

# Invention

SPRING 2017

THE MAGAZINE OF THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY

## AGAINST ALL ODDS

DONNA LOSTOCCO, BSBA '02

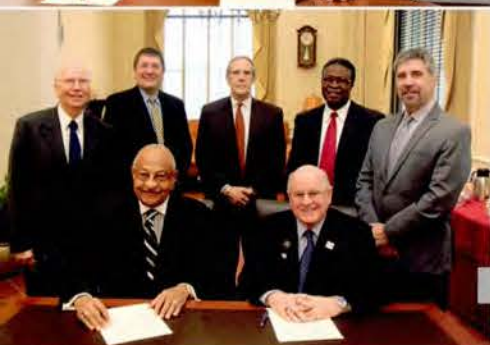


UNIVERSITY VICE PRESIDENT NAMED TO *NJBIZ*'S 'FORTY UNDER 40' | DREAMCATCHER: STEVEN KLINGER, AAS '15

DEAN DISCUSSES ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND PHILANTHROPY WITH PHILLY POPS CEO | SENIOR EXECUTIVE: FRANCES HOLLY, MPSL '15

UNIVERSITY RECEIVES \$10,000 GRANT FROM PNC FOUNDATION IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM 'BILL' SCHOFIELD





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### DEAR ALUMNI, STUDENTS AND FRIENDS,

Booker T. Washington said, "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome."

The alumni introduced in this issue of *Invention* have overcome obstacles and come out on top as evidenced in each of their unique stories.

We are privileged to introduce you to Donna LoStocco, BSBA '02, president and CEO of First Commonwealth Federal Credit Union based in Bethlehem, Pa. LoStocco shares her story of perseverance in overcoming hardships in pursuit of her degree to better care for her young family. She continues to share her love of learning, business and philanthropy with organizations close to her heart.


Also in this issue, we meet Steven Klinger, AAS '15, a sleep technologist at New York Methodist Sleep Disorder Center, in Brooklyn, N.Y. Klinger, one of the first graduates of the University's program in Polysomnography, focuses on polysomnographic studies on patients that are at high risk for sleep disorders.

Finally, we are fortunate to be able to share the story of Frances Holly, MPSL '15, executive director of Springpoint Senior Living's Wheaton Pointe community in East Windsor, N.J. Holly oversees a full staff and more than 100 residents age 62 and older. She leads the daily operations at the affordable housing complex while pursuing her eagerness to learn more about how she can best serve her residents and seniors like them.

We are also thrilled to share stories and photos from across the University, including recent grant awards, the announcement of two new University partnerships and excerpts from an interview with Frank Giordano, president and CEO of the Philly POPS.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Invention*.

Sincerely,

  
Dr. George A. Pruitt  
President



## University Vice President Named to *NJBiz*'s 'Forty Under 40'

Robin Walton, MSM '10, vice president for Community and Government Affairs at Thomas Edison State University, was named to *NJBiz*'s 'Forty Under 40' list for 2016.

The list is comprised of 40 of New Jersey's most accomplished and dynamic young leaders who have shown a commitment to business growth, professional excellence and community service. To qualify, a nominee had to meet selection criteria that included working in New Jersey, possessing significant authority for decision making within a company or organization and being the age of 39 years old or younger. The 2016 honorees, who were chosen by an independent panel of judges, were celebrated at an awards ceremony in late September at The Palace at Somerset Park in Somerset, N.J.

"I am honored to have been selected as one of *NJBiz*'s 'Forty Under 40' awardees," said Walton. "I have always been passionate about supporting the city of Trenton and advocating the mission of the University. I believe

the work we do every day to create opportunities for self-directed adult learners changes their lives. I look forward to continuing my work to serve the University locally and at the state and federal level."

Walton currently serves on Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital's Strategic Planning committee. She is a former trustee for the New Jersey Hospital Association and past chair for the Board of Trustees for the Children's Specialized Hospital as well as past trustee of Robert Wood Johnson Healthcare Corporation. Walton has been appointed to her third term for the National Task Force for Higher Education Government Relations for several nationwide higher education associations and serves on the Community Advisory Board for the Trenton Health Team.



Robin Walton, vice president for Community and Government Affairs at Thomas Edison State University

She was appointed in 2005 by the New Jersey Senate to the Governor's Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and in 2012 to the Governor's Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Task Force. Walton is the former Institutional Representative to NJ ACE Women's Network for Thomas Edison State University. She also served on the Board of Trustees for Trenton Public Education Foundation for nine years and is especially honored that she was elected chair of Children's Specialized Hospital for two terms.

## Watson Institute Executive Director Receives 2016 Outstanding Women in Government Award

Barbara George Johnson, executive director of The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State University, was awarded the 2016 Outstanding Women in Government Award by the New Jersey League of Municipalities (NJLM) at its annual conference held in Atlantic City, N.J., in November.

The NJLM's Women in Municipal Government (WIMG) Committee recognized George Johnson's extraordinary efforts on behalf of the health of communities at its annual breakfast, held at the conference.

"I am honored to have been recognized by the League as its Outstanding Woman in Government awardee," George Johnson said. "Over the last

few decades, global and national initiatives have begun to recognize the need for reconnecting the fields of planning and public health. Living well means bringing health into all of your local government policies – from economic development and planning to community activities – I am fortunate to be able to work at an institution that puts health and policy education at the forefront."

George Johnson brings more than 20 years of experience as a public policy professional in New Jersey to the University and has been a leading voice in shaping economic, health and social policy in the region. She has experience as managing principal of GOVCONNECTIONS, LLC, and a senior associate for MBI-GluckShaw,



New Jersey League of Municipalities Past President and Stone Harbor Mayor Suzanne Walters (left) presents the 2016 Outstanding Women in Government Award to Barbara George Johnson, executive director, The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of the University, at the League's annual conference held in Atlantic City, N.J. Photo credit: New Jersey League of Municipalities

where she represented a diverse client base that ranged from the New Jersey Council of Teaching Hospitals to municipal governments including the city of Trenton.

## University Partners with Mercer County Community College to Offer Four-Year Pathway to BSN Degree

Mercer County Community College and Thomas Edison State University have created a dual enrollment nursing program that enables students to complete a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree in four years.

The program will allow graduates of Mercer's Nursing Education Program to transfer and apply up to 90 credits to the online RN-BSN program at Thomas Edison State University.

"This partnership provides students the opportunity to earn a BSN degree in an efficient and cost-effective manner," said Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State University. "Our collaboration provides a seamless pathway into our RN-BSN program for students in Mercer's nursing program."

The program will provide a pipeline of baccalaureate-prepared nurses to provide healthcare services to underserved populations in Trenton, Mercer County and throughout central New Jersey.

"This exciting new agreement with Thomas Edison State University is all about creating choices for students," said Dr. Jianping Wang, president of Mercer County Community College. "By offering more choices and enabling students to study close to home, more students will complete their education and we create more opportunities for students from a variety of backgrounds and learning styles while allowing them to continue to meet family and work obligations."

Eligible students enrolled in the dual enrollment program will be granted provisional acceptance to the RN-BSN program at Thomas Edison State University and full acceptance once they complete the associate in science degree from Mercer and pass the National



Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State University, and Dr. Jianping Wang, president of Mercer County Community College, at an official signing ceremony held to celebrate the new partnership between MCCC and the University as Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes looks on.

Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN).

As they complete the BSN degree, students will be prepared to further advance their education and pursue a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), and eventually, a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP).

## University Partners with Atlantic Cape Community College to Expand Access to Bachelor's Degree Completion

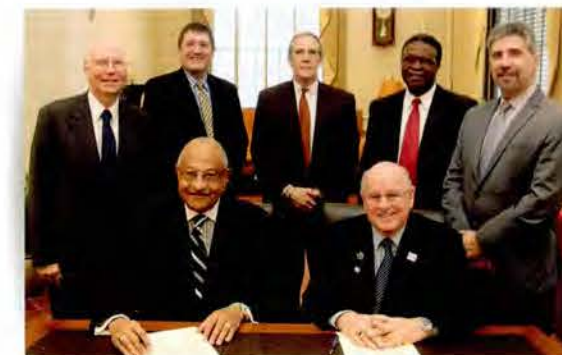
Atlantic Cape Community College and Thomas Edison State University are partnering to create a dual admission and enrollment program that will enable students pursuing an associate degree at Atlantic Cape to be simultaneously enrolled in a bachelor's degree program at the University.

"We are excited to work with Atlantic Cape to enhance access to our high-quality, flexible baccalaureate programs for their students," said William Seaton, provost and vice president at Thomas Edison State University. "I believe that this joint approach will offer an appropriate opportunity for our institutions to develop an innovative partnership based on the unique strengths of each school, resulting in an affordable and convenient approach to earning a bachelor's degree."

This relationship will benefit both institutions and, most importantly, students and families in South Jersey."

The partnership will enable students to apply up to 90 transfer credits earned at Atlantic Cape Community College to a bachelor's degree at the University.

The partnership will be open to students enrolled in select associate in science, associate in applied science and associate in arts degree programs at Atlantic Cape Community College who enroll in select Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science in Applied Science and Technology and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree programs at Thomas Edison State University. Additional programs may be added in the future.



Seated from left are Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State University, and Peter L. Mora, past president of Atlantic Cape Community College; standing from left are TESU staff, William Seaton, provost and vice president; John Woznicki, dean of the Heavin School of Arts and Sciences; Michael Williams, dean of the School of Business and Management; and John Aje, dean of the School of Applied Science and Technology; and ACCC's Otto Hernandez, vice president of Academic Affairs.



## Dean Discusses Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy with the President and CEO of the Philly POPS, Frank Giordano

Dr. Michael Williams, dean of the School of Business and Management at Thomas Edison State University, sat down with Frank Giordano, president and CEO of the Philly POPS, the largest standalone pops orchestra in the United States, as part of the Camden County Regional Chamber of Commerce's 'Game Changer Series,' at Hotel ML, in Mount Laurel, N.J.

Here are some excerpts from Williams' discussion with Giordano as part of the fourth interview in the series:

**Q: What do you think the reason is for your philanthropic orientation? Why do you do it?**

**A:** I really don't have a hobby; I enjoy the nonprofit world. You learn so much, and there are certain organizations that revolve around my passions: The Salvation Army and Goodwill Industries, to name a couple. I like to get involved in philanthropy where the dollars you give are leveraged. An organization like Goodwill will leverage those dollars dramatically. Goodwill will build a store, employ and train 1,500 people and make several hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. The Salvation Army does the same with its Kroc centers. It's all about leverage for me.

**"THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ALL COMES DOWN TO ENGAGING YOUR CUSTOMER."**

Frank Giordano

**Q: There is typically a business link to that in leveraging ourselves, we give to the community. Can you talk a little bit about how you think you make your mark?**

**A:** As the first person to go to college in an Italian family, I totally disappointed my parents because I wasn't going into pre-med. My mother was crying, my father said, 'Why?' I said, 'Because it's finite. I'm going to go into business.'

I'm going to get into something that's infinite, something that there's a future I can't see today. If I worked every single moment, it would have been impossible to do all that. I would have had to see patients 24 hours a day.

I realized that we needed to employ capital and build an organization. I first got into the trailer rental business through my father having a trailer repair shop in Philadelphia. His business was finite. He had an 8,000 square foot building and a half a dozen mechanics and there's just so much work you can do. I used to collect scrap aluminum because iron was too heavy and aluminum paid 15 cents a pound, and I saved enough money to buy two used trailers that I rented out to his customers. I recognized there was a need here, there was a niche. Nobody else was doing this.

**Q: You have established the Frank and Dottie Giordano Responsibility Scholarship and Endowment Fund. Can you share what you're doing for young people?**

**A:** My father had the trailer repair business, and I thought we were rich. We worked hard. He bought me a new Cadillac when I was 18, so I didn't have to work but I had this vision to build a business. We have many students that have full-time employment and they're not able to get something very important and that is an internship. They can't afford to get unpaid internships. Through this fund we buy young people's time. We pay them not to work so they can get an internship, and I would help them get employment. In my opinion, again not coming from an academic family, to me you go to college to get a job and it's all about placement.



Michael Williams, dean of the School of Business and Management at the University sits with Frank Giordano, president and CEO of the Philly POPS at the Camden County Chamber of Commerce's 'Game Changer Series' chat on Feb. 10 at Hotel ML in Mt. Laurel, N.J.



Dr. Michael Williams, dean of the School of Business and Management



Frank Giordano, president and CEO of the Philly POPS

**Q: How do we see your work at a national level?**

**A:** We all have natural turning points in our lives. The thing that has really been a game changer for me was joining the Union League in Philadelphia and our motto is 'love of country leads.' How does the motto relate to the Philly POPS? One of the things that got me interested was that we could run it like a business. We can operate at 70-75 percent in earned revenue. One of the big things with the POPS is that we sell sponsorships and create partnerships. We have 10 Christmas shows. The first show we give 2,000 tickets away to the military and first responders. Now how did that develop? Let's take the business angle for a moment.

Four years ago, I was there for a Friday night show, and at Christmas time we fit 2,100 people in the audience. We had about 800 people in the audience, and I probably gave away about 250 of those tickets. On Monday I said, 'next year, we're going to give 2,000 tickets away to the military and first responders.' We made \$39,000 in gate ticket sales that day, and we picked up \$250,000 in sponsorships and grants. That is what grew into what is now known as our 'Salute Series,' which is unique to the Philly POPS. We are the orchestra of civic engagement in Philadelphia. It's really our gift back to the residents of the city. So this year, we're giving all the tickets away on our Memorial Day weekend concert at the Mann Center. We'll be giving 7,000 seats away and at least 2,000 will go to the military and first responders. The publicity from the Salute Series has lifted the entire organization.

**Q: You mentioned it's the orchestra of civic engagement. How does that transpire? Where does the meaning come from?**

**A:** It was very important from a marketing point of view that we make the Philly POPS top of mind. We had to own Christmas and we had to own the fourth of July. We have more people who come see us at free concerts than come to our 26 concerts at the Kimmel Center. We see more than 50,000 people over the course of a season. We have more than 100,000 people see us at the free concerts.

Beyond that, I sit on numerous other arts boards and they all talk about how we need to do something in the schools. They form committees, raise millions of dollars to do it and nothing happens. In our shop, we talk about doing something in the schools and two weeks later we were in high schools in Philadelphia. We are also in grammar schools. We have programs here in New Jersey and we're bringing the music that young people can relate to and getting them involved. We're training them on instruments. The civic engagement all comes down to engaging your customer.

When I took over the POPS, we did a press release and it amazed me that the orchestra members, the people responsible for our success, were not told what the new season was going to be. They read about it in the paper. So we created the POPS family. Now everyone in "our family" knows. At the press conference, it was so dry. We're in show business. I've gone from the trailer business to show business. So our press conferences became shows.

**Q: Given the leadership and business experience you have, how have they both challenged and enabled your leadership capability?**

**A:** I recently attended the mentor series at the Union League. Our junior members are mentored by senior members and there are three or four

dinners in the series. David Cohen, the senior executive vice president of Comcast, was our most recent speaker and he spoke about leadership. When he was done they wanted some words of wisdom from me. Here's what I told them: from about the age of 20 to the age of 45 I knew everything. Thought I knew it all. After I sold the bulk of my business when I was 45 and I got involved in the Union League and started to get involved in some nonprofits, I met a lot of interesting people and boy, did I learn. I learned every day.

I was taking notes while David Cohen was speaking. They asked me why I was taking notes and I said, 'He's saying some pretty profound things that I never focused on.' As I get involved in these different nonprofits and organizations I learn an awful lot. I know I learned compassion from The Salvation Army. Goodwill Industries taught me how a nonprofit has to operate as a for profit operation where they take your goods and turn them into dollars or they can train thousands of people to work. I was at a panel discussion recently talking to young people and I told them to join a nonprofit. That's where you're going to benefit. Don't talk for about six months. Listen. They'll want to nurture you and take you under their wing, and you will network like never before with the leaders of your community. There is nothing more rewarding than to be involved in a nonprofit.

**Q: What are some activities you would recommend entrepreneurs engage in this year?**

**A:** Make time for your friends, and really make quality time for them. Our lives are so busy today, but if you can make time for your friends that would be an important thing. The second thing I would say is to share your energy. Mentor a younger person. Help develop tomorrow's leaders.

**"THERE IS NOTHING MORE REWARDING THAN TO BE INVOLVED IN A NONPROFIT."**

Frank Giordano



## University Names New Director of Alumni Affairs

Thomas Edison State University has appointed Margaret 'Meg' Frantz as director of Alumni Affairs. She is responsible for the planning and implementation of the overall alumni program and serves as the University's primary liaison to alumni.

Frantz is charged with developing innovative programs to foster engagement, advocacy and support for the University's more than 50,000 alumni. As director of Alumni Affairs, she will seek to strengthen the lifelong relationships between these alumni and the University. Using social media and more traditional means, she will connect alumni with current and prospective students and with each other to promote career advancement and educational attainment.

"Meg is inspired by the remarkable stories of our alumni, and her passion for alumni engagement makes her the ideal person to serve the needs of the University's ever-growing community of alumni," said John P. Thurber, vice president for Public Affairs at the University. "We are delighted to have Meg leading the alumni affairs team."

Prior to her appointment, Frantz served the University as assistant director of Marketing and Publications. Previously, she worked at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, in New Brunswick, N.J., as director of Arts Marketing and Recruitment at Mason Gross School of the Arts. Frantz earned a bachelor of arts in communication degree with an emphasis in theatre arts from Susquehanna University in



Margaret 'Meg' Frantz, director of Alumni Affairs at Thomas Edison State University

Selinsgrove, Pa., and is an avid bird watcher and enjoys traveling as well as reading mystery and biographical books.

## foundation news

## Giving Back: Truitt Andress, BA '94

United States Army veteran Truitt Andress can speak to the value in giving back.

The retired, 24-year military veteran has led a life of servitude, while still keeping himself involved in his calling, the ministry, even if only now on a part-time basis.

While still enlisted, Andress amassed credits from a number of institutions in New Jersey, though never quite finding the time to solidify a degree. "When I came to the end of my military career I wanted to do something different," he said. "Thomas Edison allowed me to do that and accepted all of my credits, including some military training, which left me with very little course work remaining to complete my bachelor's degree in history."

After completing his degree in 1994, Andress went on to pursue work in the

ministry having earned his master's degree in divinity in 1999 and being ordained by the Evangelical Church Alliance the same year.

"Without Thomas Edison, I wouldn't have been able to go on to earn my master's degree and serve others," he explained. "An undergraduate degree was required to enter the program, so the ability to finish ultimately allowed me to reach my goals."

Since being ordained, Andress has served as a pastoral minister for the past 14 years at various Methodist churches in New Jersey, only recently moving to part time. He also had the unique opportunity, combined with some medical training he received in the Army, to serve as a hospice chaplain.

On giving back not only to others through his work, but also to the University, Andress explained, "We all



Truitt Andress, BA '94

tend to draw a lot from life and don't always have the opportunity to give back. Giving back, even minimally, adds up to a major gift over time. I know and hope that my little bit is met 10 times over by so many others who have been given the same unique opportunity I have to fulfill my dreams."

Andress lives in southern New Jersey with his wife of 45 years, Jean.

## University Receives \$10,000 Grant From PNC Foundation in Memory of William 'Bill' Schofield

The Thomas Edison State University Foundation has received a grant from the PNC Foundation in memory of its late colleague and friend, William "Bill" Schofield. Totalling \$10,000 in funding support, the grant supports professional development for early childhood teachers in Trenton-area preschools.

The grant is presented in remembrance of Schofield, former vice president and relationship manager of PNC Financial Services Group and Thomas Edison State University Foundation board member. This support will fund the Trenton Initiative under The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy New Jersey Cultural Competency and English Language Learners Summer Institute and Mentoring Program at the University.

The grant will enable the Trenton Initiative program to expand its 10-year evidence-based professional development model and work with 15 early childhood classrooms in the city. The expanded program will provide 23 early childhood teachers with a three-day Learning Institute

experience. Complementing this will be nine months of mentoring to assist the teachers in improving instruction for English language learners.

"We are grateful to the PNC Foundation for its philanthropic support in memory of our beloved colleague and friend, Bill," said John P. Thurber, vice president for Public Affairs at the University and executive vice president of the Thomas Edison State University Foundation.

Schofield, who passed away in 2016, was a member of the University's Foundation Board of Directors since December 2010. He had a great appreciation for the importance of providing access to higher education for adults and was deeply involved in efforts to revitalize Trenton in and outside of PNC.

"Bill was an extremely dedicated PNC employee. He was committed to the betterment of Trenton, to TESU and to service as a volunteer in our Grow Up Great initiative, our signature philanthropic cause focused on early childhood education," said Linda



First row (from left to right): Dr. George A. Pruitt, president, Thomas Edison State University; Maureen Schofield, wife of the late William Schofield, former vice president and relationship manager of PNC Financial Services Group and Thomas Edison State University Foundation board member; Linda Bowden, New Jersey Regional president, PNC Bank; and Joseph F. Whall, senior vice president, Client and Community Relations director, PNC Financial Services Group. Second row: John P. Thurber, vice president, Public Affairs, Thomas Edison State University; Barbara George Johnson, executive director, The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy at Thomas Edison State University; Ana I. Berdecia, senior fellow and director, the Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children, The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy at Thomas Edison State University; and Peggy Lucolino, vice president and Client and Community Relations assistant director, PNC Bank.

Bowden, PNC New Jersey regional president. "We could not think of a more fitting award to honor his memory."

## Bristol-Myers Squibb Awards University Foundation \$20,000 in Support of Teaching Effective Medication Administration

The innovative teaching of effective medication administration is crucial in today's healthcare climate. Thanks to a \$20,000 grant from the Bristol-Myers Squibb New Jersey Community Grants Program, the University's Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program students will be able to prevent medication errors and improve patient safety and care.

The funding will be used to purchase the Omnicell Half-Cell Automated Dispensing Cabinet System, an integrated, advanced medication dispensing system to be used at the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing and incorporated into the Program's curriculum. The new system, together with medication administration simulations, will serve as valuable curriculum components for BSN students in the School's nursing simulation laboratory environment.

"A nurse's role in medication administration is particularly challenging given today's healthcare environment," said Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at the University. "The medication administration scenarios used with the dispensing system cabinet will assist in reinforcing students' knowledge while refining their confidence levels by increasing medication competency and improving overall patient safety."

The School's educators and simulation laboratory staff will create challenging healthcare scenarios that will help students develop and practice medication administration in a safe, controlled environment without fear of doing harm to real patients. The program will serve as an important enhancement to the already high-quality education that students now receive.



**Bristol-Myers Squibb**

"Bristol-Myers Squibb supports education at all levels and we are delighted to provide funding for this innovative teaching tool that will help train nursing students at Thomas Edison State University," said Julie Hambleton, head of US Medical at Bristol-Myers Squibb. "We believe hands-on learning experiences, particularly in medicine dispensing, will contribute to the development of highly skilled medical professionals of the future."



# AGAINST ALL ODDS

DONNA LOSTOCCO, BSBA '02

Even when the odds were stacked against her, Donna LoStocco persevered.

*Becoming a parent at 18 wasn't part of Donna LoStocco's life plan.*

"I was the first person in my family to go to college," said LoStocco, a 2002 graduate of Thomas Edison's Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) degree program. "Both of my parents are from immigrant families and it was a huge deal for them to save money for me to go to school. When you become a parent at 18, you assume that is the end of your chances at an education."

Even after the birth of her son, followed later by a daughter, LoStocco remained steadfast in her commitment to pursue her degree.

**"I HAD MY ELDERLY PARENTS; A MENTALLY ILL SISTER; MY THEN HUSBAND; AND TWO YOUNG CHILDREN ALL UNDER ONE ROOF WITH ME. THERE WAS SO MUCH GOING ON THAT IF I WAS GOING TO EVER FINISH MY DEGREE, IT HAD TO BE VERY FLEXIBLE."**

Donna LoStocco

She took the first step by enrolling at Middlesex County College (MCC) in Edison, N.J., as a psychology major and later transferred her credits to Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey's New Brunswick, N.J., campus.

LoStocco's degree completion was well underway until other commitments began to take their toll.

"I had my elderly parents; a mentally ill sister; my then husband; and two young children all under one roof with me. There was so much going on that if I was going to ever finish my degree, it had to be very flexible," she said.

With familial responsibilities mounting, LoStocco faced yet another roadblock when she and her then husband were forced to sell their business due to financial hardship.

Donna LoStocco (left) speaks with Emily Phillips, branch manager for First Commonwealth Federal Credit Union's Bethlehem location.



"My ex-husband and I were forced to sell the trucking business we started together and were hurting financially," LoStocco explained.

With the shuttering of the business behind her, LoStocco found herself immersed in the sales field almost instantly. Her newfound career path also came with taking a hiatus from her studies.

"We ended up scrambling to find sales jobs because we could make the most money in that field. He went into commercial real estate and I ended up selling rugs for Einstein Moomjy," said LoStocco.

Having the experience of owning a business, however, allowed LoStocco to hone her craft.

"The business was my boot camp. Running several aspects of an organization allows you to build from the bottom up and eventually become profitable. You're exposed to so many components, from human resources, to accounting, finance and sales; I was able to really cut my teeth as an entrepreneur," LoStocco explained.

**"THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVANTAGE OF THOMAS EDISON WAS THE FACT THAT IT WAS ULTRAFLEXIBLE BETWEEN TESTING OUT OF COURSES AND COMPLETING THEM ONLINE. COUPLED WITH THE ABILITY TO STUDY INDEPENDENTLY, I WAS ALLOWED TO FINISH AT MY OWN PACE."**

Donna LoStocco

Finally, LoStocco determined the time was right to return to school and complete her education. When researching her options, she stumbled upon information about Thomas Edison online and resolved that completing her degree was still within reach.

"The most important advantage of Thomas Edison was the fact that it was ultraflexible between testing out of courses and completing them online. Coupled with the ability to study independently, I was allowed to finish at my own pace," recalled LoStocco.



LoStocco (right) meets with employees at the Bethlehem branch of First Commonwealth Federal Credit Union in Bethlehem, Pa.

As she progressed through the BSBA program, LoStocco found a personal cheerleader and advocate in a former supervisor at Affinity Federal Credit Union, David.

"He earned his degrees as an adult and was the one who really encouraged me that no matter what, to keep pushing. As you're earning your degree, it can get a little lonely. Your family, friends, most people just may not seem interested. David was a huge support in helping me to earn my degree," LoStocco said.

After almost 22 years from her first class at MCC, LoStocco was a proud graduate of Thomas Edison and had much to show for it.

LoStocco now heads one of the largest credit unions in the Lehigh Valley, Pa., area, First Commonwealth Federal Credit Union, based in Bethlehem, as president and CEO, a position she began in July 2016. The decision, she explained, was not made lightly.

"After nearly 19 years at Affinity, I felt like the time was right for me to make this transition," she said. "This was a lifelong dream of mine and the opportunity presented itself that would have been difficult for me to pass up. It's been rewarding to be able to start something new, with a new organization, new territory, everything."

As part of her role, LoStocco oversees all functions of the organization. Reporting to the credit union's volunteer

board of directors, her primary goals are to grow the organization as a whole and increase overall membership.

Aside from her everyday responsibilities, LoStocco has also taken on a project to call her own.

"My husband and I are working on a plan to rebuild a local animal shelter, the Plainfield Area Humane Society in Plainfield, N.J.," LoStocco explained. "We're both major animal lovers and we're hoping to not only rebuild the facility, but find new ways to connect adoptable animals to potential families. I have always had a heart for it."

In addition to her love of animals, LoStocco serves as the Foundation Board chair at Raritan Valley Community College in Somerville, N.J.

Looking back, LoStocco admits, it's hard to see how it all came together.

"When I think back, I don't know how I did it," she explained. "You have to say to yourself, 'No matter what, I'm going to figure it out.' I'm at a point in my career where I am looking for the opportunity to help someone else avoid the mistakes I've made and to give back to a community that has done so much for me."

LoStocco lives in Hunterdon County, N.J., with her husband and sister, and has three adult children, three grandchildren and an adopted dog, Max.

**"WHEN I THINK BACK, I DON'T KNOW HOW I DID IT. YOU HAVE TO SAY TO YOURSELF, 'NO MATTER WHAT, I'M GOING TO FIGURE IT OUT.' I'M AT A POINT IN MY CAREER WHERE I AM LOOKING FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP SOMEONE ELSE AVOID THE MISTAKES I'VE MADE AND TO GIVE BACK TO A COMMUNITY THAT HAS DONE SO MUCH FOR ME."**

Donna LoStocco





# DREAMCATCHER

## Steven Klinger, AAS '15

### ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 50 to 70 million adults in the United States suffer from chronic sleep and wakefulness disorders.<sup>1</sup>

This is a statistic that does not surprise Steven Klinger, Registered Polysomnographic Technologist (RPSGT) and sleep technologist at New York Methodist Sleep Disorder Center, in Brooklyn, N.Y.

"Almost half of the people I know, including myself, have trouble sleeping," said Klinger. "I have long been interested in the brain's function during sleep and, up until a few years ago, was not aware of sleep study medicine. When I heard about the program in Polysomnography starting at Thomas Edison, I was thrilled to apply and be accepted. Monitoring brain and respiratory functioning is an exciting field to be a part of, and it also involves helping people, which I have had a calling for."

"THE KEY TO LIFE IS WHAT WE DO IN OUR DIFFICULT TIMES. I BELIEVE YOU HAVE TO LEAD LIFE WITH PASSION, BE ABLE TO ADAPT TO THE TIDES AND HAVE CLEAR FOCUS OF WHAT YOU WANT IN LIFE."

Steven Klinger

As a sleep technologist, Klinger focuses on polysomnographic studies on patients that are at high risk for sleep disorders. In general, a sleep technologist works under the general supervision of the medical director to provide comprehensive evaluation and treatment of sleep disorders, including in- and out-of-center sleep testing, diagnostic and therapeutic interventions, and comprehensive patient care and education.

"Easing patients' fears when they first arrive for the diagnostic process is a crucial requirement for all sleep study procedures," Klinger explained. "I do my best to connect with those I serve, and I feel very passionate about the importance of building relationships with my patients. Patient education and being able to convey true compassion and support for longtime sufferers is very fulfilling."

The field of polysomnography is vital for a number of reasons. Untreated sleep disorders can increase the patient's risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and other medical conditions. Furthermore, sleep disorders have been linked to an increased risk of on-the-job injuries and car accidents. According to the Statistic Brain Research Institute the cost in lost productivity to U.S. employers due to sleep deprivation is approximately \$18 billion yearly<sup>2</sup> and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates more than 850 fatalities and 37,000 nonfatal injuries are caused by drowsy driving in the U.S. every year.<sup>3</sup>



Laura A. Linley, (left), president of AAST, presents Steven Klinger with the 2016 American Association of Sleep Technologists (AAST) New Technologist of the Year award.

One of the first graduates of Thomas Edison's Associate in Applied Science degree program in Polysomnography in 2015, Klinger noted that earning his degree was a major achievement despite some personal adversity.

Klinger and his family, who live in Howard Beach, N.Y., lost all of their belongings during the storm surge of Hurricane Sandy. In addition, while maintaining excellent grades and completing his internship at St. Charles Sleep Disorder Center in Port Jefferson, N.Y., Klinger cared for his father, who was dealing with health issues. Even though he was faced with challenges at home and with driving more than 110 miles round trip for his clinical sessions at the Long Island facility, Klinger stated that he persevered and kept his focus on the goal of completing his degree, passing the RPSGT test in his first attempt and finding employment as a sleep technologist.

"The key to life is what we do in our difficult times," Klinger reflected. "I believe you have to lead life with passion, be able to adapt to the tides and have clear focus of what you want in life. I was able to discipline myself, put in the hard work and follow successful people long enough until achievement became a habit. Early on I knew that as the exciting opportunities in the sleep field grew, I wanted to grow with it."

Klinger credits those who have set successful examples, his proctors and mentors, for providing him with great guidance and demonstrating a sincere interest in his career.

"Especially instrumental have been several sleep professionals, including Brendan Duffy, Dave Warkentin, Rita Brooks and Dr. Rochelle Zozula. Not only have they been mentors, but true advocates for me in multiple ways. They have opened so many doors for me and never asked for anything in return but hard work, commitment and dedication."

According to University Mentor Zozula, a clinical associate professor of Neuroscience at Seton Hall University's School of Graduate Medical Education, "Steven was an outstanding student, who consistently applied himself, despite facing many personal challenges. His perseverance and commitment to achieve his goals allowed him to develop the skills necessary to become an example for other trainees in the field."

Klinger continues to advance the field in firsts. After graduating from Thomas Edison, he petitioned the New York State Education Department for licensure to practice in the state and, "after months of angst and great effort," was the first to be licensed in New York from the University.

"This has been an incredible journey, and I am sure it will open doors for future students from other out-of-state polysomnography college programs," said Klinger, who added, "I plan to continue to learn all I can about the great field of sleep medicine. Now that I am established in my sleep centers, I intend to get involved and volunteer with American Association of Sleep Technologists (AAST) and other organizations, so I can work with my professional colleagues to advance our field and profession, and give back."

Klinger was honored with the AAST 2016 New Technologist of the Year Award, which honors and recognizes an accredited sleep technology education program graduate who has passed the American Board of Sleep Medicine or Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologists credentialing examination and attained the RPSGT or Registered Sleep Technologist (RST) credential within the year.

"I AM EXCITED TO FINALLY BE WORKING IN MULTIPLE SLEEP LABS AND PROUD TO BE ONE OF THE HANDFULS OF PEOPLE WHO TOOK A CHANCE, OBTAINED A DEGREE IN SCIENCE AND UPPED THE ANTE IN THE EDUCATION ARENA."

Steven Klinger

"I am excited to finally be working in multiple sleep labs and proud to be one of the handfuls of people who took a chance, obtained a degree in science and upped the ante in the education arena," Klinger enthused. "With high-quality educational programs like the one at Thomas Edison State University and continuous education offerings like those that are obtainable by AAST, the field continues to move forward as a recognized, respected profession with standardized educational requirements."

<sup>1</sup>Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Insufficient Sleep Is a Public Health Problem, <http://www.cdc.gov/features/dssleep/>. Accessed June 5, 2016

<sup>2</sup>Statistic Brain Research Institute, Sleeping Disorder Statistics, <http://www.statisticbrain.com/sleeping-disorder-statistics/>. Accessed on June 5, 2016

<sup>3</sup>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Research on Drowsy Driving, <http://www.nhtsa.gov/DrivingSafety/DrowsyDriving>. Accessed June 6, 2016



# Senior Executive

## Frances Holly, MPSL '15

ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

In choosing a school to complete a graduate degree, Frances Holly returned to her roots.

As she planned her relocation from Michigan to her native New Jersey, she recalled her childhood growing up in Trenton, driving past the institution, seeing billboards and hearing radio ads about the "college exclusively for adults."

"I felt that Thomas Edison understood the needs of adults pursuing higher education," said Holly, who earned her Master in Public Service Leadership (MPSL) degree in 2015. "Many of my peers, like myself, have numerous responsibilities outside of school

don't live in a facility, but rather we work in their home. I make it a point to communicate to my staff that residents' opinions matter and that they should always feel at home. This sometimes translates into changing our way of doing things in order to accommodate their needs and desires and to continue to maintain a homelike environment."

Before beginning her position at Wheaton Pointe more than four years ago, Holly held positions of increasing responsibility, all within the field of senior care. Having progressed from



Frances Holly at Commencement in 2015.

**"I FELT THAT THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED FROM OBTAINING MY MASTER'S DEGREE WOULD ASSIST ME IN FUTURE ENDEAVORS – WHETHER PROFESSIONALLY OR ADVOCATING FOR AN AGING LOVED ONE – OR FOR MYSELF IN THE FUTURE."**

Frances Holly

that include careers, raising families and being members of the 'sandwich generation' where we are caring for our own children and aging parents – and even grandparents – at the same time."

Holly understands the devotion needed when caring for an older generation more intimately than most.

As executive director of Springpoint Senior Living's Wheaton Pointe community in East Windsor, N.J., Holly oversees a full staff and more than 100 residents, age 62 and older, who depend on her to lead the daily operations at the affordable housing complex.

"I pride myself on having an open door policy where residents and staff are welcome to come into my office at any time," Holly explained. "Early in my career, we were taught that the residents

internships to management positions in leading senior housing organizations in both Michigan and New Jersey, Holly found her passion in nonprofit senior care management and made it her mission to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable populations.

Upon completion of her bachelor of human services degree from Baker College in Michigan in 2012, Holly knew immediately that she wanted to pursue her master's degree in a similar field.

"Baby Boomers are aging and we as a society, in my opinion, have not done enough to prepare for the 'senior tsunami.' I was eager to learn more about grant writing, fundraising, governance, philanthropy and decision making in the nonprofit and public

sectors," Holly explained. "I felt that the knowledge gained from obtaining my master's degree would assist me in future endeavors – whether professionally or advocating for an aging loved one – or for myself in the future."

Originally interested in Thomas Edison's Master of Science in Management degree program, Holly received an invitation to learn about the institution's then new MPSL program and registered.

"While watching the webinar, I had an 'Aha' moment and thought this is really what I am interested in pursuing," she said. "What really piqued my interest was that the program was described as being designed for the next generation of leaders for nonprofit organizations, faith-based and community-based organizations, and local, state and federal governments."

Since her community is wholly dependent on funding from the state of New Jersey and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Holly stressed the importance of being able to understand the compliance of state and



federal programs to conduct business within set guidelines.

"As I progressed through the program, each course I took helped me to better understand governance of nonprofit agencies, relationships with stakeholders, the role of human resources, financial reporting, corporate compliance and so many other characteristics that I was familiar with but did not have a thorough understanding of," said Holly. "My course work gave me in-depth knowledge of operations and detailed information about the 'how's and why's' of nonprofits."

Even when Holly traveled, she admits, her course work traveled with her.

"If I went on vacation, during family events or even work travel, I would always carry my laptop and books and set aside time to study," she said. "When I submitted my final paper in December 2014, I felt an overwhelming sense of pride and relief that I had accomplished this goal I had set for myself."

With a seemingly still fresh master's degree under her belt, Holly admits that she's not done yet.

"I see myself as a lifelong learner," she expressed. "Immediately after completing my master's degree, I took courses to become a Certified Assisted Living Administrator in the state of New Jersey. I am currently researching certificate courses related to gerontology and another master's degree is not out of the question."

Holly lives in Florence, N.J., and has an adult son, Brion.



## ❖ Christopher Allen BSAST '05

Christopher Allen earned a Naval commission after earning his degree from the University and is now a U.S. Navy lieutenant commander (LCDR). In December, Allen graduated from Naval Postgraduate School with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree focusing on information systems management.

## ❖ Kathleen Bodenlos BA '02

Kathleen Bodenlos won the Marcom Gold Award for Digital Marketing Campaign for an exhibition entitled, "Pterosaurs: Flight in the Age of Dinosaurs." This campaign followed prehistoric flying reptiles as they made their way from a museum in New York to Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, Pa., where Bodenlos is the director of marketing. They touched down along the way to visit such sites as the Liberty Bell and a Wawa location.



## ❖ Gene Bouie AA '10, BA '13

Gene Bouie has been appointed to the Trenton School Board (N.J.) by Mayor Eric Jackson. Bouie works as a senior director at Educational Testing Service in Princeton, N.J.



## ❖ Monica Castaño BSN '12, MSN '17

### ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

Monica Castaño was named vice president and administrator for Holy Redeemer Health System's Elizabeth, N.J.-based Holy Redeemer Home Care North division. Castaño, a single mother, was born to deaf parents and immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 12 from Columbia, South America. She is looking forward to pursuing her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from the University in the future.



## ❖ Deborah Donnelly-McLay ASAST '94, BSAST '95

Deborah Donnelly-McLay was named as part of the research team at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health that studies the airplane environment, specific to the cockpit and how these factors affect pilot health.



She and her team are also beginning their second study to research the effects of carbon dioxide on pilot cognitive functioning. Additionally, Donnelly-McLay flies as an international Boeing 767 captain for United Parcel Service (UPS). She teaches courses at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Fla., Everglades University in Boca Raton, Fla., Laureate International Universities in Baltimore, Md., and serves as the aviation director at Oxbridge Academy in West Palm Beach, Fla.

## ❖ James Halsell AAS '10, BSAST '10

James Halsell has been named Submarine Squadron 7 'Junior Officer of the Year' while stationed aboard the USS Columbia in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Halsell has served as communications officer, scuba diving officer, chemistry and radiological control assistant and assistant engineer officer during his 36 months onboard the Columbia. The ship recently completed a six month Western Pacific deployment, during which Halsell was cited for his skill as a contact manager and proficiency at operational planning. Halsell will next report to submarine training center pacific, where he will serve as a tactics instructor.



## ❖ Matthew Hines AA '13, BA '14

Matthew Hines has been accepted into Johns Hopkins University's Master of Arts in Government with a concentration in security studies.



## ❖ John Kraemer BA '12

John Kraemer is an entrepreneur who is working to expand his current business, John Kraemer Music. Kraemer has released solo piano albums of his own compositions and recently released his fourth album, "Weeping Joy." His music can be found on Pandora, Spotify, Amazon and iTunes. Kraemer is also recently married to his wife, Elizabeth.



## ❖ Colleen Layman BSAST '99

Colleen Layman received the 2016 Annual Merit Award from the International Water Conference (IWC) at its conference in San Antonio, Texas. The award honors outstanding individuals in the field of industrial water technology. Layman was



recognized for her leadership in a water-related field of activity and for her contributions to the IWC and the industrial water industry. The organization also noted her efforts to inspire others to make major contributions in pertinent water-related technology or its application, and her active contribution to the advancement of the IWC. Layman has more than 20 years of industry experience as a professional engineer, including four years with HDR as its power-water management director.

## ❖ Dr. Donald Peace Jr. BSAST '90

Dr. Donald Peace Jr. was named founding dean for the College of Health Professions at Anderson University in Anderson, S.C., in June 2016. The College of Health Professions houses the university's School of Nursing, School of Allied Health, School of Human Performance and upcoming School of Physical Therapy. Peace is also a fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives. He also holds a Master of Science in Administration degree from Central Michigan University and a PhD in human services with a concentration in healthcare administration from Capella University.

## ❖ Curtis Pierce BSAST '03

Curtis Pierce became a captain at Southwest Airlines, where he has flown as a first officer (co-pilot) since 2006. Previously, Pierce flew as a corporate pilot and was chief pilot for Arizona Express Airlines.



## ❖ Alan J. Robinson ASPSS '97

Alan J. Robinson was named undersheriff for the Bureau of Corrections as part of the Morris County (N.J.) Sheriff's Office. Prior to this role, Robinson was the director of Protection and Security Services/Emergency Management for Atlantic Health System for 28 years, responsible for the protection of 16,000 employees and 4,000 physicians, patients and visitors at six hospitals and more than 300 satellite locations.



## ❖ Joseph Stark BSAST '04

Joseph Stark earned his MBA degree from Liberty University in 2006 and the following year commissioned as a submarine officer in the U.S. Navy. He made a lateral transfer to engineering duty officer in 2010 and, subsequently, earned his Master of Science degree in systems engineering from Naval Postgraduate School in 2014. Since then, Stark has purchased and managed five Papa Murphy's Pizza franchises and anticipates retirement from the U.S. Navy in 2019.

## ❖ Troy Vincent BA '07

Troy Vincent received the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Silver Anniversary Award, which is given to recipients for their collegiate and professional achievements. Vincent currently works as executive vice president of Football Operations at the National Football League (NFL).



## ❖ Dr. James Wallace Jr. BSAST '04, MSAST '12

Dr. James Wallace Jr. earned a PhD in Business Management with a specialization in project management from Capella University, in Minneapolis, Minn. A retired chief of the United States Navy, Wallace is currently overseeing projects in the manufacturing industry as a food processing plant manager specializing in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) implementation, risk management and process development.



### ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

To learn more about the Alumni Ambassador program at Thomas Edison State University, please visit [www.tesu.edu/alumni/ambassador.cfm](http://www.tesu.edu/alumni/ambassador.cfm)

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# *In Their Own Words*

"I made a **promise** to my mother that I was going to obtain my master's degree in nursing. This **scholarship** has helped me keep this promise." *Allison Abate, Walter and Louise Sutcliffe Foundation Scholarship recipient*

– "My goal is to use my **education** to leave the world better than I found it: to spend my time, **effort** and **passion** changing the worlds of people for the better." *Ashley Craig, Robert Sydney Needham Foundation Scholarship recipient*

– "I would like to **become** a consultant to Fortune 500 companies. As a single mother of two children, it is difficult finding the **finances** to take courses and achieve my **goal**." *Antoinette Frost, Robert Sydney Needham Foundation Scholarship recipient*

– "I do not take for granted the fact that **generous** donors are willing to take a chance on a stranger for the opportunity to help someone earn their **education**."

*Tara Castaneda, Walter and Louise Sutcliffe Foundation Scholarship recipient* – "I want to be a model of a **lifelong learner** to my children." *Hannah Do, Wells Fargo Scholarship recipient*

– "This scholarship has enabled me to **grow** as a nurse and achieve my goals, allowing me to **focus** on education rather than being distracted by financial concerns." *Derya Barc, Helene Fuld Health Trust Scholarship recipient.*