

THE POINT

A NEW CENTER FOR MEDIA INNOVATION

New collaborative space is latest University project to help reshape Downtown



A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

Exploring air and water quality through faculty and student research

BLUES BROTHER

Alumnus Ron Esser is champion of live music and regional food banks



Dear alumni and friends,

As 2016 begins, and the spring semester commences, it's an opportunity to reflect on the events and accomplishments of the past year. 2015 was a year of purposeful change, and continued growth, for Point Park.

Last fall, we welcomed 607 new freshmen and 243 transfer students, representing more than 13 countries and 36 states. At our annual opening Convocation, these newest members of our University community were encouraged to venture out and discover Pittsburgh and the places and people of our city and region. At Convocation, I enjoyed sharing the following advice from my wife, Colleen, with our new students: 'We will teach you, challenge you, and inspire you. We want to push you to your limit so that your thirst for knowledge will require you to ask more from us. You will learn from us and we will learn from you.'

Over the past year Point Park's academic offerings continued to expand, providing new opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students alike, both on campus and online. For example, in fall 2015 we welcomed a new group of doctoral students into our region's first interdisciplinary Ph.D. in community engagement. Also newly launched during the current academic year is a fully online M.S. in health care administration and management, among many online degrees in

such areas as business, education, and intelligence and national security. You can visit online. PointPark.edu to learn more.

As 2015 drew to a close, we were very happy to share yet another exciting announcement about the latest University project that will help reshape the Academic Village. The new Center for Media Innovation, to be located at the corner of Wood Street and Third Avenue in the very heart of campus, will be an extraordinary academic laboratory in which students in Point Park's communications programs will learn their craft by collaborating with media professionals and working with the latest technology. Like our plans for the new Pittsburgh Playhouse, which will be situated nearby on Forbes Avenue near Market Square, this new facility will enable our students' creative process to be an integral part of the Downtown experience. You can learn all about the Center for Media Innovation on page 14.

As 2016 unfolds, we look forward to sharing more exciting news about pioneering academic programs and ground-breaking ventures. Please stay tuned, and stay in touch.

Warm regards,

Dr. Paul Hennigan
President



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ON THE COVER:
An illustration of the planned Center for Media Innovation to be situated at the corner of Wood Street and Third Avenue in the heart of Point Park's Downtown campus. Rendering courtesy of Pittsburgh-based GBBN Architects.

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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.

IN MEMORIAM



Remembering Joanne Blum

Joanne Lee Blum, the founder of Point Park College's Education Department, passed away on Oct. 10, at the age of 83, in Cary, N.C.

Blum was the wife of **Arthur Blum**, president of Point Park College from 1967-1973, and the daughter of the college's founder, **Dr. Dorothy C. Finkelhor**. Arthur and Joanne Blum were married in 1959. Born Aug. 30, 1932, in Pittsburgh, Blum earned a bachelor's degree from Brandeis University in 1953 and a master's degree from Harvard University in 1954.

She began her career as a teacher in California before being named assistant director of the World Affairs Council Pittsburgh in 1955. She rose to associate director in 1957. In 1962, she came to

Point Park College and founded the Education Department. She acted as chairman of that department until 1969, and stayed at the school until 1973.

Blum was the longtime director of development for Project SEED, a nonprofit organization based in Berkeley, Calif., that uses mathematics to increase the educational options of low-achieving, at-risk students in school districts across the nation.

She is survived by Arthur Blum, her loving husband of 56 years; her three daughters and their husbands, Sherry Blum and Don Becker, Laurie and Justin Glodowski, and Katie and Jon Berryhill; and seven grandchildren, Gregory and Natalie Becker, Cherise, Lisette, and Jillienne Glodowski, and Brian and Deanna Berryhill.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Professional Advancement

Elaine Luther, D.Sc., professor of business management, received IABC/Pittsburgh's 2015 Business Communicator of the Year Award. The Business Communicator of the Year Award was created in 2004 by the Pittsburgh Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators to recognize an individual for outstanding contributions in practicing, promoting and enhancing professional business communications in southwest Pennsylvania. According to Mark Toth, president of IABC/Pittsburgh, the judging committee was impressed with Luther's "commitment to educating future communicators and her willingness to share her expertise and insights on business trends in articles and on TV, making them accessible and relevant to a wider audience." Luther is often featured on Pittsburgh TV newscasts, providing insights on a wide range of business topics from retail trends, new products and holiday shopping expectations to mergers and acquisitions and their impact on shoppers.

Paige Beal, M.B.A., assistant professor of sports, arts and entertainment management, was a panelist at the Marketing Management Association's 2015 Fall Educators Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The discussion was titled "Growing the Sales Program at Your University." As one of the panelists, Beal discussed the importance of rebranding sales as business development to enhance an organization's reputation. Beal is building a new SAEM course at Point Park related to this topic called Personal Branding and Business Development. "The course will focus on the importance of organizations building strong, positive digital presences as well as media and sponsorship business development," said Beal.

Thomas Cook, M.B.A., part-time instructor for the public administration program and assistant chief of Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire, received the 2015 Firefighter Hero Award at the American Red Cross of Southwestern Pennsylvania's Heroes Breakfast Sept. 24. The event aims to raise public awareness of local heroes and volunteers who carry out the mission of the Red Cross every day by making a personal commitment to creating safer communities and providing help when disaster strikes. Cook was honored for his role in rescuing three people from a house fire in Pittsburgh this past spring. Cook teaches courses in Personnel Management in Fire and Emergency Services and Political and Legal Foundations in Emergency Services at Point Park.

Camille Downing, instructor in the School of Communication, led a group of public relations and advertising students to the PRSSA 2015 National Conference in Atlanta, Ga. last November. Downing and the students networked with industry professionals during development sessions and presentations. They also learned about PR case studies and strategies, and visited the Georgia Aquarium and World of Coca-Cola. Participants said they gained many benefits. For example, "I learned about the comeback of Carnival Cruise Line, which was exciting. The presentation detailed how much went into their comeback and the crises the company suffered. After the presentation, I introduced myself to the chief communications officer to talk about my career goals," said **Kariann Mano**, senior PR and advertising major. "I attended a session led by communications professionals from the Atlanta Hawks; this was very beneficial because I would consider a career in sports," commented **Dana Fitzgerald**, also a senior PR and advertising major.

Brendan Mullan, Ph.D., assistant professor of physics, presented "Everything in the Universe Is Terrible: Here's Why That's Awesome," at the Allegheny Observatory on Oct. 16. Mullan gave an astronomy-focused public lecture about the universe's bitter shortcomings and how they are paradoxically its greatest strengths. He also discussed why the most disappointing realities of the cosmos are actually crucial to people's existence. Named a National Geographic Emerging Explorer in 2013, Mullan is an internationally respected astrophysicist, science communicator and education program developer and director. Mullan is widely recognized for his distinctive enthusiasm, sense of humor and passion for creative science communication. He has broad experience in teaching and outreach for audiences of all ages and interests, combined with the unique perspective of a trained professional scientist and educational program manager.

Ed Traversari and **David Rowell**, both professors in the Sports, Arts and Entertainment Management (SAEM) program, made it possible for students to assist backstage and attend the live *WWE Monday Night Raw* show Nov. 30 at CONSOL Energy Center in Downtown Pittsburgh and within walking distance of Point Park's campus. CONSOL is also home of the Pittsburgh Penguins. Through Traversari's connections with management staff at CONSOL, he was able to secure several spots for students to work backstage as production runners and assistants. In addition to the SAEM majors who worked at the event, several students from Rowell's Intro to SAEM and Marketing and PR for SAEM classes were invited to attend the live show. "It's great when our SAEM students gain real hands-on experience at a CONSOL Energy Center event. It really helps bring

Blaine knew in middle school that he wanted to become a broadcaster, and set out to gain the qualities and skills needed to succeed in his chosen profession at Point Park University:

"On my first day here, I realized that the next four years are the beginning of something I want to do for the rest of my life. There will be many obstacles toward my goals and dream to be a national sportscaster. I'm taking those steps and facing those obstacles, and this scholarship helps me to defeat one of those and lets me continue my journey."

BLAINE KING

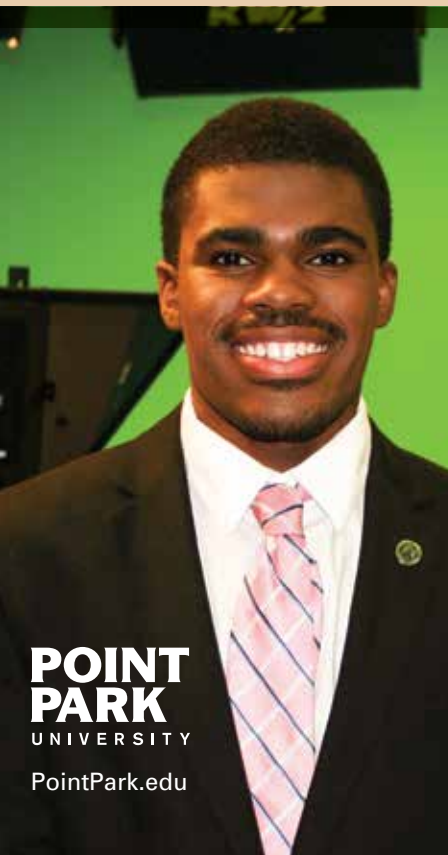
Broadcast Reporting Major,
Class of 2017

President,
United Student Government
On-Air Personality, U-View TV
Recipient, Margy Snyder
Memorial Scholarship

Help a student continue the journey. Create a scholarship through a bequest, such as the Margy Snyder Memorial Scholarship, or through an outright gift. Contact:

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to life what we teach in the classroom in our live entertainment classes about being production runners and assistants backstage,” explained Traversari.

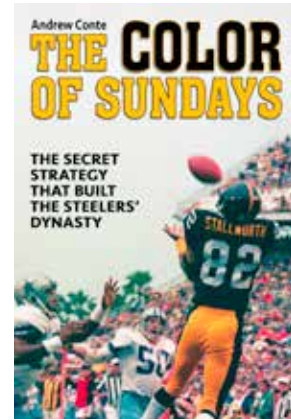
Archish Maharaja, Ed.D., and **Gita Maharaja**, Ed.D., both faculty members in the School of Business, presented their research Oct. 22 and 23 at the 38th annual meeting of the Northeastern Association of Business, Economics and Technology in State College, Pa. A. Maharaja and **M.H. Sidky**, Ph.D., discussed research on “South Pacific Blues:

Challenges and Opportunities Facing Small Island States in the South Pacific.” In addition, A. Maharaja and G. Maharaja presented their research on the topic, “Ethical Conundrums in Health Care: Access to Care and Right to Know the Cost.” Point Park’s presentations were sponsored by James M. Haley, Ph.D., professor and H.J. Heinz Endowed Chair of Management. NABET’s annual meeting provides an opportunity for scholars to present their research and discuss a variety of current issues in business, economics and information technology.



Socializing with Joe

For three Point Park soccer players, positioning and patience paid off when they got a chance to meet – and get a photo with – U.S. Vice President **Joe Biden** at the annual Labor Day parade in Downtown Pittsburgh. The photo, posted on the @PointParksports Instagram and Twitter pages, shows players **Audra Lewis**, **Justina Cincotti** and **Anna Goforth**, posing with Biden just across from the George Rowland White Performance Center. Upon returning from practice at Highmark Stadium, the students saw the parade making its way down the Boulevard of the Allies and they quickly snared a spot on the route outside Point Park’s Boulevard Apartments. When the vice president’s motorcade approached, and Biden headed toward them, noticed their Point Park soccer shirts and asked about the team. “He shook all of our hands. He was really nice,” Goforth said. “We asked ‘Can we get a picture,’ and he said ‘Of course!’”



Andrew Conte, part-time faculty member, director of the Point Park News Service, and investigative reporter for the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, is the author of the recently published *The Color of Sundays*. The book traces The Pittsburgh Steelers’ success, which started with finding players no one else could see. Bill Nunn Jr. – a pioneering black athlete, journalist and football scout – forever changed the team’s fortunes and the game of football. For more information about the book, visit: www.TheColorofSundays.com.

Lisa Stefanko has joined Point Park as the new vice president of human resources. Most recently, Stefanko was the vice president for human resources at Bolttech Mannings, Inc. where she was responsible for defining and measuring HR metrics and strategies, developing and implementing HR policies, change leadership, and business partnership. She has her M.B.A. from Auburn University.

Accounting student teams from Associate Professor **Margaret Gilfillan’s** auditing class finished second and third at the Pittsburgh Institute of Internal Auditors/ Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants Case Study Competition Nov. 5 at the Pittsburgh office of Maher Duessel. A total of 18 cases were submitted to the competition by student groups from Point Park, Duquesne University, Robert Morris University and the University of Pittsburgh. “This is the third year in a row that our accounting students

have earned top places in this important audit case study competition,” remarked Gilfillan. Point Park’s second place team, The Dollar Draft Knights, was made up of accounting students **Lauren Berner**, **Marcy King**, **Jonathan Robbins**, **Perry Ninness** and **Abby Wohlfarth**. Coming in third place was the Point Park team, The Examiners, which included **Cassandra Criswell**, **Julia Grubbs**, **Dan Lienemann**, **Courtney Mager** and **Tiffany Wink**.

Welcome New Faculty

Point Park University welcomed 18 new faculty members for the 2015-16 academic year. They are:

School of Business: **Paige Beal**, M.B.A., assistant professor (Sports, Arts and Entertainment Management); **Joseph DeFazio**, Ph.D., instructor, business; **Patrick Mulvihill**, Ph.D., visiting assistant professor, business; and **Ishwari Subedi**, MAcc, M.Com, instructor (accounting).

Conservatory of Performing Arts: **Jennifer Edwards**, M.F.A., visiting artist, dance; **Jim Cooney**, visiting artist, dance; **Jason McDole**, assistant professor, dance; **Elise D’Haene**, Ph.D., visiting artist, cinema arts; and **Matt Pelfrey**, M.F.A., assistant professor, cinema arts; **Sam Munoz**, M.F.A., assistant professor, theatre; and **Kimberly Steinhauer**, Ph.D., visiting associate professor, theatre.

School of Arts and Sciences: **Richard A. Linzer**, J.D., visiting associate professor and interim director, criminal justice administration program; **Tricia Stewart**, Ph.D., associate professor, education, and director, Ed.D. in leadership and administration program; **Matt Vogel**, Ph.D., assistant professor, special education; **Jessica McCort**, Ph.D., assistant professor, literary arts; **Benjamin Carlucci**, M.S.,



Celina Pompeani Wins Emmy

Less than two years after graduating from Point Park, alumna **Celina Pompeani** (COM ’13) is an Emmy Award-winning host of *Pens Trends*, an online show that highlights what’s trending with the Pittsburgh Penguins on social media. Pompeani, who earned a B.A. in broadcast reporting in 2013, won a Mid-Atlantic Emmy Award in the Interactivity category at the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences awards ceremony, Sept. 19, in Philadelphia, Pa. At 23, she is one of the youngest in the Mid-Atlantic Chapter awarded an Emmy. “Receiving an Emmy at such a young age, so early on in my career, is unreal,” said Pompeani. “My Point Park education contributed to my success so much. I had top-of-the-line, hands-on professors who taught classes that catered exactly to my major. Plus, Point Park has incredible facilities and equipment for students to use.” In addition to hosting *Pens Trends*, Pompeani reports on the Penguins, is the in-game arena host at all home games, produces weekly foundation promos and much more.

lab instructor, natural sciences and engineering technology; **Brendan Mullan**, Ph.D., assistant professor, physics, natural sciences and engineering technology; and **Aram Parsa**, Ph.D., assistant professor, mechanical engineering technology.

Ethical Leadership

Stephanie Mueller, an M.B.A. student at Point Park, won the Meeting the Challenge of Ethical Leadership Essay Writers Forum on Nov. 13 with her presentation on Rosalind Brewer, president and CEO of Sam’s Club and the first woman and first African-American to lead a Walmart division. Mueller received a \$500 prize for her essay “Ethical Leadership: Rosalind Brewer.” New to the event this year,

students in the Organizational Behavior and Ethical Leadership and Sustainable Organizations graduate classes were asked to write essays addressing the question, “What values and best practices make a leader ethical and effective?” while highlighting a leader they admire and respect. Sponsored by **James M. Haley**, Ph.D., professor and H.J. Heinz Endowed Chair of Management, this year’s ethical leadership event also featured presentations from finalists: Jason Kirby, D.O.: “Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, M.D., D.O., Founder of Osteopathic Medicine”; Megan Kuntz, “Ethical Leadership and Angelina Jolie”; and Mark E. Murray: “The Hybrid Design: Delivering an Ethical Sustainable Learning Organization and General James Doolittle.” “I enjoyed hav-

ing the opportunity at the event to further explain my point of view," remarked Kuntz, who is concentrating her M.B.A. degree in international business. Essays were judged by event co-facilitators and panelists **Tim McGuire**, Ph.D. Point Park University trustee and senior executive vice president, chief analytics officer and vice chairman of Management Science Associates, Inc. and **Robin Connolly**, Ed.D. Point Park trustee, chair of Point Park's Academic and Student Affairs committee and senior vice president of human resources for PNC Financial Ser-

vices. Following the student presentations, McGuire and Connolly led a discussion on ethical leadership.

Part-time Faculty Contract

Last November, part-time faculty at Point Park ratified their first contract since voting to unionize in 2014. A month earlier, in October, the University joined the United Steelworkers (USW) in jointly announcing they had reached tentative agreement on a first contract for more than 300 part-time instructors after nearly 10 months

of negotiations that began in December 2014. The USW and Point Park worked diligently and creatively in an effort to address each party's interests, and the resulting agreement is a reflection of that. The agreement provides significant wage increases and improved job security for part-time instructors through its Aug. 1, 2019, expiration. USW International President **Leo W. Gerard** congratulated negotiators for the union's Adjunct Faculty Association and Point Park on reaching a fair contract and said the union looks forward to working with University administration to face the challenges ahead. "We are gratified to have addressed many important issues through the collective bargaining process," Gerard said. "In so doing, we have built a more secure future for the instructors, their students and the university as a whole." President **Paul Hennigan** said the agreement is a symbol of the important role part-time instructors play at the University. "Point Park University maintains great respect for its part-time faculty and fully appreciates their strong commitment to academic excellence," he said.

New Test Optional Admission

Point Park has joined more than 800 four-year colleges and universities by adopting a test optional admission policy for bachelor degree applicants. The test optional admission choice is for students who do not believe their standardized test scores are indicative of their true potential and accomplishments. Instead, they would be evaluated by their college preparatory curriculum, extracurricular accomplishments and leadership performance. **Gary Bracken**, vice president of Enrollment Management at Point Park, notes that national research and empirical evidence indicate standardized tests



Veterans Day 2015

When Point Park Trustee and Marine veteran **Jake Wheatley** was 17 years old, he had no idea what he wanted to do with his life. Watching television one day, he saw an ad for the U.S. Marine Corps and called the 1-800 number. By the end of the day, he had visited the Marines recruiting office, taken the entrance test, and chosen his occupation — communication specialist. Now a Pennsylvania state legislator representing the 19th District, Wheatley served 3½ years in the U.S. Marine Corps, becoming a decorated combat veteran of Operation Desert Storm in Iraq. Wheatley recounted his military experience at the University's second annual Veterans Day observance, held Nov. 11 in the University's Village Park. Wheatley's district

includes Downtown Pittsburgh, and he also serves on Point Park's Board of Trustees. The University currently has about 150 veterans and military personnel enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs, with many making use of veterans benefits. At the ceremony, an R.O.T.C. color guard presented the American flag and musical theatre student **Paul Hambidge** sang The Star-Spangled Banner. Wheatley began by asking all veterans present to stand. Following Wheatley's remarks, about 20 veterans in attendance — including Point Park students, faculty and staff — stepped forward to receive red, white and blue lapel ribbons. Wheatley and President Paul Hennigan then placed a wreath of red, white and blue flowers in the Village Park.



New Artist for Pioneer Records

John Kono Rushlander, a military veteran and student in the Sports, Arts and Entertainment Management program, is the second musician to be selected for Point Park's record label, Pioneer Records, which is housed at Red Caiman Studios in Pittsburgh. According to SAEM Associate Professor **Ed Traversari**, Rushlander was chosen among numerous submissions by a team of judges including music industry professionals and Point Park faculty and staff. "The recording process is new to me and really awesome," said Rushlander, who has a blues-rooted musical style. "I'm looking forward to performing in local venues and hopefully meeting new friends and developing more music industry connections. My goals are to continue progressing as a guitar player and hopefully reach a larger audience with my craft. Picking up the guitar was the best decision I have ever made." See and hear Rushlander play at <https://vimeo.com/147369808>.

are not always a reliable predictor of academic success at the college level. "The adoption of the test optional policy in no way diminishes the careful attention paid in evaluating a student's credentials in the admission review process," Bracken said. "In fact, this holistic review requires an even more thorough evaluation of a student's performance in all areas of high school and community contributions." To be eligible, students must hold a 3.0 GPA in core academic courses, demonstrate acceptable writing

skills, and show evidence of participation and leadership in school and community activities and organizations. Home-schooled and international students are not eligible for test optional admission. The policy was implemented immediately, including the evaluation of applications for full-time, first-year students who will enroll in the fall of 2016. For more information, visit: PointPark.edu/Admissions/Undergraduate/FullTimeUndergraduate/Requirements/Freshmen/TestOptionalAdmission.

M.B.A. Tuition Discount

Point Park is pleased to offer students, alumni and employees of participating companies a 25 percent tuition discount for the following School of Business M.B.A. programs: M.B.A. (with five concentration options); M.B.A. in global management and administration; and M.A. in media communication/M.B.A. Current Point Park students (new and returning) and alumni, as well as employees or members of companies

and organizations that have established agreements with the University, are eligible for this 25 percent discount (tuition only, does not include fees. If a student receives this discount, no other institutional aid will apply.) For a complete list of participating employers and organizations, visit PointPark.edu/MBAdiscount. Not yet a tuition partner? Point Park welcomes inquiries from companies, organizations or their employees about tuition partnership programs. To learn more, contact Steve Tanzilli at stanzilli@pointpark.edu.

Serving Operation Safety Net

Expanding upon their annual blanket and coat drive, the Confluence Psychology Alliance student group at Point Park held a donation kick-off party Nov. 17 to collect coats, blankets, hats, gloves, socks, hygiene products and more for



Dancing for Children's

Six weeks into their first semester at Point Park, 60 freshman dance majors had the unique opportunity to perform at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation's 125th Anniversary Celebration Gala Oct. 2 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. "The 125th Anniversary Gala marked a tremendous milestone for Children's Hospital," said **Kiesha Lalama**, associate professor of dance, who choreographed the performance with assistant **Jason McDole**, assistant professor of dance. "To be invited to choreograph a thematic concept celebrating this milestone was an honor." Photo courtesy of Annie O'Neill Photography.



Ally Stacy
Sports, Arts and Entertainment
Management Major
Class of 2018

Shaniece Lawrence
Biological Sciences Major
Class of 2018

"Point Park means a lot to people and they want to support it. As callers, we get to see how all the contributions add up and make an impact. It is amazing how far we have already come!"

Ally and Shaniece, students and Annual Fund phonathon callers, love to connect with alumni, families and friends. They hope to share their enthusiasm and inspire YOU to join the Annual Fund team this year – every gift, no matter the size, helps to make the University stronger and our community more vibrant.

MAKE YOUR GIFT TO THE ANNUAL FUND: PointPark.edu/Give



People OF POINT PARK

#PeopleofPointPark

Operation Safety Net. OSN is a nonprofit organization that provides hundreds of men and women living on the streets of Pittsburgh with access to health care and other services through drop-in centers, soup kitchens and medical vans. At the kick-off event, students decorated donation boxes and made 100 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for OSN to distribute to those in need. During these activities, attendees listened to graduate students **Alexandria Bright**, **Calla Kainaroi** and **Jeremy Northup** from the M.A. in clinical-community psychology program discuss their work with OSN and the reality of homelessness in Pittsburgh. "Our graduate students are remarkable as they have synthesized theoretical knowledge with regard to community, ethical engagement and hands-on activism," said **Robert McInerney**, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology and Confluence's faculty advisor. For more information about donating, contact rmcinerney@pointpark.edu.

Upcoming: Broadway Bound

Save the Date! On April 21, Point Park will hold its annual Broadway Bound event that raises funds to support students attending the NYC Showcase. The event will feature a wine and appetizer reception and the exclusive premiere performance of Point Park's talented conservatory students. Later in the Spring, conservatory students will travel to the New York City Showcase in May to audition before key industry professionals. Nearly 150 students have participated in Broadway Bound, since its inception in 2006, as a result of the generous support of past donors and patrons. To learn more about this sell-out event, please contact development@pointpark.edu.



Point Park is a Top 25 Safe Campus

Safe Campus, the National Campus Safety Summit, has announced that the Point Park University Public Safety Department has been named to the Safe Campus 2016 Top 25 List. The department was recognized for its accomplishments in improving University campus safety this past year. This year's Top 25 List was chosen out of 4,706 eligible college or university administrative departments in the U.S. Each administrative department was nominated based on its efforts and improvements in campus safety for the student body in that school. The latest effort undertaken by Point Park Public Safety is the filming of an active shooter training video modeled after the ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter & Evacuate) program. Its officers are involved in a number of community organizations. Chief **Jeffrey Besong** was honored with a YWCA Racial Justice award, Lt. **Nicholas Black** is one of Pittsburgh Magazine's 2015 40 Under 40 honorees, and Sgt. **Matthew May** recently won an Honorable Mention for the Amen Corner Senator John Heinz Law Enforcement Awards. "Making the Safe Campus 2016 list is a gratifying recognition of the hard work done by our officers and staff," Besong said.

Voices of Pittsburgh Sports

Veteran Pittsburgh broadcasters brought their sports industry expertise to the Center for Sports Media and Marketing's Voices of Pittsburgh Sports event Nov. 19 on Point Park's campus. School of Communication and School of Business students had the opportunity to hear about real-world experiences from three play-by-play announcers: **Bill Hillgrove**, Pittsburgh Steelers and University of Pittsburgh Sports Network; **Greg Brown** (former Point Park student), Pittsburgh Pirates; and **Paul Steigerwald**, Pittsburgh Penguins. Telling stories from their

careers, the broadcasters covered a variety of topics ranging from how they landed their first job and how play-by-play differs from other forms of broadcasting to what a typical day is like and much more. "Play-by-play announcing is instant. You have to be prepared, but it's still ad lib and of the moment," said Hillgrove. "I always look at a game as getting on a magic carpet; it takes you for a ride." According to attendees such as M.B.A. student **Kelsey Veydt**, "It was great to see students so engaged. This was a very unique opportunity to hear from all three voices so familiar to me."



Photo of George and Kathleen White by Tom Bell.

Honoring the Philanthropy of George and Kathleen White

George and Kathleen White received a special posthumous award, honoring the late couple's transformational bequest of \$15 million to Point Park, from the western Pennsylvania chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) on Nov. 12. The award, presented in conjunction with the 2015 National Philanthropy Day celebration, recognized the couple's many contributions as philanthropists in the Pittsburgh region. President Paul Hennigan said, "Their passion for the arts, and their understanding of the importance of a well-rounded liberal arts education set in a vibrant Downtown, has allowed the University to expand programs and campus enhancements that are significant and meaningful, not just to our students and academic community, but to the Pittsburgh region as well." The Whites' bequest is dispersed among several initiatives at the University, including the Pittsburgh Playhouse construction fund and enhancements to the University's School of Business, including continued funding of the George Rowland White Endowed Professor of Accounting and Finance and support of the Urban Accounting Initiative.



Nicholas Black

40 Under 40

Point Park was well-represented in Pittsburgh Magazine's 2015 celebration of 40 Under 40, recognizing the accomplishments of young professionals in the region. Honorees included **Nicholas Black**, a lieutenant with Point Park's campus police. The magazine noted that "Black often is the face parents meet at student orientation and the face their kids see when someone needs help. [He] reaches out to students with drug and alcohol classes, CPR and first-aid training, and he teaches the vital "Refuse to Be a Victim" crime-prevention course at the downtown campus. His community work includes volunteering with the local YWCA, the New Kensington Hill Neighborhood Watch Group, Special Olympics and the Salvation Army. He's also Point Park's liaison with Pittsburgh Action Against Rape." Alumna **Olivia Benson** (BUS '08) was recognized for her work as program manager for The Efficiency Network, which coordinates energy-saving projects with companies and government entities. She was press secretary for Dan Onorato's campaign for governor, worked in the press office of former U.S. Rep. Jason Altmire and was communications director for Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald's



Olivia Benson

campaign in 2011. Another alumna, **Princess Rose Hughes** (A&S '09, BUS '10) was honored for her work as a parent organizer for the Hill District Education Council. The magazine noted, "More than half of the students at Pittsburgh Weil PreK-5 school come from disadvantaged homes. One advantage they can claim is the person they call "Miss Princess," a young woman who overcame her own hardships to earn a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and master's degree from Point Park University.... Hughes helps parents to engage with the school community while promoting positive self-image and conflict resolution strategies among various groups." Student **Michelyn Hood Tinor**, who is pursuing a master's degree in media communication at Point Park, was honored for her work as a representative with Pfizer, the host of Mount TV, and founder and CEO of The Pittsburgh Spot, "a website that features short profiles of everyone from wedding coordinators to ice-cream entrepreneurs. The spots draw more than 7,000 discrete viewers at pghspot.com." Former student **Kevin L. Carter**, CEO of the Adonai Center, Inc. was recognized as a "...standout at Point Park University, he worked as a community relations officer for state Rep. Jake Wheatley and later founded the Adonai Center, Inc. [which] guides young African-American men at five different sites. As Adonai Fellows, the young men are taught to be leaders, staying clear of the violence and dysfunction Carter witnessed growing up in the 1990s." Read Pittsburgh Magazine's salute to the 2015 40 Under 40 at: bit.ly/1QwFcdV.



Signs of the Times

It's now easier to navigate around campus, and stay up to date on Point Park announcements and events, thanks to the University's new digital signage program. The interactive displays, found in the lobbies of the Student Center, West Penn Hall, the University Center, Lawrence Hall and Academic Hall, were created in response to "overwhelming requests from faculty, staff, and students," according to Vice President of Operations Christopher Hill. The digital displays help inform the campus community and visitors about programs, meetings, activities, way finding, weather information,

news, television feeds, current events, campus facts and urgent messages. Every screen is connected to Point Park's emergency notification system. In an emergency situation, important information will automatically be displayed on applicable screens. "The displays will help us reach our goals of improving communication, increasing attendance at events and informing the campus community of University news," says Hill. "At the same time, they support the University's mission of teaching, community outreach, and service." Photo by John Altdorfer.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Transforming lives through new scholarship funds



GIFTS AT WORK

“

This scholarship could not have come at a better time ... I cannot express enough how thankful I am. Your act of kindness has made an incredible difference in my life.

— ShaRhonda Ensley
senior business major
**Thomas W. Golonski Family
Scholarship recipient**

”



50+ Endowed Scholarships = Benefits for 1000+ Students

Point Park hosted an annual Scholarship Awards event last October, which provided scholarship recipients with the opportunity to meet their donors in person. Throughout the years, more than 1,000 students have benefited from more than 50 endowed scholarships.

The Development and Alumni Relations team works to fund the mission of Point Park University by building a culture of philanthropy throughout the University community,” says Sharon Navoney, vice president of development and alumni relations. “Our goal is to help our students succeed.”

At Point Park’s annual scholarship brunch last fall, “one of our students expressed her deep gratitude to the gathering of donors and scholarship recipients,” recalls Navoney. She said, “Without your generosity, people like me could not even imagine attending college. You give us the opportunity to receive something that is so worthwhile, valuable and everlasting ... and that is an education.”

Philanthropic Impact

This successful student is just one of more than 93 percent of Point Park students who receive some form of financial aid, says Navoney. “Without this assistance, a Point Park education would not be possible for many deserving students. This is why philanthropic gifts are so important.

“Scholarships and other forms of aid help spare our students from excessive and debilitating debt, and enable us to keep the University affordable without sacrificing high quality academic programs and instruction,” adds Navoney. “Our Development and Alumni Relations team is excited to share some of the great work happening to help offset these expenses through the University’s generous contributors.”

Scholarships Honor Ron Tassone and Deloitte LLP

For example, two new scholarships recently joined more than 50 established endowed scholarship funds that award more than \$200,000 to Point Park students each year.

The Ron Tassone Memorial Scholarship Fund was established last spring in honor of the late professor who mentored generations of Point Park dance students. A gift from his estate, combined with contributions from the Point Park community, has already raised nearly \$55,000 toward the endowed scholarship fund, which will provide support to a deserving dance major each year.

Likewise, community partner Deloitte LLP recently established the Deloitte Academic Enhancement Fund, providing scholarship support for Point Park students with more than \$77,000 raised through staff contributions and through the company’s generous match. Beginning in 2015, the scholarship fund provides support for two deserving accounting students each year.

“Our students rely on gifts like these to keep tuition rates manageable,” says Navoney. “Because we want meaningful philanthropic opportunities, like supporting scholarships, to be accessible to our community, I am excited to share that we have created two levels of giving to establish scholarships.

New Giving Opportunities

According to Navoney, donors now can establish a new endowed scholarship fund at the \$10,000 level, payable over (a maximum) of three years. One-time expendable scholarships can also be established for \$2,000, payable within a fiscal year. “Many of our already established funds, such as the newly endowed Alumni Association Scholarship Fund, are also available for gifts of any amount, which personally connects our students and donors.

Below: Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations Sharon Navoney listens to student and donor stories at the 2015 Scholarship Awards event on campus.



“In the future, I look forward to announcing more exciting news about how the Development and Alumni Relations team works to support Point Park’s mission – our students,” says Navoney, who encourages alumni and other members of the Point Park community to reach out and share their own stories.

“Please don’t hesitate to contact me directly at 412-392-4205, or snavoney@pointpark.edu, for a personal chat on the phone, or over coffee,” says Navoney. “I want to hear your own story, and share the successful stories of Point Park students.”



A Center for Media Innovation

New incubator and collaborative space is latest University project to help reshape Downtown

Above: Media and government leaders gathered with members of the Point Park community at an Oct. 21 press conference in the space to be transformed into the New Center for Media Innovation. Photos by John Altdorfer.

When Point Park envisioned the future for its widely respected School of Communication, one of its foremost considerations was to create a state-of-the-art learning center where students could merge their energy, talent and ambition into a central location.

On Oct. 21, the University revealed the result of that academic vision, the Center for Media Innovation which, when completed later this year, will give students the opportunity to work with the latest technology. The 4,000-square-foot center, designed by Pittsburgh-based GBBN Architects, will 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. "We are pleased to announce the Point Park University Center for Media Innovation, an academic laboratory and incubator, where faculty and students, along with professionals working on the cutting edge of new media, will collaborate to teach and learn and be a leader in media innovation," said University President Paul Hennigan at a press conference.

Open View

Located at Wood Street and Third Avenue, in a now vacant storefront, 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.

"The media industry has evolved from individual labels such as print and television into a massive multimedia effort that requires knowledge and expertise in all disciplines," President Paul Hennigan said. "This is an innovative incubator and collaborative space that brings together a cohesive, interactive strategy to education, while simultaneously engaging a Downtown audience. The Center will act as a critical educational complement to Point Park's Academic Village Initiative, the multiblock living and learning hub that has led to a transformation in the heart of Downtown Pittsburgh."

Inside the Center

Key areas will include:

- Television and radio broadcast studios. The TV studio will include a green screen, industry-specific lighting, and high-definition cameras. A radio broadcast booth will share a common control room. Both broadcast areas will be self-contained modules with glass walls for a "fishbowl" studio experience.
- Photo studio. The studio will feature high ceilings and light control for the best possible shooting environment.
- Multimedia newsroom. Reporting and multimedia storytelling, along with graphics production, social media, and website and page layout can be conducted through multiple courses in this high-tech smart classroom.
- Transformational presentation and gallery space. The center will open into an event space for networking and educational sessions with newsmakers and industry leaders. The same area also can be used as a photo gallery.

Industry Partner

Trib Total Media will be an active participant in the education and development of students in each of the key areas, another example of Point Park's commitment to providing an education rooted in real world experiences.

Richard M. Scaife, the late owner of Trib Total Media, was firmly committed to journalism and its essential role in American life, according to Matt Groll, chairman of the Allegheny Foundation. "Dick always said he wanted to find ways to help build journalism, not just through the Trib and his other papers, but through the education of future journalists," said Groll, who succeeded Scaife as head of the foundation in 2014. "This partnership is a perfect opportunity for us to do that with one of his two foundations. It is especially exciting because Point Park's program is here in Pittsburgh."



Renderings courtesy of GBBN Architects.



TEACHING/PRODUCTION MODE



PUBLIC EVENT MODE

Also featured in the Center will be café-style work stations for editing, reporting and design situated throughout the facility and open to students for class projects, the Point Park News Service, Wood Street Communications, and student publications such as The Globe, the weekly student-run newspaper, and The Pioneer, a classroom-based digital magazine.

Focus on Experience

“Point Park prides itself on offering a real-world, career-focused educational experience,” Hennigan said. “The Center for Media Innovation will play a key role in the University’s mission to teach students to be entrepreneurs and to embrace technological change, while adding another vibrant corner to the important Wood Street corridor.”

Alumni Lead the Way

According to Hennigan, “Point Park has a reputation for training world-class professionals in the communications and media industry. We currently have over 2,700 communications alumni living across the country.” For some of alumni, it’s a family affair, he added. “For example, in the Pittsburgh market alone, I can highlight three successful alumni who can trace their start back to Point Park – beloved Pittsburgh sportscaster Bob Pompeani, and Bob’s daughters Chelsea and Celina.” Chelsea, who graduated in 2011 with a degree in broadcast journalism and communications, is currently the director of public affairs and spokesperson for AAA East Central, located in Pittsburgh, after previously working as a TV news reporter

and anchor at Channel 8 in Rochester, N.Y. and at WJET/FOX 66 in Erie, Pa. Celina, who graduated in December 2013 with a B.A. in Broadcast Reporting, won a Mid-Atlantic Emmy Award in the Interactivity category in September of this year, at 23 years old, for her role in hosting *Pens Trends*, an online show that high-lights what’s trending with the Pittsburgh Penguins on social media. (See page 5 for more information on Celina’s accomplishments.)

A 24/7 Hub

“It is important for us to continue to offer the most cutting-edge tools and meet the demands of unprecedented and constant change within the media industry to keep our students on

track for success,” said Hennigan. “The new Center for Media Innovation will be an energetic, 24/7 hub that stimulates inter-university scholarly and programmatic partnerships.

“The Center will be an intersection for professional leaders and students to collaborate in the educational process, for educators to provide their students with experiential opportunities that will prepare the next generation of journalistic innovators to meet the challenges of global media issues.”



As a boy growing up in Three Bridges, N.J., Matthew Opdyke, Ph.D. waded into the local river every spare moment, digging through the sediment and turning over rocks to find clams, snails and insects. He loved the thrill of discovering what other people didn't see.

Three decades and many scientific papers later, Opdyke, associate professor of environmental studies at Point Park, still feels that boyhood wonder of exploring nature and passes that exhilaration onto students who accompany him into the woods and streams.

His frequent field trips have made him a favorite of students such as Michael Bowen (A&S '15), who earned his degree in education last May. "He did a great job of bringing the field work into the classroom, which is what science is all about." Opdyke's hands-on teaching style goes beyond field trips. He has landed external grants so students can conduct their own research and help him do studies about aquatic ecology, wetlands restoration and lichens as an indicator of air quality.

In the Field

Last summer, Opdyke and biology students in the environmental science concentration donned waders and stepped into Lowry's Run stream near McCandless to collect insects and study the diversity, which was limited because of the effects of development. Matthew Love (A&S '15) came up with the research project and was grateful for Opdyke's help. "He is patient and willing to work with students to achieve their goals," said Love, who recently completed his degree in biology. "He was willing to take time out of his summer to help me complete an independent study for my degree."

In 2014, student Joshua Daugherty and Opdyke conducted a lichen diversity survey at Pymatuning Laboratory of Ecology. Lichens, formed from a symbiotic relationship between algae and fungi, are sometimes found on trees and concrete. They are sensitive to air pollution. "If you see a lot of lichens, it is a good sign for air quality," Opdyke said. Their findings will be published in *Evansia* journal next year.

A River Runs Through It

Environmental Science Professor Matt Opdyke leads exploration of air and water quality through student research

By Cristina Rouvalis



Opposite, top: Professor Matt Opdyke, Ph.D. (left) and student Matthew Love studied biodiversity in Lowry's Run stream in McCandless, Pa. last spring. All photos by Martha Rial.



Air and Water Quality

Sometimes the field research is an adventure. On a chilly March morning in 2013, Ingrid Reiland (A&S '13) and Opdyke paddled a kayak onto the Allegheny River to reach Sycamore Island, located near Blawnox and owned by the Allegheny Land Trust. Opdyke taught her how to core the trees to determine their age.

"It was a little terrifying," said Reiland, who now works as an ecologist for an environmental consulting firm in Pittsburgh. "I had never used a kayak before. The water was choppy, with barges going past. My arms were exhausted coring trees." But Opdyke raised her spirits. "He is the constant cheerleader. He is constantly giving you pep talks. He always makes it fun."

The two made a poster illustrating how hydrology and climate affect tree growth and showed it during the Association of Environmental Studies and Sciences conference in Pittsburgh in 2013.

Opdyke also was awarded a grant from the Coldwater Heritage Partnership to study the effects of acid rain on Fishing Creek Watershed in central Pennsylvania. Streams with acid rain have fewer insects and fewer trout. "Fishing is a big industry in Pennsylvania."

Lifelong Passion

Opdyke honed his research skills earning his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, studying how agriculture affects streams. He then pursued a postdoctoral research position at Michigan State University in East Lansing. He has watched some students go on to graduate programs and others land jobs with consulting firms. The fieldwork he encourages can give them the edge in the job market.

Biology graduate Bryan Dolney (A&S '09) said the two-year study he did on lichens under Opdyke's guidance made all the difference in him securing a job as an ecologist at the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. He presented his research at the PA Academy of Science and Ecological Society of America, and the professor and student published an article in the Pennsylvania Academy of Science journal. "Dr. Opdyke is a great mentor," Dolney said.

For Opdyke, there is no better way to spend his days than helping future scientists. "If I could, I would spend every class outdoors doing research with students. You get to know students one-on-one and their passions."



Point Extra
See a video at PointPark.edu/ThePoint.

ALUMNI PROFILE

BLUES BROTHER

Journalism alumnus Ron Esser is Pittsburgh's champion of live music and regional food banks

By Cristina Rouvalis

Ron Esser at his music club, Moondog's, in Blawnox, Pa. Photo by John Altdorfer.

In 1989, when he opened a music club in Blawnox, Pa., Ron "Moondog" Esser would work 16-hour days, and often felt hopeless. Booking national bands and attracting crowds to a former shot-and-beer bar wasn't easy. And the club – called Moondog's for his childhood nickname – drew so many noise complaints that one day a police officer handcuffed Esser and put him in jail for an hour. The struggle took a toll on him. "I spent many nights literally in tears." Whenever he felt like quitting, Esser would blare the song "I Ain't Going Down," the hit of local rocker, Joe Grushecky, on the jukebox.

That never-say-die attitude paid off. Moondog's is a popular club that showcases local musicians such as Grushecky and Norm Nardini. He also brought in national acts such as Joe Bonamassa, Keb' Mo' and The Clarks before they became famous. The club has a devoted following and is a beloved fixture in Blawnox. Esser also runs a diner called Starlite Lounge, whose pierogies were praised in the Food Network show, *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*.

Feeding the Hungry

But Esser is much more than a successful businessman and a champion of live music. He has helped raise more than \$2 million for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank as chairman of the Pittsburgh Blues Festival for the past 21 years. He also has helped launch two music fundraisers for the Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank and the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwestern Pennsylvania. He also lends out his sailboat free of charge to a program that helps at-risk youth in Erie.

In 2005, he won a Keeping the Blues Alive Award, a national honor from the Blues Foundation. He was recently named Volunteer Philanthropist of the Year by the Association of Fundraising Professionals of Western Pennsylvania. "I have been blessed with good people," he said, referring to volunteers at the Blues Festival, his employees and his wife, June.

Life Lessons

Though Esser is famous for promoting blues, he grew up in the Pittsburgh suburb of Aspinwall listening to, and playing, rock 'n' roll. "I am an old '70s rock guy with a potbelly and a bald head," he said with a laugh. The bass guitarist played in a "terrible" high school band. In his office is a framed dollar bill, the first one he earned from his music during a gig playing at the American Legion Hall in Aspinwall.

Once at Point Park, he and his classmates — Phil Harris, Phil Smith, Tony Sanchez and Tim Cox — formed a band named Wood Street. "Ron was very adventurous, very daring. Some people were intimidated by him. But once you got to know him, he had a heart of gold. If he is your friend, he is in forever," said Sanchez, who is indeed still his friend.

Esser, a journalism major, loved Point Park. "It taught me so much about life. You had to work hard to do well. There were great teachers. They really took an interest in what you did. They were like your friends."

Though he wanted to work in radio, Esser took a job after college managing the music club Graffiti in Oakland and would bring in acts ranging from the Red Hot Chili Peppers to Jerry Seinfeld to Sam Kinison.

Natural Talent

He realized his talent was promoting bands — especially ones on the cusp of stardom. To this day, he records late-night TV such as *The Tonight Show* and *Late Night with Seth Meyers* so he can listen to the bands that play at the end of the show. "I am a music stalker," he said.

The 57-year-old volunteers his time for music festivals to raise money for food banks and bring people together. "When I can look out and see 30,000 people forget about their lives and have a smile on their faces, it makes me feel great that I am a part of it"

Though sometimes music is viewed as a young man's game, Esser has stayed at the top of his game. "As long as you love music, you will always be current. I have loved and lived music my entire life."

ALUMNI CONNECTION



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Feb. 9 (San Francisco) Alumni & Student Reception

Feb. 10 (Pittsburgh) Recent Alumni Happy Hour

Feb. 17 (Miami, Fla.) Alumni Reception

Feb. 18 (Orlando, Fla.) Alumni Reception

Feb. 19 (Tampa, Fla.) Alumni Luncheon

March 2 (New York City) Alumni & Student Reception

April 13 (Pittsburgh) Alumni Reception – Welcome Class of 2016

June 4 (Pittsburgh) Alumni Baseball Outing

Visit pointpark.edu/alumni for more information.

Greetings from campus!

I hope each of you had a joyful holiday season with family and friends. As we turn the calendar to 2016, I want to say a brief thank you to so many of you who demonstrated your support for your alma mater in 2015. Your collective support has a tremendous impact on the University community and on the success of our students.

I am sure many alumni have embraced the tradition of making a New Year's resolution. Perhaps your resolution is to visit the gym more frequently, spend more time with family, or volunteer with a worthy organization. I would ask each of you to add one additional resolution to your list – to stay engaged with your alma mater.

There are easy ways to accomplish this resolution. Attend an event – above is a partial list of the events happening this spring, and you can visit pointpark.edu/alumni for a complete list. (We're especially excited to see our alumni in Florida in February!) Share your experience and expertise – participate in enrollment activities and events, speak in a classroom, or spend time with the Career Development team conducting mock interviews and teaching networking skills.

Keep others informed – follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, and share news about events and benefits with your networks. Be a leader – nominate yourself or a classmate to serve on the Point Park University Alumni Association Board of Directors, the governing body of the Alumni Association that provides professional expertise and insight to support the University's engagement initiatives.

Visit www.pointpark.edu/alumni to learn more about the many ways to stay engaged, and register for an event, sign up for a new benefit or volunteer. With so many options, staying engaged with Point Park is an easy resolution to keep.

Best wishes for the New Year!

Sarah Myksin
Director of Alumni Relations
smyksin@pointpark.edu

P.S. Do you know someone who would flourish with a Point Park education? Let us know at www.PointPark.edu/ReferaStudent.

CLASS NOTES

1970s

Carmen Pellegrino (A&S 1977) writes, "My thanks to Point Park University. It was 1977 when I proudly walked out of Point Park with a quality education. This was accomplished during a period of seven years attending evening classes. I graduated from high school in 1954, so the challenge of going back to college several years later (1970) was not easy. With my military obligation fulfilled, it was time to move on with my life's work. Point Park was a perfect fit for me, with excellent professors guiding me to accomplish my endeavors. They prepared me well and I was able to attain a degree in engineering technology (both electrical and mechanical). Many thanks to Point Park for preparing me well for my life's work, enabling me to progress throughout my career. Traveling from coast to coast, many opportunities came my way and I [will always remember] how it all started. It was a

journey that I will never forget. I retired from US Airways, where I served as an electrical engineer and technical writer, in 2001. As I reflect back to my time at Point Park, those years enabled me to succeed in so many ways. After retirement, I was able to author and publish two books – *Memories of a Foregone Era* and *One Hundred Years (1912 to 2012) of Westinghouse High School*. These two books were a labor of love for me, and Westinghouse rewarded me with an induction to the school's Wall of Fame. Several elective courses I took at Point Park [influenced] my desire to write and I was able to pursue this endeavor. A good education is a valuable asset that can never be taken away from you. I am a proud member of the Point Park Alumni Association and encourage more students to consider attending and realize you can get there from here.

1980s

Pamela Shafer (COPA 1985) booked a guest star role on the CBS series *Scorpion*. She played the lead character's Irish mother. The episode aired on CBS on Nov. 23. Shafer earned her degree in musical theatre at Point Park.

Anthony McCune (COM 1982) operates Your Right Hand, the Virtual Assistant for Social Media based in Canton, Ohio. For information, visit www.AMcVirtualOffice.com.

1990s

Thomas Petro (BUS 1990), president and CEO of Fox Chase Bank in Hatboro, Pa., has been appointed to the 2015-16 board of the American Bankers Association (ABA). The confirmation took place in Los Angeles during the ABA's annual convention. He earned a



MOVING UP TO "THE SHOW"

40 years in the making for alumnus Kim Payne

ous duties such as official scorer, goal judge, timekeeper and penalty box attendant.

He grew up around hockey in Hershey, Pa. ("Chocolatetown, U.S.A."), where the sport is second nature, with the Bears being the oldest and most successful franchise in the AHL, the NHL's primary development circuit.

Now a resident of Tampa, Fla. for the last five years, his association with professional hockey came full circle last spring when he was notified by the NHL that he had been selected as a member of the Off-Ice Crew for the Tampa Bay Lightning, the league's Eastern Conference champion, who play their home games at Amalie Arena in Tampa.

Payne, who is the staff writer and media coordinator at Saint Leo University in Saint Leo, Fla., began his new part-time job with three preseason games in early fall. During

the regular season, he is one of two league-designated concussion "spotters," individuals who are responsible for watching for potential concussions as part of the NHL's new program. He also serves as an alternate to substitute for various Off-Ice Official positions.

Payne is the only Off-Ice Official in the 75-year history of the Hershey Bears to ever be promoted from the AHL to the NHL in this capacity. "I was thrilled when I got the call and I couldn't wait to work my first game," he said. "I feel humbled and privileged by this honor."

In addition to his undergraduate degree from Point Park, Payne earned his M.B.A. with a marketing concentration from St. Leo University. (*Editor's Note: In the fall 2015 issue of The Point, some information in Kim Payne's Class Note was incorrectly reported. The Point regrets the error.*)

CLASS NOTES

spot on the ABA board through his naming as vice chairman of the ABA Government Relations Council. "Tom has been an active voice in the government relations efforts supporting the Pennsylvania banking industry for many years," said Pennsylvania Bankers Association President and CEO Duncan Campbell. "His appointment to the ABA board is a great opportunity for Pennsylvania banks to have a stronger voice in Washington." Before joining Fox Chase Bank, Petro led the turnaround, as president and chief executive officer, of Northeast Pennsylvania Financial Corp. and its principal subsidiary, First Federal Bank in Hazleton, Pa. He has also served as executive vice president of the Bryn Mawr Trust Company, president of the Bryn Mawr Brokerage Company and chairman of Bryn Mawr Asset Management. He began his banking career with Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh, Pa. Petro earned an associate's degree in banking and a bachelor's degree in business management at Point Park.

Dawn Holden (COM 1998) has joined VisitPITTSBURGH as vice president of partnership development. She previously served at Hargrove Inc., where her responsibilities included sales of custom rental exhibits to C-Suite executives at associations, DMOs, corporations and other organizations. Holden was also previously employed by Destination D.C. from 2005 - 2013 and prior to that she was the assistant executive director at the Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Raised in Mercer County, Holden earned her bachelor's degree in journalism and communications at Point Park. She also has an M.B.A. (with a focus on global strategy) from the University of Maryland University College.

Bobbie Norman Cubbage (COM 1996) is the workshop instructor at the new Lauri Ann West Community Center (formally the Boyd Community Center). Cubbage also works for the Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church Preschool since 2007, in the

Pre-Kindergarten class. Prior to teaching, Cubbage worked for WGBN-AM 1150, and WPGR-AM 1080. Cubbage and her husband Samuel own a small business, "Cubbiez Creations," where they make soap and chocolate couture creations. She has been married to **Samuel Cubbage** (also a former Point Park student), for 13 years. She earned her bachelor's degree in journalism and communications at Point Park.

2000s

Rick Moody, Jr. (A&S '05, '13) recently was appointed clinical supervisor of the Outpatient Forensic Mental Health Unit at Pittsburgh Mercy Behavioral Health Offender Services. He previously served as manager at Shawn McGill MSW Consulting. Moody was honored with the Visions Towards Peace Counseling LLC's "Road Runner Award" for mental health care services. He has also been re-appointed as a member of the City of Pittsburgh Propel Commission. Moody earned his bachelor's degree in English and his master's degree in criminal justice at Point Park.

Lou Takacs (COM '04) has accepted a position as communications specialist in the Allegheny County Controller's Office, where he develops and disseminates communications on fiscal and policy issues concerning Pennsylvania's second largest local government. Takacs is a former legislative assistant for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and also served as community relations director for Pennsylvania State Representative Erin Molchany. He earned his bachelor's degree in journalism, with a minor in political science, at Point Park in 2004. During his time on campus, Takacs served as president of United Student Government (USG) and as editor of the student newspaper, The Globe.

Jason Lauffer (A&S '04) is director of business development and customer services at Thales Transport & Security Inc. Accord-



You have a unique story and perspective about how Point Park can transform lives. We need your help to ensure that qualified students continue to reap the benefits of a Point Park education.

Share your Point Park success story with a potential future student you know — then simply complete the Refer-a-Student form:

PointPark.edu/ReferaStudent

We're happy to provide any materials you need or answer any questions. Contact us at alumni@pointpark.edu or 412-392-4750.

To learn about other ways alumni can assist prospective students and volunteer for the Pioneer Alumni Recruitment Team, visit:

PointPark.edu/PART

PIONEERS LAUNCH NEW ALUMNI APP

Last fall, Point Park alumni gathered at launch parties in Pittsburgh and elsewhere to kick off the new Alumni App, which enables alumni to connect with fellow alums with a multifaceted directory in the palm of your hand! With the app you can: search the alumni directory by name, class year, company or grad school; filter searches for classmates and industry peers; use a map feature to find and connect with alumni nearby; integrate the app with your LinkedIn

profile; and much more. It's easy to download the app: 1. Go to the app store on your device. 2. Search for EverTrue and download the app. (EverTrue supports Apple iOS 7 and 8, and Android 4.0.3 and above.) 3. Once installed, search for and join the Point Park community. Join us!

For more information, visit PointPark.edu/alumniapp or email alumniapp@pointpark.edu, or call 412-392-4204.



ing to Mass Transit Magazine, "during his tenure with Thales, Lauffer founded and started the services group for the U.S., servicing 11 different customer signalling sites, providing 24/7 on-call support and deployment of system upgrade projects for lifecycle extensions ... In his two decades in the business, Lauffer has demonstrated a keen commitment to transit safety and a dedication to his customers, and has risen to the top of the industry as an expert on communication-based train control and rail signalling systems. In addition to signalling jobs, Lauffer is responsible for the business development of the other business lines within Thales Ground Transport, including Urban Rail Signalling (CBTC); Revenue Collection Systems (Fare Collection); Integrated Communications systems; and Mine Line Rail Solutions. During his prolific career, Lauffer has been involved in the deployment of several worldwide train control projects, including in Taipei, Taiwan; New York City; Heathrow Airport (London); Dulles Airport (Washington, D.C.); Baltimore, Md.; Busan, South Korea; Dallas Tex.; Atlanta, Ga; and

San Francisco, Calif. Additionally, Lauffer has overseen train signalling bid proposals for some of the largest and most complicated transit networks in the country, including New York and San Francisco, and for people mover and airport systems in New Jersey, West Virginia, Florida, Texas, and Washington, D.C. ... Lauffer is named on four engineering patents, three trainborne-related and one for a cable-driven train inspection system, and holds several awards for design engineering during his work at Bombardier." Read the entire article at: bit.ly/1Nv6Jf7. Lauffer earned his bachelor's degree in engineering technology at Point Park in 2004.

Patricia M. Lonsbary CFRE (BUS '01) has joined the American Red Cross of Western Pennsylvania as a major gifts officer — individual channel serving Allegheny, Greene, and Washington counties in western Pennsylvania. In her new position, Lonsbary is responsible for the cultivation and stewardship of major donors. Prior to her employment with the Red Cross, Lonsbary gained extensive fundraising experience for

nonprofits through her roles as a consultant and managing director of Bob Carter Companies in Sarasota, Fla.; global philanthropy fundraising manager for major donors, with UNICEF in Geneva, Switzerland; and vice president of development and marketing with Sheffield Place in Kansas City, Mo., among other positions. Lonsbary earned a bachelor's degree with a double major in psychology and communications and a minor in journalism from the University of Pittsburgh, and an M.B.A. (international business) from Point Park. She is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) and is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP).

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PIONEERS IN PARIS

Bob Saline and **Deborah Steele Saline** (both COM 1968) stayed true to their school during a recent vacation in Paris, France, where they donned Point Park gear while sight-seeing in the City of Lights. The Salines, who believe they are the first couple to meet and marry as Point Park students, have had an ongoing love affair with each other and their alma mater that has endured through 46 years of marriage, raising a family, and professional accomplishments. Together they founded PR Works, Inc., and the couple has long worked side-by-side in mentoring, teaching and professional development. Their son **Erik Saline** earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering technology at Point Park in 1998. The legacy continues for the Salines, who recently created a bequest in their will to support the Vincent LaBarbera Scholarship Fund, which supports journalism and mass communication students at the University. "We are grateful for all that Point Park did for us as students," says Bob. "We are proud to be graduates. We are pleased to give back." Where have you been in your Point Park gear? Send us a photo, and tell us your story, at thepoint@pointpark.edu.



Krystin Roczek (BUS '08) spoke to Point Park students about her work as U.S. field marketing manager for Reebok-CCM Hockey, a subsidiary of Adidas Group, on Oct. 8 at a workshop hosted by the Pittsburgh Center for Sports Media and Marketing at Point Park University. According to Roczek, who earned her M.B.A. at Point Park, "sports have always been a passion of mine. I knew that I wanted

to work in the sports world in some capacity. The sports, arts and entertainment management (SAEM) concentration allowed me to gain much knowledge in all areas of the business without limiting myself. Since I knew that I wasn't going to be happy with just the status quo, I wanted to continue to push myself. That is why the M.B.A. program was the perfect way to start my career." Roczek was recently honored with the Adidas Group 2014 Team Work Award and Adidas Group Marketing 2012 Representative of the Year.

Becki Dennis (COPA '06) writes, "I had a speaking role in the major motion picture *Ted 2*, written and directed by Seth MacFarlane." A resident of Bedford, Mass., Dennis earned her degree in musical theatre at Point Park.

2010s

Michele L. Tabaka (COM '13) writes, "Being born and raised in the Pittsburgh area, then attending Point Park University, it was time for a change of pace. [In addition to] working full-time as a marketing manager for a local business in Pittsburgh, I had the opportunity to work for Pittsburgh Fashion Week as a communications liaison and for Allegheny Valley School District as: publicity director for the high school musical, assistant girl's basketball coach, and head 7th grade volleyball coach. After about two and a half years' experience in the marketing field, I wanted to go outside of my comfort zone and put to test my skills and knowledge in Washington, D.C. After two short weeks moving out here, I gratefully accepted a full-time position in the Digital Advertising Department at The Washington Post." Tabaka earned her Point Park degree in public relations and advertising with a minor in business management.

Shayna Robinson (BUS '14) writes, "I am so excited to share the news that I have accepted a position in Jacksonville, Fla. Thanks to my great professors and diverse classes, I was able to obtain a position as an executive assistant for 1-800-BOARDUP, a great company with a great cause." Robinson earned her degree in organizational leadership at Point Park.

Richelle Szypulski (COM '13) recently accepted a position as editorial operations assistant at Travel + Leisure magazine in New York City, where she assists the magazine's editor-in-chief, executive editor and managing editor. Prior to that, she worked as a freelance Web editorial producer for Vogue.com. According to Szypulski, who also has her own photography business, "I am absolutely loving it in New York, but I do miss the wonderful people back in Pittsburgh and at Point Park."

Robert Michael (A&S '14) is an English/special education teacher at Moon Area High School. Michael, who earned his B.A. and dual

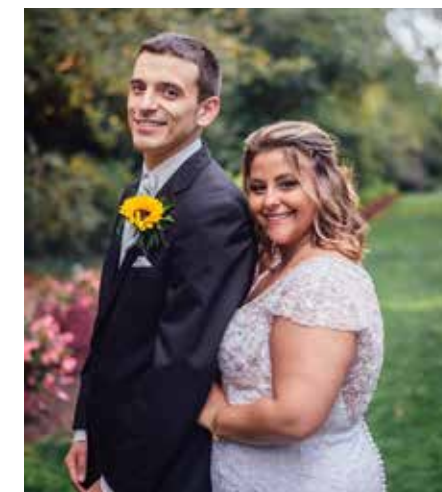
certification in Secondary Education English and special education at Point Park in 2014, says that his student teaching placement at Bethel Park High School was a key factor in being hired for his current position at Moon. "I was a nontraditional student. My decision to seek teaching credentials didn't come until I was 28 years old, living in New York City and working in the human resources field," says Michael. "When I decided to move back to Pittsburgh, I began my course work at another local university. I was very displeased with the lack of connection to the professors, delivery of content and the school overall, which prompted me to shop around." He ultimately chose Point Park instead. Michael is now pursuing an M.A. in curriculum and instruction, with a concentration in teaching and leadership, and expects to graduate in 2016.



Gulsara Shingozhina (BUS '13) is an ISS specialist (Investment Services) with the Bank of New York Mellon. A native of Almaty, Kazakhstan, Shingozhina earned her M.B.A. with an international business concentration at Point Park in 2013. She also holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Moscow University of Industry and Finance. She says she chose Point Park because, "as a foreign student, I was looking for a school that offered interesting programs, had a great reputation, a convenient location, smaller size classes and most importantly, cultural diversity. Point Park met all my requirements. One of the greatest characteristics of Point Park is its faculty, who create a warm and positive environment

for international students. I especially would like to thank **Rebecca Lee** and **Amanda Avampato** in the International Student Services and Enrollment Office for their support and love, and for organizing incredible cultural events that brought all domestic and international students and faculty together."

Elizabeth (Birdsell) Mutschler (BUS '12), married Scott Mutschler on Sept. 6, 2015 at Fellows Riverside Gardens in Youngstown, Ohio. The bridal party included **Andy Olson** (BUS '11) and **Karly Shorts** (A&S '13). Point Park alumni in attendance included **Carleigh Detorre** (A&S '12), **Phylicia (Winland) Joy** (A&S '12), and **Kaitlin Villines** (COPA '12). Elizabeth is the marketing and community relations manager for Magic Tree Pub and Eatery in Boardman, Ohio. Her role within the family business includes social media management, community and press relations, and event coordination, among other responsibilities. She says she is thrilled to be utilizing many of the skills she learned during her college career at Point Park, both inside the classroom and outside at her many internships. She received her bachelor of science degree in sports, arts and entertainment management (SAEM), with a minor in advertising and public relations, at Point Park.



Daniel Komara (BUS '11) is a vice president, associate service director for the Bank of New York Mellon. He earned his M.B.A.

with a concentration in management at Point Park in 2011. In gaining his promotion to vice president at BNY Mellon, Komara says "having an M.B.A. definitely contributed to my upward mobility within the organization. My current manager places a lot of value on education and the internal motivation that an individual shows by furthering it". In addition Point Park really offered me the most value in comparison with other M.B.A. programs that I considered."

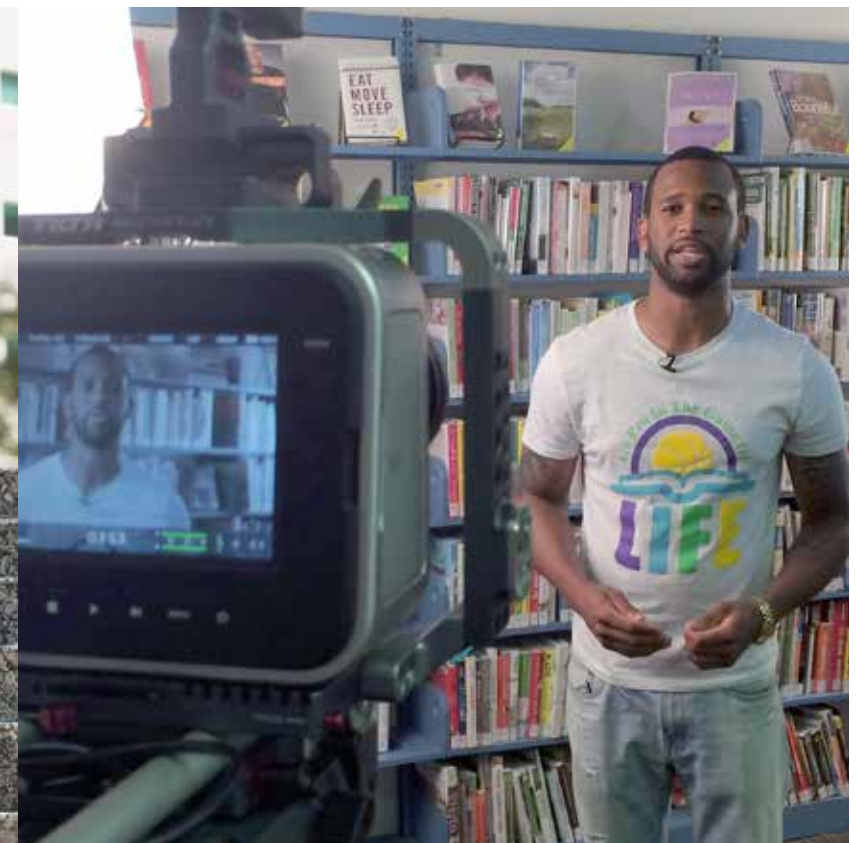
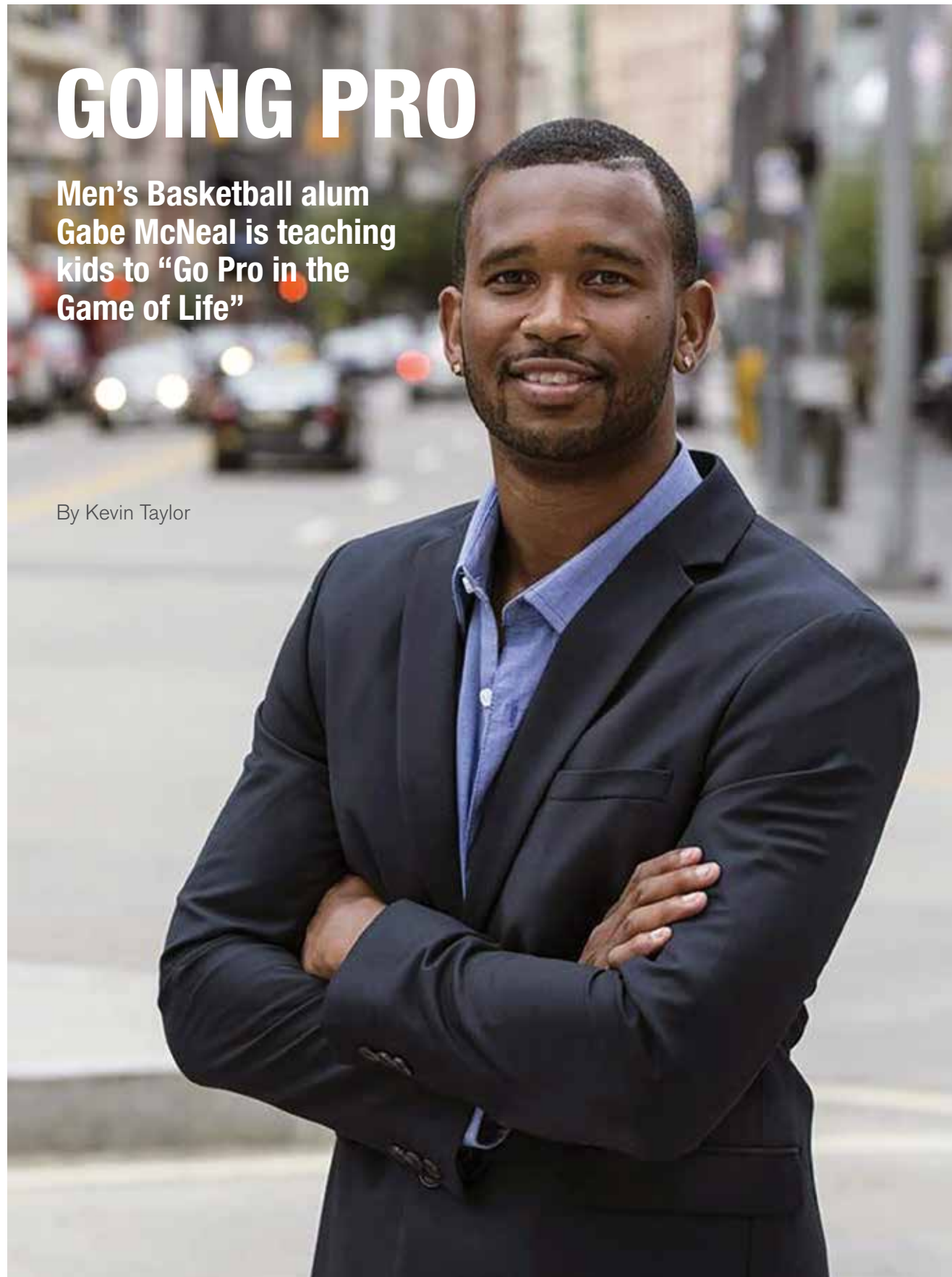


Daniel Mikulan (A&S '13) is a cyber intrusion analyst for PNC Financial Services in Pittsburgh. He earned his bachelor's degree in intelligence and national security in 2013. A Marine Corps veteran, Mikulan says that career advancement was the most important factor in choosing Point Park's intelligence and national security program. He currently works with PNC's SOC/CERT team. According to Mikulan, "these types of fusion centers are commonly used in the security world to gather threat intelligence. I have seen my share of fusion centers while serving five years overseas and I am happy to be a part of this new state-of-the-art facility here in my hometown." Mikulan also says, "To all the veterans at Point Park and those coming home: Our time in service does not have to be our greatest accomplishment. Keep your standards high. I'd like to extend a special thanks to the intelligence and national security program, Point Park's Career Development Center (which helped Mikulan obtain an internship with the National Cyber-Forensics and Training Alliance), and the Veterans, Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania. ❖"

GOING PRO

Men's Basketball alum Gabe McNeal is teaching kids to "Go Pro in the Game of Life"

By Kevin Taylor



School of Communication senior and former men's basketball player Gabe McNeal knows the value of an education. He also knows what basketball has given him in his life.

Now he's using what he learned playing basketball at Point Park, and his upbringing in a household where reading was encouraged, to pass the message on to kids.

McNeal, who starred at Point Park with over 1,000 career points, finished up his men's basketball career after the 2013-14 season. Since then, he has blended education and basketball into his non-profit work.

Improving literacy

McNeal, from Richmond, Va., is the president and founder of the Go Pro in the Game of Life Foundation. It is dedicated to improving literacy rates in low-income

communities, and it has developed several programs designed to motivate and encourage at-risk minorities to read. It also incorporates a basketball aspect given his sports background.

"We understand that reading is the foundation to education, and education is the key to success," said McNeal. "Our mission is to promote literacy by motivating and encouraging at-risk youth to read. "I grew up with the odds stacked against me. Both of my parents are incarcerated, and several other family members have spent time in prison. I had many opportunities to continue down the same path, but I refused to be a bench warmer in the game of life."

Pathway to success

Despite the chances to take a different path in life, McNeal's journey ultimately led him to Point Park as a student-athlete in the fall of 2012. He started his college basketball career at a highly ranked team

in NCAA Division II. He then moved on to a community college, seeking a better balance. Not being able to find the right fit of basketball and academics, he eventually found both at Point Park.

McNeal had an outstanding basketball career with the Pioneers. He needed only two years to put up 1,056 career points and ranks 17th on the school's all-time scoring chart. But it's what he learned there and the people he met that has allowed him to make his organization, Go Pro in the Game of Life, a reality.

"Our belief is that every child with a solid reading foundation and a game play for life can achieve success even when facing challenging situations," he said. "Early in life, my father instilled in me the conviction that reading is key to success. I know that enabled me to focus and have discipline while progressing through K-12 and then college."



Building a foundation

McNeal leads the "Go Pro in the Game of Life" effort by being his foundation's front man out in the community. There are several programs that he has developed as presentations to kids at elementary schools, summer camps and other organizations. These include the "T.E.A.M.H.O.O.P. (Together Everyone Achieves More, Helping Others Overcome Pressure) program," which features story-time reading at elementary schools. There's also the "Back to School Hip-Hop Reading Summit," a program for the start of the school year.

In a sports setting is the "Get off the Bench and Get into the Game of Life Ball-Handling Clinic." There he opens up with a 90-minute basketball skills session for kids, followed by his presentation that encourages reading and getting a game plan for life.

Kool Kat in the Hat Man

That's just to name of few of the programs, which also include McNeal taking on the persona of the "Kool Kat in the Hat Man," a rapper whose main song repeats the chorus "I will succeed, I believe I read."

It's all part of an effort to present the topic of reading education through a mix of sports, music and more. McNeal has found that this approach has been a successful way to get the message across to young people. "My success academically is because of my reading background," said McNeal. "Reading helped me develop work ethic, discipline, mental toughness and gave me confidence and the ability to retain information."

"And my skills in basketball provided me an opportunity to go to college. I want to use those skills that I learned in my education and in basketball to pass on to youngsters in the community the importance of education."

Communication is key

McNeal's studies in advertising and public relations at Point Park have helped him develop the communications skills to spread his message of "Go Pro in the Game of Life" and develop his non-profit strategy.

His time at Point Park has also afforded him the opportunity to collaborate with other students, such as those majoring in photography and cinema and digital arts, to collect pictures and shoot documentary videos to spread his message.

For more information about "Go Pro in the Game of Life," visit www.goprointhegameoflife.org.

Kevin Taylor is director of athletic communications and assistant athletic director at Point Park. Photos of Gabe McNeal by Zachary Labos, a senior in the Sports, Arts and Entertainment Management (SAEM) program. ❖



SPORTS ROUNDUP

▶ WOMEN'S SOCCER

The Pioneers won the KIAC Tournament championship with playoff wins over Rio Grande (Ohio) and WVU Tech to earn the first-ever appearance in the NAIA national tournament in team history. Point Park ended the year with a record of 12-7-2 overall and 6-2 KIAC to set a program record for most wins in a season. Fourth-year head coach Maggie Kuhn and the senior class of 11 players won 39 games over the period of four years.

▶ CROSS COUNTRY

For the first time ever, the Pioneers made a team appearance at the NAIA National Championship meet. Point Park won both the men's and women's team titles at the KIAC Championship Meet at Rio Grande, Ohio, to earn automatic qualification to nationals. Point Park had previously sent individual runners to NAIAs but never an entire team. First-year coach Kelly Parsley had sophomore Katie Guarnaccia as his top women's runner and freshman Brian Moore as the top men's runner.

▶ VOLLEYBALL

Point Park made back-to-back appearances in the NAIA national tournament by making a run to the KIAC Tournament finals. The Pioneers, who were 9-3 KIAC, lost in the conference championship game but still earned an automatic bid to nationals with its finals appearance. It was the third time the team made nationals, along with the 2011 and 2014 seasons. Mike Bruno completed his 11th year as head coach. Point Park had a record of 17-24 overall but got hot at the end of the year to make the NAIAs.

▶ MEN'S SOCCER

Point Park had another strong season at 10-7-2 overall, and the Pioneers made it all the way to the KIAC Tournament semifinals. Point Park's run of three straight KIAC Tournament titles came to an end with No. 1 Rio Grande and No. 25 WVU Tech making the finals instead of the Pioneers. Eighth-year head coach Jeroen Walstra's squad ended the year ranking 40th in the NAIA's MRPI rankings, a strength of schedule and season indicator.

Best of the Best

The Pioneer Athletic Hall of Fame inducted its Class of 2015 on Sept. 26 at an annual ceremony in Lawrence Hall, part of Athletics Alumni Weekend. The 2015 honorees were **Rachel Roddy** (Volleyball 2007-10) and **Randy Smith** (Men's Basketball 1989-93). Pictured with Roddy and Smith are Associate Vice President of Student of Affairs and Dean of Students Keith Paylo (far left) and Director of Athletics Dan Swalga (far right). For more information on the Hall of Fame, visit www.PointPark.edu/athletics/HallofFame. Photo by Chris Squier (COM '15).



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