesne, which had received such a trusted endorsement. Tom met with then Associate Dean John Sciullo, a friendly figure who worked alongside Dean Ron Davenport. Sciullo quizzed the gangly applicant; the two clicked. Both came from working-class backgrounds. Sciullo was impressed by Kline’s intellectual acumen, his easy-going nature and his laser focus on earning a degree embossed with the name of this particular Law School. Three days later, Kline received a letter accepting him into Duquesne Law School.

Paula and Tom taught their final classes, then drove the Pennsylvania Turnpike over the mountains and through tunnels to their new home, where Paula had landed a job as a reading specialist at Hampton School District. Their one-bedroom place in Cricklewood Apartments sat adjacent to Duquesne’s campus, a stone’s throw from the Law School. Everyone from that era knows Cricklewood, and recent alumni and current students know it by its current name: Brottier Hall.

Tom’s favorite class turned out to be Torts, taught by a young professor named Frank McClellan. Influenced by Yale Law School Dean and later federal appeals Judge Guido Calabresi, McClellan emphasized in Torts class the notion that the legal system had to achieve fairness and justice in seeking redress for plaintiffs who had suffered injury and other forms of harm through no fault of their own. The notion would stick with Tom.

MENTORS, PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER CHOICES

Tom landed a summer job with Stephen Zappala Sr. (later Chief Justice of Pennsylvania), a solicitor for many municipalities and a Democratic powerhouse. Working in
baseball glove in his office continued to remember his roots. Cases that not only sought justice for the people affected but established an incomparable record of courtroom victories. Pomeroy authored nearly 50 of them, with the full engagement of his clerks. Legal jobs were scarce in the late 1970s, so before his clerkship began Kline had accepted a position at a small law firm in Pottsville, Pa., near Hazleton. Tom endeavored to fit into this small practice, joining the Rotary Club and other organizations to attract clients. He and Paula had their first child—a baby, girl, Hillary, in March 1979.

Soon, Paula posed the question: “What, exactly, are we doing here?” In many ways, she said, they were back where they had started, living a life they had left in Hazleton. Paula encouraged her husband to think big. He had spoken effusively about the powerhouse plaintiffs’ firm in Philadelphia led by the legendary trial lawyer James E. Beasley—why not aim high and give it a shot? Tom agreed and mailed a letter to Beasley, with his resume. A week later, he sat in the office interviewing with Jim Beasley himself, who offered the young lawyer a job on the spot. Perhaps more than any other reward of his storied career, Tom treasures the letters of thanks from families. One came from the mother of a baby who was catastrophically injured due to a hospital medication error in 1991. More than 20 years later she wrote:

Tom, please always remember that, because of you we were able to spend every day with Johnathan. We were able to take him to any doctor anywhere. Had the money to take the very best of care of him. We are forever grateful. When having a bad day, know that and feel proud. Love, Linda

This letter hangs on the wall in Kline’s office and reminds him of the reasons he committed himself to his profession in the first place.

THE ‘BABE RUTH’ OF TRIAL LAWYERS

Tom’s legal career blossomed as he gained invaluable courtroom experience and learned first-hand from the master trial lawyer, Jim Beasley. In October 1984, the couple had their second child, Zachary Wolf Kline, his middle name Paul’s maiden name. Raising a family and building a career was all-consuming and exciting. Yet Tom would suffer a personal blow when, a year after the couple’s move to Philadelphia, his father, Izzy, died of a rare form of leukemia. His mother felt lost and alone. Tom and Paula made trips to Hazleton as often as possible.

Having established his house fides as one of the top litigators in the state, Tom took a chance and joined forces with Shanan Specter to form their own firm: Kline & Specter. The firm swiftly gained a reputation of excellence and Tom established an incomparable record of courtroom victories. In one front-page story, the Philadelphia Daily News described Kline as “the Babe Ruth of personal injury litigation.”

The headline presaged a period of significant victories in cases that not only sought justice for the people affected but also led to corporate, institutional and governmental change. As Tom’s accolades accumulated, the man who kept his baseball glove in his office continued to remember his roots as well as his purpose.

Black Alumni Network Elects Leadership

Duquesne’s new Black Alumni Network (DUBAN), formed in 2021, elected its inaugural Executive board and officers in June 2022.

Keith Richardson, B’88, a DUBAN founder and executive board member, commented on the importance of the new network. “The establishment of DUBAN addresses a number of needs for Black alumni, and for the wider Duquesne community. The administration has offered to extend a discerning ear to listen and to address the varied concerns of Black alumni. DUBAN can help with that. “DUBAN reaches back by establishing meaningful connections between alumni and current students,” Richardson continued. “We hope DUBAN can be a bridge between students and young alumni and the support, guidance and mentorship of many of us who traveled the same path, some 20, 30 or 40-plus years ago.”

More information on DUBAN can be found at duq.edu/duban.

OFFICERS:

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Vice President – Joyce Howard, A’76, LO’8
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Naomi Ritter, A’44, GA’77

Visit duq.edu/magazine to hear more about this historic event.

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

The motto of the Law School, affixed to the wall just inside the building’s entranceway, is Salus Populi Suprema Lex. Loosely translated from Latin, that means: “The welfare of the People is the Highest Law.” That is what the Law School stood for, for the past 111 years. It is also precisely what Tom Kline has stood for, during 44 years of legal practice, using his considerable talents to accomplish justice. His groundbreaking cases have helped to shape the law in trial and appellate courts across the country and have helped to produce change for the good of his clients, the legal profession, and our system of laws and justice.

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SALUS POPULI SUPREMA LEX

From the moment I first encountered Tom Kline, I recognized he was an extraordinary person—one of the most impressive lawyers and human beings I’d ever met. He has built a career by representing ordinary citizens and a wide range of clients in the most difficult, complex cases that most would shy away from—because he cares so deeply about using his considerable talents to accomplish justice. His groundbreaking cases have helped to shape the law in trial and appellate courts across the country and have helped to produce change for the good of his clients, the legal profession, and our system of laws and justice.

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Tom’s celebrated career of pursuing justice and changes for the greater good matches perfectly with a law school committed to the good of the people.

Speaking at Duquesne in 2021 to a packed hall in the Power Center ballroom, he told our students: “I cherish that card in my wallet that allows me to practice law. I belong to a profession that is necessary. We are the guardians of democracy, the backbone of our nation, and we are all in this together.”

Tom Kline has devoted his entire career and all of the talents at his command to the service of others; particularly those needing the most basic guarantees of justice and fairness. That is the essence of what Duquesne University has always stood for. Now, he has given an incomparable gift to future generations of Law School graduates, who will forever carry his shining imprint of integrity and excellence with them.

“...DUBAN reaches back by establishing meaningful connections between alumni and current students...”

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InnovatIVe: Interdisciplinary and Imaginative

By Rose Ravasio, A’90

I f you’ve ever been hospitalized or treated in an emergency room, chances are you’ve had a peripheral intravenous catheter or “IV” inserted into your arm. In fact, IVs are used in up to 90% of hospitalizations, with approximately 330 million IVs inserted each year. And yet, IV dislodgement is a significant issue for hospitals.

“The last thing nurses want to see when they walk into a patient’s room is a dislodged IV,” explains Celia Gambacorta, a recent alum of Duquesne’s biomedical engineering and nursing undergraduate dual-degree (BME/BSN) program, who worked as a patient care technician at UPMC Mercy Hospital while studying at the University. “It delays a patient’s treatment of medications, of blood or of fluids—it changes the whole outcome of their shift and is critical to patient safety.”

ACADEMIC AMBITIONS AND HORIZON-EXPANDING EDUCATION

This common issue was the inspiration behind an award-winning prototype developed by Gambacorta, fellow BME/BSN graduate Rachel Wentz and BME majors Abby Hebenton, Sakina Goawala and Emily Meier for their senior capstone project in Duquesne’s Biomedical Engineering Program.

While dislodgments can happen accidentally, intentional dislodgements are the most common. “Confused, agitated and delirious patients often dislodge their IVs, which can cause bruising, bleeding, blowing a vein or just pain and general immobility,” adds Wentz, who worked with Gambacorta as a patient care technician at the hospital. “If the patient dislodges or pulls out the IV multiple times, restraints must often be used.”

“It is used for the use of restraints or issues in order to keep the progress on our project moving forward.”

“They were very motivated, and we practiced their pitch during class. These five senior engineering and nursing students competed against startups and existing entrepreneurs...”

PROBLEM SOLVERS DRIVEN BY COMPASSION AND EMPATHY

The all-female group developed a practical and meaningful solution to the prevalent IV dislodgement and a way to prevent the use of restraints. Sharing their knowledge, clinical and internship experiences, the collaborative developed “innovatIVe,” a two-layered sleeve that is secured around the upper arm, features a dome placed over a patient’s IV site and a proximity sensor that notifies a health care worker if the layer is compromised.

“The use of innovatIVe also could improve a patient’s overall wellbeing—not only physically, but mentally as well.” Wentz says. The group worked well together, understanding the importance of being open to suggestions and clear communication.

“Working on this project together led to a lot of team-building,” Goawala says. “We’re all so different, but we were open in our communication and encouraged each other to get straight to the point if we had questions or issues in order to keep the progress on our project moving forward.”

The group worked well together, motivated, and we practiced their pitch directly if we had questions or issues in order to keep the progress on our project moving forward.”

SOLVING THE PROBLEM IN MEANINGFUL WAYS

“We did a lot of research on what kind of material we were going to use,” Gambacorta says. “We knew it needed to be biocompatible so it wouldn’t irritate the skin, it needed to be breathable so there wouldn’t be any moisture buildup at the IV site, it needed to be able to withstand cleaning and it needed to be flexible so that it wouldn’t be considered a restraint.”

“As they worked together, the team experimented, experienced failures, and discovered new possibilities and a new respect for biomedical engineering and nursing connect in meaningful and productive ways.

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The group also credits BME and nursing faculty for walking alongside them and providing invaluable feedback and support during their journey.

“Rosanna Henry, a nursing instructor who is director of the nursing school’s Learning and Simulation Center, gave us prosthetic arms, which was really great because we had something on which to model our device and see it in action,” says Goawala.

“Accidental dislodgement is a very high-priority clinical problem as very ill older and young patients often have poor peripheral venous access,” Henry says. “The group was open to my advice and expertise and made modifications to the design, use of coverings, dressings, etc. It was a pleasure to work with them.”

DUQUESNE ADDS A GREATER SENSE OF PURPOSE

BME faculty, including Assistant Professors Dr. Melikhan Tanyeri and Dr. Bin Yang, mentored the group with aspects of the prototype’s design, like the sensor and the parts created through 3D printing. Assistant Engineering Professor Dr. Leda Kloudas, who originally assigned the women to work on their capstone project together, was a big supporter who encouraged them to develop something they could market. She even suggested the group enter the Duquesne University New Venture Challenge. The only all-student, all-female team in the competition placed third and was awarded $6,000 in prize money.

“I encouraged them to join the New Venture Challenge as part of their work in developing a medical device prototype. What better way to find out early in the process how you can get a device to market from a business side?” Kloudas says. “They were very motivated, and we practiced their pitch during class. These five senior engineering and nursing students competed against startups and existing entrepreneurs, and they came in third place.

“Their prototype was a smart idea that they developed both from experience and by talking to experts in engineering and nursing,” Kloudas adds. “I am very proud of them. This is what every educator hopes for, to have self-motivated students who develop an idea on their own—they made it happen. It’s also a testament for both nursing education and engineering education.”

More than a year after the five women were assigned to work together in class, they oversee their own company and are preparing a patent application for their product. They meet biweekly and talk regularly on a group text chat about next steps and bigger goals, including marketing the product and recruiting investors.
At the beginning of his trip to Ghana this summer, Gordon Cortney, percussion student in the Mary Pappert School of Music, was served foods of a more "familiar" nature—rice, beans, sometimes chicken. His mornings were spent learning to play traditional African percussion instruments, for this was the reason the Honors College student applied to be an Africa Fellow. Those first few days he would retreat to his room at the Bernard Woma Dagara Music Center (DMC) after lunch for a respite not just from the sun and jet lag, but also from the newness of everything. He was the only visitor, the only foreigner in the entire village of Medie, and it was a far cry from Cortney’s home in Las Vegas, as well as Duquesne’s campus.

Within a few days, Cortney was no longer heading to his quarters during the heat of the day. Instead, he found himself playing soccer, barefoot in the red dirt with the many children who live at the center—it functions not only as a cultural non-profit but also a family home. When it became clear Cortney was willing to try new things, the menu began to change. Traditional Ghanaian porridges made from corn dough, stews made with bushmeat, and local treats known as bofrot (donut) and nkatie cake (peanut brittle) made their way to his plate.

At first his fingers blistered, unaccustomed to the way one holds the rubberized mallets while playing the gyil, a pentatonic instrument resembling a xylophone that utilizes dried gourds as resonators. Soon he developed the calluses, and as the skin between his first and second knuckles toughened, it became quite clear that his three weeks in Ghana would leave him with more than a new set of musical skills.

“At the end, they become part of the family,” said Michael Woma, DMC director of communications and nephew of the late Bernard Woma. Asked by Cortney who Woma is, the answer at this point might simply be, “my friend.”

A DISTINCT HONOR

Cortney joins a line of Duquesne students who have benefitted from the Honors College Endowed Fellowship program, which awards up to $15,000 to conduct research, often abroad, in support of their projects. “Honors Fellows represent less than 1% of any graduating class at Duquesne,” said Dr. Kathleen Glenister Roberts, director of the Honors College. “We’ve never had more than 17 fellows in a given year. And yes, the Endowed Fellows are an even smaller subset—usually between one and four in a year.

“Endowed Fellows undertake their projects at pivotal times in their undergraduate careers and typically return to Duquesne energized and transformed by the experiences,” Roberts said. “The rare specializations they have been able to establish, whether it’s learning a West African instrument or honing their research skills in another language, point them toward bigger goals.”

RESONATING UPON HIS RETURN

Just a few days after his return from Ghana, Cortney was still abuzz with enthusiasm about the life-changing experience. Determined more than ever to incorporate African drumming into his repertoire, he has become the de facto gyil and djembe expert in the program.

“The grant ensured he would be able to not only secure a handmade instrument for his personal use, but also one for the music school.”

“We are thrilled Gordon brought back a gyil. It will help us continue to expand what instruments and music traditions are available for our students to study and interact with,” said Joseph Sheehan, associate professor of musicianship.

“There are many ways the instrument can be incorporated into our programs, including in performances, for guest artists, events at the Center for African Studies, and in classes such as Music of Africa and the African Diaspora.”

Cortney didn’t need much time to adjust to the time change, the climate and the food upon his return home in July. He misses his afternoons kicking the soccer ball with the children and the quiet evenings playing spades with the village elders, but nothing will remove him fully from that experience in Ghana as an Endowed Fellow.

“I was told countless times I was ‘free,’” Cortney said. “‘Free,’ in their language, was the word used to describe open to their culture, open to possibilities, open to new horizons.

“They were pleased with me. I was ready. I was ready to learn.”

Visit duq.edu/magazine to listen to Cortney play the Gyil.
There are the typical challenges to obtaining an academic degree: managing time, understanding course materials, tests and presentations, navigating a social life. But for Pharm.D. graduates Hari Acharya, P’22, and Tetyana Chubko, P’22, the obstacles to higher education were so much more: moving to a new country, learning a new language and culture, balancing finances, family illness and even war. There is a story of resilience, determination and reaching bigger goals.

Acharya remembers exactly when he decided he wanted a health care career. “There was a lot of death in the camps. We didn’t have medicine or doctors nearby to help,” said Acharya, who lived in a Nepal refugee camp until he was 13. “My uncle fell sick from malaria and died. That’s when I knew I would be a health care professional so I could help the less fortunate.”

That life-long dream became a reality when Acharya earned his Pharm.D. degree in May and began working as a pharmacist at Rite Aid in Whitehall, an area where many Nepal natives live. But reaching that dream was anything but easy. After living in severe poverty in Nepal, Acharya and his family moved to America with the help of the International Organization of Migration in 2009. After arriving and living in San Antonio for three years, the family moved to Pittsburgh.

“We were extremely scared about moving to a new country,” he said. “We were so used to living a different way. But my parents knew it would be better for us.” In Nepal, Acharya would walk miles just to get to a school made of bamboo and thatch. In America, he remembers the “giant yellow bus” coming to take him to the first day of classes. “I thought the school was a palace, it was so large,” he said.

Acharya didn’t speak English, which led to painful moments early in his high school career. “One day the teacher asked a question and I rose my hand to answer it. Because of my poor English and accent, the teacher couldn’t understand me and the kids in the class laughed,” he said. “It really devastated me and it took a while for me to move on from that experience.” It also inspired him to learn English not only through school, but also by listening to music and watching movies.

With strong skills in math and science, Acharya eventually graduated with a degree from the University of Pittsburgh and was accepted into Duquesne’s Pharm.D. program. “I cried the day Duquesne called and let me know I was accepted to the program,” he said. “On that day, I went from no future to working toward becoming a pharmacist.”

Shortly before beginning the program, Acharya’s mother fell ill so he took on a full-time job to help pay the bills. As a result, he struggled with his classwork in the first semester but remained determined. “At that point, it just felt like another obstacle that had been thrown at me,” he said. “I didn’t feel bad—I felt extra motivated. There was no way, after all I had been through, that I could quit.”

Acharya passed his classes and noted his professors were welcoming and supportive of his efforts. “All of the professors are great. They create a real foundation and focus on the skills you need to become a great pharmacist,” he said. “They do it with patience and make sure your work is done correctly. When I started my clinical rotations, I was ready for anything.”

Thousands of Miles from Home, Duquesne Graduates Still Serving Countrymen

NEW PHARMACISTS READY TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES
Acharya also praised the personalized approach to rotations, as he was able to choose where he wanted to work. He said other pharmacy schools assign students to locations using a computerized system.

With his degree in hand, Acharya looks forward to taking on his new position, where he can communicate with many of the Nepal-speaking people in the community.

“I have always been amazed by how a tiny pill can make such a difference in someone’s health,” he said. “Now I will have the opportunity to make a difference for people in my community.”

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Acharya’s story somewhat mirrors that of Tetyana Chubko, a Ukrainian native who is finding ways to serve her fellow countrymen both in Pittsburgh and abroad.

Chubko came to Pittsburgh in 2007 with no knowledge of the English language. Since then, she has earned two academic degrees, gotten married, had a child and helped her mother in her cancer. She has taken on a new job as a pharmacist at Walgreens in Carnegie, which boosts a large Ukrainian population.

Now, though, she finds her thoughts reside with her two brothers, step father and half-brother who are fighting the war in Ukraine.

“It’s been very difficult the last few months,” she said. “It is so scary when you get a call and don’t know what the news will be on the other end. I’m so thankful that everyone is alive. When something like this touches you personally, you really see it from a different perspective.”

When the war first happened, Chubko said she felt emotionally exhausted, but then decided to redirect her energy. As a vice president of the local Ukrainian New Wave, a charitable organization, she coordinated efforts to send medical supplies to Ukraine.

“My daughter, Sofiya, has the opportunity to make a difference for people in my community.”

Chubko’s resourcefulness is not surprising. She has found her way ever since she entered the U.S. as a 21-year-old. Having earned a degree at a university in Ukraine, she decided to return to school, where she learned English while taking on a full course load at a community college. She eventually earned a psychology degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 2013, just a few months after giving birth to her daughter Sofiya.

With a passion for helping people, Chubko knew she wanted to work in health care. She took jobs at the Medicine Shoppe in Carnegie and at the pharmacy department at UPMC Passavant Hospital and joined Duquesne’s Accelerated Weekend Program.

“The program made it possible to work, take care of my family and go to school,” she said. “I felt so comfortable there right away, and the professors are very supportive.”

The program was especially helpful when Chubko’s mother, Mariya, who arrived in Pittsburgh in 2017, was diagnosed with stage 3 colon cancer in 2018. Chubko became her caregiver, taking her to doctor visits and translating for her. The cancer is now in remission.

Chubko said she is grateful for the support provided by the program.

“The professors have always been here for me,” she said. “When the war started, Dean (Jim) Drennen and many of my professors reached out to me with supportive messages. They have been like a second family and helped me to get through some tough times.”

Chubko received three job offers before deciding on the Walgreens in Carnegie, and said Duquesne has prepared her well to serve the community.

“I’ve had a really good experience and loved each clinical rotation I’ve worked on,” she said. “I’ve made some great connections and friends. This new position is where I want and need to be.”

“...many of my professors reached out to me with supportive messages. They have been like a second family and helped me to get through some tough times.”

Presis Naumann’s heart for serving others and passion for making health care more accessible on a global scale is what drew her to pursue her Healthcare Ethics Ph.D. at Duquesne.

As one of this year’s Fulbright Scholarship awardees, Naumann earned a grant to spend nine months conducting research in her hometown of Chennai, India, engaging with women who are unable to have children due to medical reasons. Women who are involuntarily childless may have longed to be mothers but have not been able to have a baby due to different circumstances. Naumann will study the impact of social stigma in health care and identify more accessible, equitable strategies to support women who are unable to have children.

The Fulbright Scholarship program is a horizon-expanding opportunity for students to engage in important cross-cultural research, gain professional experience in new countries, and foster appreciation for global perspectives. Through her scholarship opportunity, Naumann says she hopes to help bring diverse women’s perspectives into research.

“For many across the world, seeking health care is an act of courage because, to enter through those doors, they have to overcome the burden of stigma,” Naumann says.

“Health care ethics is integral to health care practices, public policies and patient education on a global level,” Naumann says. “This research is necessary to ensure that no women face social stigma when trying to access health care.”

From an early age, Naumann experienced how, in underserved regions, childlessness can negatively impact a woman’s mental wellbeing, social position and physical health due to a lack of resources.

“Back in Chennai, I grew up in a house of women educators who fought for equality, sexism and poverty to get where they are today. Despite their strength, there is still one fight they have not won: social stigma. At a young age, I witnessed my aunt, a bright, educated woman, kicked out of her in-laws’ home due to her involuntary childlessness.”

Naumann continues, “Suffering in silence and crippling her mental wellbeing, she passed away in her 30s from renal failure.”

This fateful moment altered the course of her calling to become an advocate for ethical health care. Naumann believes her aunt could have prevented her untimely death with proper access to stigma-free care.

“Many health care policies are influenced by the Global North—regions such as North America and Europe—and I want to make sure that women in South India have the chance for their voices to be heard. Their experiences should have the chance to influence the policies that affect them.”

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Steps from Campus

PARTNERSHIP OFFERS UNIQUE, MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL OPPORTUNITIES

By Amanda Dabbs

M y favorite part of the position is listening to patients,” said Shayaan Meyers. On the Spinal Cord Rehabilitation floor, it’s essential for patients to have meaningful conversations that aren’t always about their medical care. Meyers, a current Duquesne health science major, is working at UPMC Mercy, steps from Duquesne’s campus, in a role created through a special partnership between the University and UPMC Mercy. “Because of the shortage of health care workers, it can be challenging to meaningful conversations in the fast-paced environment. The hospitality associate role is the perfect way to combat this issue,” explained Meyers, whose career goal is to become a physician assistant.

She added, “Duquesne has helped me discover what I am truly passionate about, and the Health Science program has given me the opportunity to explore different types of health care while piquing my interest in physician assistant studies.”

Over the past year, 90 Duquesne University students, or nearly 70% of the hospitality associates at UPMC Mercy, have worked at the neighboring Uptown Pittsburgh hospital campus. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and staffing shortages, UPMC Mercy designed a flexible role to support its nursing units and reached out to Duquesne right away to help.

“We knew there were Duquesne college students in our own backyard who we could connect with to help us take care of our patients,” said Samantha Spagnola, director of HR Recruitment for UPMC Mercy. Spagnola and Juliannne Remaley, UPMC Mercy recruitment lead, worked with Duquesne University’s Dr. David Dausey, Ph.D., executive vice president and provost, Dr. John M. Kauffman Jr., D.O., dean of the proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine, and Nicole Feldhues, director of Career Development, to establish the UPMC Mercy and Duquesne partnership.

“We couldn’t be more pleased with the partnership and the number of student hires, especially so early in this initiative. We are building a strong pipeline of Duquesne talent to meet the staffing needs of an important health care provider which directly serves and impacts our community and is core to Duquesne’s mission,” explained Feldhues.

DEDICATED DUKES ON THE PATIENT FLOORS

Allison Brand is one of the many talented Duquesne students working in the hospitality associate role.

“I decided to apply to get the experience of working in a hospital and to see what a typical day is like. Being a speech language pathology major, I may work in a hospital in the future, so this has been the perfect opportunity to get hands-on experience,” said Brand.

In her role, Brand provides snacks and drinks to patients, helps clean patient rooms, and stocks gloves and cleaning supplies on the hospital floor. She has also had the opportunity to shadow speech pathologists at the hospital during her shifts. “I love being able to talk to patients and brighten their moods,” added Brand.

MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES AT MERCY

Nursing major Molly Brennan enjoys seeing the daily routine of patients and nurses, gaining valuable experience to take into her next round of clinicals, and the convenience of living on Duquesne’s campus and walking just two blocks to UPMC Mercy Hospital.

“This is certainly a big advantage. I’m on Duquesne’s swimming and diving team and the flexible work schedule, along with the convenient location, allows me to continue to pursue both my academic and athletic goals,” said Brennan.

Luke Meyers, Hannah Meng, an occupational therapy major, also works on the Spinal Cord Rehabilitation floor. “My favorite part of the job is my coworkers. Everyone on the floor is extremely welcoming and a joy to be around. I also enjoy gaining experience in a hospital setting while having a flexible work schedule,” said Meng.

Making an Impact While Building Career Competencies

According to Spagnola, the hospitality associate role is extremely beneficial to their nursing units because it allows their nurses to perform at the highest level of their license while giving patients the time, attention and care they deserve.

When asked to describe the Duquesne students working as hospitality associates, Spagnola said: “The students have been absolutely fantastic...one thing that has been consistent is their desire to lend a hand.”

“‘The students have been absolutely fantastic...one thing that has been consistent is their desire to lend a hand.’”

Feldhues added: “Our students benefit by gaining practical hands-on experience at one of the nation’s top health care systems while building important career competencies that will set them up for future career success. What a tremendous opportunity—and it’s literally just steps from campus!”
The Duquesne University Young Alumni Network hosted its first in-person Dukes from the Last Decade Awards Reception at the Energy Innovation Center in Uptown Pittsburgh on June 4.

The evening of celebration brought together alumni, staff, faculty and friends to recognize the exceptional achievements of 11 recent graduates. Honorees were selected based on their professional excellence, commitment and service to their communities, and dedication to their alma mater. Most importantly, the recipients live out the mission of Duquesne University in their daily lives.

The event featured live music by a jazz trio from the Mary Pappert School of Music, rooftop views of campus and the Pittsburgh skyline, and remarks from Dr. David Dausey, Executive Vice President and University Provost. Herff Jones, official provider of Duquesne’s distinctive class ring, was presenting sponsor of the event.

To learn more about this year’s award recipients and nominees, the inaugural 2021 award recipients, and information about 2023 nominations, visit duq.edu/lastdecade.

The 2023 awards reception will take place, June 10 at the Energy Innovation Center.

The Power of Perspective: Why Thinking Like a Historian Matters

By Gabrielle Payne

A simple definition of history states: “the study of past events.” While this description may suggest that history is a straightforward collection of facts, that is not often the case. Moreover, history is a complex, ever-changing intersection of truths, biases and conflicting narratives—a reality that historians confront daily. Duquesne’s Dr. Robin Chapdelaine, history professor and author, says it’s important for students to learn how to think like a historian. Through developing critical, higher-level reasoning, she teaches students to evaluate historical narratives, draw inferences about the broader context and feel confident enough to communicate their own interpretations.

Chapdelaine empowers her students with the question, “What history are you going to tell?” Each summer, Yale University hosts a faculty seminar where experienced professionals from across the nation come together to share insight and engage in powerful discussions. This year, Chapdelaine was selected to join the seminar.

In June 2022, the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) Seminar on the Legacies of American Slavery, led by Yale History Professor David Blight, included nearly 20 inter-disciplinary professionals from private, liberal arts colleges across the country. Through roundtable discussions, participants dove into researching, analyzing and offering solutions to the legacies of slavery that continue to manifest in society today.

“Usually when I’m in a collective group, it’s with historians and sociologists,” Chapdelaine says. “This seminar also included nurses, biologists and individuals from health sciences. The questions and knowledge that they brought to the table were essential in ways that I wouldn’t have thought.”

For Chapdelaine, it’s not only important for scholars to engage in these types of discussions that offer new perspectives; she says it’s how she promotes equity in the classroom.

“When students take my class, one of the first things I tell them is: ‘We’re going to learn from each other,’ I want every student to have the opportunity to take hold of class and lead their own discussion,” she says. “It builds equity in the sense that students are empowered to know that their voice matters.”

As the legacies of the past continue to influence the present, Chapdelaine says the classroom should be a place where students learn to think, reason and teach. She encourages students to not only load discussions about “what happened,” but instead to focus on the “why and how” evidence that supports their interpretation.

“The study of history is never something that will be done or complete,” she says. “When we challenge each other’s work and offer new perspectives, we create a scholarly community. Gaining new interpretations is the beauty of learning about the past.”

THE 2022 DUKES FROM THE LAST DECADE RECIPIENTS:
- Armani Davis, A’14, Shadyside Academy
- Jamie Drennen, B’15, L’18, Strassburger, McKenna, Gutnick & Gefsky
- Jamilah (Seabrook) Ducar, A’13, University of Pittsburgh
- Gina Govojdean, B’12, Howmet Aerospace, Inc.
- Michelle Mikus, GP’13, Delta Care Rx
- Robin Rectenwald, A’12, BCW Global
- Michael Robertson, B’13, Arrivalist
- Alydia Thomas, GE’14, University of Pittsburgh
- Jordan VerPlank, S’11, University at Buffalo
- Devin Walker, E’14, U.S. Department of Justice
- Amy (DiPietro) Woods, GP’12, GA’19, Duquesne University School of Pharmacy

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People new to Duquesne’s Pittsburgh campus often ask about the white bird peeking from buildings, one wing flaring into fire. A few years ago, in fact, a student from another country asked a residence life director why it appeared the University did not like birds. Confused, the director asked what made him reach that conclusion. They are all on fire, the student responded.

One needn’t be on the Bluff long to learn the importance of the symbol. The New Testament associates the winged dove and tongues of fire with the Holy Spirit—the Spirit that gives life and animates the Spiritan Community who founded Duquesne.

As written in Luke 3:22, the Holy Spirit descended as a dove at Jesus’ baptism, carrying the voice of God, and then in Acts 1:2, when the Apostles hear the word of God through tongues of fire.

The city, too, in which the United States’ only Catholic Spiritan university sits, is characterized often by the fires that flared in furnaces of its historic steel industry, an industry that forged the story of Pittsburgh’s growth and tempered its enduring identity.

Duquesne’s alumni, faculty and students have been leading characters in that story. Now, announcing an ambitious fundraising campaign for the people who deliver on Duquesne’s distinctive mission, the University looks to spark its alumni and friends to support the cause.

**STRIKE THE MATCH**

On the Saturday night of Homecoming and Parents Weekend, in UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse, President Ken Gormley revealed the details of the IGNITE campaign. Astute attendees noticed a theme: fire dancers, a concert with a conflagration of flame-themed music, a call to Fire up the night!, and a Friday fireworks celebration overtly struck the match.

“When it all came together with President Gormley’s stunning revelation on Saturday, you could feel the electricity in the room, you could feel the energy and the excitement and the buy-in” said alumna Rita Ferko Joyce.

DUQUESNE LAUNCHES IGNITE, A $333 MILLION FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN TO FORGE A STRONG FUTURE FOR ONE OF THE WORLD’S LEADING CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES

“We’re preparing globally minded citizens who are going to make an impact wherever they go.”

“It is time and energy all coming together to say - yes, let’s go, let’s do this.”

Invoking the Spiritans arriving in Pittsburgh 150 years ago, President Gormley challenged the audience with a question that drives the University’s work now: What would the Spiritans do if they arrived in Pittsburgh today?

They would be called to act. Invest in the future, making sure students had resources to attend Duquesne as their first choice for college. Illuminate minds with a broad, ethical and practical education. Inspire in souls a generosity and urge for authentic and supportive relationships. And in the times we face, integrate health care to provide the complex and holistic practices to improve overall health. IGNITE is designed to provide the resources to achieve those dreams.

“The point is to IGNITE a spirit of giving, certainly,” says Jim Miller, senior vice president of University advancement, “It also shows that alumni and friends can help by referring students, volunteering, and clearly expressing the good Duquesne’s people are doing in Pittsburgh and around the world.”

**BLAZING FORWARD**

More than ever, students choose Duquesne with interest in preparing for a job and a life in which they can, to paraphrase Miller, do good in the world and make a difference. A major assist for them are scholarships made possible by alumni donations. Critical for families to handle the cost of education, those scholarships do more than make attendance possible. They then open ways to illuminate the mind and inspire the soul.

“Duquesne isn’t afraid of the world,” says Duquesne
We are engaging the students in a way that we’ve not been able to before.”

Chaplain the Rev. William Christy, C.C.Sp. “As a missionary university, we are constantly pushing out into the world, into a diverse world. To be part of that world.”

Such connection is key to illuminating minds. The faculty know and value that.

“If we attract students who really want to make a difference within their community, but also think about their role in a global sense, we’re not only making a difference in the local Pittsburgh community,” says Dr. Sandra Quiñones, professor of education. “We’re preparing globally minded citizens who are going to make an impact wherever they go.”

The programs that exist are varied and, especially since the start of IGNITE’s quiet phase, growing. Some marquee programs include the semesters abroad at Duquesne’s Rome and Dublin campuses, but many are right in the neighborhoods around campus.

“Our student-athletes definitely understand, recognize and embrace their sphere of influence,” says Sherene Brantley, associate athletic director for academic and student services. “They’re in the community. In the spring, we did a comfort associate athletic director for academic and student services.

“It’s wonderful to meet them all over the world,” says Menk. “We’ve got the technology at their hands, too. They can meet, they can work, they can have faculty come in,”

BUILD THE FIRE

Bryan Menk, associate professor of accounting in the Palumbo-Donahue School of Business Administration, is making the most of what early gifts to the IGNITE campaign have made possible. Renovations to Rockwell Hall, the home of the School, were made possible by alumni donations, as the campaign gathered momentum.

“Now, the fourth floor, the sixth floor, soon the seventh floor, all of these student collaborative sections exist where they can meet, they can work, they can have faculty come in,” said Menk. “They’ve got the technology at their hands, too. We are engaging the students in a way that we’ve not been able to before.”

Such renovations also extend what is possible for students and faculty engaging the wider world, such as having members of Congress participate in person and via Zoom in master’s students presentations about fixing Social Security for Menk’s class.

“I benefit from donors’ generosity just by by sitting in the new classrooms in Rockwell,” says Jessica Schmitz, a student from North Dakota who also is the president of the Student Government Association, referring to the impressive renovations that alumni have made possible. “Or when we have an event in the Cooper Fieldhouse, all of campus benefits from their generosity here.”

 Forgiving the New

The most audacious element of the IGNITE campaign—integrating health care—is most visible in Duquesne’s proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine. With more than $30 million already raised to fund the facility, for which ground broke in 2022, the project will also require investment in faculty, community programs and partnerships, technology and more.

Furthermore, its strength will be bolstered by being located at a university already blessed with nationally visible programs in nursing, pharmacy and health sciences as well as unique programs created by partnerships with law, business, education, science and music.

Yes, music.

“Music therapy continues to be a burgeoning field, and our numbers continue to increase,” says Noah Potvin, assistant professor of music therapy. “We’ve had a 50% growth over the past five years alone because when music therapists are invited into health care systems, we are not kicked out. We are asked to stay, and we are asked if we have friends.”

According to Potvin, staff nurses, respiratory therapists, physicians, social workers, chaplains and others find they gain useful assistance from music therapists—whether it’s connected to breathing, stress, pain management or mental wellness.

Duquesne’s music therapy program is very strong and attracts alumni support already. “It becomes a natural point of connection across all the other health care programs,” Potvin says.

Where We Are Already

To date, IGNITE has raised more than $234 million in gifts from alumni, friends, regional and national foundations, and more. The momentum is well underway, with new and historic gifts announced with increasing frequency at Duquesne.

Such excitement is contagious, and reflective of the Spiritan fathers’ enthusiasm for connecting to the world and helping others.

“We welcome the world in to our University,” says Christy. “We don’t hide who we are, and we don’t ask that everybody agree with us. We don’t ask that the world look like us or be like us, because as missionaries, we are to go out and meet the people where they are. We go back to that very well-worn phrase that we use here as our motto, as our as part of our guiding principles.”

And by going out and igniting change, we forge a future. •
From festive campus events to newsworthy happenings, the Duquesne spirit brings people together.

Continuing a meaningful tradition, students and staff mark the 21st anniversary of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 by placing American flags outside College Hall in remembrance of the victims.

The multi-disciplinary Fritzky Family Integrative Health Summit brought health care professionals to Duquesne who are dedicated to improving patient care and defining integrative health in the future.

With their proven success, delicious food offerings and cool restaurant atmosphere, we know that they’ll appeal to our students, faculty and staff as well as the Pittsburgh community.

Matt Fred, senior vice president for finance and business, speaking on the addition of a new dining option on campus, Moonlit Burgers.

Besides creating more opportunity, the sport additions also will support an overall enrollment strategy of growing the undergraduate population with highly-qualified students with strong leadership skills.

Duquesne University Vice President of Athletics Dave Harper announcing the addition of women’s triathlon, women’s golf and women’s acrobatics and tumbling to varsity sports.

As part of the GoBabyGo Program, our PT and OT students dedicated a day to volunteering with students from Pitt and CCAC to adapt ride-on battery-powered cars for children with a need for mobility.

Construction continues on the proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine on Forbes Avenue in Uptown.

The Arbor Day Foundation has honored Duquesne University with a 2021 Tree Campus Higher Education recognition for its commitment to effective urban forest management. Bill Zilcosky, senior director of facility services and operations at Duquesne, speaking about the student perspective.

The diversity of our Duquesne team was very helpful because we had representatives from five departments who presented various perspectives of what diversity, equity and inclusion meant in each of their units.

Crystal/McCormick Ware, inaugural chief diversity officer and senior advisor to the president for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), discussing the Duquesne University team at the 2022 Summer Institute for Equity in the Academic Experience.

Alumni and friends traveled to Hawaii in support of Duquesne football. Despite a loss, the experience was one to remember for fans and student-athletes alike.

When students visit Duquesne for the first time, they’re amazed at how our campus is like a beautiful park in the middle of the city.

The diversity of our Duquesne team was very helpful because we had representatives from five departments who presented various perspectives of what diversity, equity and inclusion meant in each of their units.

Crystal/McCormick Ware, inaugural chief diversity officer and senior advisor to the president for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), discussing the Duquesne University team at the 2022 Summer Institute for Equity in the Academic Experience.

CHALLENGE
ACCEPTED:

Listen, Learn & Achieve a More Inclusive Classroom

By Stephanie Sullivan

I
spired by Duquesne’s Spiritan values of service and virtue, faculty across the University are stepping up to the Center for Teaching Excellence’s Inclusive Teaching Challenge. For us, equity and opportunity begin right here on campus. As our founders intended, inclusion remains a core value at the forefront of our works toward bigger goals.

NEW STRATEGIES TO HELP STUDENTS THRIVE

Dr. Stephanie Gray, assistant professor of public history in the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, jumped on the opportunity to learn about students’ challenges and ways she can help them succeed.

Each semester, she invites students to privately share information that can help her serve and support them—things like their preferred name or pronouns; racial, ethnic and gender identification; responsibilities outside of the classroom; challenges they anticipate facing in their classes; concerns about access to technology or resources; and how they can be supported during the semester.

Halfway through the semester, she checks in with students again, soliciting feedback on what she should keep doing, quit doing and start doing. It’s an opportunity to ensure she’s meeting students’ expectations and providing support to guide their success.

She’s learned that many students feel quite anxious about speaking aloud and engaging in class. Since participation is a significant chunk of their grade, she’s created other opportunities to earn participation credit, like writing a response to a video or submitting their thoughts via email by a certain time.

“While I think it’s important for students to begin to feel comfortable talking with their peers, I want Duquesne classrooms to be a safe environment,” Gray empathizes. “As an instructor, you have to be interested in and invested in your students: an empathetic teacher who wants students to learn and achieve academic success, and who also cares about the physical and mental wellbeing of each individual student.”

PROACTIVE, CONSIDERATE ACCOMMODATIONS

Dr. Tiffany Hatcher, clinical assistant professor in the School of Pharmacy, strives to ensure that students with disabilities feel comfortable speaking up and seeking accommodations, and are alleviated of any additional inconveniences or stresses.

For example, Hatcher has become more committed to providing closed captioning in her class videos, including throughout the online Pharm.D. program. “At one point, I thought putting captions on my videos was a burden for me. But now, as I think about students with impairments, videos without captions cause those students to carry additional burdens and may cause barriers to reaching their full potential. Additionally, providing captions has the potential to benefit all students.”

That effort includes reading through automated transcripts to ensure that students needing accommodations or with neurodiversity get the same message and understanding as everyone else: “It’s a conscious decision to take personal responsibility to make sure your content is accessible to everyone.”

Dr. Claire Radcliff, assistant professor in the School of Education, has taken a proactive approach to making her course content more accessible to visually impaired students.

“Offer empathy and flexibility when possible. Recognize various elements that might limit or impact a classroom’s inclusivity, and implement small changes. They add up to make a big difference.”

SMALL CHANGES, BIG DIFFERENCE

Both Hatcher and Gray have learned that, in many ways, inclusive teaching can be simple to embrace. “Treat everyone with respect. Don’t assume you understand all the factors that contribute to a student’s wellbeing and academic success,” Gray shares. “Offer empathy and flexibility when possible. Recognize various elements that might limit or impact a classroom’s inclusivity, and implement small changes. They add up to make a big difference.”

“...you have to be interested in and invested in your students.”

“It’s a conscious decision to take personal responsibility to make sure your content is accessible to everyone.”
A

Alumni Christian Wrabley, A’10, E’10; Lezlie DelVecchio-Marks, A’99, E’00; and Tia Wanzo, Ed.D., E’14, pursued different career paths in education, but it was Duquesne University’s School of Education that helped all three discover what they’re good at—teaching, counseling and administration—and why that’s good for the world.

IMPACT: AFTER GROWING UP WITH TEACHERS

Wrabley grew up around the teaching profession (his mom, dad and grandma were all teachers), but he never thought it was a career fit for him—until he came to Duquesne:

“I always admired the work, but never considered it for me. That is, until I came to a point where I was two years into college and had no idea what I wanted or what I was good at. I wanted a job I could love,” explained Wrabley, now in his 11th year as an eighth grade civics teacher at Greater Johnstown School District in Johnstown, Pa.

“I transferred into the School of Education and fell in love with educational and developmental psychology. Learning became fun again. I started to feel like I was finding my place,” he said.

The School of Education showed Wrabley that teaching is a prestigious and honorable craft:

“My professors took pride in teaching and modeled all the qualities that you want in a teacher. They made me feel valued and capable. They took time with me and invested in both my strengths and my weaknesses. They demonstrated a love of learning and reading,” he said.

Through the School of Education, Wrabley had the opportunity to student teach in Dublin, Ireland, where he learned about culture and perspective, and how to adapt his teaching skills.

“I came home with a new confidence about what I could do as a teacher,” said Wrabley.

Wrabley was recently recognized for excellence in teaching by the Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies and selected as a 2022 PBS Digital Innovator. Also, his students have been featured on national television programs for their innovative civics projects.

“My favorite part of teaching is just being present, being in the moment, with the kids. I love to sit in a student desk, with no other distractions on it, to get on their level and listen. Whether they’re discussing current events, reimagining a historical event or creating an action plan, I find joy in those moments,” he said.

IMPACT: COUNSELORS KNOW STUDENTS SEEK CONNECTIONS

Another award-winning Duke is DelVecchio-Marks, school counselor for Shaler Area School District’s Burchfield Primary School in Allison Park, who was recently named Pennsylvania School Counselor of the Year and selected as one of the recipients of the National Certified School Counselor of the Year Award.

Additionally, she helped her school—the only one in Pennsylvania this year—earn a Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designation, as well as receive the RAMP School of Distinction award, which honors schools with exceptionally high-caliber counseling programs.

“Once I began taking courses in the counseling master’s program, I knew I made the right decision. I learned so much from my school counseling classes at Duquesne and particularly enjoyed the real-life school counseling experience I gained during my internship. Also, I distinctly remember what a great experience I had practicing individual and group counseling sessions in class,” explained DelVecchio-Marks.

Through her counseling work, one of the most important lessons DelVecchio-Marks has learned is that most students are seeking connections.

“I love making connections with students, staff and families and inspiring people. I find great enjoyment in teaching classroom lessons, too. It provides me with the opportunity to connect with and learn about all the students in the building,” she said.

IMPACT: ADMINISTRATORS AIM TO INSPIRE OTHERS

Making her mark in education administration, this past summer, Wanzo was the first Black superintendent appointed by McKeesport Area School District in its 136-year history.

Prior to becoming superintendent, Wanzo served in many roles throughout the McKeesport Area School District, including as a fifth-, fourth- and second-grade teacher, as well as an assistant middle school principal and a ninth grade principal.

Her father, a physical education teacher and coach for 30-plus years, was her main source of inspiration to enter the education field.

“His positive attitude toward his career has always been admirable to me,” remarked Wanzo. She was also inspired by all her former teachers and principals to be a leader in the education administration field.

“I wanted to inspire others as they inspired me as a student,” she said.

Wanzo said her favorite part of working in education is building relationships with staff, students, families and community members.

“Also, I am now seeing the children of my former students and I love that!” she added.
Taking Full Advantage – In the Best Kind of Way

Jessica Schmitz started her senior year at Duquesne this fall, but she can already point to the course catalog and take credit. Politics, Communication, and Social Media is being taught by Adjunct Professor Rodney Lyde, but Schmitz is the reason it’s being offered.

“It’s all about how social media has revolutionized the political landscape, what effect that has had. And then also how it affects us, not even on a political level, but how we communicate with each other, you know, where it’s taken us,” Schmitz shares, unable to hide her enthusiasm.

She holds up her left pinky and points to the dent that wasn’t there at birth—something now known as “smartphone pinky,” a soft-tissue indentation resulting from a greater number than I think people expect,” she says.

Tuition for students who didn’t want the bus pass, which was understood that real change is possible, and is ready to pay it forward upon graduation. She is considering law, but is grateful for that,” Schmitz says. •

Duquesne took a chance on me, and I’m really grateful for that.”

ANCORABLE AGENDA

Her interest in politics began at an early age in her home state of North Dakota. She volunteered for some local elections while in high school, even spending a semester on Capitol Hill as a U.S. Senate page. It was a natural progression to become involved with politics at the university level.

Schmitz is quick to give credit to her predecessor, but elevating the Diversity Committee to a Standing Committee, introducing the Diversity, Inclusion and Identity Council, as well as making student government generally more accessible to students, particularly graduate students, are among her continuing initiatives.

Be careful what you mention to Schmitz in passing—it might end up an agenda item.

During one conversation, political science classmate Bella Biancone, A’22, mentioned how the workers at the campus job she held as an undergraduate had been asking for anti-fatigue mats for years. They stand most of their shifts, and those gel mats would really help alleviate back, leg and foot pain.

“And Jess said, ‘You know, next time I go to a meeting, we’re going to talk about trying to get stuff like that. I want the workers to be able to have something,’” Biancone shares, smiling at the memory. “Even something as simple as that, she was on top of.”

KEEPING IT EQUITABLE

In the intimate, Schmitz was appreciating the realization of another major effort undertaken during her time on SGA: discounted access to Pittsburgh public transit for all Duquesne students. The UPass program took effect this fall—and is equitable.

“That was the biggest thing—we didn’t want to raise tuition for students who didn’t want the bus pass, which was greater number than I think people expect,” she says. Schmitz is excited about “her course,” and is of course enrolled in it.

“It is being offered for the first time this semester,” says Lyde. “And guess what? We are only one student short of full capacity.”

Thanks to her experience at Duquesne, Schmitz understands that real change is possible, and is ready to pay it forward upon graduation. She is considering law, but is keeping her horizons open.

“Duquesne took a chance on me, and I’m really grateful for that,” Schmitz says. •

In the Best Kind of Way

By Elizabeth Shostak

Pursuing his Passion: Capturing the Human Experience

The people who I interview give me energy and give me life,” explains Raheem Perry, an M.F.A. in media arts and technology candidate. “When I get a chance to talk to somebody and they share their story with me, and I visualize it; that gives me energy.”

A native of Pittsburgh’s Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar neighborhood and a graduate of the Imani Christian Academy, Perry enrolled at Duquesne to pursue a degree in business, but ultimately discovered the McNally College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts was a better fit and began working toward his bachelor’s degree in digital media arts.

“I wanted to switch to something I could really use and enjoy,” Perry says.

As a first-year student at Duquesne, Perry arrived on campus a few weeks before the start of the academic year to participate in the Gussin Spiritan Division’s Summer Passage Program, which offers a head start on the college experience. The Spiritan Division’s dedicated team of faculty, tutoring programs, support services and credited core curriculum helps students develop at their own pace to reach their bigger goals.

The following year, Perry was selected to be a Resident Assistant (RA) for the Summer Passage Program, mentoring and walking alongside incoming students. He sought to be a helpful guide for those making the sometimes-stressful transition to college and moving to a new place or even a new city or state.

While a mentor to others, Perry had many people in his own corner, supporting him throughout his Duquesne journey, like James Vota, chair of the Media Department, and Don Mase, director of the Center for Emerging and Innovative Media. He also credits the Center for Excellence in Diversity and Student Inclusion staff for their ongoing support.

“Raheem is a gentle giant. He has a passionate eye for telling that story through his gift as a filmmaker,” Mase says. “He has a tremendous ability to interview a person for one of his films, and what he captures becomes a portrait of self-expression that represents the pinnacle of being human.”

Chuck Cooper III, the son of Duquesne All-American and NBA Hall of Famer Chuck Cooper, for whom the UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse is named, also holds a special place in Perry’s heart. The founder and chief executive officer of the Chuck Cooper Foundation and his team provided important mentorship and financial assistance for Perry to continue on to graduate school. The foundation also honored him at its annual award banquet, during which Perry had the opportunity to meet and network with the likes of Pittsburgh Steeler legend and Hall of Famer Franco Harris and other prominent members of the Pittsburgh business community.

At Duquesne, faculty and staff help students dig into what they’re good at and discover why that’s good for the world. Similarly, Pittsburgh’s Youth Enrichment Services program works to empower young people from urban communities to become successful and confident leaders. As an alumn of both, Perry is paying it forward by mentoring and championing the aspirations of the next generation.

“It’s just a part of who I am now because of that tribe, the people that were there for me in my life,” Perry says. “I wouldn’t have made it without those who backed me, supported me and believed in me.”

Today, as he works to complete an M.F.A. in media arts and technology with a concentration in Photography and Film, Perry is locked into a career path and toward his own bigger goals. Using cutting-edge technology to learn audiences’ interests and likes, Raheem is putting the finishing touches on his documentary film series We Succeed. •

By Ian Hurley

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Century Club and McAnulty Service Award Honor Alumni Achievements

Three new members were inducted into the Century Club and McAnulty Service Award Honor Alumni Achievements to commemorate the 1878 founding of Duquesne University, Alumni Association of Duquesne University Annual Banquet at the President’s Dinner during Homecoming and Reunion Weekend on Oct. 7. The Century Club was established during Duquesne’s 100th anniversary in 1978 to recognize graduates with exemplary records of professional achievement and service to the University and their communities. Only 346 alumni have been admitted to its ranks.

A past Century Club honoree was also presented with the McAnulty Service Award, recognizing outstanding continued support of Duquesne since his induction. Named for the University’s 10th president, the Rev. Henry McAnulty, C.S.Sp., and initially bestowed on him in 1980, the award was presented for only the 29th time this fall. The 2022 New Century Club inductees are:

Matthew V. Costello, A’95

Vice President, Hardware Engineering and Operations Apple

Costello came to Duquesne from Holy Ghost Preparatory School in Bensalem, Pa., was active in student government, Sigma Alpha Epsilon and the track team, and earned his bachelor’s degree in English and government. He completed additional studies in computer science at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium.

In the midst of this effort, Apple acquired Beats and Costello ran the integration between the companies. He spent two years on the successful integration and, in 2016, was named vice president of Apple’s global hardware engineering organization, including audio, accessories, Apple Home Products and Ecosystem. Costello serves on Duquesne University’s Board of Directors and the Palumbo-Donahue School of Business Advisory Board, and on the boards of Holy Ghost Prep and the Kirby School in Santa Cruz, Calif. His other charitable interests include Oxfam International.

Phoebe H. Haddon, Esq., L’77

Chancellor Emerita

Rutgers University—Camden

Haddon came to Duquesne’s Law School after receiving her bachelor’s degree from Smith College. At the time, Duquesne Law was led by Ronald Davenport, the first black dean of a major American law school and one of the youngest law deans in the nation. Haddon would prove herself a trailblazer for diversity in legal, academic and community leadership as well.

After beginning her career in private practice, Haddon joined the faculty of Temple University’s Beasley School of Law in 1981, teaching courses in constitutional law and torts and authoring two casebooks and numerous scholarly articles. In 2009, she was named the first female and African American to serve as dean of the University of Maryland’s Francis King Carey School of Law, where she further cemented a reputation for leadership in diversity, equity and inclusion, including work with the American Bar Association’s Diversity and Inclusion 360 Working Group and Commission on the Future of Legal Services.

In July 2014, Haddon was appointed chancellor of Rutgers University—Camden, an urban public research institution. Under her leadership, Rutgers—Camden emphasized affordable access through its Bridging the Gap Initiative, offering tuition reductions for New Jersey’s working families, and expanded its nationally recognized civic engagement program. She became chancellor emerita in June 2020 and remains a professor at the Rutgers University School of Law. Haddon also served as chair of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, participating in the formulation of national monetary policy.

The recipient of the 2019 Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of American Law Schools, Haddon is a board member of the Cooper University Health System, Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Camden Health & Athletic High School and Education Resource Services. She is active in many Duquesne Law alumni programs and was the School’s 2013 Commencement speaker.

Samuel P. Kamin, Esq., L’63

Attorney

Goldberg, Kamin & Garvin

A founding Partner of Goldberg, Kamin & Garvin LLP, Kamin is a renowned eminent domain attorney representing property owners and government agencies. Among projects in which he served as counsel are the acquisition of 0,000 acres for Pittsburgh International Airport; the acquisition of mineral rights for the Southern Beltway and Mon-Fayette Expressway; the acquisition of properties for the Beaver Valley Expressway, and other major highway and redevelopment projects throughout Pennsylvania.

Kamin’s legal practice has also encompassed municipal tax, law, assessments, zoning, real estate, outdoor advertising and employment discrimination matters. He served as lead counsel in a landmark sexual harassment case, representing newscaster Liz Randolph in her suit against “Quinn and Banana” and WBBZ Radio. Kamin also taught real estate law at the University of Pittsburgh for 22 years.

For more than 20 years, the Kamin-Goldberg family, through a family foundation, has presented developmental fellowships to new faculty in the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts. The family also created the Selma and Edward Goldberg Scholarship at the Law School.

Kamin served as president of Riverview Center for Jewish Seniors, now part of the Jewish Association on Aging, helping youth and families find resources and become involved in support groups and cultural and educational programming. He has served as an officer and board member of other community organizations and social agencies, and is a 53-year member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, achieving the Order of Merlin Excalibur designation.

Eugene P. Beard, B’59, GB’61, H’98

Chief Executive Officer Westport Asset Fund

Eugene “Gene” P. Beard was a member of the inaugural Century Club class in 1978. He is an investor and philanthropist currently serving as chairman and CEO of Westport Asset Fund, Inc., an investment vehicle for public, private and startup companies worldwide. Beard earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Duquesne, where he received the prestigious Ford Foundation Fellowship in business administration and economics. He received an honorary Doctor of Ethics in Business Leadership from Duquesne in 1998 and an honorary degree from Carlow University in 2012.

Beard was vice chairman for Finance and Operations and Chief Financial Officer of the Interpublic Group of Companies (IPG), leading more than 100 global acquisitions and creating one of foremost advertising holding companies in the world. He retired from IPG in 2011.

In 1997, Beard was named as an independent director to the Old Westbury Fund, Inc, a $30 billion mutual fund, from which he retired as chair in 2015. He has served on the boards of Brown Brothers Harriman, Caterpillar Corporation, Catalina Marketing Corporations, Huntington PLC, Scantillant PLC and Marc USA; and on the advisory boards of the New York Stock Exchange Educational Foundation and the Entrepreneurial School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Beard’s charitable investments focus on the academic and medical communities. He established the Board and Faculty Fellowship for Ethics in the Professions at the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Ethics of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and was recently recognized for his work, philanthropy and services as a member of the center’s Advisory Board.

At Duquesne, Beard supported scholarships for business students; fellowship and funding for business faculty; awards for international study, ethics and sustainability; and a $1 million faculty scholarship and innovation. Most recently, he created the Eugene P. Beard Presidential Prizes for Innovation and Distinction and the Eugene P. Beard Business School Endowment Fund to seed and support ambitious projects with potential to elevate the school’s national and international reputation.

Beard established the Rose Marie Beard “Women of Spirit” Award at Carlow University and the Eugene and Nancy Jones Beard Learning Center for Doctors and Staff and Nancy Jones Beard Cancer Radiology Center at Norwalk Hospital in Norwalk, Conn. As a member of the Jewish Association on Aging, he helped to establish the Eugene and Nancy Beard Hebrew Heart and Imaging Center and the Board Education and Leadership Program Center for Doctors and Staff in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Recipient of the 29th McAnulty Service Award
A CHAMPIONSHIP RUN

Rising senior Collin Ebling closed out one of the finest individual track & field seasons in Duquesne program history with a nationally televised appearance at the NCAA Outdoor National Championships at legendary Hayward Field at the University of Oregon in June.

Competing in the 800m, Ebling ran a time of 1:48.02 in his semifinal which was televised live by ESPN2. The effort placed Ebling sixth in his heat and 17th overall, earning him honorable mention All-American honors from the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association.

Ebling, who broke and re-broke a total of seven school records in 2022, was the third Duquesne men’s track & field student-athlete to compete at the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships—and third to earn All-American honors—joining Jim Spinak in 2014 (10,000-meter run) and Tom Slosky, who advanced to the NCAA National Championships in the 3000m steeplechase three times (2006, 2007 and 2008).

LEARN MORE ABOUT COLLIN AND HIS EXPERIENCE AT DUQUESNE HERE:

NEW-LOOK DUKES TO DEBUT IN NOVEMBER

The men’s basketball team will have a new look in 2022-2023 as sixth-year head coach Keith Dambrot adds 10 newcomers to a core featuring returning starters Kevin Easley Jr. and Tre Williams.

Visit GoDuquesne.com to check out this year’s schedule and roster.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Duquesne is coming off one of its most successful seasons in the classroom as five Dukes earned CoSIDA Academic All-America honors in 2021-2022. The five honorees—the most since 2006—included football players Jake Dixon (3.96/4.00 accounting, 1st team) and Spencer DeMedal (3.97 biology, 2nd team), swimmer Hanna Everhart (4.00 physician assistant studies, 2nd team), track athlete Isaac Elliott (3.86 corporate communication, 2nd team) and track/cross country athlete Lauren Ehrenberger (4.0 pharmacy, 3rd team).

It was the third Academic All-America honor for DeMedal, who is the only Duquesne student-athlete to earn first team honors twice (2019 and 2020). DeMedal is one of six three-time Academic All-Americans in school history. Ehrenberger and Dixon are the 15th and 16th Dukes to earn multiple Academic All-America honors.

LEARN MORE ABOUT COLLIN AND HIS EXPERIENCE AT DUQUESNE HERE:

CELEBRATING A HALF-CENTURY

Duquesne women’s basketball will be celebrating its 50th season in 2022-2023. Although the team’s roots go back as far as the late 1920s, the then-called Duchesses were elevated to the varsity level in 1973-1974.


The women’s program, entering its 10th season under head coach Dan Burt, has grown exponentially since its meager beginnings.

DU, which made its first NCAA Championship appearance under Burt in 2015-2016, has blossomed into a top-tier A-10 program.

The Dukes have also made their mark globally as student-athletes representing 26 countries have worn the Red and Blue.

Join coach Burt and the 2022-2023 Dukes as they begin year No. 50 on Nov. 7 vs. Point Park at UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse.

Please visit GoDuquesne.com or follow the Dukes on social media at @DUQWBB for events planned in conjunction with the 50th season.

A COMPLETE LIST OF DU ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICANS MAY BE FOUND HERE:

Ehrenberger
Elliott
DeMedal
Dixon
Everhart

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BLUFF IN BRIEF

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE | Fall '22

GAWALT BECOMES FIRST FEMALE DEAN OF DUQUESNE’S BAYER SCHOOL

President Ken Gormley has named Dr. Ellen Gawalt as the first female dean of the Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences at Duquesne University. She had been interim dean of the school since July 2021.

“Dr. Gawalt’s commitment to our students is unparalleled,” said Gormley. “She is a wonderful collaborator, whether partnering with faculty on a research project or working together with students in the lab or classroom. The School’s faculty, staff and students will continue to benefit from her expertise.”

A professor at Duquesne since 2003, Gawalt is a Hillman Distinguished Professor and formerly served as chair of the school’s Chemistry and Biochemistry Departments.

“I am honored to be named dean of the Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences,” Gawalt said. “I look forward to working alongside our nationally recognized faculty who care deeply about the education of each of our students and work to continue our tradition of excellent research in the care sciences.”

Gawalt received her bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Duke University and her master’s and doctoral degrees in chemistry from Princeton University.

Learn more at duq.edu/deangawalt

DUQUESNE + UPTOWN PARTNERS = CLEANING AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Duquesne University is helping Uptown Partners of Pittsburgh (UPP) keep the neighborhood streets and those bordering campus clean.

The “ambassadors” are contracted through Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership's Clean & Outreach Program to remove trash from the sidewalks, empty and clean trash cans, remove graffiti and handbills, and power-wash sidewalks and alleyways three days a week.

“The vitality of our setting in Pittsburgh’s Uptown is a major draw for students and a source of pride for all who are part of the Duquesne community,” said Duquesne President Ken Gormley. “Supporting the Cleaning Ambassador Program is another way of working with community partners to show off the city while providing value to our community and neighbors.”

Dr. Brittany McDonald, executive director of UPP, is looking to secure additional funding for the program, which is receiving positive feedback from those in the Uptown community. “It’s a huge help to have institutional partners, particularly those that sit on the Uptown Task Force, support this initiative,” McDonald said.

Uptown Partners of Pittsburgh, founded in 2007, is a community-based organization of residents, institutions, business owners and other stakeholders working together to improve community quality and create a vision for the revitalization of Uptown. More information on the Cleaning Ambassador Program is available on their website.

Learn more at duq.edu/upowntaskforcprogram

$2.5M GIFT TO SUPPORT SECOND-DEGREE NURSING STUDENTS

A $2.5 million gift from the Bedford Falls Fund to Duquesne’s School of Nursing will provide partial scholarships this fall for students in the University’s 12-month or 16-month second-degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs. This significant scholarship support will be dispersed over the next five years.

“This grant will allow the school to fund 32 students per year with a partial scholarship and simultaneously increase enrollment among second-degree students,” said Duquesne Nursing Dean Dr. Mary Ellen Glasgow. “I want to acknowledge Mr. and Mrs. Conway for their transformational gift and for their vision to prepare nurses who will be critical to the health of our region and nation.”

Bill and Joanne Conway, the philanthropists behind the Bedford Falls Fund, are renowned for their generosity to support nursing education and address the national nursing shortage.

“We admire how the Duquesne University School of Nursing has continued to evolve its programs to serve the needs of the health care profession,” Bill Conway said. “It’s gratifying to know that these scholarships will swiftly expand the pool of highly qualified nurses.”

In addition to the classroom, Duquesne’s second-degree nursing students begin their clinical experiences during their very first semester and complete clinical hours in hospitals and community facilities in Pittsburgh, renown as a top-ranked health care hub in the United States. Nursing faculty-scholars walk alongside students to help them realize their bigger goals.

Read more: duq.edu/25mnursinggift

IN MEMORIAM: CHIEF JUSTICE MAX BAER - DEC. 24, 1947-OCT. 1, 2022

Several of Pennsylvania’s highest-ranking officials were among the hundreds of well-wishers who gathered for a memorial service to honor the life of Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Max Baer, an alumnus of what is now the Thomas R. Kline School of Law at Duquesne University.

Baer’s family was joined by former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett (now a member of the Duquesne Kline School of Law faculty) and current Gov. Tom Wolf, along with several other Pennsylvania Supreme Court justices and numerous attorneys and justices from across the commonwealth. While Baer’s enormous positive impact on family law and on the welfare of children in Allegheny County was celebrated, speakers most admiringly about Baer’s love of his family and friends.

President Gormley wrote the following reflection on Baer’s life:

Chief Justice Baer was a true giant in the legal profession, distinguishing himself first as a judge on the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas who revolutionized and modernized the Family Division. He had a special passion for Juvenile Law and dedicated himself, particularly, to protecting young people who were at risk within the legal system.

He was a leading figure on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, dating back to his election to the High Court in 2003, and emphasized collegiality and respect for his fellow Justices above all else.

As Chief Justice, he shied away from the limelight but took great pleasure in collaborating the accomplishments of others. He always led by example as a caring, collegiate colleague who brought the Court together to achieve consensus whenever possible.

And he presided, with pride, over the 300th anniversary of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court—the nation’s oldest court—this past May, at an event held at the Constitution Center in Philadelphia.

Chief Justice Baer was a lifelong student of history, and treated with reverence the role of the Court in our system of government, and his own role in ensuring justice for all citizens in recent years, he took great joy in naming his predecessor—Thomas G. Saylor—Chief Justice Emeritus upon Saylor’s retirement. And he was extraordinarily proud to be passing over the reins of leadership to Justice Debra Todd, recognizing the historic importance of her becoming the first female Chief Justice in the history of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, upon his own planned retirement in December. Indeed, in recent months, Chief Justice Baer was busy laying the groundwork for Justice Todd’s installation as Chief, expressing repeatedly a strong desire to ensure her success in every way.

On a personal note, Chief Justice Baer has been a good friend for most of my own career, ever since I did work with Chief Justice Ralph Cappy and other members of the Court as a young legal scholar writing about Pennsylvania Constitutional Law and the unique contributions of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Max was kind, positive, humble, dedicated to the Law School where he had gotten his start, and a faithful friend to me and many others whose lives he greatly enriched.

He was sitting in the front row several weeks ago, as we announced the historic naming of the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University in honor of fellow alumnus and friend Tom Kline. And he wrote me a beautiful handwritten note afterward, saying that participating in this historic occasion that marked an exciting new era for the Law School was one of the high points of his own professional career.

Max Baer was a judge’s judge, a lawyer’s lawyer; an extremely proud husband, father and grandfather, and a warm, caring human being who believed in the sacred nature of public service and in the solemn responsibility of all lawyers to use the legal profession to do good for others. His loss leaves a massive void in the Pittsburgh legal community in the national community of jurists and in the Duquesne family that admired him so much. May he rest in peace.
In MEMORIAM

Daniel J. "Coach Dan" McCann passed away on May 14 in Zelienople, Pa, at age 88. A graduate of North Catholic High School and the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned a football scholarship, McCann spent 38 years as a salesman and district manager for Pittsburgh Brewing Company. In 1970, he became head football coach at Duquesne University, reviving a program that had been dormant since 1952. His team won the 1973 national football championship and returned to NCAA Division I in 1979. McCann retired from coaching in 1992 after positioning the program to rise to Division I-AA (now FCS) status, but remained an active supporter. He was elected to Duquesne's Sports Hall of Fame in 1987.

Submit Alumni Updates or a Photo

Class Notes, online and in print, are an opportunity for alumni to share personal and professional news and accomplishments. Members of our alumni community are invited to log into www.myduquesne.edu/alum to update their profiles, award, publication, marriage, new family member, reunion or anniversary.

Submissions are subject to editing for clarity and length. All submissions will be available online; however, space limitations prohibit us from including all alumni updates in our magazine.

Check out myduquesne.edu/events for more information on upcoming virtual and in-person events that will be scheduled. Alumni also can visit our Dukewalk platform for the latest details on what’s happening at Duquesne, events, and how to get involved and stay connected.

Duquesne University, PA 15143

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At Duquesne it’s our joy to help students dig into what they’re good at and discover why it’s good for the world.

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