

# THE POINT

## FINISH LINE

Guiding student success through innovative learning

## Covering the Environment

Training a new generation of environmental journalists

## Pioneer Spirit

Competitive cheer and dance are newest varsity sports





Dear alumni and friends,

Another spring commencement season has come and gone, and summer is on the horizon. It's a perfect time for reflection, rebuilding and innovation. In fact, innovation is always in season at Point Park, and we have a number of initiatives in the works that we are excited to share with you – now and in the months to come.

For example, this fall we'll celebrate the opening of the new Center for Media Innovation, an incubator and collaborative space that is the latest University project to help reshape Downtown. This state-of-the-art academic laboratory, situated

in the heart of campus, will enable our communications students and faculty to work with experienced journalists and media professionals to meet the challenges of global media issues. Stay tuned for more information about the fall kickoff of the new Center, and be sure to drop by the corner of Wood Street and Third Avenue for an inside look.

The Center is just one of many new projects and programs that focus on innovation in education at Point Park. I am pleased to share that in the future, our innovative learning initiatives will be led by Karen McIntyre, Ph.D., who recently stepped down from her longtime role as Point Park's chief academic officer. Words cannot express the impact of Dr. McIntyre's extraordinary contributions to the University over the past decade, which were honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2016 commencement.

After a well-deserved sabbatical, Dr. McIntyre will return to campus in 2017 to lead a new Center for Innovative Learning. Her responsibilities will include close collaboration with our new centers of excellence as well as leadership of the University's new community-focused Ph.D. programs and Point Park's rapidly growing online programs. Dr. McIntyre will also create an incubator that will enable faculty and staff to explore innovative methods of instruction and delivery. Please visit page 12 to learn more about her past accomplishments and plans for the future.

Our 2016 commencement also marked the first time that graduates of Point Park Online joined us in Pittsburgh to receive their diplomas (see page 3). In recent years we have embarked on a comprehensive effort to build the University's online degree programs. No matter where they are in the United States or around the world, our online students benefit from the University's faculty expertise, emphasis on real-world experience, and intense commitment to student success. You can learn more about these programs at [online.PointPark.edu](http://online.PointPark.edu).

Finally, one of our most ambitious and innovative projects is now taking shape on Forbes Avenue in Downtown Pittsburgh: the new Pittsburgh Playhouse at Point Park. This creative crossroads will offer many cultural and interdisciplinary opportunities for students and faculty across the entire University, as well as our Downtown neighbors and arts patrons. We look forward to sharing our Playhouse progress with you.

At Point Park, innovation is the heartbeat of our dynamic urban campus. We hope you'll stop by and share in the excitement on your next visit to Downtown Pittsburgh.

Warm regards,

Dr. Paul Hennigan  
President

President  
Paul Hennigan, Ed.D.

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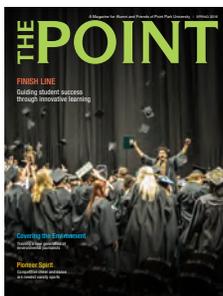
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**ON THE COVER:**  
Celebrating student success at Commencement 2015. Photo by John Altdorfer.

**ABOVE:**  
Students volunteer with Friends of the Riverfront during annual Pioneer Community Day. Photo by Chris Rolinson.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2** News and Views
- 8** Covering the Environment  
A grant from The Heinz Endowments enables Point Park to train a new generation of environmental journalists.
- 10** Entering a New Stage  
Construction of the new Pittsburgh Playhouse begins with meticulous deconstruction of historic facades on Forbes Avenue.
- 12** A Teacher at Heart  
Student success remains focus of outgoing provost Karen McIntyre, Ph.D., who will transition to leadership of the Center for Innovative Learning.
- 16** Stepping Up  
Point Park hosts more than 1,300 young dancers, teaching artists and guests for the 2016 National High School Dance Festival.
- 20** Listening to Pittsburgh's Homeless  
Graduate students in clinical-community psychology program join Operation Safety Net® to take classroom lessons to the streets.
- 24** Alumni Connection
- 25** Class Notes
- 30** Pioneer Spirit  
Competitive cheer and dance debut as Point Park's newest varsity sports.

## TALK TO US!

The Point wants to hear from you. Send your comments and suggestions to:

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### Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Initiatives

This policy affirms Point Park University's commitment to nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and the pursuit of diversity. Point Park University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender or in a protected class which includes the following: race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, sex, age (40 years and over), ancestry, individuals with disabilities, veteran status, sexual orientation, height, weight, genetic information, marital status, gender identity, caregiver status or familial status, in the administration of any of its educational programs, activities or with respect to employment or admission to the University's educational programs and activities.

This policy is in accord with local, state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Pittsburgh Human Relations Act. Inquiries regarding these regulations, policies or complaints of discrimination should be referred to the human resources officer, telephone number 412-392-3952. Inquiries regarding Title IX and the Title IX regulations should also be referred to the senior vice president of academic and student affairs as the Title IX coordinator or to the deputy coordinators: the associate vice president of academic and student affairs, the human resources officer or the dean of students.

# NEWS AND VIEWS

## CELEBRATING COMMENCEMENT 2016

**Tony Yazbeck**, a 2015 Tony nominee for Best Leading Actor in a Musical and former Point Park student, was the featured speaker and received an honorary degree at the University's 2016 Commencement on April 30 at the Consol Energy Center. Yazbeck, who trained at Point Park from 1997 to 1999, earned his Tony nomination for the critically acclaimed Broadway revival of *On the Town*. He also received Drama League and Outer Critics Circle Award nominations, and the Fred Astaire Award for his performance. Most recently, Yazbeck finished a run in the lead role of J.M. Barrie in the Broadway musical *Finding Neverland*. He also previously played Gabey in the critically acclaimed revival of *On the Town* on Broadway.

"While Tony's incredible talent is obvious, it's his passion and commitment that have allowed him to reach his full potential," said President **Paul Hennigan**. "As a school that prides itself on teaching the importance of a good work ethic and being positive forces of change, we are honored to have Tony send our graduates off into the next chapter of their lives."



### A Memorable Graduate Hooding

**Nicholas Gigante**, a Point Park alumnus and vice president of development for the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, delivered the keynote address at the University's 2016 graduate Hooding and Degree Conferral on April 24 at the Wyndham Grand Hotel in Downtown Pittsburgh. Gigante, who

has worked at the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust since 2002, decided he wanted to further his business skills and earn an M.B.A. "Point Park's program allows you to do an M.B.A. with a concentration in Sports, Arts and Entertainment Management," Gigante said. "The best part is that I was able to combine all of my interests and passions in one experience." In his role with the Cultural Trust, Gigante serves as an ambassador, encouraging more people to rediscover the arts and the Cultural District. He also manages the day-to-day operations of the Development Department. "Our graduate programs are designed to be rigorous and complete, as we send students out into the world ready to make an impact



Yazbeck has a passion for teaching young artists and is involved with The YoungArts Foundation, which helps talented youth in their educational and professional development. He is a master teacher, panelist and director for its program.

In addition to Yazbeck, **Charlie Batch**, former Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback and noted community advocate, author and entrepreneur, also received an honorary degree. Batch, who was Point Park's 2015 Commencement speaker, has been working with Pittsburgh-area youth since the creation of his Best of the Batch Foundation in 1999. Batch also serves on multiple boards, including the United Way of Allegheny County, the Western Pennsylvania Humane Society, the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Musical Theater.



Yazbeck photo by Joan Marcus. Commencement photos by John Altdorfer.

on society," said President Paul Hennigan. "Nicholas is an example of one of our best possible outcomes, as he has remained in Pittsburgh and become a key contributor to one of our city's most respected organizations." **Vincenne Rivella Beltran**, Ph.D., professor of education, served as grand marshal.

Overall, 210 students received graduate degrees from across 17 master's programs offered at the University. This year's ceremony also included Point Park's first class of graduates from its low-residency Master of Fine Arts in Writing for the Screen and Stage program, as well as master's degree recipients from new fully online programs.



## First Grads of Point Park Online Receive Diplomas

2016 marked the first year that graduates of the University's new fully online degree programs joined in the Commencement ceremonies to receive their diplomas.

Point Park Online opportunities have grown significantly in recent years, and include one of the Pittsburgh region's first fully online graduate programs in health care administration and management, initiated in fall 2015. The 36-credit Master of Science in Health Care Administration and Management is designed to meet the growing demand for highly trained professionals to manage health care centers and services due to the

rapidly aging American population and overall expansion of health care.

"Our fully online degree provides flexibility for working professionals while delivering the same quality and depth of instruction that one would receive on ground," says **Archish Maharaja**, Ed.D., C.F.P., C.P.A., associate professor of business management. Students have the opportunity to complete the degree in as little as 18 months (six semesters) at a tuition cost of \$550 per credit. The program offers a rigorous curriculum of quantitative and qualitative classes integrating theoretical learning, scholarly research and case analysis in national and global health care policies and practices.

### Online Opportunities Grow

The new fully online M.S. in Health Care Administration and Management is among a variety of online master's degrees in such areas as business, education, and intelligence and global security. Point Park also offers online bachelor's degrees (in such areas as business, communication, criminal justice and public administration) and online certificates (Pennsylvania school principal K-12 certification). The University plans to continue expansion of online degree programs in the future.

For more information about Point Park's online degree programs, visit [Online.PointPark.edu](http://Online.PointPark.edu).

**Professional Advancement**

**Teresa Gregory**, CFRE, assistant professor of sports, arts and entertainment management, recently earned recertification as a Certified Fund Raising Executive by CFRE International. Individuals granted the credential have met a series of standards set by CFRE International that include: tenure in the profession; education; demonstrated fundraising achievement; and commitment to service to nonprofit organizations.

**Greta Daniels**, CFRE, director of annual giving, has also earned certification as a Certified Fund Raising Executive.

**Rosemary Martinelli**, a part-time faculty member in the School of Communication, led a cross-course project for Point Park's Wood Street Communications. Four

students in the Strategic Planning and Applications and Marketing Research classes developed an integrated marketing communications plan for Harmony Weavers during the fall semester. Harmony Weavers is a group of volunteers at the Harmony Museum Weaver's Cabin in Harmony, Pa. "This project was a 'case study' of sorts where we linked two courses and two schools through one cohort to bring a holistic approach to teaching," said Martinelli. In School of Business Instructor **Chris Lovett's** Marketing Research class, the students covered the fundamentals of marketing research and key topics and trends in the industry. Throughout the semester, the students met with the volunteers for the Harmony Weavers to learn more about the organization's needs. The project culminated in a final presentation to the client on Point Park's campus.

**Sharna Olfman**, Ph.D., professor of psychology, was recently featured in the national publications Psychology Today and Mad in America. Psychology Today interviewed Olfman about child mental health controversies as part of its series on the future of mental health.

**David Rowell**, assistant professor of sports, arts and entertainment management, moderated an Association of Performing Arts Presenters webinar March 17 titled "Social and Mobile Marketing Trends Today." Rowell led an online discussion focusing on current trends in arts industry marketing, particularly social media and mobile, and offered best practices from diverse perspectives.

**Michele Langbein**, Ph.D., associate professor of business management, presented on the topic "Leaders Empower Lives"



**JOSH WAS BORN FOR THIS —**

"I have always loved playing sports and I love covering sports. When I was playing Little League Baseball, I did my own play-by-play of the game in the outfield. ... I looked into larger schools with broadcasting programs. There were a lot of opportunities there, but I would have had to wait to get as involved as I would have liked. At Point Park, I was able to jump in from day one."

**— BUT HE CANNOT DO IT ALONE.**

**Josh Croup**  
Broadcast Reporting Major  
Class of 2018

*Editor-in-Chief, The Globe  
Reporter, U-View TV, WPPJ Radio*

SUPPORT THE ANNUAL FUND TO HELP STUDENTS LIKE JOSH RECEIVE VITAL FINANCIAL AID FOR THEIR EDUCATION:  
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## Andrew Conte Will Lead New Center for Media Innovation

Point Park's new Center for Media Innovation, set to open in fall 2016, will be led by **Andrew Conte**, an award-winning investigative reporter from the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. In addition to his work as a journalist, Conte has spent the last 10 years as a part-time professor and director of the Point Park News Service. Under Conte's leadership, the news service provides opportunities for journalism students to place their work in professional media publications.

The Center for Media Innovation is a learning center where students can merge their energy, talent and ambition into a central location, and offers the opportunity to work with the latest technology. "The media industry continues to rapidly evolve in the

digital age, and it's critical the Center be led by someone who has lived professionally in that world," said **Paul Hennigan**, president of Point Park. As director, Conte will collaborate with professional journalists and University professors, instructors, students and leaders of student-run media operations to facilitate the best use of the Center. Conte holds a bachelor's degree in American studies from Dickinson College and a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University. After three years at the Cincinnati Post, Conte came to the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review in 2001. He has been a part of many major investigative stories at the Tribune-Review, including a 2008 series of stories that uncovered doctors who were performing unnecessary liver transplants.

at the Inspiring Lives International conference March 12 in Downtown Pittsburgh. The conference brought in 50 leaders from around the world — from Singapore to South Africa — who shared leadership ideas and inspirational advice. Following the conference, Langbein participated in a global gala with more than 200 prominent business leaders, nonprofit executive directors and best-selling authors.

**Tatyana Dumova**, Ph.D., professor in the School of Communication, has published a new book, *Social Networking: Redefining Communication in the Digital Age* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2016). The

book, co-edited with Anastacia Kurylo of St. Joseph's College, provides a focused examination of online social networking across the globe to expose the inherent, yet often subtle, differences of social media adoption and usage.

**Nathan Firestone**, J.D., professor of political science, has been designated as vice chair of Pennsylvania's Minor Judiciary Education Board by the state Supreme Court. Firestone has served as senior magisterial district judge as well as a long-time magistrate for the neighborhoods of Squirrel Hill, Shadyside, Point Breeze, Regent Square and Swisshelm Park in the city of

Pittsburgh. He teaches constitutional law, government and political science courses at Point Park.

Andy is a remarkable reporter," said Tribune-Review Editor **Frank Craig**. "He has developed a strong relationship between the Trib and Point Park over the past decade, even as he won many of journalism's major investigative awards. We are all thrilled that he will continue his relationship with the Trib as he helps to build a University program that can develop the next generation of talented, dedicated journalists — reporters like Andy himself."

The 4,000-square-foot center, designed by Pittsburgh-based GBBN Architects, cost \$2.5 million to build and is made possible, in part, with a grant from the Allegheny Foundation. Trib Total Media is a sponsor of the Center. Located at Wood Street and Third Avenue, the Center will bring to life another key corner of the Central Business District. Floor-to-ceiling glass walls, flat-screen televisions and a digital ticker will offer a New York City-style media hub where passersby can be entertained and informed as students learn their craft. Watch [PointPark.edu](http://PointPark.edu) and [PointPark.edu/alumni](http://PointPark.edu/alumni) for more information about the kickoff of the new Center in early fall.

Pittsburgh. He teaches constitutional law, government and political science courses at Point Park.

### Reintegrating Veterans

In support of effectively reintegrating veterans into the workforce, Point Park's organizational leadership program in the School of Business hosted a Joint Leadership Initiative event on campus April 8. "This initiative is designed to bring together both veterans and business leaders to gain a better understanding of each other's organizational cultures. A more systemic understanding will



## Students Tour ROOT Sports

A group of 13 Point Park students toured the ROOT Sports television studios on the North Shore on March 8, courtesy of The Pittsburgh Center for Sports Media and Marketing. The students were selected from the Center's student advisory board, the School of Communication, and the School of Business's SAEM program. ROOT Sports carried the Pittsburgh Penguins game against the New York Islanders that night, and the students had the opportunity to observe behind the scenes during a Penguins game broadcast. Presenters included ROOT Sports general manager **Shawn McClintock** and broadcasters **Rob King** and **Jay Caufield**. The group also had the opportunity to meet with three Point Park alumni who are current ROOT Sports employees: Marketing Coordinator **Stephanie Speziale**, Broadcast Associate **Brian Lacey**, and Graphics Coordinator **Craig Hall**. "I learned so much," said one of the students. "I felt like I was a kid in a candy store." Photo by Kelsey Veydt.

likely result in a smoother transition and greater retention of veterans in the workforce," explained **Patrick Mulvihill**, D.Ed., visiting assistant professor of business. In addition to Mulvihill, Point Park faculty and staff **Helena Knorr**, Ph.D., **Sean Elliot Martin**, Ph.D., **Jennifer Fedele**, M.A. and **Danielle Matthews**, M.A., along with leaders from regional organizations, engaged in veteran-focused roundtable discussions on reintegration challenges and opportunities, leadership and followership, organizational culture, communication and ethics.

## Accounting Team Tops Again

One of Point Park's student accounting teams captured first place again at the Institute of Internal Auditors Pittsburgh

Chapter Case Study Competition March 21 at Schneider Downs. This is the third time in four years that a Point Park accounting team has won the competition against teams from Carlow University, Duquesne University, Robert Morris University and the University of Pittsburgh. The winning team — named The Dollar Draft Knights — was made up of **Julia Grubbs**, **Gabe Dubin**, **Destiny Medina**, **Perry Ninness** and **Abby Wohlfarth**. "The Drafts' presentation provided a unique perspective into the world of internal auditors through the various interviews they conducted, making them a clear first place choice among the judges," said **Richard Neish**, who teaches auditing and forensic accounting courses at Point Park and is vice president of independent risk management for PNC Financial Services Group.

## MLB Diversity Summit

For business students **Jessica Martin** and **Hailie Sandor**, having access to connect with all 30 Major League Baseball clubs and many Minor League Baseball clubs at the 2016 MLB Diversity Business Summit was the chance of a lifetime. The Pittsburgh Pirates offered Point Park the opportunity to send two students to the Summit March 8-9 in Phoenix, Ariz. Co-hosted this year by the Arizona Diamondbacks, the MLB Diversity Business Summit is recognized as a premier sports employment conference and supplier diversity trade fair. "We selected Jessica and Hailie based on their hard work and dedication in the SAEM program as well as their demonstrated interest in sports management careers," remarked **Steve Tanzilli**, J.D., associate professor of SAEM and chair of the Department of Management.

## Presentation on Autism

Freshman secondary education social studies and special education major **Timothy Grebeck** and Special Education Assistant Professor **Matthew Vogel**, Ph.D., presented on the topic of autism to teachers, staff and administrators in three schools within the Seneca Valley School District. "When Tim presented his journey with autism in my Intro to Special Education and Inclusive Practices class, I immediately knew that school districts would greatly benefit from seeing his presentation," said Vogel. "With the rise in autism spectrum disorders comes the need for teachers to be educated on the unique needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders." Grebeck and Vogel spoke at Evans City Middle School, Evans City Elementary School and Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School about autism and teaching strategies

for students with autism. Grebeck also discussed his personal experiences living with autism.



## New Degree in Electrical Engineering

Beginning fall 2016, Point Park will offer a bachelor of science degree program in the thriving field of electrical engineering. The new program combines rigorous theoretical study in electrical engineering with extensive laboratory experience. “Our program educates students in the timeless fundamentals of science, mathematics and electrical engineering while incorporating specific technology to illustrate these fundamentals,” said **Donald Keller**, Ph.D., P.E., professor of electrical engineering. According to Keller, every electrical engineering course at Point Park includes a laboratory component to reinforce theory with hands-on practice. In addition, students have the unique opportunity to take electrical engineering courses their first semester. “Students hit the ground running here and get to know us very well by the time they graduate,” said **Gregg Johnson**, Ph.D., associate professor of electrical engineering and chair of the NSET department. “Electrical engineering is a big field with myriad specialties. Our curriculum is designed to give our students a solid footing in the fundamentals, but with enough electives to explore an area of personal interest.”

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## Home Is Where Art Is

Stunning artwork was showcased on campus April 8 at the “Home Is Where the Art Is” art show, hosted by Point Park’s Confluence Psychology Alliance student group and Pittsburgh Mercy’s Operation Safety Net®. About 250 people, including students, faculty and the general public, attended the event, which featured artwork by more than 20 individuals who have experienced homelessness throughout the Pittsburgh region. “We were so excited to be able to work with Operation Safety Net to promote the talent of the artists and bring up the conversation of homelessness in our area,” said **Emily Jamison**, junior psychology major and co-chair of Confluence. According to **Robert McInerney**, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology and founder/advisor of Confluence, this event best reflected the student group’s overall mission.

## Pioneer Records Launch Party

**John Kono Rushlander**, a military veteran and Point Park business student, celebrated the release of his first three-track EP on Point Park’s new record label, Pioneer Records, at a launch party on April 7. He is the second “Pioneer Star” for Pioneer Records, which is housed at Red Caiman Studios in Pittsburgh and provides students with opportunities to learn all aspects of the recording industry. According to SAEM Associate Professor **Ed Traversari**, Rushlander was chosen from among numerous submissions by a team of judges that included music industry professionals and Point Park faculty, staff and students. Selected on the basis of his “raw talent,” Rushlander has a blues-oriented musical style. “Picking up the guitar was the best decision I have ever made,” he says. See and hear Rushlander play at <https://vimeo.com/147369808>. ❖



## Roaming with Rick

Popular public television producer **Rick Sebak** visited Point Park’s campus last fall to do interviews and research for his 2016 documentary, *Return to Downtown Pittsburgh*, which aired on WQED in late January. Sebak talked with Point Park people including President **Paul Hennigan**, Professor **Ed Meena**, Archivist **Phil Harry**, and University Architect **Elmer Burger** - pictured on Point Park’s Facebook during his chat with Sebak (left).

# COVERING THE ENVIRONMENT

A grant from The Heinz Endowments enables Point Park to train a new generation of environmental journalists



All photos by Chris Rolinson, assistant professor in the School of Communication and a leader of the new program in environmental journalism.

As environmental issues continue to dominate today's news cycle, Point Park is responding with a new bachelor of arts degree in environmental journalism beginning in fall 2016.

Made possible through a grant from The Heinz Endowments, the degree program is designed to provide the core foundation of modern journalism training, along with the now-critical area of data analytics. Students will also take courses in biology, ecology and environmental science through a partnership with Point Park's School of Communication and Department of Natural Sciences and Engineering Technology.

"Point Park is in a unique position through its new Center for Media Innovation to partner with The Heinz Endowments and

train a new generation of environmental journalists," said Point Park President Paul Hennigan. "Armed with the tools to provide critical, unbiased reporting, these students will gain a heightened awareness and better understanding of practices impacting the environment"

## A Critical Need

Issues such as the Flint, Mich., water crisis, fracking in the Marcellus Shale and climate change continue to make headlines and dominate political discussion.

"The need is as critical as ever for skilled and authentic investigative and explanatory journalism. Helping to inform and safeguard the well-being of our citizens is integral to a healthy democracy,

# GIFTS AT WORK

and environmental issues, especially, are at the forefront of concerns in many communities across our nation,” said Grant Oliphant, president of The Heinz Endowments. “Point Park has developed a powerful learning opportunity for journalism students, and the Endowments is delighted to partner with the University on this new and exciting program of environmental journalism.”

A limited number of educational institutions offer the kind of training necessary to develop investigative journalists who can present all sides of increasingly complex environmental stories to the general public. In fact, the Society of Environmental Journalists lists only three other universities nationwide on its website with comparable programs.

## Prime Position

“Point Park is in a prime position to offer a needed educational program – at the undergraduate and graduate levels – in a city that has experienced its own environmental renaissance, and is home to more than 30 nonprofit environmental groups working to protect the health of our communities,” said Thom Baggerman, chair of the School of Communication.

The new program is designed to accomplish three main goals:

### ***Prepare future generations of environmental journalists:***

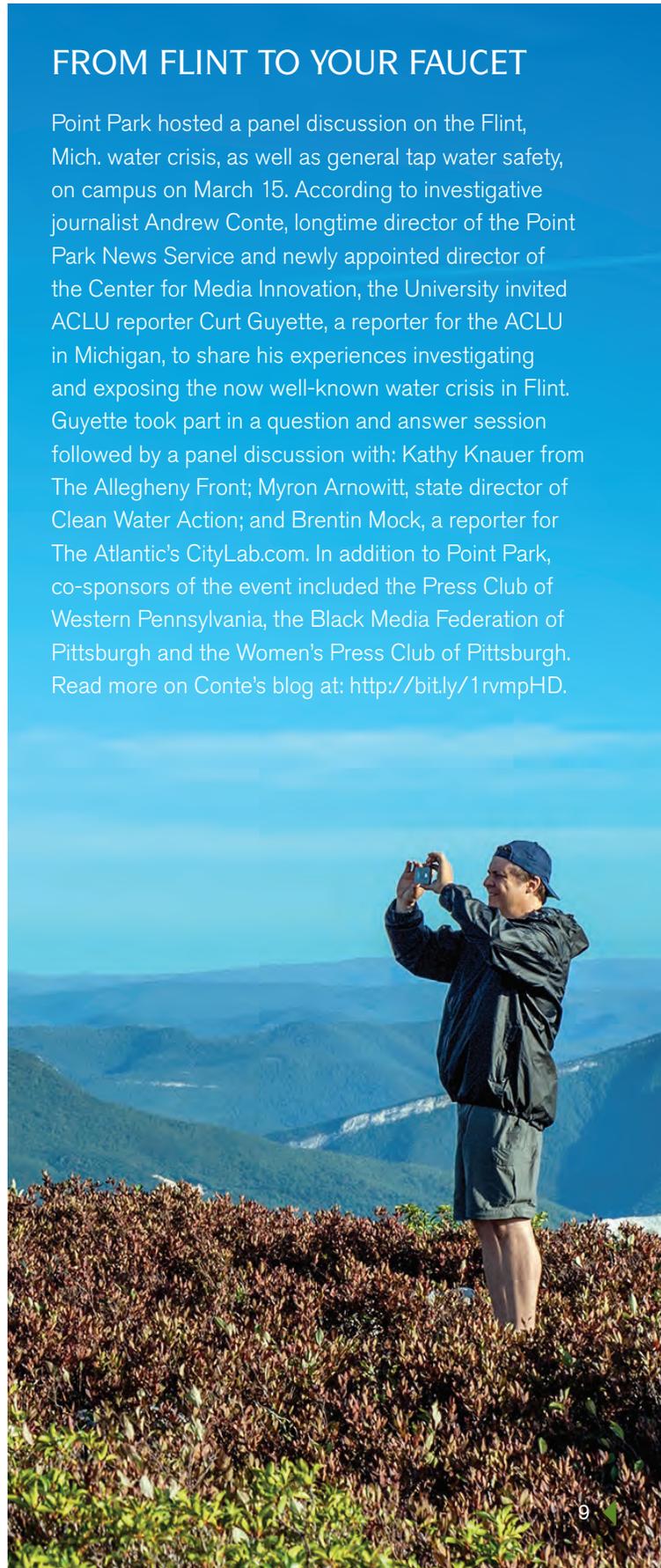
In addition to the creation of a curriculum that combines training in journalism and scientific knowledge, students will be mentored by leading practitioners in the environmental journalism field. A priority will be placed on opportunities to have students’ work considered by professional media outlets for publication, broadcast and distribution.

***Engage the broader community:*** Events surrounding environmental issues will be open to the general public, while a website and newsletter will provide access to the students’ work. An online portal cataloguing government data sites, reliable research and shared data sets will serve as a resource for not only students, but also professionals and the general public.

***Stimulate the work of existing journalists:*** A professional journalist-in-residence will be hosted each year and will collaborate with students in and outside the classroom. The program also will offer networking opportunities between professional media organizations and hold events that will target professional journalists, as well as students and the general public. ❖

## FROM FLINT TO YOUR FAUCET

Point Park hosted a panel discussion on the Flint, Mich. water crisis, as well as general tap water safety, on campus on March 15. According to investigative journalist Andrew Conte, longtime director of the Point Park News Service and newly appointed director of the Center for Media Innovation, the University invited ACLU reporter Curt Guyette, a reporter for the ACLU in Michigan, to share his experiences investigating and exposing the now well-known water crisis in Flint. Guyette took part in a question and answer session followed by a panel discussion with: Kathy Knauer from The Allegheny Front; Myron Arnowitt, state director of Clean Water Action; and Brentin Mock, a reporter for The Atlantic’s CityLab.com. In addition to Point Park, co-sponsors of the event included the Press Club of Western Pennsylvania, the Black Media Federation of Pittsburgh and the Women’s Press Club of Pittsburgh. Read more on Conte’s blog at: <http://bit.ly/1rvmpHD>.



# ENTERING A NEW STAGE

Construction of the new Pittsburgh Playhouse begins with meticulous deconstruction of historic façades

Preservation is a key element in plans for Point Park University's new Pittsburgh Playhouse, a 92,000-square-foot cultural hub that is now in the initial stages of construction on a 1.6-acre parcel between Forbes and Fourth avenues in Downtown Pittsburgh.

The first step, the careful deconstruction of three historic Forbes Avenue façades, was successfully completed during the past winter.

Those pieces will be professionally cleaned and carefully stored away until they are reconstructed in their original form as part of the new Playhouse. The plans incorporate two historic structures – the Stock Exchange Building and the University Center – with a new five-story addition that includes space for theaters, technical production and more.

## History in the Making

Mick Nardozi, lead estimator for Franco Associates, the company contracted to handle the façade removal, restoration and reconstruction, said about 95 percent of the façade pieces were salvaged. A small amount proved too damaged and will be meticulously replaced.

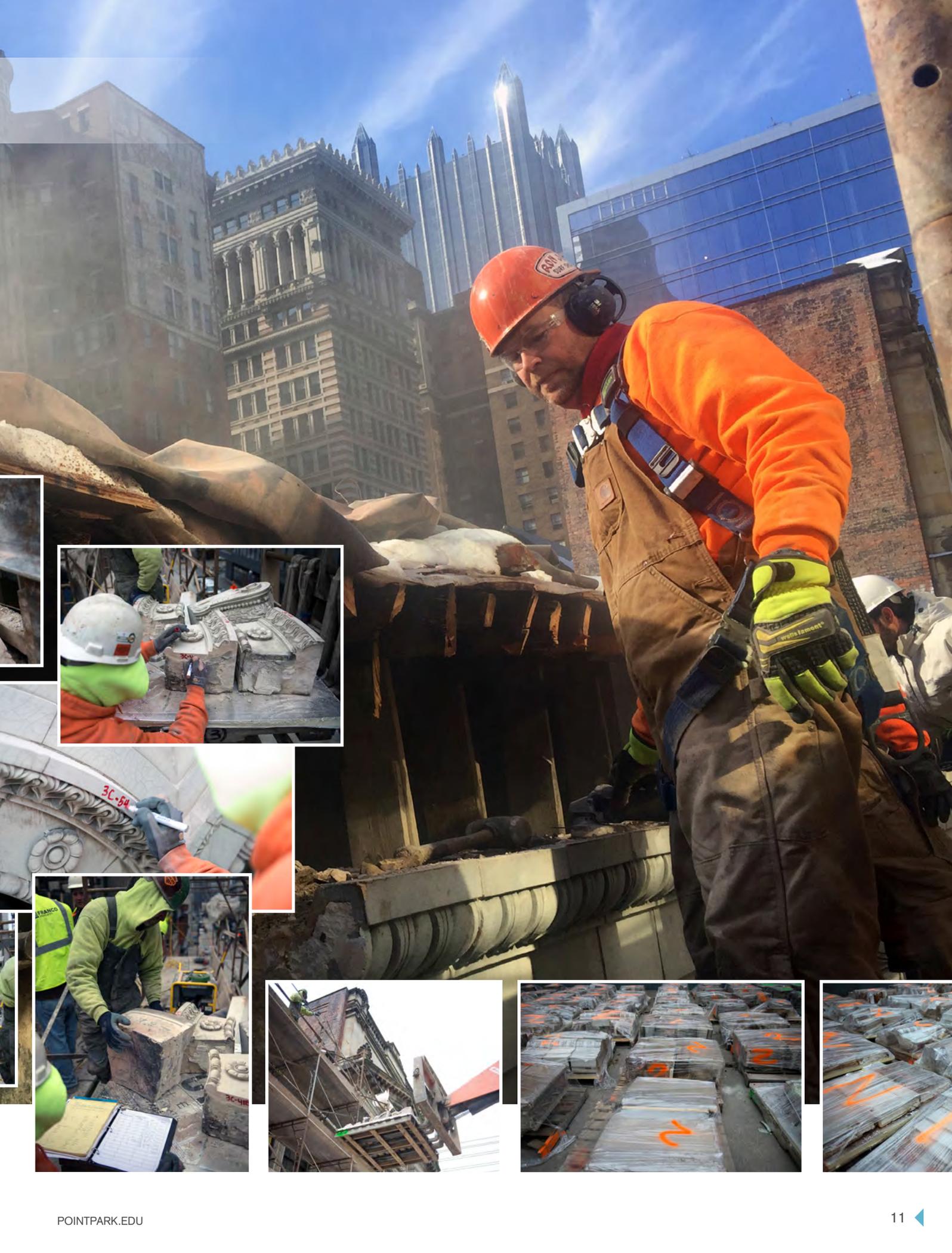
"I think it's safe to say it's the largest terra cotta salvage and rebuild in Pittsburgh," Nardozi said. "The extent to which we were able to salvage intact, whole pieces was pleasantly surprising. There are still repairs – terra cotta is a clay product and it's been fired and exposed to the elements for a long time – but the high percentage we will be able to reinstall is remarkable."

This project also is unusual because the façades will be rebuilt exactly as they were, right down the replication of the windows, according to Nardozi. "It will look exactly the same."

The buildings at 320, 322 and 330 Forbes Ave. were deconstructed after the removal of the façades. ❖



Photos of façade deconstruction by Chris Rolinson.



# A TEACHER AT HEART

Karen McIntyre, Ph.D., recognized for lifetime achievement as she transitions from provost to leader of Innovative Learning



Photo by Martha Rial.

**K**aren McIntyre, Ph.D. says that the position she has always treasured most is that of a teacher.

In June, Point Park's chief academic officer will return to her roots as an educator and lifelong learner as she transitions from her administrative role as University provost to focus on leading Point Park's new Center for Innovative Learning after taking a year-long sabbatical.

At Commencement 2016, McIntyre was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her dedication to Point Park, which began in 2005 and has spanned leadership of the University's Education Department, dean

of the School of Arts and Sciences, and later vice provost, provost and dean of faculty.

As chief academic officer, she has overseen all aspects of academic affairs and student affairs, from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation process to the establishment of a new core curriculum. McIntyre was the driving force behind the Point Park 2020 initiative, a comprehensive effort to examine and enhance key pillars of the student learning experience, which encompasses everything from the new core and academic structure to co-curricular experiences and city-campus life.

## Students First

"It's so gratifying to look back on everything we have accomplished together," says McIntyre. "For example, the new core was created with significant engagement from faculty, students and our board of trustees, and that was really very exciting for me."

In addition, the "Pathways to Success initiative has provided new opportunities to advise and support students in completion of their degree requirements for graduation. We have a new Center for Student Success, which now includes tutoring and disability services and the integration of Career Services. And our faculty have renewed their own focus on program and professional development." McIntyre is proud to see the launch of the doctoral programs in Leadership and Administration (Ed.D.) and Community Engagement (Ph.D.) at the University.

"I think we have had a shared and consistent focus on the need to put students and their needs first," says McIntyre. "So if there is anything I feel happiest about, and take the most pride in, it's that."

## Innovative Learning

McIntyre's next chapter at Point Park will involve leadership of Point Park's new Center for Innovative Learning, which brings together several initiatives focused on teaching and learning – now and in the future. It will encompass the University's online programs, community-focused Ph.D. programs, and close collaboration with new centers of excellence. This includes the new Center for Media Innovation, an academic laboratory in which communications students will collaborate with media professionals and work with the latest technology.

"Innovative learning is really about creating an incubator in which we can try new ideas for higher education as we greet the class of 2020 and look to the next decade," says McIntyre. "It will involve exploring and addressing what learners want and need, from flexible learning opportunities to competency-based learning and much more."

## New Ideas to Explore

"I liken it to a very big sandbox where faculty and staff will get to take risks and try new methods of instruction and delivery," she explains. "For example, Point Park Online will be based in Innovative Learning, and we hope to create some new and bold

majors that play to our strengths in the arts and in entertainment management. We will also be focusing on how those courses look and how they are delivered – making them more dynamic, integrated and responsive through new tools and technology.

In addition to exploring what learners want and need, "we are also looking at what employers want prospective employees to deliver," says McIntyre. "For example, how can we do things in a different way than the traditional four-year college experience? Perhaps a student needs to study full-time for a period of time, followed by a period of full-time employment, and later online learning, to give just one possible example. We are excited to be launching a cooperative education program that will respond to these needs. We will also be exploring what I call 'flexible pathways' to explore other approaches for delivering instruction."

## Change Agent

Point Park is in a very good position to lead these innovations, she says. "Our urban location is an advantage, and we are not burdened with a heavy bureaucracy as so many other schools are. We can make changes faster."

McIntyre says her upcoming year-long sabbatical will provide a much-needed opportunity to rest, refresh and continue her research and planning for her leadership of Innovative Learning at Point Park. It will be a return to her roots, she says, after spending so many years in educational administration. "I am looking forward to spending more time focusing on the teaching and learning side of my life." She will also be available to assist her successor, incoming Provost John Pearson (see page 14), as he takes on his new responsibilities as chief academic officer.

## Heart of Point Park

"John brings great talent and experience to Point Park and I am excited about what I believe he will bring to the position," McIntyre says. "He has deep knowledge of curriculum, faculty development, and other key issues. I think it will be a wonderful fit." For his part, Pearson says "Karen has already been so incredibly generous in sharing her time and knowledge with me. I can never fill her shoes, although I am hoping to fill my own shoes!" Pearson says that as he has talked with campus people in getting to know the University, a common theme emerged: that McIntyre has deeply influenced Point Park, "in a very good, positive and productive way.

"One person called Karen McIntyre 'the heart of Point Park.' I think that's wonderful." ❖

# ACADEMIC PROGRESS

John H. Pearson, Ph.D., is  
new provost at Point Park



Pearson in the Lawrence Hall  
lounge. Photo by John Altdorfer.

Campus climate was a factor in John Pearson's decision to leave Stetson University in sunny Florida to join Point Park as the University's new provost.

"I wasn't drawn to Pittsburgh because of the weather!" laughs Pearson, who says he was attracted by Point Park's climate of creativity, cultural activities and commitment to academic excellence. "I was drawn away from the warm weather I love because this is where I want to be."

Pearson, who previously served as associate vice president of academic affairs at Stetson in DeLand, Fla., was selected as the University's chief academic officer after a nationwide search that drew many well-qualified candidates. He replaces Karen S. McIntyre, Ph.D., provost and senior vice president of academic affairs, who will take a year-long sabbatical before returning to chair Point Park's newly established Center for Innovative Learning (see page 12).

## Student-centered

"John's experience clearly shows a commitment to the same values that have allowed Point Park to thrive as a student-centered university with an eye toward innovation and community engagement," says President Paul Hennigan. "Point Park is committed to a personalized support system that gives each of our students the opportunity to build a plan for a successful future."

Pearson, who holds a Master of Arts and a Ph.D. in English from Boston University, began his career in 1988 as an English professor at Stetson. "I have always loved teaching, particularly the singular focus on students," says the longtime professor, who found himself balancing teaching with a growing number of administrative responsibilities over the years. As Point Park's provost, "I hope to help others have the same great experiences teaching that I did."

## Community Focus

At Stetson, Pearson founded and directed for 10 years the General Studies Program, created to improve the performance and retention of academically at-risk students. He also founded Stetson's Discovery Program, an advising program for undecided students designed to enhance student experience from first contact to the selection of a major.

And, in fact, Pearson says it was Point Park's commitment to individual student success and a community focus that drew him to the role of chief academic officer here. "The University values are very much in line with my own," he says. "I relish the opportunity to provide students with a foundation for lifelong success, and significance in their professional, public and personal lives."

Pearson says that it's critical to build "a campus culture that is learning-centered. At a learning-centered university, everyone is learning. That is, learning is meant to be happening everywhere, for everyone. For students, of course, but also for each and every one of us.

"We need to model for our students that learning is something that happens throughout your entire life, not just the years you spend in college."

## City Is Campus

Pearson says he also looks forward to the experience of living and working in Downtown Pittsburgh. An avid diver and amateur underwater photographer, Pearson says he plans to enjoy Pittsburgh's beautiful rivers – but from the shore, he laughs.

His husband, David, who works in finance, has also accepted a new position that will require moving from south Florida to Washington, D.C. That means the couple (and their beloved beagle) will be commuting between two major metropolitan areas, says Pearson.

After spending many years in a small college town, urban life will be a welcome change of pace, says Pearson. "It's exciting that Point Park students, faculty and staff can walk outside and find all kinds of opportunities, from professional internships in many different fields to cultural events. I am looking forward to enjoying everything that the University and Downtown Pittsburgh have to offer."

In addition, "community engagement takes on an entirely new meaning when your campus is in the heart of a city like Pittsburgh," he says. "The city is an incredible gift to our student community, but the University is also a gift to the city.

"That's extraordinary." ♦

# STEPPING UP

## Point Park hosts more than 1,300 young dancers, teaching artists

From Australia and Bermuda to South Carolina and California, 1,300 young dancers from 78 high schools, as well as teaching artists and guests, traveled to Point Park University in Downtown Pittsburgh March 3-6 for the 2016 National High School Dance Festival.

The event – the largest of its kind – provided high school students with the opportunity to train in Point Park’s state-of-the-art dance facilities with guest artists and choreographers, including world-renowned choreographer David Parsons. More than 200 master classes were held during the festival.

Students also had the opportunity to audition for scholarships from 65 of the most prestigious dance schools in the country, including Point Park, The Juilliard School, The Boston Conservatory, Butler University and the Joffrey Ballet School.

“This event is just the latest indication of the great respect held for our Conservatory of Performing Arts,” said Point Park President Paul Hennigan. “While we are thrilled and excited with the opportunity, we also are pleased with the economic opportunity it brings to Downtown Pittsburgh.”



# and guests for the 2016 National High School Dance Festival

## Conservatory Shines

This is the first time in its 27-year history that the festival has been held in Pittsburgh. Kathryn Kearns, Ed.D., associate professor of integrative arts at Penn State Abington and the event's founder, executive director and festival co-coordinator, said Point Park ultimately had a lot to offer.

"The facilities are just state-of-the art, and to have Point Park's dance faculty on board, who were really interested in doing it, made it very appealing," Kearns said. "Having the studios, the George Rowland White Performance Center and Pittsburgh's

Downtown theaters so close to one another helps make it safer for the kids and easier to coordinate. It just seemed like this would be a wonderful place to do it."

Rubén Graciani, chair of dance and associate artistic director for the Conservatory of Performing Arts, said hosting the festival was a no-brainer. "This was an important opportunity for the Conservatory to recruit high-level young dancers from around the world, while showcasing the extraordinary opportunities and facilities available at Point Park," Graciani said. "We want prospective students to fall in love with everything Point Park and Pittsburgh have to offer."





## Amazing Experience

“Auditioning for the recruiters was an amazing experience,” said Annika Gadson, a junior at Charleston County School of the Arts in Charleston, S.C. “It was a little difficult trying to learn the routine so quickly, but I did it!”

Shayla Marshall, a junior at Bridgeprep Academy of Arts Minds in Miami, Fla., agreed. “It was a stressful and fun experience at the same time,” she said. “It was so cool to get to audition with dancers from all around the world.”

Gaynell Sherrod, chair of dance at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va., said she was excited for the opportunity to recruit talented students and network with other

dance schools from across the country. “I’m so glad to be here to recruit incredible talent, share best practices with dance professors and engage with the students,” said Sherrod.

Following the auditions, festival participants enjoyed a ceremony at Pittsburgh’s Byham Theater, featuring performances by Point Park students and Parsons Dance Company.

## From Point Park to Parsons

Point Park Dance alumni Ian Spring (COPA '09) and Ahmad Simmons (COPA '10) — members of Parsons Dance Company in New York City — returned to campus to teach a master class at the Festival.



Above: Point Park Dance alumni Ahmad Simmons (left) and Ian Spring teach a master class.



Held in the George Rowland White Performance Center, more than 70 high school dancers participated in Spring and Simmons' 80-minute class.

"Some of the best times in my life happened at Point Park and it's so great to be back. Coming back as an alum and representing Parsons Dance Company is amazing, but it's actually really intimidating," said Spring. "You know the students are watching your every move, but by the same token, you know they are here to support you. The talent level of these students is ridiculous!"

Simmons agreed. "Coming back to Point Park for NHSDF is surreal. I love Pittsburgh and I love Point Park! Point Park is where I learned my craft, discovered who I am as a person and as a dancer," he said.

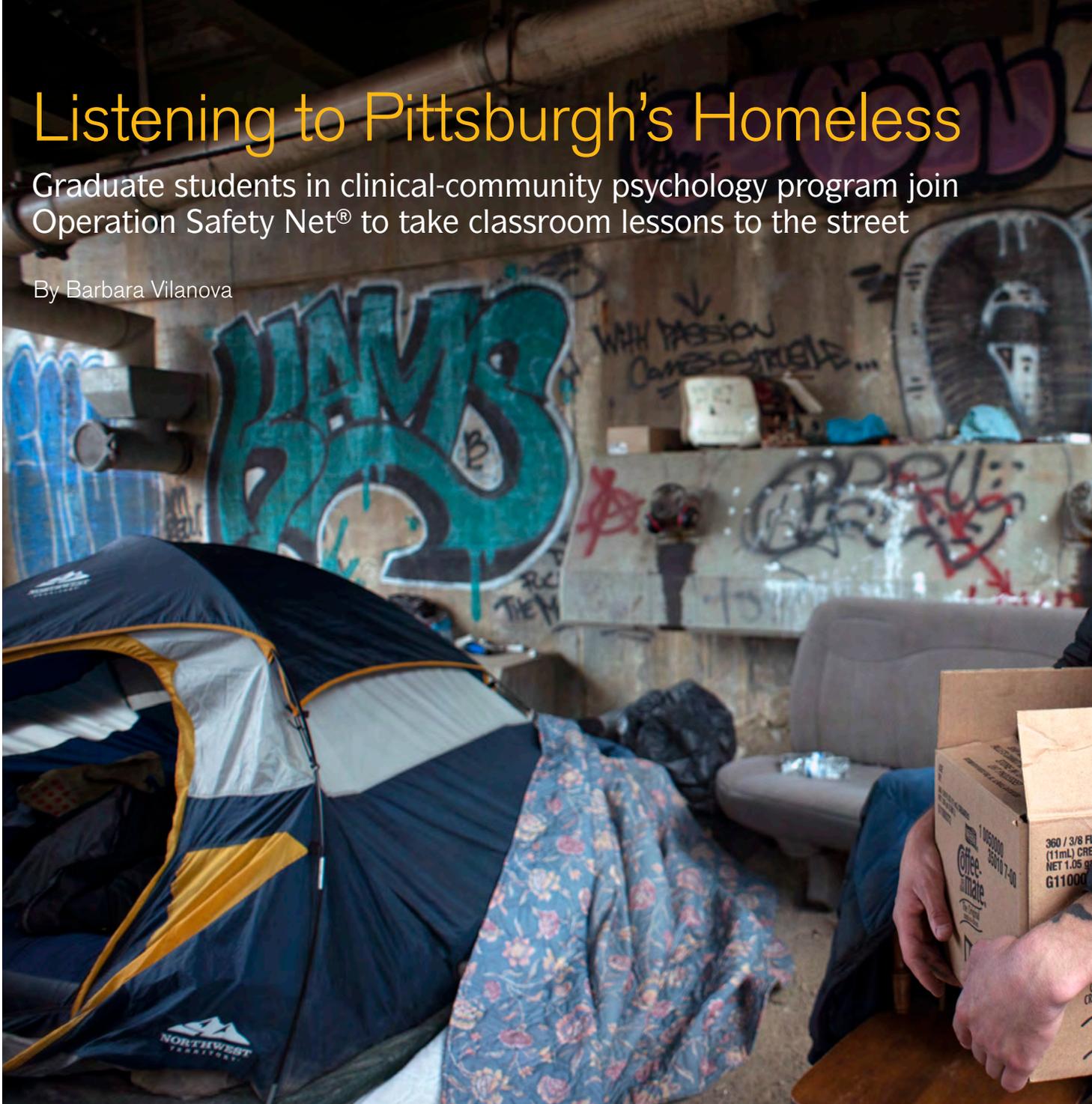
"When I walked into Point Park's dance studio, all of the memories from classes and rehearsals came flooding back. It was a pretty emotional moment for me, and it's so touching to be back in this space."

*Reporting by Gina Puppò. Photos by Christopher Rolinson, Dominique Hildebrand and Sarah Collins. ❖*

# Listening to Pittsburgh's Homeless

Graduate students in clinical-community psychology program join Operation Safety Net® to take classroom lessons to the street

By Barbara Vilanova



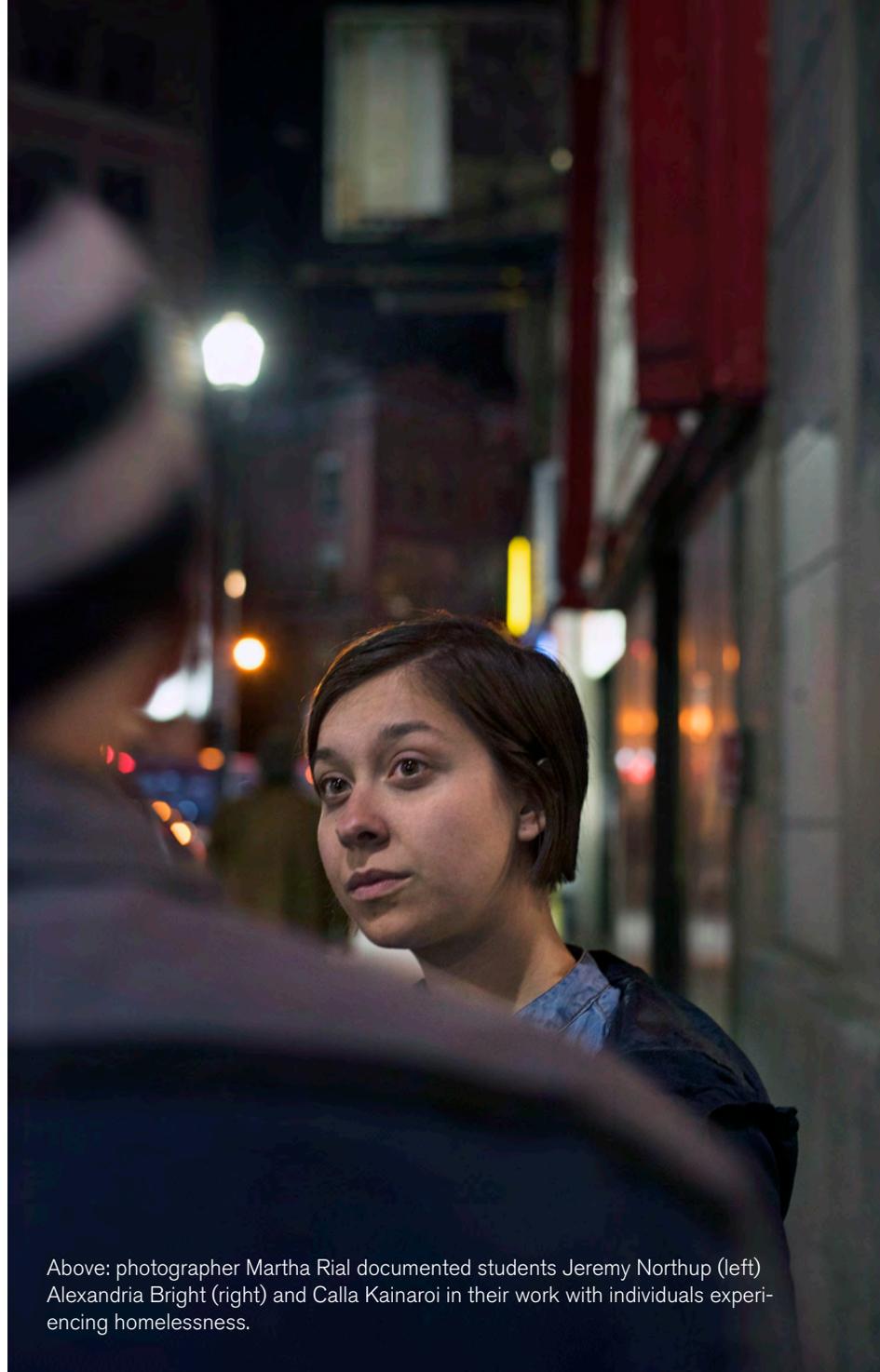
For students enrolled in Point Park's clinical community psychology program, the opportunity to partner with Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net® meant taking classroom lessons literally to the streets – something Operation Safety Net has done for nearly 25 years.

"I've lived in Pittsburgh my entire life, but after being a part of this project, the city has opened up to me in completely new ways. Words like 'home', 'bridge', 'streets', and 'cold', will never be the same for me again," said Calla Kainaroi.

Kainaroi, along with fellow students Jeremy Northup and Alexandria Bright – all pursuing a M.A. degree in clinical-community psychology – are visiting and speaking with men and women living on the streets of Pittsburgh as part of a practicum in advocate ethnography.

## Partners With Operation Safety Net®

The idea for partnering with Operation Safety Net began when Robert G. McInerney, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology, met Operation Safety Net founder and medical director James



Above: photographer Martha Rial documented students Jeremy Northup (left) Alexandria Bright (right) and Calla Kainaroi in their work with individuals experiencing homelessness.

S. Withers, M.D., at a campus lecture several years ago. Operation Safety Net, which is part of Pittsburgh Mercy and Trinity Health, serving in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy, was founded by Withers who began providing medical care to Pittsburgh's unsheltered homeless population in 1992. "Jim expressed the need for a better understanding of the people he helps, beyond the important medical and social service interventions he and his staff provide. I explained that this is exactly what our students are being trained to do in the clinical-community psychology program and as ethnographers," said McInerney.

An advocate ethnographer works within a particular community and participates by observing the rituals, practices and functions that take place. Ethnography is an integral part of the clinical-community psychology program because it focuses on promoting mental health and well-being as well as social and cultural influences for personal well-being.

### A Sensitive, Gradual Process

The process of information gathering, especially interviews with men and women experiencing homelessness, is sensitive



and gradual. Students need to build a level of trust during the interview process so that the data they collect is an accurate reflection of an individual's story, experiences and challenges. Even though the interview process is gradual, there is a research protocol that has been established in which students ask a series of 8-10 open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview process. The interviews are audio recorded, transcribed and reviewed by McInerney.

"As an ethnographer, you aren't viewing what is going on behind a glass wall, you're up close and involved," said

Alexandria Bright. "I'm able to be curious and ask questions while taking note of what I am thinking and feeling, and all of that is part of the data we collect. There aren't many avenues in mainstream science where your opinions and experiences matter or are encouraged at all," said Bright.

For Operation Safety Net, the partnership with Point Park is an opportunity to go beyond the critical medical and social services help Withers and his team provide to people experiencing homelessness. "This initiative will allow us an additional powerful tool to understand the complex issues of



Student Calla Kainaroi assists with an art project. All photos by Martha Rial.

those we serve,” said Withers. “Although we respond to the immediate needs of those on the streets, some of the deeper aspects of their experience can sometimes be missed in the process. We care about the whole person, so this partnership will hopefully provide us with insights that will guide us in serving them better.”

### Efforts to Enhance Well-Being

An important overall goal of the Operation Safety Net partnership, and of Point Park’s clinical-community psychology

program, is to enable students to enhance the well-being of individuals, groups and communities through research, community assistance and clinical practices.

McInerney hopes that the Operation Safety Net and Point Park partnership extends for many years. Not only will students benefit from the unique experience, but also their research may provide “consciousness raising for our city with regard to the experience of homelessness and may also contribute to better serving a community facing many complex challenges,” said McInerney. ❖

# ALUMNI CONNECTION



Dear fellow alumni and friends,

April is my favorite time of year at Point Park. It's a month that abounds with ceremonies, pomp and circumstance, farewells and well wishes. Students stress over exams and job interviews alike. Families flood onto campus to shuffle Rubbermaid totes into SUVs, and wonder how their student's belongings seem to have tripled since August. The excitement is simply contagious, and I can't help but feel invigorated.

As Alumni Association president, I'm delighted to take part in all of this. But perhaps my favorite experience is the selection process for the Distinguished Student Award (previously known as the Outstanding Student Award). Regardless of the award's name, 'distinguished' and 'outstanding' are only two of the adjectives I'd use to describe the students I have been lucky enough to meet before they move from Point Park into the next stage of their personal and professional lives.

The award is presented to students who not only embody academic excellence, but have also given their time and talents to the University and communities. Among the award nominees we have met first-generation college students, students who have created campus organizations, campus leaders, pioneers in their field of study, and more. We have listened to stories of loss, heartache and the improbable triumph of success over adversity. It is a humbling experience, and I am so proud now to call all of these nominees fellow alumni.

The 2016 award recipients, announced at the annual student awards banquet on April 22, are James Baker (master of education in secondary education) and Hailey Turek (bachelor of arts in dance). Mr. Baker and Ms. Turek – and recipients in years past – remind me of the joy that can be found by investing my own time, talent and treasure into a University that has educated so many exemplary professionals.

There are many ways in which you can invest your own time, talent and treasure at Point Park. For example, I value each contributor to the massively successful "I Heart Point Park" campaign last February, those who volunteer at Pioneer Community Day each April, and alumni who mentor students through the Pioneer Alumni Recruitment Team (P.A.R.T.) year round. Throughout the year, not one cent, one second or sentiment given to the University is unappreciated.

My favorite time of year to be an alumna is the month of April. What's your favorite? Tell us! Make a comment on the Point Park Alumni Facebook page, download the Point Park Alumni App on your smart device, or attend a local or regional alumni event.

May you recall your time at Point Park as fondly as I do, and build new memories as an alumnus/a. Maybe April is a good place to start.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carrie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

**Carrie Potter-Murray, COM '09**

President, Point Park Alumni Association

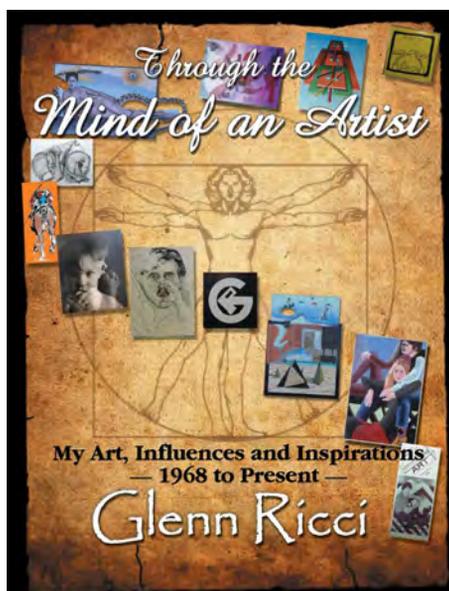
# CLASS NOTES

## 1970s

**George C. Schirm** (A&S 1979) writes, "I attended Point Park from Sept. 1964 to April 1970 and received a bachelor's degree in business management, [and] continued to attend Point Park and received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1979. I now work at Raytheon Space Systems as a project engineering manager. I previously worked at Westinghouse corporate and overseas, and worked at a Volkswagen manufacturing automotive plant, and at Bechtel Engineering/McDonnell Douglas Air Craft/General Dynamics. I also served in U.S. Army. [I am] a veteran from the school's beginning, and I want to thank Point Park for my success."

**James H. Riggs III** (COM 1973) retired in December 2014 after 39 years working in the sports department at The Post-Journal in Jamestown, N.Y., and the last 34 years as sports editor. Locally, he mainly covered and took photos of Jamestown Community College sports, Jamestown High School football, and the Jamestown team in the New York-Penn League. He was also the official scorer for Jamestown's team in the NY-P League for 38 years. Riggs covered major golf events in the area and created the P-J Champions tournament for area men's scratch club champions. On the national scene, the highlight of Riggs' career was covering the U.S. win over the Soviet Union at the 1980 Winter Olympics along with the gold medal victory over Finland. He also covered four U.S. Open golf championships, a PGA Championship and the 2008 Ryder Cup. Riggs took photos at Buffalo Bills home games and handled visiting locker room interviews during the team's stretch of four Super Bowl appearances. Though battling health issues, he and his wife, Sharon, are looking forward to spending time in Nashville, Tenn., visiting with their son, Jim IV, daughter-in-law Melissa, and grandchildren

Brennan, Cora and Seth. Riggs' successor at The Post-Journal is former assistant sports editor, **Scott Kindberg** (COM 1982) who is also a Point Park graduate.



**Glenn Ricci** (COM 1971) writes, "I recently published a book (in 2015) of my life's art-work which goes back to, and includes works from, my Point Park College days. It is titled *Through The Mind Of An Artist — from 1968 to Present!*" According to the book's description: "Creativity, artistic processes, and ideas are revealed in pictures and words to reveal how final images came to be what they are from initial drawings to the resulting metamorphosis. Ricci reveals the creative process with explanations of how images evolved from initial idea or beginning sketch to a finished work... The love he feels in revealing the creative process can be inspiring; readers find themselves drawn into these images that exhibit wonderment, in-depth discovery, a heartbeat of structure, mastery and naiveté all mixed together in presenting works of art from the heart." For more information, visit: [www.legacybookpublishing.com/product/through-the-mind-of-an-artist/](http://www.legacybookpublishing.com/product/through-the-mind-of-an-artist/).

## 1980s

**Beverly Edwards** (COPA 1983) is the general manager of Breakfast at Tiffany's, now on stage at Theatre Royal Haymarket in London's West End.

**Kathleen Conery** (COPA 1983) recently completed her 20th year as the costume shop manager at James Madison University's School of Theatre and Dance. Over the past two decades she has designed numerous theatre, dance and children's theatre costumes, overseen the production of almost 200 shows, and taught sewing and patternmaking to a countless number of students. She writes, "The coming year will bring more of the same, with designs for two JMU productions, one for the local community theatre, and a multitude of students learning the art of sewing on a button (and hopefully more!)" In addition to her work responsibilities, for the past six years she has served as president of a local textile guild, teaching classes and demonstrating in spinning, knitting, weaving and beadwork. With the end of her term limits coming this June, she says she looks forward to learning the meaning of the words "spare time," though she suspects that it just means more time to weed the garden.

**Irene Kent** (COPA 1988) and friend and fellow alumna **Angela Garrison** (COPA 1988) were the focus on an article on *Starbound Talent and Consulting for your college needs*. Learn more at [www.danceinforma.com/2016/02/02/starbound-talent-and-consulting-for-your-college-needs/](http://www.danceinforma.com/2016/02/02/starbound-talent-and-consulting-for-your-college-needs/). Kent earned her degree in dance and Garrison earned her degree in musical theatre at Point Park.

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A NOTE!**

Visit [www.pointpark.edu/classnote](http://www.pointpark.edu/classnote) to share your news.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Sara Jane (Beardsley) Freese** (BUS 1982) passed away on February 2 in Kansas City, Mo. She was 56. Born in Pittsburgh, she earned her bachelor's degree in accounting at Point Park. According to her obituary in the Kansas City Star and Legacy.com, she also "did graduate work in theology and had a lifetime teaching certificate in Missouri. Sara was an administrative secretary at St. John's United Methodist Church in Kansas City. Sara enjoyed being a mother, was a fabulous cook, and an accomplished artist. The lovely Sara was a wonderful wife, mother, sister, and aunt; a faithful helpmate, and full partner in ministry. In addition to her husband Barry, Sara is survived by her daughters, Ruthan Constance Freese of Durham, NC, and Samantha Leigh Freese of Kansas City..." Read the entire obituary at: [bit.ly/1PZ1k14](http://bit.ly/1PZ1k14).



**Ed Weigle** (COM 1990), a veteran voice actor, celebrates his 15th year as the international radio voice of World Wrestling Entertainment in September. Today, he's responsible for conceiving, voicing and producing all radio spots heard across America and in every English-speaking nation across the globe for WWE. According to Weigle, 48, he began doing voiceovers at 13 and became a radio personality at 15 – believe it or not, with the indirect help of screen icon, Jimmy Stewart – influenced by his close friend, the late Pittsburgh icon, Porky Chedwick (whose

**1990s**

**Scott Kleinberg** (COM 1995) has accepted a new position in New York City. After 11 years at the Chicago Tribune, Kleinberg is moving back to where he was born, where he'll be the director of social media and digital engagement in the New York City mayor's office.

**Jeff Poffenbarger** (COPA 1996) was recently promoted to senior executive producer at the Toys for Bob video game development studio, a subsidiary of Activision, Inc. Jeff has produced a number of games during his 18 years at Activision including the best-selling Skylanders video games.

# WHAT LEGACY WILL YOU LEAVE?

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**POINT PARK UNIVERSITY**

biography he's now writing). With the help of Point Park's Professor **Joan Williams-Guiliani**, he landed his first national voiceover job at 19. He is heard today narrating three television series on the NBC Sports Channel, *Outdoor and Sportsman*, as well as announcing (and sometimes co-hosting) the nationally syndicated radio program, *The Cigar Dave Show*, heard on more than 140 radio stations coast to coast. In 2012, producer Casey Tebo and Aerosmith's Steven Tyler recruited him to do the tongue-in-cheek narrative at the beginning of the music video for "Legendary Child," the group's first video in eight years. His unmistakable voice has also been heard on Cartoon Network, ESPN, Nickelodeon and ABC-TV over the past several years. He's even featured in the book, *Legendary Locals of Latrobe*, along with his friends, Arnold Palmer (with whom he did a radio and TV ad campaign for 84 Lumber, in the '90s, which may have been the only to feature two Latrobe High School grads) and Mister Rogers.

**Michelle Lawrence-Schmude** (BUS 1999) has been promoted to associate dean for admission, enrollment management and financial aid, at The Commonwealth Medical College. She earned her M.B.A. in international business at Point Park.

## 2000s

**David Flora** (COM '09) writes, "I now work as a producer for PGA Tour Live and PGA Tour International!" He is based in Jacksonville, Fla.

**Shane Portman** (COPA '02) wrote and co-created a series of original stop-motion animated shorts for HMH Publishing's new app, *Curious World*. Produced through Bix Pix, *Moonlight Storytime* follows a brother and sister, Adeline and Albert, who read popup book tales to their little turtle friend, Tot. Each time they open the cover and the popups fold out, the home viewer is taken into the book and the stories come to life in

## Pioneer of Woodturning

**Jim Caskowski** (COM 1980) is an accomplished artist who specializes in woodturning and creates original works in his North Carolina studio. His works can be found in galleries and shops in the Ashville, N.C. area. Caskowski recently donated an original wood-turned bowl to his alma mater, and it is now displayed in the 8th floor administrative office area in Point Park's Academic Hall. Caskowski was a journalism and communications major who served as the business manager of the Point Park Pioneer, and has fond memories of working with the head of the Journalism and Communications Department, Dr. **Vincent LaBarbra**. Photo of Caskowski's bowl by Beth Exton.



whimsical re-imaginings of Aesop's Fables. The children and turtle are animated in traditional 3D stop motion with plasticine and ball and socket puppets and sets (designed by the award-winning staff at Bix Pix) and the popup book characters were animated in 2D paper animation (designed by Disney paper artists, Kevin Kidney and Britni Brault). And, to make this experience even more memorable, two of the stories came from the imaginative mind of his fiancé, **Ruth Gamble** (COPA '03). Portman is also the current script supervisor for Bix Pix's Emmy Award-winning stop-motion series *Tumble Leaf* on Amazon Prime. For more info, visit: [www.shaneportman.com](http://www.shaneportman.com)

**Benjamin Cole** (COM '09) has accepted a new position at KDKA-TV in the station's Traffic Department. Prior to this he was traffic manager at Renda Broadcasting (WISH 99.7). While at Point Park, Ben was active in both WPPJ (assistant general manager) and U-View. According to Cole, he's excited to enter the world of TV, leaving radio behind.

He joins his wife, **Annie Perri Cole** (COM '09), at KDKA-TV, as well!

**Stephanie Rex** (COM '07) is the new vice president of public relations, marketing and social media at Z Brand Group, a full-service marketing and advertising agency located in downtown Pittsburgh. She will lead client projects by creating and implementing marketing, public relations and social media strategies, internal communications planning and implementation, writing for various mediums, and media relations. "I am thrilled to join the talented team that is led by our founder and principal, Goldie Z. Ostrow, and I look forward to the creative work and experiences ahead," she said. Rex has more than 10 years of communications experience working for local and national nonprofit organizations, a local boutique PR firm, and as a former reporter and editor. She earned a B.A. in journalism from Point Park and an M.A. in public relations from Kent State University.

## CLASS NOTES

**Ashley Laverty** (COPA '09) recently founded Kerfuffle, Arizona's first theatre company devoted to creating performances with and for children under 5 years old. Laverty, who earned her degree in musical theatre at Point Park, also wrote and directed their premiere production, *The Caterpillar's Footprint*. For more information, visit [www.kerfufflety.com](http://www.kerfufflety.com).

**Dustin Fitzharris** (A&S '03) has returned to ABC News and is now working as an associate producer for network's *20/20* specials. He previously worked as an associate producer for the daytime drama *All My Children*. Fitzharris earned his degree in elementary education at Point Park.

### 2010s

**Mallory Marinack** (COPA '12) is currently dancing with Dayton Ballet, and previously

danced with Texas Ballet Theater for two seasons.

**Trumaine "Tru" Verret-Fleming** (COPA '14) writes, "From the time I graduated I was able to find lots and lots of work in the city of Pittsburgh. From plays, to musicals, to commercials, to being a full time singer/entertainer with a wedding and corporate event band, to finally joining Royal Caribbean International as a lead vocalist for their Vision of the Seas fleet. Prior to joining Royal (I'm now rehearsing in Miami) I was able to obtain my Actors' Equity Card from The Rep professional company at Point Park's Pittsburgh Playhouse. I played Pharus Young in this season's second show *Choir Boy*. I also recently got married. Coming to Point Park (even as a non-traditional student) has changed my entire life and has led me to new journeys in Pittsburgh and abroad. I am a proud alum!"



**Katherine Lancaster** (BUS '13) writes, "I recently accepted a new position at the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust as a show marketing manager, and married Carey McKelvey (a current Point Park MBA/MA graduate student) in November 2015."

**Margie (Trax) Netzel** (COM '12) now serves as the content manager of Scott Enterprises, which owns and manages 27 different hospitality properties, including Splash Lagoon Indoor Water Park in Erie, Pa. and Peek 'n Peak Resort in Clymer, N.Y. She is also the social media manager for the LECOM Health Challenge on the PGA Tour's Web.com tour. Netzel lives in Geneva, Ohio with her husband Andy and their children Emily and Clark Netzel.

**Ashley Kress** (COM '15) writes, "after graduating with a 3.96 GPA, I moved to Madison, Ind. where I am now serving as the member services specialist for the Madison Area Chamber of Commerce." Kress, who earned her M.A. in communication technology) says she chose Point Park "because I desired a program that would teach me communication theories and how to conduct research (in case I decided to seek my Ph.D.), but that would also give me hands-on experience working with digital marketing programs and situations that I would encounter in the workforce." In her new position, Kress says "I work within the Madison area to support local businesses, while also connecting the community to these



### Pioneers at the Peaks

**Trevor Marnich** (future Point Park student and son of Education Department Chair **Darlene Marnich**, Ed.D.) joined his cousin Zachary Giroux in showing Point Park pride on a vacation to Grand Teton National Park in northwest Wyoming, a classic destination in American mountaineering. Have you roamed far and wide in your Point Park gear? Send us a photo, and tell us your story, at: [thepoint@pointpark.edu](mailto:thepoint@pointpark.edu).

## M.B.A. DISCOUNT

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businesses, so the economy can prosper. My duties primarily focus on supporting our members through digital marketing initiatives (like social media, email marketing, graphic design and content creation). But, I also get to dabble in planning networking events and festivals for the community. My very first project was to lead the transition of the Chamber's website to a new platform, as well as redesigning the whole site to be more user friendly. The website project led to the redesign of our marketing materials as well."

**Justin Karter** (COM '14, A&S '15) has been accepted into the Ph.D. program in counseling psychology at UMass Boston, where he will continue his work in psychological ethics. He earned his M.A. in journalism in 2014, and his M.A. in clinical-community psychology in 2015, at Point Park. He will marry Hannah Steere, M.D., on Seneca Lake in western New York on August 5, 2016.

**Dana Fitzgerald** (COM '15) is an events assistant at the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden. She earned her B.A. in public relations and advertising at Point Park.

**Melissa Ferraro** (A&S '11, BUS '13) is the development director at the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden. She earned her B.A. in behavioral sciences and her M.A. in organizational leadership at Point Park.

**Jared Passante** (COPA '14) writes, "I am now working for the Los Angeles production company Mythology Entertainment as the executive assistant to the vice president of film development and production. The company was founded, and is run by, the producers and writers of such films as *Zodiac*, *Black Swan*, *Shutter Island*, *Truth*, *White House Down* and *Amazing Spider-Man*." Passante earned his degree in cinema and digital arts at Point Park.

**Michael W. Mann** (A&S '11, BUS '13) has been named one of "Pittsburgh's 50 Finest" by the Cystic Fibrosis Association and was featured in Whirl magazine. He is the regional business manager at the dental practice of Bobbie Lee Hawranko, D.M.D., in the Shadyside neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Mann earned his bachelor's degree in elementary education and his M.B.A. at Point Park. For more information, visit: <https://finest.cff.org/michael-manns-finest>.



**Kishor Pradhan** (BUS '12) is IT testing and quality analyst at Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield in Pittsburgh. A native of Sarpang, Bhutan, he earned his M.B.A. with a concentration in health systems management at Point Park

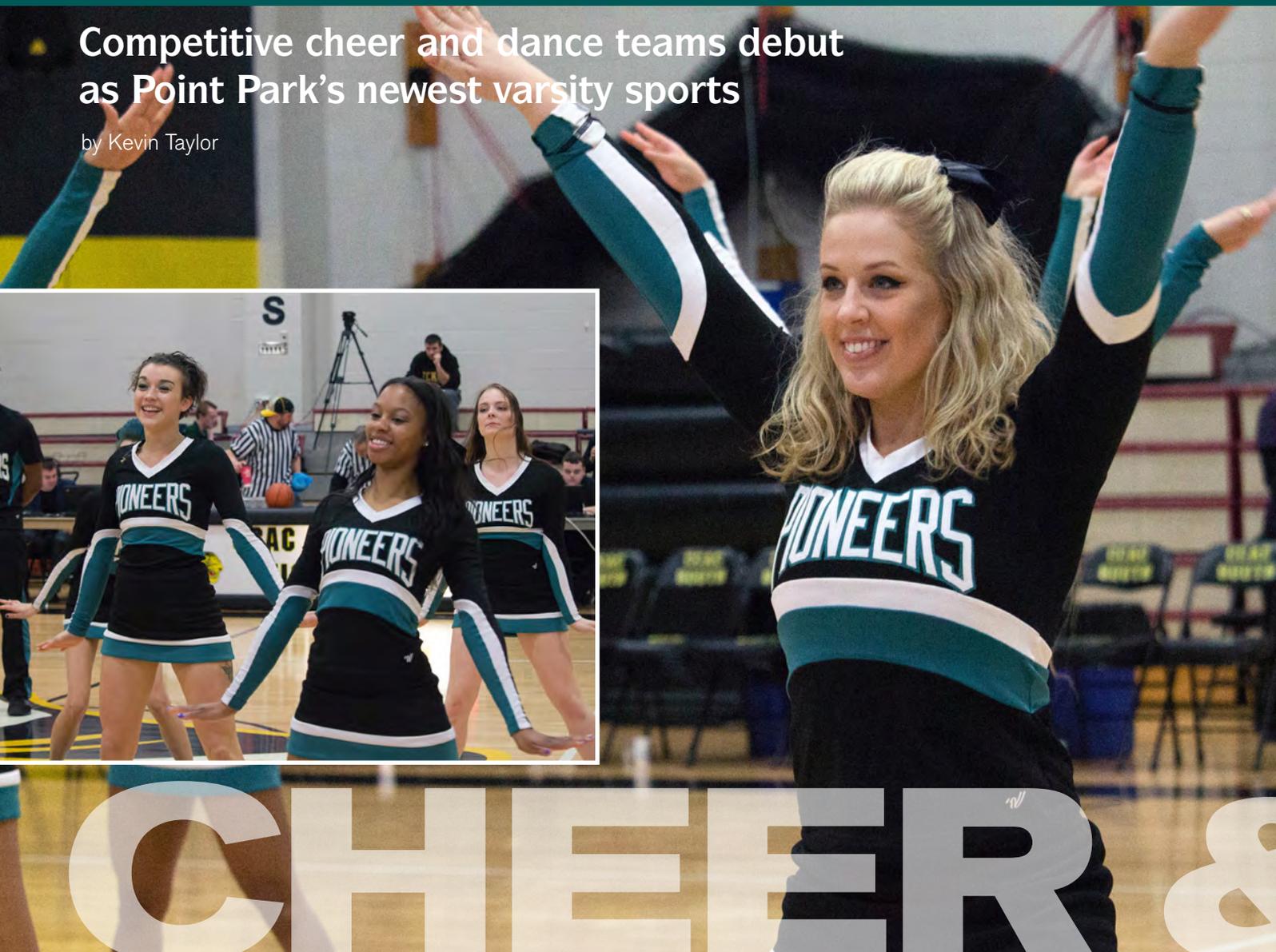
in 2012. He also earned a master of commerce degree at Uttaranchal University and a bachelor of commerce degree at the University of Calcutta. According to Pradhan, "When I first arrived to the United States, I was working in contract positions for various health care organizations. I felt that pursuing an American degree would help me to obtain a full-time, permanent position. In addition, I believed that an M.B.A. degree focused in health systems management would be important to have with the new health care laws coming."

**Suresh Chockiah** (BUS '13) is vice president, strategic services and enterprise architecture at PNC Financial Services. He earned his M.B.A. with an international business concentration, Point Park in 2013. Previously, he earned his B.S. in math and computer science at the University of Madras. He is also a Project Management Institute certified Project Management Professional, a TOGAF certified Enterprise Architect, and Carnegie Mellon University certified Enterprise Architect. A native of Chennai, India, Chockiah says, "My M.B.A. education has definitely helped me move beyond just having a technologist viewpoint. I've gained a broader perspective on how my decisions and strategies affect PNC's business."

# PIONEER SPIRIT

Competitive cheer and dance teams debut as Point Park's newest varsity sports

by Kevin Taylor



**P**oint Park University has two new varsity sports teams. And they're ones that many alumni will be excited to see gain varsity status.

In January 2016, the University announced its plans to add competitive cheer and dance teams to the inter-collegiate, varsity sports offerings in the athletic department.

## Varsity Tradition

The history of Point Park cheerleading dates back to the 1960s with the Varsity Club. Involvement as a Point Park cheerleader has been a source of pride for many alumni through the years.

Many recall the days of cheering coach Jerry Conboy and the Point Park basketball team, leading Black Diamond the Bison and generating an overall great sense of school spirit.

Since those early days, Point Park has had a cheerleading team at various points in time, including the last five years when it operated as a club organization.

Now, what was once a club has been elevated to varsity status. The competitive cheer and dance teams will operate under the athletic department, compete in the NAIA, and award scholarships to its student-athletes.



### Herold Is Head Coach

The first step was to hire a head coach to lead the programs. Bettina Herold, who coached the team the last five years as a club organization, was hired in February and began to lay the foundation of the team.

Our program is focused on developing our student-athletes with the elite skills of competitive cheerleading and dance with an emphasis on participation, teamwork,

safety and responsibility," said Herold, who has a background as a University of Pittsburgh dancer and Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) cheerleader.

"Our goal is to represent the Point Park community in an exceptional manner at all competitions and performances."

### Cheer and Dance Competitions

The competitive cheer and dance teams will participate in cheer and dance

competitions representing Point Park as an intercollegiate sports team. The ultimate goal is to qualify for and compete at the NAIA Competitive Cheer and Dance National Championship, which is held in the spring of every year.

Qualification to nationals involves advancing through regional competitions throughout the country. The cheer and dance teams will play a full schedule of competitions preparing for regionals.

*continued*





## SPORTS ROUNDUP

### ► MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Pioneers had a strong season with a record of 17-11 overall and made a run to the KIIAC Tournament semifinals, where they lost at Alice Lloyd (Ky.), 89-88. Point Park had its most wins in nine seasons and also had two all-conference players with senior guards Kelvin Goodwin (23 ppg) and Jerah'me Williams (19 ppg). The Pioneers ranked third in NAIA Division II in scoring at 91.9 points per game.

Head coach Bob Rager now has 381 victories after his 27th year at his alma mater. During the season, he became the all-time wins leader for college basketball in the City of Pittsburgh when he passed Pitt's Doc Carlson for that honor.

### ► WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Pioneers made the playoffs for the fifth year in a row and finished with a record of 19-11 overall and 12-5 KIIAC. The Pioneers had a rebuilding year but still came close to the 20-win mark, something they had done the previous four years straight. The senior class of Alexa Xenakis, Carly Corcoran, Leah Hurst and Briana Brownfield were a part of 98 victories the last four years.

Carly Forse, a junior forward from Bishop Canevin High School, led the team in scoring at 10.8 ppg and was named all-conference first team. She is one of four starters who will return next year. Head coach Tony Grenek is now 121-34 (.780) in his five seasons.

### ► INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

The Pioneers had their first qualifiers for nationals as four student-athletes qualified for the NAIA Indoor Track & Field National Championship. The program is in its second year of existence and is coached by Kelly Parsley.

Sophomore triple jumpers Shaun Berry and Jryi Davis placed 12th and 19th, respectively, in the nation. Sophomore distance runner Katie Guarnaccia placed 14th in the nation in the 5,000 meters. Freshman middle-distance runner Desmond Marrow placed 22nd in the country in the 800 meters.

The other aspect of the competitive cheer and dance teams is spirit based. In addition to their competitions, the teams will be involved in cheering and dancing at Point Park athletics games and special events to promote school spirit.

Overall, this is great news for the school, the athletic department and the student-athletes who will experience being part of the teams.

### Inspiring Student Athletes

"My philosophy as the head coach of Point Park cheer and dance is to inspire

my team to be the best, well-rounded student athletes that they can be," said Herold. "I focus on enhancing each student-athletes' experience by teaching physical and interpersonal skills that they can apply to their personal, work and school endeavors.

"Our program is built on a solid foundation that will provide student-athletes with direction and inspiration to become exceptional leaders and ambassadors of the Point Park community."

The news of the cheer club organization reaching varsity status was met with

excitement by the current team members. Many have signed on as varsity student-athletes and gone through the eligibility requirements of the NAIA.

Point Park competitive cheer and dance is currently seeking prospective student-athletes to join the teams. Those interested should visit the Point Park athletics website at [PointPark.edu/Athletics](http://PointPark.edu/Athletics) and complete the Prospective Athlete Questionnaire. ❖

*Kevin Taylor is director of athletic communications and assistant athletic director at Point Park. Photos by Sam Robinson.*

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