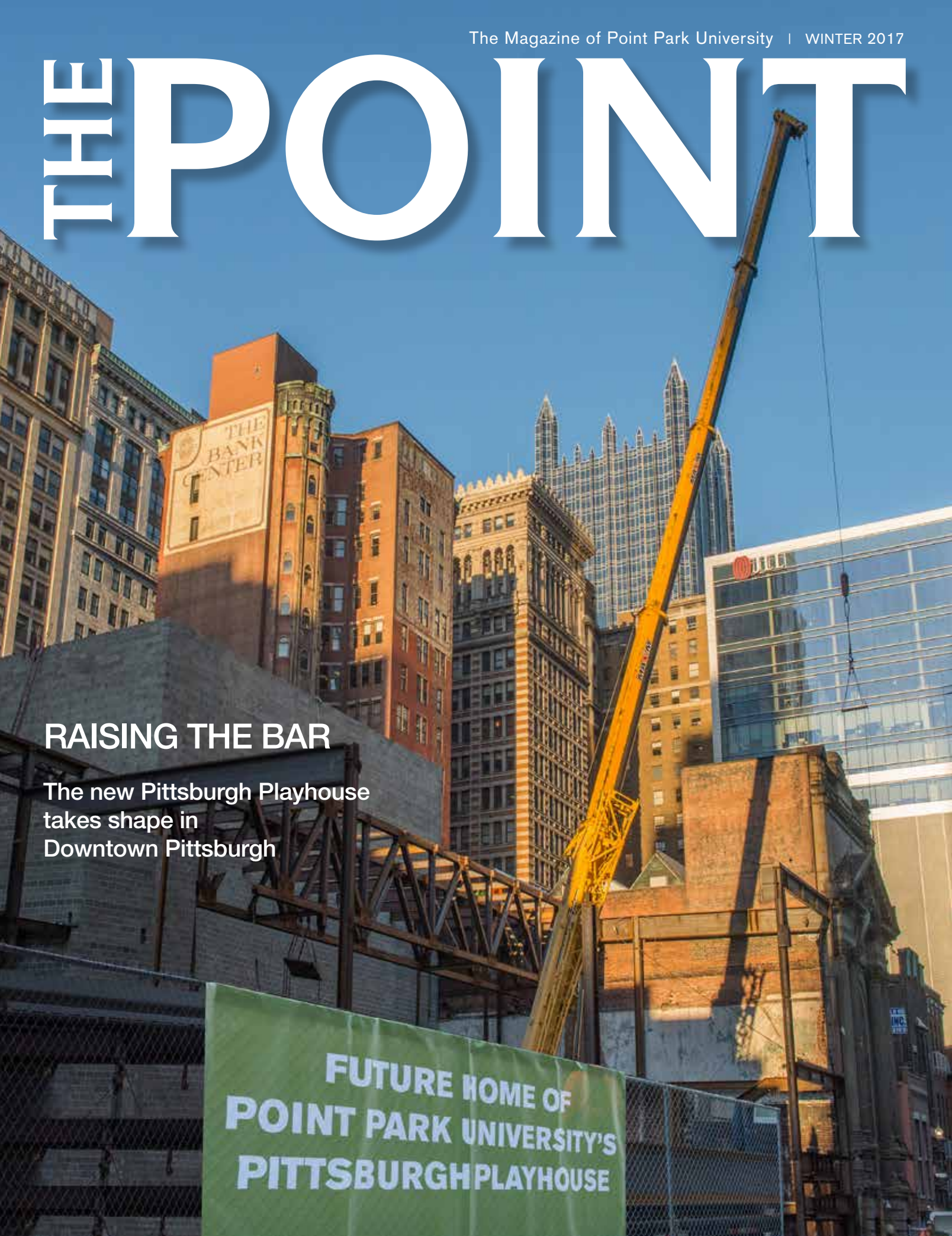


# THE POINT

## RAISING THE BAR

The new Pittsburgh Playhouse takes shape in Downtown Pittsburgh

FUTURE HOME OF  
POINT PARK UNIVERSITY'S  
PITTSBURGH PLAYHOUSE







Dear alumni and friends,

As 2017 begins to unfold, the spring semester is already well underway. It's another opportunity to reflect on the events and accomplishments of the past year, which brought more exciting changes and ongoing growth for Point Park.

Last fall, we welcomed more than 620 freshmen and 280 new transfer students — representing 34 states and 11 countries. As we celebrated the new academic year at our annual convocation, I encouraged the members of the Class of 2020 to get to know one another and get to know the faculty and staff who are here to help

them. I hope they will open their minds to everything around them, learn how to do scholarly research, analyze things, and put it all together to form thoughts and opinions.

There's never been a better time to be a Point Park student. Over the past year our academic offerings continued to expand, providing new opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students — both on campus and online. We are very proud to have been named a College of Distinction, an honor that recognized innovative application of high impact educational practices. Our students have earned college credit and valuable life experience through service learning, learning communities and internships. Point Park Online also earned recognition in 2016, with our fully online public relations and advertising and mass communication programs recently ranked among the best for affordability by TheBestSchools.org. Visit [Online.PointPark.edu](http://Online.PointPark.edu) to learn more about a variety of online programs, including nine bachelor's degrees, eight graduate degrees and one certification program.

On campus, the new Center for Media Innovation is already a point of pride for everyone at Point Park. Since its opening last fall, the Center has hosted a variety of activities and events for students and the general public. For example, the CMI was a hive of activity on election night, as our students collaborated to provide

comprehensive coverage of the presidential election and other electoral races throughout the day on Nov. 8 and well into the following day (see page seven for more details).

Finally, as 2016 drew to a close, we were very excited to mark our construction progress on the new Pittsburgh Playhouse with a beam-signing and topping off ceremony. Like the CMI, this new cultural hub will enable our students' creative process to be an integral part of the Downtown experience. As I have said many times, I believe the new Pittsburgh Playhouse will become the heartbeat of Downtown Pittsburgh. Visit page 10 to share in our excitement about the beam-signing and see the latest progress on the Playhouse, which is set to open in 2019.

Even better, we would love to welcome you in person, and we hope you'll stop by for a closer look the next time you are in our Downtown neighborhood. There is always something innovative happening at Point Park University.

Warm regards,

Dr. Paul Hennigan  
President



**ON THE COVER:**  
A view of the new Pittsburgh Playhouse as it takes shape along Forbes Avenue in Downtown Pittsburgh.

Photo by Christopher Rolinson.

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#### TALK TO US!

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

Managing Editor  
Marketing and Communications  
Point Park University  
201 Wood Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Phone: 412-392-6108 Fax: 412-392-6185  
Email: [thepoint@pointpark.edu](mailto:thepoint@pointpark.edu)

President  
Paul Hennigan, Ed.D.

Vice President of  
External Affairs  
Mariann Geyer

Managing Editor  
Cheryl Valyo

Managing Director,  
Communications and  
Client Services  
Nancy Commella

Managing Director,  
University Marketing and  
Public Relations  
Lou Corsaro

Graphic Designer  
Judy Sporka

Manager of Printing  
Services  
Don Pastorius

Director of Online  
Communications  
Keith Kuzmovich

Web Services Manager  
Stephen Shanahan

Writers  
Amanda Dabbs  
Linda Fletcher  
Gina Puppo  
Kevin Taylor  
Barbara Vilanova

Photographers

John Altdorfer  
Richard Kelly  
Patrick Lazour  
Shayna Mendez  
Sam Robinson  
Christopher Rolinson  
Olivia Ruk

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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, race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, age (40 years and over), ancestry, individuals with disabilities, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, height, weight, genetic information, marital status, 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 and policies, or complaints of discrimination, should be referred to the vice president of human resources, phone number 412-392-3952. Inquiries regarding Title IX and the Title IX regulations should also be referred to the Title IX coordinator or to the deputy Title IX coordinators: the associate provost, the vice president of human resources or the vice president of student affairs.



# FEEDBACK

## Remarkable Growth

We are so glad to see the continued growth of Point Park, which appears to be becoming an even bigger part of Downtown Pittsburgh! Seeing all the improvements and new development, well, it's nothing short of remarkable. Remembering our humble roots, it is rewarding beyond words to see Point Park's bright future. We are proud of everyone there. Keep up the outstanding work!

We recently received a letter from Point Park's president [focusing on] 'Why I Give'

to Point Park University. The timing was remarkable, as we were preparing to make our annual gift. It is a wonderful idea to 'keep in touch' with the many alumni who consider their education at Point Park so important to their success in life, and love to hear about the University's plans for the future.

We remember that western Pennsylvania winters can be tough (and that's whether the six-time world champion Pittsburgh Steelers win again, or not!) A 'spring break' of sunshine can be a very positive way to 're-charge.' Lambda

Chi Alpha, my Point Park fraternity, had a group that went to Florida almost every year. We recommend a road trip to the Sunshine State!

**Bill Bruun** and **Cabrini Bruun** (A&S 1969) Ft. Myers, Fla.

*Editor's Note: Calling all Florida alums! The Point Park Alumni Office team will host alumni events in Ft. Lauderdale on Feb. 15, Tampa on Feb. 16 and Orlando on Feb. 17. Visit [PointPark.edu/alumni](http://PointPark.edu/alumni) for more information.*



Jim Rohr (right) joins President Paul Hennigan and Board of Trustees Chair Anne Lewis in the Village Park. Photo by John Altdorfer.

## Along Jim Rohr Way

The leadership and community engagement of former PNC Financial Services Group Inc. Chairman and CEO **Jim Rohr** were commemorated by the City of Pittsburgh dedicating Wood Street in front of

Two PNC Plaza, Point Park's corporate neighbor in Downtown Pittsburgh. After a naming ceremony with Pittsburgh business, political and civic leaders in 2015, the University had a separate ceremony last fall to place a sign in the Village Park marking Jim Rohr Way. Rohr joined Presi-

dent **Paul Hennigan**, University Board of Trustees Chair **Anne Lewis**, and other members of the Point Park community on September 20 as they celebrated the enduring impact Rohr has made on Point Park's Academic Village Initiative and beyond.

# NEWS AND VIEWS

## Professional Advancement

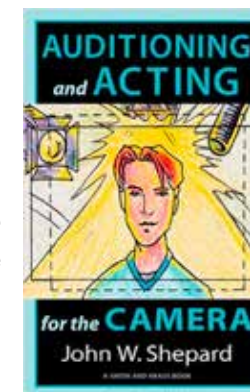
**Brendan Mullan**, Ph.D., assistant professor of physics, presented on the topic "Change and the Cosmos" Dec. 3 at the Tennessee Science Teachers Association Conference in Murfreesboro, Tenn. In his presentation, Mullan explained how change is inevitable and a fundamental part of the language of physics and the laws that govern the universe. In addition, National Geographic recently featured Mullan in the videos, "TIL: Why Mars' Ocean Disappeared" and "TIL: How to Transform Mars Into Our Second Home," which have resulted in more than 50,000 views on YouTube alone. Mullan was named a National Geographic Emerging Explorer in 2013 and is an internationally respected astrophysicist, science communicator and education program developer and director.

**Tatyana Dumova**, Ph.D., professor in the School of Communication, participated in the annual conference of the Pennsylvania Communication Association last September at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Dumova presented "Information Literacy Assessment in a University-Wide Core Theme Course for First-Year Students" as part of a panel on "Assessment in the Context of National Communication Association Learning Outcomes." She also made a poster presentation titled "Creating Clusters of Excellence within Graduate Programs in Communication" about the challenges facing graduate programs offered by small colleges and universities and strategies for potential solutions.

**Paige Beal**, M.B.A., assistant professor of sports, arts and entertainment management, presented on the topic "Storytelling Data" as part of a panel discussion on "Effective Strategies for Teaching

Analytics" at the Marketing Management Association Educators' Conference Sept. 16, 2016, in Providence, R.I. "I shared techniques for teaching students how to deliver data analytics in a manner that is relevant and clear to their audiences. Some of these techniques include the creation of infographics and the use of visuals to make data easily understandable," Beal explained. She will serve as co-chair of the Marketing Management Association Educators' Conference, which will take place in Pittsburgh in 2017.

**John Shepard**, professor of theatre, is the author of *Auditioning and Acting for the Camera*, available on Amazon. The compendium of techniques for auditioning and performing in film, episodic TV, sitcoms, soap operas, commercials and more was named among "11 Amazing Books for the On Camera Actor" by Backstage Magazine, one of the country's largest, most influential theatre resources.



**Chelsea Pompeani** is working to build connections for Point Park's new Center for Media Innovation. As media innovation specialist, Pompeani manages the center's social media sites while developing cutting-edge programming for students, journalists and the public. "We are very pleased to have someone as experienced and talented as Chelsea join our team," said **Andrew Conte**, the center's director. Pompeani was most recently the public and communications director for AAA East Central. Prior to that, she served as a news reporter for WROC-TV in Rochester, N.Y., and WJET-TV in Erie.

**Jonas Prida**, Ph.D. has joined Point Park as assistant provost for curriculum, assessment, and accreditation. He previously spent eight years at the College of St. Joseph in Rutland, Vt., where he served in several faculty and administrative capacities, most recently as vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty. Prida will provide leadership for the University's student learning outcomes assessment and assistance in curriculum development, while working closely with the faculty, department chairs and program directors, staff, and administrators, to assess and improve student learning.

**Ken Mori**, part-time faculty member in the Department of Education, serves as the American Board of Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) coordinator at Point Park. Upon successfully meeting requirements specified by both ABCTE and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, candidates may apply for Instructional I Pennsylvania state certification in a number of content areas. All candidates must have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university prior to initiating the ABCTE program. For more details, contact Mori at [kmori@pointpark.edu](mailto:kmori@pointpark.edu) or 412-392-3487.

**Dave Fabilli**, professor in the School of Communication, announced the release of the album "*Abbey Lincoln, Love Having You Around*" by HighNote Records. Fabilli produced the album, researched the material and wrote the liner notes. The 35th album on which he has worked, this is the second of a two-album set released from a series of live performances at the legendary San Francisco jazz club, the Keystone Korner. In one of the album's reviews, Lincoln is described as "a member of the idiom's songstress royalty."



**Michele Langbein**, Ph.D., associate professor of business management; **Archish Maharaja**, Ed.D., professor and director of the M.S. in health care administration and management program; and **Gita Maharaja**, Ed.D., part-time associate professor of business presented research papers at the 39th Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Association of Business, Economics and Technology in State College, Pa. Langbein's presentation was titled "It is Possible to Teach Ethical Leadership?" while A. Maharaja and G. Maharaja presented on the topic "Is it a Quality Improvement or Just for Marketing? – Accreditation of Business Schools." The conference trip was sponsored by **James Michael Haley**, Ph.D., Point Park professor and H.J. Heinz Endowed Chair of Management.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Milton Washington**, a philanthropist and husband of educator and former chair of Point Park's Board of Trustees **Nancy Washington**, died on Oct. 22 at the age of 81. According to his obituary in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, although he "was not a native Pittsburgher, he chose to make a life in Pittsburgh where he made lasting contributions to this community while establishing himself as the leader of one of the largest black-owned business enterprises in the state. [Washington] was the founder and owner of Allegheny Housing Rehabilitation Corp. (AHRCO), an East Liberty-based company that provides housing for low-income people throughout the county ... 'He was a wonderful hus-

band and a wonderful father,' said his wife of 55 years, Nancy. 'To work was what he actually believed in. That's the life he lived. He could not imagine a life without work' ... Mr. Washington was born in Philadelphia. He met his wife while she studied at the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University. They married and moved in 1968 to Pittsburgh, where he served as vice president of AHRCO. He purchased the company in 1973. He also owned a number of other successful businesses, including SSM Industries, Beacon Construction, Keystone Minority Capital, Twin Mills Timber & Tie Company and Temple Maintenance." Read the entire Post-Gazette obituary: [bit.ly/2hXOver](http://bit.ly/2hXOver).

## Honoring Richard Rauh

**Richard Rauh** was honored as Outstanding Philanthropist of the Year at the 2017 National Philanthropy Day Awards, sponsored by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Western Pennsylvania Chapter (AFP-WPA). Rauh has a long history of philanthropy with Point Park and the Pittsburgh Playhouse. He has invested in students, and, more broadly, in the development of theatrical talent in Pittsburgh, as a University trustee (he is currently a trustee emeritus), as a teacher in Point Park's theater programs, and as a philanthropist. One of his largest gifts was to name the Rauh Theatre at the Pittsburgh Playhouse in honor of his parents. His father, **Richard S. Rauh**, was the founder of the Pittsburgh Playhouse and his mother, **Helen Wayne Rauh**, was an acclaimed actress at the Playhouse. He has also contributed to the purchase of equipment for the theatre, to scholarship funds for students, and contributed funds toward a program that enables students to showcase their work for professional theatre industry scouts in New York City. He has appeared on the Playhouse stage and contributed to Point Park's campaign to relocate the Playhouse downtown and transform the Playhouse into a national arts laboratory.

## Online Programs Ranked for Affordability

Point Park's fully online public relations and advertising and mass communication programs recently ranked among the best for affordability by TheBestSchools.org. The rankings were announced in the article "The 25 Most Affordable Online Bachelor's Degrees in Communications and Public Relations." Rankings were based on the average yearly net price for undergraduates



## Cranston on Campus

Known for his work in *Breaking Bad*, *Malcolm in the Middle*, *Seinfeld*, *Argo* and many other hit television shows and films, award-winning actor, writer and director **Bryan Cranston** told his story to Point Park students Nov. 16 in the GRW Theater. Cranston is in Pittsburgh filming the movie *Last Flag Flying* co-starring Steve Carell and Laurence Fishburne. During the conversation, led by **Steve Cuden**, associate professor of screenwriting, Cranston shared stories from his career, answered questions and offered advice to students. "To be successful in this business you need talent, persistence, patience and luck. If you do not love what you do, do not attempt to do it," Cranston said. "Bryan also focused on being well-rounded in the crafts of acting, writing, and directing as a way to become excellent at what so many of our students hope to achieve in the motion picture industry," said Cuden. Photo by Olivia Ruk.

## A MESSAGE FOR POINT PARK UNIVERSITY ALUMNAE

When thinking about your future, you may be challenged with how to support both your family and the causes you are passionate about. Now you can explore all the options available with a free Wills Planning Guide.

This easy-to-use guide is available at: [plannedgiving.pointpark.edu](http://plannedgiving.pointpark.edu).

Start the year off with all the information you need to make decisions about planned giving!

### Questions?

**Penny Schnarrs**  
Assistant Vice President  
Development and Alumni Relations

412-392-8060 | [pschnarrs@pointpark.edu](mailto:pschnarrs@pointpark.edu)

**POINT PARK UNIVERSITY**



among various colleges and universities. Point Park offers a variety of fully online programs designed for busy professionals, including nine bachelors degrees, eight graduate degrees and one certification program. For more information, visit: [Online.PointPark.edu](http://Online.PointPark.edu).

## Fighting Food Insecurity

Food insecurity was the first topic discussed at Courageous Conversations, a new series hosted by Point Park's Ph.D. in Community Engagement program. **Leah Lizarondo** — CEO and co-founder of 412 Food Rescue, whose

mission is to reduce food waste and end hunger in the community — spoke to students in the Center for Media Innovation during the fall semester. Lizarondo shared the startling statistics of food insecurity in Allegheny County — nearly 172,000 people are food insecure; 43,000 of those are children. She and 412 Food Rescue volunteers have worked to cut costs and save more food by utilizing social media. The volunteers pick up food from food banks, universities, food retailers, wholesalers, restaurants and catering companies to deliver to families in need on the same day. Following Lizarondo's presentation,



## Doc Emrick at Point Park

Hall-of-Fame hockey broadcaster **Mike “Doc” Emrick** visited Point Park Nov. 3, and he shared stories of his 44-year career in the business and encouraged students to chase their dreams. “If one person learns to not give up and be confident of their abilities to go out and do what they really want to do in the world as a result of me showing up here, I’ll come back more times,” Emrick said. “That’s part of paying it forward.” The Pittsburgh Center for Sports Media and Marketing hosted Emrick in the JVH Auditorium, where he addressed and took questions from the standing room-only crowd of students. Emrick also spoke to multiple classes in the morning in the Center for Media Innovation. The biggest piece of advice that Emrick gave to students look-



ing to break into the sports industry was to never give up. “It’s like loving a person in life that’s high maintenance,” Emrick said. “There’s a lot that maybe can be difficult, but you still love them or you love the job, and so any setbacks don’t mean that much if you still have a love for it.” *Reporting by Joshua Croup, photo by John Mrozinski.*

students participated in a service project for Plum Borough School District’s Feeding Friends program, which provides food to students who are food insecure.

### Doctoral Students Focus on Diversity

Point Park doctoral students in the Ed.D. in Leadership and Administration program attended “Diversity Through the Eyes of Women,” an interactive discussion hosted Dec. 6 by the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh on diversity and inclusion. Held on Point Park’s campus, the discussion addressed challenges faced by immigrant and international communities in Pittsburgh, especially women, and ways the larger community can promote a more welcoming environment. The doctoral stu-

dents attended as part of their Visionary Leadership course, taught by Professor of Education **Vincenne Revilla-Beltrán**, Ph.D. **Mary Montague**, a renowned peace builder and conflict resolution practitioner, was the keynote speaker and discussion moderator.

### Broadcasting Honors for WPPJ

Point Park’s student-run radio station WPPJ received three College Radio Award nominations for the 77th annual Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Conference and radio awards to be presented this March in New York City. “This is the seventh year in a row WPPJ has been named as category finalists,” said **David J. Fabilli**, professor of broadcasting and adviser of WPPJ. “It’s so exciting

to see our students get highly competitive about their work.” At Point Park, more than 70 students from a variety of majors are gaining hands-on experience on and off the air. “The students are working on more than 50 radio programs,” Fabilli added. “They get it, they dig it and they’re doing their jobs enthusiastically.” This year’s student finalists include: **Vincent Ferrainola**, **Alex Popichak** and **Brandon Cross**: “Best Celebrity Interview” for an interview with Sarah Koenig, host and co-creator of the Serial podcast; **Brandon Cross**: “Best Public Service Announcement” for a PSA about freedom of speech; **Miranda Van Bramer**: “Best Program Promo” for a promo for her show *Girls Overboard*.

### Veterans Joint Leadership Initiative

The School of Business hosted its second Veterans Joint Leadership Initiative event Sept. 23, which included team field exercises throughout Downtown Pittsburgh, followed by a conference on campus to discuss issues related to effectively reintegrating veterans into the workforce. Led by **Patrick Mulvihill**, Ed.D., visiting assistant professor of business, the event brought together the Point Park community with representatives from a variety of organizations, including PNC Bank, FedEx, Duquesne University, University of Pittsburgh, PAServes, the 171st Airwing, the 303rd Psychological Operations Company and the Southwestern PA Veterans Chamber of Commerce.

### Cakes for Cops

Criminal Justice Club members at Point Park recently hosted a “Cakes for Cops” event, visiting several Pittsburgh Police zones with cakes and cards to show appreciation for the city’s police officers.

“We came up with the ‘Cakes for Cops’ idea as a way to give back to cops. As civilians, we feel safe to celebrate the holidays with our families because of these officers risking their lives for us,” said **Amar Shiwlochan**, a senior criminal justice major from Queens, N.Y. “Some people around the world do not have that privilege, so it’s important we give back.” According to **Sean Elliot Martin**, Ph.D., instructor of criminal justice and intelligence studies, “The students were eager to express to our local police officers that we appreciate and support them. It’s one of the hardest, most important jobs in the world, and we really value those who represent the law enforcement community with ethics and professionalism.”

### Instagram Wins Gold

Point Park’s Instagram account recently won a national Gold Award from the Education Digital Marketing Awards in the social media content category. The Education Digital Marketing Awards recognizes the best educational websites, digital content, electronic com-

## Rock On

NEWS AND VIEWS

Halloween was celebrated rock style as Pioneer Records hosted its first Rocktoberfest at the Pittsburgh Playhouse on Oct. 31. The Rockwell Theatre set the stage for students and guests, who donned creative costumes and enjoyed live performances by Grandadchilds (including guitar player/vocalist **John Kono Rushlander**) and **Chase and the Barons**, the third musician/band signed by Pioneer Records. The

Point Park-operated record label is managed by the Sports, Arts and Entertainment Management program, and housed at Red Caiman Media, a commercial recording studio in Pittsburgh’s Uptown section. Through Pioneer Records, students gain first-hand experience working on various aspects of a record label, including marketing, promotion, intellectual property protection, recording, editing, production and more.



munications, mobile media and social media throughout the country. A national panel of industry specialists reviewed more than 1,000 submissions this year based on creativity, marketing execution, message impact, technology application and innovative content. Since launching in 2015, the University’s

Instagram account has acquired more than 4,800 followers with more than 500 photo and video shots of Point Park students, the Downtown campus, the city of Pittsburgh and more. Social Media Manager **Felicia McKinney** manages the Instagram account: @pointparku.

## Election Night at the CMI

Point Park students stepped into the role of working journalists as they collaborated to provide comprehensive coverage of the presidential election and other electoral races throughout the day on Nov. 8 and into the early morning hours of Nov. 9. Using the new Center for Media Innovation (CMI) as home base, and in collaboration with the School of Communication, faculty and graduate students, U-View, the Globe, WPPJ Radio and the Point Park News Service, students fanned out across the region, providing comprehensive reporting and in-depth interviews and live-streaming the entire evening’s coverage on YouTube. View the full night of coverage at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vieYXeQc4k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vieYXeQc4k). On Nov. 20, KDKA’s “Sunday Business Page” with Jon Delano featured interviews with Point Park students **Joshua Croup**, editor of the Globe, and **Blaine King**, U-View’s station manager, on the work students did to cover the election. Photo by Shayna Mendez. ❖







# ART IN THE CITY

Gallery gets new name, permanent exhibit

by Linda Fletcher



Frank Mason 1985. Photo courtesy of Studio 9 Inc., New York



"Ballet Dancer" by Frank Mason.



Jack Tomayko and Martha Yannessa (left) join Anne Mason, standing next to her late husband Frank Mason's self-portrait, at the opening reception.

When the Lawrence Hall Gallery hosted its first exhibit in 2009, two names were at the forefront: artist Frank Mason and art patron Jack Tomayko. Now the gallery is home to a permanent exhibit, and those two names are a permanent part of Point Park University's artistic legacy.

On Oct. 25, 2016, Point Park hosted the opening reception for the exhibit of Mason's works — a gift from the Frank Mason estate — in the newly christened Tomayko Gallery. Their connection goes back decades.

"I was in a gallery in Shadyside in the mid-1980s and I saw a still life that [Mason] did," recalls Tomayko, a past member of the Point Park board of trustees. "It was an exceptional painting and I couldn't afford it, but I worked out terms to pay for it over time."

Later, Tomayko met Mason while attending an art convention in New York, and struck up a friendship.

## Embracing the Arts

Tomayko's relationship with Point Park also goes back decades, to when he was pursuing a doctorate in health and physical education from the University of Pittsburgh in the early 1980s. "At the time, Point Park wanted to bring in a professional to look over health and recreation services, so they worked out an arrangement with Pitt," Tomayko says.

"I was here for almost my entire Ph.D. program and stayed on for a year after as assistant dean of student development." Impressed with the energy of Point Park, Tomayko wanted to continue his involvement with the University. "Point Park is

unlike any place I had been to. It was easy to embrace the arts there, and during my initial collecting phase, I was able to make an impact," he says.

In addition to coordinating many of the exhibits in the gallery over the years, Tomayko commissioned the bronze sculpture Freedom Bound by artist Paige Bradley, which has graced the Lawrence Hall lobby since 2008. He also served on the committee that selected the mural created by Pittsburgh artist Philip Salvato that brightens the landing of the stone steps in that building.

## Mason's Art at Point Park

Since the first exhibit in 2009, the gallery has hosted a diverse array of art. "We try to balance out the exhibitions to give

students a different flavor and also involve the community," Tomayko says.

Some of Tomayko's favorite exhibits were 2011's Rivers of Steel, with works borrowed from the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area and the Duquesne Club; the 2013 exhibit of Joyce Werwie Perry's paintings of dancers; three shows that featured works by members of the National Association of Women Artists; three shows that were co-sponsored by the Andy Warhol Museum and featured emerging artists; and a 2010 show of works that all related to Point Park or Downtown Pittsburgh, called Point Park Frame of Mind.

*Read more about Frank Mason's life and art at [frankmason.org](http://frankmason.org).* ❖



# THE PARK



## Good Business

### Karen Larrimer is head of Retail Banking and chief customer officer of The PNC Financial Services Group

As I look back on my own life and career, I believe what has helped me the most is getting out of my comfort zone," says Karen Larrimer (BUS 1991), executive vice president, head of Retail Banking and chief customer officer of The PNC Financial Services Group. "This is good advice for anyone, but especially for young people just starting out."

"You need to seek opportunities to go above and beyond. That's what I've always done," says Larrimer, who is responsible for leading PNC's consumer businesses, business banking, brokerage, all distribution channels, digital, marketing, enterprise innovation and customer advocacy. "If I heard about something new, I wanted to learn more about it and get involved."

"Getting out of your comfort zone helps you develop muscles that you don't even know you have. If you don't push yourself to do something you aren't sure of, you may never know that you can actually do it," she says. That approach, "along with the experience of attending Point Park while I was working full-time, during my early career, has kept me in a continual state of learning."

#### Customer-centered

Larrimer says she chose Point Park, where she earned a B.S. in business management with a concentration in marketing, in part because of the Downtown location and classes that fit around

her full-time work schedule. "Point Park catered to people who needed that [flexibility], which I appreciated." In addition to her time at PNC, Larrimer also held management positions at Mellon Bank and served as a sales executive for Ernst & Young.

Larrimer was attracted to PNC's "culture of teamwork and focus on the customer, and that is what I still love today. I've been afforded so many opportunities to challenge myself." She was named chief customer officer in 2014 and assumed the leadership of Retail Banking in 2016. Prior to that she held various executive positions at PNC, including chief marketing officer and executive vice president for business banking, where she directed strategic planning, marketing, and product management and development.

When Larrimer accepted the position of chief customer officer, "it was a unique position in the financial services industry, and a real breakthrough. It was an opportunity for me to step into an enterprise-wide role, across the entire company, and create something from scratch. I knew it could have an incredible impact, and that was pretty exciting."

#### Role Model

Larrimer has been recognized as one of the Most Powerful Women in Banking by American Banker magazine (2015 and 2016); was selected to receive a Most Powerful and Influential Woman Award by the National Diversity Council's Pennsylvania Awards Committee (2014) and was a finalist for the 2014 Athena Award. She received the Girl Scouts of America Award of Distinction in Business (2013) and was named a Working Mother magazine "Mother of the Year" (2010), "Women Worth Watching" by Diversity Journal magazine (2009), and one of the Best 50 Women in Business in Pennsylvania (2003). She

## ALUMNI PROFILE

is known as a generous mentor, in and outside of her own profession. A mother of four children ranging in age from six to 28, Larrimer says "what I'm truly most proud of is that I've been able to have a successful career while being a good mother to my children, raising them well, and still being able to make an impact on my community."

"I've found value in all three of those pathways, and I'm very proud of bringing them together."

Community service is close to Larrimer's heart. A board and executive committee member of United Way of Allegheny County, she will soon become the first woman in the history of the organization to serve as board chair. "I believe in the work of the United Way because of the significant, broad-based impact it has on the community in identifying and meeting critical areas of need," she says.

#### Lifelong Learning

Larrimer is also deeply involved as a board member of The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, "an incredible treasure that makes a great impact on the lives of children." She also serves on the board of directors for The PNC Foundation and Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

For Larrimer, education is a lifelong endeavor. After graduating from Point Park, she went on to complete the Carnegie Mellon University Center for Executive Education Leadership Program. Today she serves on the board of trustees for Robert Morris University and volunteers on the Board of Visitors of the RMU Women's Leadership and Mentorship Program.

And as she travels each day to her office in the PNC Tower, across from the site of the University's new Pittsburgh Playhouse, Larrimer says she is impressed by Point Park's transformation.

"The growth of the University has been amazing," she says. "I drive through the campus area every single day and I am so proud of what I see, and of the vibrancy that Point Park has brought to the city of Pittsburgh. It's very exciting." ❖



# RAISING THE BAR

A signed beam tops off Point Park's new Pittsburgh Playhouse, now taking shape in Downtown Pittsburgh



Point Park students, faculty and staff joined President Paul Hennigan, Board of Trustees Chair Anne Lewis and other friends of the University on Nov. 30 for a topping off ceremony for the new Pittsburgh Playhouse, now under construction in Downtown Pittsburgh.

Hennigan invited everyone to follow his lead in signing the final beam for the new Playhouse, which is situated on a 1.6 acre parcel between Forbes and Fourth avenues. It is set to open in 2018.

"This is an important day in the life of the new Pittsburgh Playhouse and Point Park University," Hennigan said at the ceremony, which took place in the University Center adjacent to the Playhouse. "As you sign the beam, I would like you to think about what it represents for you."

## A Rich Legacy

"For me," said Hennigan, "here is what it represents. The Pittsburgh Playhouse journey began over 80 years ago. After a couple of years of make-shift theaters, the Pittsburgh

Playhouse organization bought the auditorium building on Hamlet Street in Oakland and built a larger stage. That theatre, which we now call the Rauh Theatre, is what is considered to be the original Pittsburgh Playhouse, and it was known as the Hamlet Theatre.

"Point Park College bought the current version of the Pittsburgh Playhouse in 1968, along with the Playhouse School, which was the beginning of Point Park's now nationally recognized theatre program. That was almost 50 years ago, and Playbill magazine just ranked us in the Top 10 on

Broadway," Hennigan said. "That was also the beginning of Point Park's highly acclaimed dance program, founded by Nicholas Petrov, who also started The Pittsburgh Ballet in the same year. Depending on which ranking you read, our Dance program is now either number two or three in the nation."

## Crown Jewel

"So there is a lot of rich history in the placement of this steel beam," said Hennigan. "For me, the contemporary meaning is: This beam represents the crown jewel of the Academic Village Initiative."



“ There is a lot of rich history in the placement of this steel beam. For me, [it] represents the crown jewel of the Academic Village Initiative. ”

— President Paul Hennigan



Point Park President Paul Hennigan and Conservatory of Performing Arts Artistic Director Ronald Allan-Lindblom survey Playhouse construction. Photos by John Altdorfer.



Signed beam in place near Fourth Avenue.

The eight-foot steel beam, which remained in the University Center for two days after the ceremony to enable students and others to add signatures, was draped with a gold necklace from the costume and scenery shop of the Conservatory of Performing Arts. In early December, the signed beam (adorned with the costume necklace) was set in place high atop the Playhouse structure on the Fourth Avenue side of the complex, not far from the future location of the new prop shop.

Hennigan told those gathered for the signing ceremony that the new Playhouse will be a cultural hub and “an innovative

academic lab for the entire University.” He added: “Performance students will use the studios and stages, theatre tech students will design and build masterful sets, and cinema students will use the sound stage.”

In addition, he said, “Business students will run every aspect of the new Pittsburgh Playhouse, Communication students will do all of the marketing, advertising, promotions and social media, and Arts and Sciences students will host a wide variety of speakers and topics. Artists from around the country will flock to the new Playhouse to try out their new works.”

### Heartbeat of Downtown Pittsburgh

Hennigan added, “For the first time in 50 years, Point Park University will have its entire physical campus right in the heart of Pittsburgh.

“I believe it will become the heartbeat of Downtown Pittsburgh.”

Construction of the Playhouse is about 30 percent complete. In December, the site was covered so work can continue on the complex throughout the winter. Off-site work currently being

done includes restoration of a stained-glass ceiling in the Stock Exchange Building, and restoration of the three Forbes Avenue facades that will be reused in the Playhouse's two-story outdoor courtyard.

Community members can watch the development of the new Pittsburgh Playhouse, as it unfolds in real time, from the University 24/7 construction cam. Follow the action at [bit.ly/29RV6nC](http://bit.ly/29RV6nC).



"While studying at Point Park, my interest of performing on stage shifted when I had a work-study job in the costume shop. It made me realize that there are so many other fun aspects in theatre other than performing on stage." — **Bobbie Zlotnik**, B.A. in musical theatre, 2009. Currently a wig/hair department swing for *Wicked*, *Beautiful*, *The Color Purple*, *Matilda*, *Something Rotten* and *Jersey Boys*.

"I never had formal acting training before Point Park. In the two years I attended, I took acting, voice and speech and voice training classes, which provided me the tools I needed to succeed in the audition room and in New York City." — **Kaley Ann Voorhees**, former musical theatre student, 2010-12. Debuted as the lead role of *Christine Daaé* in *Phantom of the Opera*.

"Point Park got me to Broadway by instilling a great work ethic, drive and a diversified sense of storytelling from all of my class work. I have such gratitude for the program." — **Rachel Stevens**, B.A. in theatre arts, 2009. Assistant director for *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*.

"Point Park provided me with the tools to navigate a career in the arts by offering a well-rounded education in dance. The instructors have a wealth of knowledge that was instrumental in my success." — **Ahmad Simmons**, B.F.A. in dance, 2010. Currently performing in *Cats*.

"Point Park taught me everything I needed to know in less than four years. The diverse and eclectic theatre program exposed me to a world of endless possibilities. I turned out to be a well-rounded actor, singer and dancer who started working on Broadway almost immediately after graduation. Thank you, Point Park!" — **E. Clayton Cornelius**, B.A. in theatre, 1998. Performed in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*.

"The versatility of the training at Point Park allowed me to keep all of my options open as a dancer. That, along with connections of the faculty, has really contributed to launching my career!" — **Alex Hathaway**, B.F.A. in dance, 2016. Ensemble dancer in *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*.

"Point Park provided me with the technique I needed to not just have a job, but a career!" — **Andrea Weinzierl**, B.A. in musical theatre, 2014. Working on *Mindhunter* for Netflix filming in Pittsburgh.

"My career has been moving forward ever since Point Park. I made my Broadway debut in the Tony award-winning musical *Kinky Boots*. Thank you, Point Park!" — **Jeff Kuhr**, B.A. in dance, 2004. Currently performing in *Kinky Boots*.

## ON BROADWAY

Point Park Conservatory of Performing Arts alumni on Broadway gathered for a photo on the Red Steps in Times Square on Nov. 16. The reunion was organized by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Steeltown Entertainment Project for "Pittsburgh on Broadway," a Post-Gazette Sunday Magazine feature about the Pittsburgh connections who have worked, or are working, in show business in New York City. Past reunions were held Nov. 16, 2005 and Nov. 16, 1994. Photo by Patrick Lazour.

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Preceding pages and above: Conservatory of Performing Arts alumni gathered on Broadway in Times Square on Nov. 16. Photos by Patrick Lazour.



President Paul Hennigan (center) with theatre arts alumni (from left): John Magaro ('05), Ben Mapp ('07), Ross Lekites ('07) and Mike Cannon ('00). Photo by Jennifer Broski.

Representing Point Park's Broadway stars in the Big Apple were alumni who have landed roles on and off stage in such shows as: *Hamilton*; *Phantom of the Opera*; *Cats*; *Wicked*; *Jersey Boys*; *Mary Poppins*; *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*; *A Chorus Line*; *Holiday Inn*; *The Producers*; *Never Gonna Dance*; *Funny Face*; *Hand to God*; *Kinky Boots*; *The Winter's Tale*; and *A Bronx Tale*.

### On Top: Conservatory of Performing Arts recognized by two national Top 10 lists

Point Park University is ranked No. 8 on Playbill.com's list of the "Top Colleges Currently Represented on Broadway," ahead of schools such as the Boston Conservatory, UCLA and Florida State. This ranking comes on the heels of Point Park's No. 3 ranking on OnStage's list of the Top 10 BFA Dance Programs in the Country for 2016-2017.

"These rankings are a testament to Point Park University's commitment to the performing and cinematic arts," said Ronald Allan-Lindblom, artistic director of Point Park's Conservatory of Performing Arts. "The recognition also is a direct result of our

students' talent, as well as the dedicated work of our faculty of artist educators and the national guest artists we are privileged to work with each year."

Playbill.com's ranking is based on its own research, which only includes Broadway shows currently open, along with some shows that have announced casting for the 2016-2017 season.

The list of Point Park alumni recognized by Playbill.com includes:

- Mike Cannon, *Aladdin*, Woodside, N.Y.
- Shonica Goodwin, *Cats*, Atlanta, Ga.
- Ahmed Simmons, *Cats*, Fort Worth, Texas
- Callan Bergmann, *Cats*, Gowanda, N.Y.
- John Magaro, *Front Page*, Munroe Falls, Ohio
- Megan Sikora, *Holiday Inn*, New York, N.Y.
- Amy Van Norstrand, *Holiday Inn*, Hyde Park, N.Y.
- Candi Boyd, *Jersey Boys*, Gibsonia, Pa.
- Rory Max Kaplan, *Jersey Boys*, New York, N.Y.
- Ross Lekites, *Kinky Boots*, Louisville, Ky.
- Sarah Meahl, *Paramour*, Orlando, Fla.
- Bruce Weber, *Paramour*, Melrose, Mass.
- Jennifer DiNoia, *Wicked*, Meriden, Conn.

Alumni of Point Park's Conservatory of Performing Arts also have found success behind the scenes on Broadway. *Wicked*, Steve Martin and Edie Brickell's *Bright Star*, and the first national tour of *Hamilton* are among the more recent productions that have had Point Park alumni working as assistant stage managers and production assistants.

"The immersive, hands-on education our students get in the technical areas of production gives them the kind of real-world experience they need to succeed in the fast-paced environment of Broadway," Lindblom said. "As a result, hundreds of graduates of our programs are working on stage and behind the scenes all over the world."

### Point Park Sponsors Broadway Dreams

Point Park University was the leading education sponsor for the Broadway Dreams annual Night of Dreams Gala, held in New York City on Nov. 21. Tony Award-winning lyricist Lynn Ahrens and composer Stephen Flaherty were honored with the inaugural Arts Advancement Award at the event.

"Point Park University is dedicated to educating the artists of the future," said University President Paul Hennigan. "We are delighted to sponsor Broadway Dreams in that shared vision for the young artists that they work with year-round." Point Park alumnus and trustee Ryan Stana (COPA '02), founder and CEO of RWS & Associates, is a longtime supporter of Broadway Dreams, which provides youth and young adults of all socio-economic backgrounds with performance training, life skills building, and mentorship opportunities from the entertainment industry's brightest talents.

Broadway Dreams seeks to empower young artists through performing arts training, with a focus on the acting, voice, and dance disciplines. Since its inception, Broadway Dreams has inspired more than 10,000 students and awarded more than \$1 million in needs-based scholarships nationally in such cities as New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Philadelphia - and internationally in Brazil, Russia, Canada and beyond.

Broadway Dreams student Abigail Cowan was recently awarded a scholarship for Point Park's International Summer Dance program in 2017. ❖



## LEADING ROLE

Ryan Stana produces top entertainment events and paves the way for Point Park talent

by Barbara Vilanova

Growing up as the only child of two entrepreneurial parents, Ryan Stana learned from a young age the value of taking risks and trying new things.

Stana is the founder and CEO of RWS & Associates, an Emmy Award-winning New York-based entertainment firm that produces brand experiences for top resorts, cruise lines, theme parks and New York fashion events. A 2002 graduate of the Conservatory of Performing Arts (COPA), he serves as a Point Park University trustee and has become a valued advisor to the University on the Conservatory and new Pittsburgh Playhouse.

Stana's company also recently acquired Binder Casting, an Artios Award-winning casting firm for Broadway, film and television, including *The Lion King*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* and Broadway's upcoming *In Transit*, written by Academy Award winner Kristen Anderson-Lopez (*Frozen*) and directed by Tony Award winner Kathleen Marshall. With this acquisition, RWS has created pathways for opportunities throughout performers' careers.

### Big Dreams

"My parents encouraged me to believe anything is possible, and whatever I imagined, they worked hard to make a reality for me," says Stana. His mother Shirley owns and operates Billy's Country Smokehouse, a family business still located on its original site in Greensburg, Pa., and his father Edward founded and was CEO of Tech Source, Inc., a manufacturer of tools and products aimed at helping to reduce air pollution.

As a young boy, Stana had two big dreams: to be a teacher and a performer. His parents helped make that a reality for their son by building him a little schoolhouse, "Complete with letterhead, lesson plans and an annual holiday musical, the whole thing," laughs Stana. The takeaway from his parents' encouragement was "anything I dreamed was possible with hard work."

In fact, Stana's work ethic and academic talents brought him to college while still in high school. As a sophomore at Hempfield Area High School, he explains, "I would take my core high school curriculum in the morning and earn college credit attending dance classes at Point Park in the afternoon." That

experience introduced him to Joe McGoldrick, Ron Tassone and Kiesha Lalama, academic and artistic mentors who, says Stana, "had such belief in me, it still humbles me to this day."

After graduating from Point Park with a bachelor of fine arts in theatre arts, Stana moved to New York to focus on production work. He soon landed a position as an associate producer with a company that produced corporate and retail events throughout the U.S. – and while it was a good job – he knew he would do things differently.

"So one day, on my way into work, I called my parents and explained my frustrations, and they said, 'Well, why don't you start your own business?'" Stana took their advice to heart and quit his job the same day. He took a cab to a nearby Staples, bought office supplies and set up a desk in the corner of his apartment, launching RWS & Associates in 2003.

### Fostering Talent

As a University Trustee, Stana relishes his role in fostering Point Park talent in the entertainment industry. A special focus is the role he plays at the Point Park senior showcase event in New York, where a select group of theatre and cinema majors have an opportunity to have their auditions adjudicated by a panel of professional agents and casting directors. "I'm always impressed with how Point Park grads are ready to compete," says Stana.

In fact, at his Long Island City office complex, Stana's staff of 35 full time and more than 2,000 seasonal employees includes several Point Park graduates, some of whom hold executive positions. In addition to his efforts with the senior showcase, Stana is also involved in Broadway Dreams, a nonprofit organization that provides performance training and mentorship opportunities to youth and young adults.

As the opening of the new Pittsburgh Playhouse nears, Stana believes the University is poised for even bigger and better things. "We need to think of the new Playhouse as having a global impact on arts education," he says. "It will be a state-of-the-art facility unsurpassed for a university setting, and that's something for which we can all be proud." ❖

Ryan Stana outside Pittsburgh's Consol Energy Center (now PPG Paints Arena), where his company RWS & Associates produced the 2016 Hillman Cancer Center Gala on Sept. 29. Photo by John Altdorfer.



# ROAD SCHOLARS



Point Park's International Media Class celebrates 10 years of educational travel supported by the John Fallon Travel Scholarship Fund

# GIFTS AT WORK



Helen Fallon, School of Communication professor.



For the past decade, Point Park students have had opportunities to explore media and culture in countries around the world thanks to financial assistance provided through the John Fallon Travel Scholarship Fund.

Established in memory of the late Dr. John Fallon, a popular dentist and the husband of School of Communication professor Helen Fallon, the fund has made it possible for students with limited financial resources to participate in the annual International Media class and trip abroad at the end of the spring semester, as well as media trips to U.S. cities such as Washington, D.C. and New York City. More than \$40,000 in international travel grants, most averaging about \$1,000 each, have been provided to students since the first trip (to London) in 2008.

## Open to Possibilities

Since then, more than 150 students have enrolled in the International Media class and traveled to such destinations as the United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal and many more. Students meet regularly during the semester to learn about media, government, politics, economics and culture, then spend 1-2 weeks visiting media organizations and sightseeing in destination countries at the end of the course. School of Communication faculty members such as Fallon, Robert O'Gara, David Fabilli and Jan Getz (now retired) have served as faculty guides on the trips.

For students, the experience "opens their eyes to the possibilities — personally and professionally," says Fallon. The class also exposes students to international perceptions of America and its citizens and is important in an era in which most news organizations have reduced foreign coverage, she adds. For participants such as Jessica Federkeil, a journalism major who traveled to Amsterdam, Bruges and London in 2016, it was her first time traveling abroad and "an amazing experience. It's so important to go out and see different cultures and learn new ideas, especially as a college student," said Federkeil. "I wouldn't have been able to take this trip if it wasn't for this class and financial assistance from the John Fallon Travel Scholarship."

## April 17 fundraising celebration

The Fallon Travel Scholarship Fund is supported by sales of note cards and an annual fundraiser, to be held on April 17 at Wagle Whiskey, a craft distillery in Pittsburgh's Strip District. For a small admission charge, participants can enjoy entertainment (provided by Pioneer Records recording artists Chase and the Barons in 2016 and 2017), food trucks, and a good time.

Admission proceeds and a portion of purchases support the travel fund. For more information and to register, visit: [bit.ly/2icKWfC](http://bit.ly/2icKWfC) or contact Helen Fallon at [hfallon@pointpark.edu](mailto:hfallon@pointpark.edu). ❖



# ALUMNI CONNECTION



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Feb 15** (Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.) Alumni Dinner with President Hennigan
  - Feb 16** (Tampa, Fla.) Alumni Dinner with President Hennigan
  - Feb 17** (Orlando, Fla.) Alumni Dinner with President Hennigan
  - Mar 1** (New York City) Alumni & Student Reception
  - Mar 18** (Pittsburgh) 50th Anniversary Celebration of The Globe
  - Mar 21** (Pittsburgh) Faces of Impact Reception
  - Apr 11** (Pittsburgh) Graduating Seniors & Alumni Networking Reception
  - May 20** (PNC Park) Alumni Baseball Outing: Pirates vs. Phillies
  - May 23** (Ligonier, Pa.) Pioneer Golf Classic
- Visit [PointPark.edu/alumni](http://PointPark.edu/alumni) for more information.*

Dear alumni and friends,

Since coming to Point Park University in 2013, I have been fortunate to see so much positive growth and change. Point Park has had a steadfast persistence through its history that has served it well. Our alumni represent that resolve in their personal and professional lives. Point Park has a commitment to community, and we believe our alumni share that same commitment. While your time as a student was finite, you are a lifelong member of this community. Whether you support your alma mater through volunteer opportunities or donate to our annual fund or special campaigns such as the Academic Village, you are engaged and informed – positively affecting each of our students, faculty and staff members.

The work of the Development and Alumni Relations department exists as a pathway for our constituents to engage and be involved with their alma mater. We need to hear from our alumni often so that we know how best to serve, inform and engage you. We want you to remain connected with the institution in ways that resonate with your time as a student. My time here has been about building bridges for engagement for you to remain a deeply linked member of this community, because you, our alumni, are Point Park University.

We have been working to build a culture of philanthropy within the University and beyond. Philanthropy is not just about financial investments, but taking action for the common good. Our core focus is to work across all departments to ensure support for programs and initia-

tives from which the greater community will most benefit. This culture is not just about funding one project, but about strengthening our mission-centered drive.

Point Park has recently updated a new strategic plan with four core initiatives: Academic Excellence, Quality Student Experience, Community Engagement and Managed Resources. These core initiatives support the University's vision. We have innovative and entrepreneurial projects to create and support, including new academic centers of excellence and emerging programs, scholarships for faculty and students, and growing our permanent endowment to sustain the University and its plans to remain uniquely competitive in higher education.

I hope that now, more than ever, these exciting projects and programs will spark your interest to engage with your alma mater in new and more meaningful ways. I would love to share more details of these strategic initiatives and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to share news, build awareness and to see where your affinity might lie moving forward.

Best regards,

**Sharon M. Navoney**

Vice President, Development and Alumni Relations  
412-392-4205 | [snavoney@pointpark.edu](mailto:snavoney@pointpark.edu)

# CLASS NOTES

## 1960s

### IN MEMORIAM

**Dennis “Denny” McWilliams** (COM 1969) died on Oct. 21 at the age of 70 in Hendersonville, N.C. A native of Level Green, Pa., he is survived by his wife of 28 years, Kathaleen Rhoads McWilliams and sons, Jeff McWilliams and Brad McWilliams. For 35 years, he worked in industrial publishing and communications sales for Chilton Company, Cahners Publishing, CapCities/ABC and Disney. McWilliams earned his degree in journalism and communications at Point Park, where he was an officer in Delta Phi Kappa fraternity. He is fondly remembered by fellow alumni, including **John Crisafi** (COM 1970) of Dubois, Pa. Find McWilliams' full obituary at [bit.ly/2iUzarM](http://bit.ly/2iUzarM).

## 1970s

**Tom Kayser** (COM 1974) will retire as the president of the Texas League on February

28, 2017 after 25 seasons, the longest tenure in league history. On December 6, he received the Baseball America Minor League Baseball Executive of the Year award at the Baseball Winter Meetings at National Harbor, Maryland. A resident of San Antonio, Tx., Kayser earned his degree in journalism and communications at Point Park in 1974.

**Joseph R. Greco** (BUS 1971), president and CEO of Greco Gas Inc., has been honored with the Bob Jackson Memorial Award in recognition of his contributions to the Independent Welding Distributors Cooperative (IWDC), the industrial gas & welding industry and surrounding Pittsburgh community. Headquartered in Tarentum, Pa., Greco Gas is one of the oldest continuously owned independent gas and welding distributors in North America. Joe Greco has been leading his company's growth for more than 37 years, during which the company has expanded to four locations, installed a state of the art cylinder fill plant, launched

a microbulk gas offering and diversified into specialty gases, dry ice and propane. Greco graduated from Point Park in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in business management.

**Kim Payne** (COM 1979) has been named communications director for Florida Hospital Center Ice. A veteran marketing, media and public relations professional, Payne was previously the staff writer and media coordinator at Saint Leo University. He has more than 35 years of experience in professional communications in various settings, including corporate, healthcare, non-profit and academic. His new responsibilities encompass all marketing and public relations activities for Florida Hospital Center Ice. Payne is also a National Hockey League Off-Ice Official for the Tampa Bay Lightning. At 150,500 square feet, the newly completed Florida Hospital Center Ice is the largest ice sports facility in the southeastern U.S. The facility features five ice pads — an Olympic-size rink, three NHL rinks, and a mini rink. One NHL rink can be converted into a multi-purpose floor for additional dry sports. The complex includes a fitness center, dance studio, turf track and skills area, as well as a pro shop and a full-service restaurant and bar. Florida Hospital is the facility's major sponsor and naming partner and the Tampa Bay Lightning is a program rink partner. Payne and his wife Susan reside in Wesley Chapel, Fla.

**David Lee** (COPA 1975) shared the news that he has completed a 10-month assignment to make a video about a circus in Cambodia, in which most of the performers were recovering from genocide and war. A resident of Washington, D.C., Lee earned a triple fine arts degree, with an emphasis on filmmaking, at Point Park.



## Pioneers Among the Palms

Point Park alumni reunited and shared memories at a recent wedding in Tampa, Fla. Donning vintage Point Park College and Sigma Delta Sigma t-shirts for the occasion are, from left: **Carol Riden Spendiff** (A&S 1972), **Mary E. London Gibbon** (A&S 1972), **Robin Mason** and **Nancy Davis-Kahrs** (COM 1972).

Where have you wandered in your Point Park gear? Share your story, and send us a photo: [thepoint@pointpark.edu](mailto:thepoint@pointpark.edu).



1980s

**Peter Wentzel** (COPA 1982) is senior vice president of production finance at Media Rights Capital (MRC) in Los Angeles, where he has been overseeing feature films *The Dark Tower*, starring Idris Elba and Matthew McConaughey, and *Baby Driver*, starring Kevin Spacey, Jamie Foxx, Jon Hamm and Ansel Elgort. Both are scheduled for release in 2017. Wentzel is currently in pre-production on the film *Mortal Engines*, by Peter Jackson, writer/director of *Lord of the Rings*.

1990s

**Mark Ansani** (COM 1992) writes, "I am newly hired by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in their Driver's License Center in Allison Park, Pa. I also was recently promoted to Master Sergeant in the United States Air Force Reserve."

2000s

**Patricia Lonsbury** (BUS '00) was recently appointed director of development for the School of Medicine at West Virginia University. Prior to that she was a major gifts officer for the American Red Cross, Southwestern Pennsylvania Chapter, and a managing director at Bob Carter Companies. Lonsbury has also managed international philanthropy projects for UNICEF and has had a long career in development and fundraising. She earned her M.B.A. in international business at Point Park in 2000.

**Robert L. Horvat Jr.** P.E. (A&S '06) has joined Entech Engineering, Inc. as the regional director of the company's Pittsburgh office, as well as a project manager. He has nearly 25 years of industry experience in the municipal, water, and wastewater fields, including operations, applications and engineering. Entech's Vice President and Civil/Environmental Re-

sources Manager Robert Weir, P.E., said, "We're excited to have Rob join us and continue to build Entech's presence in the Pittsburgh area, as well as throughout the Commonwealth. We know with his great attitude and experience, he will do great things." Horvat earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering technology in 2006.

**Lindsey Whissel Fenton** (COPA '08), a senior producer/director at WPSU Penn State, was honored with a 2016 Mid-Atlantic Emmy for excellence in a program or special that covers schools, teaching or education. Fenton produced the winning program, *You Can't Say That*, which documents Penn State's popular SOC119 course on race and ethnic relations. She earned her degree in cinema and digital arts at Point Park.

**Jennifer Bullano-Ridgley** (BUS '07), senior director of communications and media relations for the Pittsburgh Penguins, was honored with

a 2016 Mid-Atlantic Emmy for excellence in the "Sports - One-Time Special" category for *There's No Place Like Home with Sidney Crosby* (in which hockey superstar Crosby himself was among the nominees). She earned her M.B.A. degree at Point Park in 2007. The Mid-Atlantic Chapter, which represents Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio, presented 86 Emmys in 78 categories for excellence in television programming and individual achievement.

**Scott Schubert** (A&S '08, '09) has been appointed the new acting chief for the Pittsburgh Police. He earned his bachelor's degree in accelerated law enforcement in 2008 and his master's degree in criminal justice administration in 2009 at Point Park.

**Anthony Pignetti** (COM '08) was recently promoted to chief director of business development with the Reading Fightin' Phils baseball team, the A.A. affiliate of the Philadelphia Phillies, located in Reading, Pa. He is a 2008 graduate of Point Park, where he earned his degree in broadcasting.

**Melodee Holsinger** (COPA '02) is now known as Miss Melodee to children across the country. Her music and videos are available on iTunes, Amazon, Google+ and more, and featured on Speakaboos.com, a Top 5 reading app for preschool children. She is also the owner and president of Miss Melodee Studios, specializing in dance and arts education for children, and a co-owner of Melstar Entertainment, which manages her children's music and entertainment brand. Melstar Entertainment's

feature film division, Sure Crossing Films, recently released a family adventure film, *Lost & Found*, through Sony Pictures and AMC Theaters. The movie, which stars Cary Elwes, Jason Patric, Justin Kelly, Benjamin Stockham, Celeste Desjardins and Greg Bryk, opened in limited theaters (including Pittsburgh) on Jan. 6 and is now available on VOD/DVD. See the trailer at: <http://bit.ly/2jj9QiA>. Holsinger earned her degree in musical theatre at Point Park in 2002.

2010s

**Ange Loiseau** (COM '10), former program coordinator and organizational support at Bayer Corporation/Bayer MaterialScience, is now community affairs officer for Covestro (formerly Bayer MaterialScience).

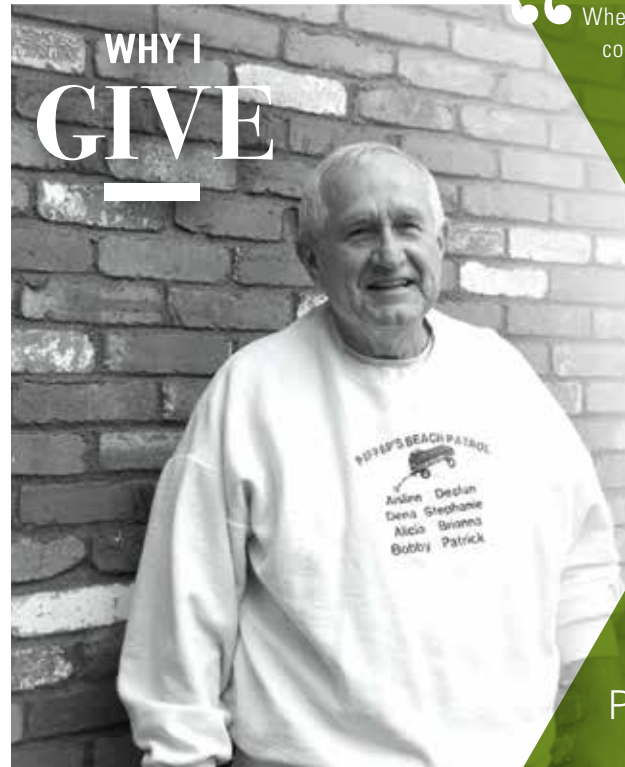
**Matthew Walsh** (BUS '16) and Christina Forster were married on July 9, 2016 at St. Mary's of the Mount Church in Pittsburgh.

**Claire Gysegem** (COM '13) earned a master's degree in public media from Ohio

University in 2016. She is now the community liaison for Trumbull County Children Services in Warren, Ohio. She graduated from Point Park with a degree in broadcast journalism in 2013.



**Gianna Martello** (COM '11), is a choreographer best known for her work on Lifetime's hit series *Dance Moms*, which follows the training and careers of children in dance and show business under the tutelage of Abby Lee Miller. Martello has appeared on the show since season one, assisting Miller to choreograph the performances of the show's stars such as Maddie Ziegler, Mackenzie Ziegler



WHY I GIVE

“When I was 18, I never dreamed of going to college. Point Park Junior College took a chance on me and prepared me well to have a great life. Point Park believed in me, and I believe in them.”

**BERNARD MURRAY**  
Retired Elementary Teacher  
A.A. in Liberal Arts, '64

**GIVING BACK**  
Bernard gives to carry on the tradition of providing chances for the students of today and tomorrow.

Whatever your reason for giving, your gift will provide opportunity. Please give to the **POINT PARK UNIVERSITY ANNUAL FUND.**  
[PointPark.edu/Give](http://PointPark.edu/Give)



Know someone who can benefit from a Point Park education?

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MEDIA PIONEERS IN THE BIG APPLE

Catching up in New York City last fall were (from left): **Richelle Szypulski** (COM '13), editorial assistant for *Travel+Leisure*; **Emily Berk** (COM '11), producer, *Today Show*, *NBC Universal*; and **Kate Santichen** (COM '07), senior video producer, *Money* magazine. They joined **Jan Getz**, former Point Park faculty member and broadcaster-in-residence (second from right), for a mini-reunion at Obao restaurant.



## CLASS NOTES

and Kendall Vertes. Martello has been choreographing routines for the Abby Lee Dance Company (ALDC) since she was 16 years old. She has been a part of the faculty at the ALDC for 11 years and has been a guest instructor and judge around the world on competition circuits. Her award-winning routines have earned her regional and national titles, as well as awards for choreography. Martello's choreography can also be seen in music videos for Todrick Hall, Kendall Vertes, Alexx Calise and MackZ. Martello earned her degree in advertising and public relations

from Point Park in 2011. She currently splits her time between Pittsburgh and Los Angeles.

**Olivia Ciotoli** (COM '14) writes, "I have started my own LLC, The Black Cat Market. It will be Pittsburgh's very first cat cafe, where customers can enjoy coffee, tea, and baked goods while interacting with adoptable cats. We are partnered with Animal Rescue League and will be located in Bloomfield. The Black Cat Market will be opening this January/February. You can find more info at [www.black-](http://www.blackcatmarket.com)

[catmarket.com](http://www.blackcatmarket.com)." Ciotoli earned her degree in photojournalism in 2014.

**Elena LaQuatra** (COM '14) and **Aster Teclay** (BUS '14) were honored among Pittsburgh's 40 Under 40 for 2016. Pittsburgh Urban Magnet Project (PUMP) and Pittsburgh Magazine hosted the 18th annual 40 Under 40 Awards to recognize individuals under the age of 40 whose creativity, vision, and passion enrich the Pittsburgh region. LaQuatra earned her degree in broadcasting and Teclay earned his M.B.A. at Point Park. Both graduated in 2014.

**Deandre Williamson** (COM '13) has been honored with the prestigious Walter Cronkite Bust for a first place finish in a conference paper competition. Williamson, an editor /journalist, also addressed the 3rd Annual Walter Cronkite Conference on Media Ethics and Integrity, held at the Missouri Western State University last November. The conference is both a celebration of the legacy of Walter Cronkite and a discussion of the future of journalism. A member of The Bahamas Press Club, Williamson presented on the topic 'Ethical Challenges in Bahamian Journalism: The Case for a Code of Ethics.' "This is a research study I did for my master's thesis as a student at Point Park University. I'm proud of my work in journalism research, which took me two years to complete," she said. Williamson is a former editor and reporter at The Bahama Journal. She was a student speaker at Point Park's Graduate Hooding Ceremony in 2014 and received an Academic Excellence Award in Journalism and Mass Communication. She interned at KDKA-TV, Pittsburgh and at CNN Headline News in Atlanta.

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## JAZZ PIONEERS

By **Timothy Cox** (COM 1980)

As an alumnus and frequent reader of *The Point*, I often peruse the magazine to see if I recognize any of my classmates from the mid to late 1970s. Several months ago, *The Point* did a wonderful feature on **Ron "Moondog" Esser**, a philanthropist and owner of Moondogs, the famous Blues music club in Blawnox, Pa.

Esser is also my former band-mate, who joined me and three other musicians to form what we [believe to be] the first-ever Point Park Jazz Ensemble in 1978. We initially used our jazz stylings to accompany [Point Park] dancers, who utilized our music to help prepare for dance performances.

We later renamed ourselves WOODSTREET, in homage to our downtown Pittsburgh location, and performed popular music including punk-rock sounds created by then-new groups such as The Police and The Cars. Of course, we also played The Beatles. We managed to stay true to our jazz origins by continuing to play contemporary funk-jazz tunes like "Mr. Magic" by Grover Washington Jr., and "Pick Up The Pieces" by The Average White Band, along with compositions by Count Basie, Dave Brubeck and Tom Scott. The band typically rehearsed in one of the dance studios [used] by students who studied jazz, ballet, Afro, tap [and more]. Needless to say, we had close ties with the student dance community.

Our quintet featured a diverse group of college kids who came from various parts of Pittsburgh and western Pa. I received my degree in journalism and communications in 1980. I continued in music after moving to Atlanta in the early 1990s, and currently perform with (and manage) a successful wedding band in Augusta, Ga. called "Play-Back-The Band," now celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Some members of the WOODSTREET band reunited in November 2016 at Moondog's in Blawnox, where they joined legendary blues artist Norm Nardini for a photo. From left: Philip Smith, Ron Esser, Nardini and Timothy Cox.



In addition to Esser and myself, the Point Park band included: **Philip Smith** (tenor sax); **Phil Harris** (rhythm guitar) and **Tony Sanchez** (lead and rhythm guitars). I played drums and Esser was the bass player. Smith is now a successful businessman and entrepreneur in suburban Washington, D.C., Harris owns a bookstore in Sewickley, Pa. [and enjoys] a career as a music writer, and Sanchez continues practicing law in metropolitan Pittsburgh. I now live in suburban Washington, D.C., where I work as a technical writer in the defense contracting industry.

Philip Smith and I [recently reconnected through Facebook] and reunited about a year ago to trade stories, after a 30-year lapse in contact. In retrospect, he should be credited for having the forethought to form [the band]. He was a music major at West Virginia University before transferring to Point Park [and] was our unofficial band leader. ❖

## HEART OF POINT PARK

**Kaitlin Villines** (COPA '12) and **Ian Lupo** (A&S '14) were married in June 2016 in Pittsburgh. The bridal party included **Sarah Garren Owens**, **Sarah Rills Mayer** and **Bri Feindt**, all members of the class of 2012. Other alumni in attendance included **Elizabeth Birdsell Mutschler** (BUS '11), **Melissa Tyler** (COPA '09) and **Nicole Flasch Jamison** (COPA '13). Kaitlin, who earned her degree in dance (with a minor in accounting) in 2012, is a ballet dancer with Bodiography Contemporary Ballet. Ian, who earned his degree in electrical engineering in 2014, is an engineer with Industrial Scientific Corporation. The happy couple said they moved to Pittsburgh to receive their education from Point Park, but fell in love with the city and have made it their home.





# BACK TO BACK

By Karina Graziani

## WOMEN'S SOCCER WINS ANOTHER CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP



The Point Park women's soccer team poses as champions of the River States Conference Tournament on Nov. 12, 2016 with a 2-0 win at Ohio Christian in the finals. Photo by Sam Robinson.

As the saying goes: One is an accident, two is coincidence and three is a pattern. But nothing about the Point Park women's soccer team's recent success is an accident or a coincidence.

Under the leadership of head coach Maggie Kuhn, the Pioneers have seen a complete turnaround of the program. Point Park has recorded 10-win seasons four of the five years under Kuhn and has reached the conference tournament every year.

More recently, the Pioneers won the River States Conference championship in the fall of 2016 knocking off the top-seeded Ohio Christian University 2-0, in the finals. It was the second conference tournament championship in a row to earn another trip to the NAIA National Championship Opening Round.

### Increasing Momentum

From a team that was 26-86-5 before Kuhn's tenure, to a team that has won

49 games in the five years since, Point Park has seen a tremendous swing in momentum from the program.

"What excites me about coaching in general is seeing the student-athletes develop and get better," Kuhn said. "This is my first head coaching job, so I didn't really know what to expect, but what excited me the most about taking over the program was that I was going to be able to see what I could do."

Under Kuhn's tutelage, the Pioneers are yearly contenders for the conference title having experienced five years in a row in which they have reached the finals or semifinals (2012, 2013 and 2014) or were conference champions (2015 and 2016).

"What's important to me – especially when I'm recruiting players – is that I want the team to be a family," Kuhn said. "That means they're constantly working together to get better for the team, not for individual gain. I'm fortunate to be

surrounded by brilliant young ladies who are the reason this team is successful!"

### Team Progress

This season was the Pioneers' fourth 10-win season and its third winning season in a row. After the first championship in 2015, Kuhn lost seven starters to graduation, including two first team all-conference players, as well as four second team all-conference players.

With 19 new faces on the team for 2016, there was no guarantee of a trip to the conference tournament and barely a thought about the national tournament.

"I knew coming in we had a lot of quality, but I didn't know how they would mesh with the upperclassmen and adapt to the college level," Kuhn said. "In my opinion, belief is one of the most underrated qualities in moving a program forward, and that carried into the next season.





Women's soccer senior defender Paige Manning in the game versus No. 2 Lindsey Wilson (Ky.) at the NAIA National Championship Opening Round Nov. 19, 2016. Photo by Lindsey Wilson.



Women's soccer junior defender Asia Pennock-Franke was an all-conference performer for the Pioneers in 2016. Photo by Sam Robinson.

"I'm always talking to the team about being in love with the process – it's one thing to want to win a championship in August, but another to want to win when the season is over."

After a rough start to the 2016 season at 0-5-1 against a tough, non-conference schedule, the Pioneers hit their stride and came together as a team to go 6-2 in conference action and secure a second place seed and first-round bye in the RSC tournament. After defeating No. 3 seed Asbury (Ky.) University, 2-1, at Highmark Stadium, Point Park went on the road for the finals to face No. 1 Ohio Christian. The Pioneers lost to OCU, 2-1, in the regular season, but knowing this only added fuel to the fire.

### Up to the Challenge

Kuhn said she knew the team had a shot at the conference title after beating Asbury and WVU Tech, two big wins in the regular season.

"We didn't play our best game against Ohio Christian in the regular season," she said. "I think we believed after we beat Asbury that we had a chance of beating any team in the conference as long as we brought our best game."

After a 2-0 win over OCU to clinch another conference title, the Pioneers were headed back to the NAIA national tournament. There they drew No. 2 seed Lindsey Wilson (Ky.) College, a perennial NAIA powerhouse and the same team they played in the 2015 national tourney.

The Pioneers did not back down from the challenge, holding Lindsey Wilson to only seven shots. Only four teams all year held the Blue Raiders to under 10 shots with the other three being nationally ranked.

However, the shots for Point Park did not fall, and the ladies were sent home with a 3-0 loss. Even though they all played a tremendous role on the team, Kuhn is losing only four seniors this year, which means that the majority of her starting

lineup will be back and ready to defend the conference title in 2017 and continue the pattern of winning.

"I'm really excited about the future of this program," Kuhn said. "The ladies are already in the gym preparing for the fall. The future of this team is dependent on them and the effort they put in until next August." ❖



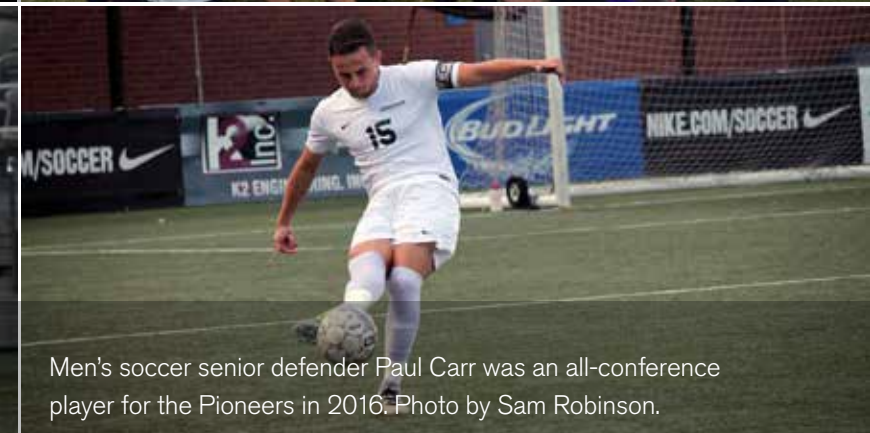
Point Park's volleyball team is pictured in the regular-season finale with head coach Mike Bruno picking up his 400th career victory. Photo by Sam Robinson.



Women's cross country runners (L to R) Anna Shields and Katie Guarnaccia compete at the NAIA National Championship Meet Nov. 19, 2016 at Elsah, Ill. Photo courtesy of NAIA.



Men's soccer players (L to R) Paul Carr and Alan Ramos celebrate a goal in a game during the 2016 season. Photo by Sam Robinson.



Men's soccer senior defender Paul Carr was an all-conference player for the Pioneers in 2016. Photo by Sam Robinson.

### ► VOLLEYBALL

Point Park volleyball won the River States Conference regular-season championship with a 15-1 conference record, which earned an automatic bid to the NAIA National Championship Opening Round. It was the third year in a row and the fourth time in six years that the Pioneers reached the national tournament. Point Park had a final record of 20-15 overall, and head coach Mike Bruno registered career win No. 400 in the regular-season finale. Seniors Shiloh Simonson (OH) and Emily Meng (S) were named all-conference first team, and sophomore Ashley Taylor (RS) second team. Simonson was RSC Player of the Year.

### ► WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

The Pioneers placed third of 10 teams at the River States Conference championship and also qualified two individuals for the NAIA national



meet. Junior Katie Guarnaccia was third in the conference, and sophomore Anna Shields was fifth to qualify for nationals, and both were all-conference performers. Freshman Jenny Murtha was also all-conference, and the team will not lose any seniors to graduation.

### ► MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

The Pioneers placed sixth of 11 teams at the River States Conference championship. It was a very young team running for the Pioneers with four freshmen and three sophomores in their top seven finishers at the meet. It was a successful season that included a team victory at

## SPORTS ROUNDUP

the Lebanon Valley meet, and the Pioneers will not lose any seniors to graduation.

### ► MEN'S SOCCER

Point Park men's soccer registered its sixth winning season in a row with a final record of 9-9-1 overall. It was also the sixth year in a row that the Pioneers made the conference playoffs. It was a very competitive conference, and the Pioneers lost a tough game at Midway (Ky.), 1-0, in the first round of the postseason. Senior defender Paul Carr led the all-conference honorees on the first team. Junior forward Alan Ramos and freshman goalkeeper Manuel Pajzer were second team.



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