

# I·N·V·E·N·T·I·O·N

NEWSLETTER OF THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

WINTER 1999

## Commencement '98: A Dream Comes True for 1,036 Adult Learners



Thomas Edison graduates at the 26th Commencement Ceremony on Oct. 3, 1998



In early fall, Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance" resounded once again through the Gothic arches of the Princeton University Chapel as Thomas Edison State College celebrated the graduating class of 1998. In full academic regalia, while their families and colleagues proudly watched, 210 adults received their master's, bachelor's and associate degrees.

The 26th Commencement ceremony, held on Oct. 3, was the culmination of much hard work for these adults for whom a college education once seemed like an impossible dream. "There is no Commencement like this anywhere else in the United States, maybe the world," said Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College. Graduating students from 12 states including Hawaii, Texas, California and Georgia, and the District of Columbia, attended the regal ceremonies.

The ceremonies included a moving student address by Anthony V. Bilotta, Jr., of South

Cedar Grove, N.J., a BSBA graduate who received the Arnold Fletcher Award.

"This was the best thing I ever did. Speaking for the student body and having my family present as I received my diploma were the best thrills," Bilotta said. "Thomas Edison offered me something I wasn't able to get in a traditional classroom with students who were much younger than myself."

The 1998 graduating class totals 1,036 which includes adult learners from around the world. One special degree recipient is Mary Buzby, a retired clerical support worker in the College's Office of the Registrar. Ms. Buzby received her Associate of Arts degree that day. "It took 50 years to get there. It felt good," said Ms. Buzby.



Thomas P. Salmon, the former governor of Vermont and retired president of The University of Vermont, was recognized for his outstanding contributions to higher education, government, business, law and the community. He was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa.

Diplomas were presented by Richard Arndt, chairman of the Thomas Edison State College Board of Trustees, and Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College.

Following the ceremonies, many new alumni attended the PHT (Putting Him or Her Through) dinner at the Princeton Holiday Inn where they honored the family members who provided support and assistance.

## Thomas Edison Launches Partnership with Florida's Edison Community College

In a move to provide a new level of academic opportunity to its students, Edison Community College, of Fort Myers, Fla., has embarked on a partnership with Thomas Edison State College. This partnership will lead to bachelor's degrees for many of the two-year college's students and alumni.

Through the Degree Pathways Program, Edison Community College graduates will be able to transfer seamlessly into a baccalaureate program at Thomas Edison while remaining in Florida and continuing to use many of the resources provided by Edison Community College. Until now the Degree Pathways Program has been limited only to New Jersey community colleges.

Dr. Patricia Sparks, academic dean and vice provost of Thomas Edison says, "We are thrilled to work with Edison Community College to create this borderless

relationship between two distinctive colleges which are 1,400 miles apart. Together, we will lead the way in the exploration of new and innovative methods to use technology to support the highest quality instruction."

The two degrees available under the Degree Pathways Program are:

*Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) in Business Administration and Management, and*

*Bachelor of Science in Applied Science and Technology (BSAST) in Computer Programming and Applications (Programming Option).*

Students will have a wide range of choices for earning credits including testing, portfolio assessment and distance learning courses. Students who enroll for on-line classes will be provided with access to the Internet, either through Edison Community College's computers or their own PCs, thus linking them with other adult learners, educational institutions and libraries around the world.

Students will receive local advisement support from Edison Community College staff. Thomas Edison will provide transfer support, faculty and staff training and well-devised degree plans for each student.

"Thomas Edison offers students the opportunity to complete a high-quality degree program wherever they live or work," says Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College. "We have a unique opportunity to build upon existing efforts to provide new higher-education opportunities for the citizens of southwest Florida."

According to Dean Sparks, the Edison Community College partnership will pave the way for "21st century partnerships with some of the nation's best two-year colleges as we break down the barriers of time and space between educational communities."



Edison Community College and some of its students



## "A MODEL FOR OTHER PROGRAMS TO FOLLOW"

### U.S. Coast Guard Chooses Thomas Edison for Degree Completion

The United States Coast Guard, which has been protecting U.S. interests for nearly 200 years, has selected Thomas Edison State College as its educational partner in helping its personnel earn degrees in the 21st century.

Under a new, historic agreement, Coast Guard workforce acquisition personnel will be able to complete bachelor's degrees as required by law starting next year, using Thomas Edison's renowned educational programs for adults. Thomas Edison is the only college or university selected for this far-reaching program.

"I believe the outstanding educational opportunities the Coast Guard has created for its acquisition workforce through Thomas Edison State College is a 'win-win' for all concerned," said William H. Campbell, director of Finance and Procurement for the U.S. Coast Guard. "Together, we have created a flexible, quality education program which will allow Coast Guard personnel to advance both personally and professionally."

"It can serve as a model for other programs to follow in professionalizing their workforce and improving employee morale," Campbell continued. "I am really excited about this program, and look forward to working with the experienced educators at Thomas Edison to provide higher learning opportunities for Coast Guard acquisition personnel."

The agreement is based upon the broad range of degree programs offered by Thomas Edison including the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree with majors in procurement, and purchasing and materials management. Students are able to complete degrees at the College through a variety of methods including transfer of credits from other regionally accredited academic institutions, portfolio assessment courses, credit by examination and courses delivered through distance education methods.

# Proposed New Master of Arts Program Would Combine Liberal Arts, Career Interests

Always looking to provide adults learners with access to the best choices in higher education, the Academic Council of Thomas Edison State College recently approved the College's intention to proceed with a proposal for a Master of Arts in Professional Studies (MAPS) degree program.

With the trends of global and international expansion continuing, employers are increasingly seeking people grounded in liberal arts who are able to apply an understanding of cultural differences to new and diverse business settings. MAPS is a graduate degree program that will allow liberal arts graduates with professional or management experience to continue their liberal arts studies at an advanced level. It is intended to serve professionals who are interested in broadening their skills, knowledge and competencies through intensive exposure to the liberal arts in ways that can be directly applied to the practical concerns of today's workplace.

## MAPS has two objectives:

- Provide professionals with the opportunity to apply the study of the liberal arts to their own areas of professional practice, and
- Provide liberal arts students the opportunity to study at their convenience using the learning methods available through Thomas Edison.

Today's disciplines of liberal arts and sciences are rooted in the classical conception of learning described by Cicero as basic to the formation of the "civilized" person. A civilized person is viewed as a product of the city (cives in Latin, polis in Greek) where the city acts as birthplace, sustainer and focal point of the community providing cultural nourishment and the growth of an individual's personal identity.

However, today's civilized person is one who inhabits the "global village" without effort. The MAPS program is designed to demonstrate an intimate connection between the liberal arts and professional work by expanding the multi-cultural focus of professionals. The program incorporates Eastern, Western and African cultures allowing for the exploration of the meaning of community with a focus on the values of cultural, racial and ethnic diversity, tolerance and a celebration of differences. Thus deepening professional sensitivities, appreciation and insights into the applicability of liberal arts on day-to-day job performance.

Development of the MAPS program has been guided by advice from employers, research on adult student behavior and preferences and a review of existing, similar programs across

the nation. The 36-semester hour program is expected to have a core curriculum, electives and a graduate thesis or major project. Core courses planned at this time include Liberal Arts and Professional Life and Human Discourse and the Sense of Community. Electives may

include ethics, organizational theory and behavior, leadership development, leadership for the global community, feminist perspectives and others.

MAPS will be offered using the Thomas Edison on-line computer classroom. Work will be accomplished through

extensive reading assignments supplemented by on-line conferencing and extensive writing or problem-based assignments. Many of the classes will be designed to encourage student interaction.

More information on MAPS is available on-line at [www.tesc.edu](http://www.tesc.edu).

## Thurber Takes Leadership Role With Trenton Board

John P. Thurber, of Lawrence, N.J. and vice president for Public Affairs at Thomas Edison State College, was recently appointed 1st Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Trenton Downtown Association.

The Trenton Downtown Association (TDA) is a private nonprofit corporation charged with the revitalization of Trenton's downtown Special Improvement District (SID). The TDA was created 14 years ago by ordinance of the Trenton City Council to work with the business community and local and state governments to strengthen the capital city's central business district. The TDA has accomplished its charter by managing the area's cleanliness, creating security and informational guide crews, developing marketing to promote real estate and business investment, administering physical improvement programs, and building partnerships with the public and private sectors to gain support for its programs.

"The College is excited to be part of the important community services and activities provided by the Trenton Downtown Association," Thurber stated. "We have a commitment to support the Trenton community, and the TDA plays an important role in the vitality of our downtown."

Some of the more recent projects completed by TDA include the on-going development of a community of artists downtown, assisting the district's cultural institutions and re-establishing a public market in the city after a 52-year absence.

Thurber is a summa cum laude graduate of Rutgers Law School and a member of the New Jersey and New York Bars. He has been with the College for seven years and was appointed vice president in 1996. Prior to that, he served as executive director of the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy and, its forerunner, The Trenton Office of Policy Studies.

Thurber's many other distinguished honors include membership in the Leadership New Jersey Class of 1992 and receiving the New Jersey Association of Family Food Center's Man of the Year award in 1993. He is also a member of the Rotary Club of Princeton, serves on the boards of Teach for America for New Jersey and the Greater Princeton Youth Orchestra (GYPO), and is chairperson of the Board of Managers of the Mercer Unit of the American Cancer Society.

## Corporate-Higher Education Forum Highlights



*Elsbeth B. Kahn, director, Development & Technology, Lucent Technologies, spoke to Forum participants about how Lucent is determining the critical skills needed to build a workforce proficient in areas critical to Lucent's success and how new learning options have been created to meet training needs. Lucent Technologies courses in the highly specialized field of telecommunications management were reviewed by ACE in 1996 and continue to be recommended for college credit.*



*William Holt (left), who has directed the Technical Training Project for over 26 years, spoke to Forum participants about the benefits of an ACE review. The Technical Training Project, a consortium of 13 pharmaceutical companies in the New Jersey-New York area, is a private, nonprofit organization that offers entry-level laboratory training to the unemployed or underemployed. The intensive 20-week program has undergone an ACE review and is recommended for 29 credits. Although employment is the primary goal, many of the students who come into the program with a high school diploma are encouraged by the college credits they can receive for the training (because of the ACE recommendation), and continue their education. Holt is pictured at the Forum speaking with Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College.*



*Patricia M. Traynor, vice president of Global Services Markets at AT&T, delivered the keynote address at the 1998 Corporate-Higher Education Forum, "Learning as a Competitive Corporate Strategy," held recently at the Gateway Hilton in Newark, N.J.*

## Greater Trenton's Promise

The Thomas Edison State College John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy's newest client—members of the delegation to Trenton's Promise—recently participated in a two-day retreat held at the First Union Corporate Center in Pennington, N.J. The retreat was part of the work toward The Presidents' Summit on Volunteerism held in April 1997 in Philadelphia, in which participants pledged to provide five fundamental resources critical to the development of youth. They are:

- A caring adult, role model, mentor or tutor;
- A safe place for structured activities during non-school hours;
- A healthy start leading to a healthy future;
- A marketable skill through effective education; and
- An opportunity to give back through community service.

Staff from the Watson Institute assisted in planning for the retreat. Samirah Abdul-Fattah, associate fellow, assisted in organizing and structuring the retreat. During the two days, members of the delegation engaged in a series of team building activities that were designed to give them an opportunity to reconnect and bond with each other. In addition, they drafted a mission and vision statement, identified core values and set goals and objectives for the coming year, all focused on keeping the issues of youth in the forefront of public awareness.

The group also selected a name, Greater Trenton's Promise, and presented a brief summary to invited guests. An additional session is planned in November to establish a governance and organization structure. William A. Watson, executive director of the Watson Institute, will facilitate a follow-up session.

## 7th Annual Gala was "TOTALLY HOT"

The 7th Annual Gala of the Thomas Edison State College Foundation was totally successful with dinner, a Silent Auction and dancing to the sounds of Totally Hot at the Hyatt Regency Princeton. The Gala, held Sept. 26, was attended by 250 revelers and generated over \$89,000 in revenues and in-kind support.

The silent auction generated \$8,400 and included the auction of two round-trip tickets to any location in the continental U.S., tickets to Philadelphia

Flyers hockey games and collectibles from Lenox and Beanie Babies. The Gala Program Journal raised \$19,667 in ad sales.

The Gala also showcased the presentation of this year's Spirit of Edison awards by the Thomas Edison State College Foundation.

*This year's recipients were:*

Dr. Marc Jordan Ben-Meir, Class of '84, from North Richland Hills, Texas., a rabbi, psychologist and counselor who overcame learning disabilities that

forced him to drop out of high school.

Dr. Suren N. Sehgal, of Princeton, N.J., a Distinguished Research Fellow with Wyeth-Ayerst Research and a world authority on immunosuppression therapy for patients receiving human organ transplants.

Rita A. Novitt, of Princeton, N.J., a consultant for W.K. Kellogg Foundation and retired corporate executive with Johnson & Johnson for her strong support and dedication to higher education and Thomas Edison State College.

Nick Carnevale, chairman of the Foundation, presented the Spirit of Edison awards.

The Gala committee was co-chaired by Maria Imbalzano, Esq., Stark and Stark and Margaret Hoisington, vice president/director of New Business Development/Human Resources at HACBM Architects Engineers Planners, Inc.



*Alumnae Paula Vaughan, BSBA '90, MSM '97, and Patricia A. Slaymaker, BSBA '90, MSM '98, enjoy a chance to talk during the festivities.*

▲ "Spirit of Edison" Family Award recipient, Rita A. Novitt (second from left with members of her family, Ida Kalman White, Victoria White and Adam White.



## Thomas Edison State College Receives National Recognition For Outstanding "Best Practices" Program

Thomas Edison State College was singled out for its outstanding "Best Practices" program during a meeting of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) in San Francisco, Calif., Nov. 22-24.

The College is cited in the AASCU publication, *Commitment and Success: A Compendium of Best Practices at AASCU Institutions*, which illustrates that many state colleges and universities have responded to calls from policymakers and others for more efficiency and accountability.

The publication provides 100 examples of programs that illustrate that schools are already producing results in many of these areas. AASCU is a Washington-based higher education association of more than 425 public colleges and universities and higher education systems across the United States and the U.S. territories.

"Best Practices" refers to the processes, practices and systems identified in public and private organizations that performed exceptionally well and

are widely recognized as improving an organization's performance and efficiency in specific areas.

"Key to the success of 'Best Practices' is an organization's ability to communicate its success and produce evidence that these measures are working," said Michael J. Scheiring, vice president and treasurer at the College. "Creating an organizational culture that promotes finding more, better, faster or less expensive ways of operating is critical to serving our students well and to keeping tuition costs affordable."

### Technologies a key to collegiate efficiency

Thomas Edison State College was one of the nation's first colleges to deliver higher education via technologies in the late 1980s. In recent years, it has revolutionized the ways it serves its clients (i.e., businesses, the military and individual adult learners) and expanded the scope of the distance learning meth-

ods it uses to deliver quality higher education. Today, the College offers more than 200 distance learning courses and examinations which adults can take wherever they live and work worldwide.



*Pictured from l to r are the 1998 Spirit of Edison award winners, Dr. Suren N. Sehgal, Dr. George Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College, Rita A. Novitt and Dr. Marc Jordan Ben-Meir.*

## Three Distinguished Leaders Honored with Spirit of Edison Awards

Three distinguished leaders were presented with 1998 Spirit of Edison Awards at the 7th Annual Gala of the Thomas Edison State College Foundation. The Spirit of Edison award recognizes community leaders and graduates of Thomas Edison State College who embody the commitment to innovation, concern for the public good and the spirit of excellence associated with Thomas Alva Edison and the mission of the College.

This year's alumni recipient was Dr. Marc Jordan Ben-Meir, Class of '84, from North Richland Hills, Texas. Dr. Ben-Meir is a rabbi, psychologist and counselor who overcame learning disabilities that forced him to drop out of high school. Working through and around his dyslexia, Dr. Ben-Meir has continued to demonstrate perseverance and persistence resulting in four college degrees, a number of licenses and certifications and ordination as a rabbi. His published dissertation on criminal behavior is used in many prisons in Texas. Dr. Ben-Meir also is a published poet. He was the American Poetry Association's "Poet of the Year" in 1989 and named "Poet Laureate" by the National Library of Poetry in 1996. Dr. Ben-Meir has turned these accomplishments into a remarkable career as a counselor and psychologist serving the public good including parolees and battered women and children. "I was tickled to be among the people I respect and honor when I received this award. It is a great honor to receive the Spirit of Edison award.

Dr. Suren N. Sehgal, a Distinguished Research Fellow with Wyeth-Ayerst Research and resident of Princeton, N.J., is a world authority on immunosuppression therapy for patients receiving human organ transplants. Dr. Sehgal's extraordinary contribution is the discovery and development of a new drug that blocks the rejection of transplanted organs increasing the promise of better lives for transplant recipients. The drug is in the last phase of clinical studies. His career spans 45 years and has resulted with some of the highest forms of recognition from his industry and his peers including the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Indian Society of Organ Transplantation. He was elected to the fellowship of the American Academy of Microbiology in 1997. Other activities include membership in the International Consensus Panel on Immunosuppressive Drugs, the Transplantation Society, the American Society of Microbiology and the Society for Industrial Microbiology. As well, he is a published author of books and articles in his field and is a highly respected lecturer on immunosuppression. With this record of leadership and commitment to public health and wellness, Dr. Sehgal was a natural choice for a Spirit of Edison Award.

The third honoree was presented with a special Spirit of Edison Award. Rita A. Novitt, also of Princeton, N.J., is a consultant for W.K. Kellogg Foundation and a retired corporate executive of Johnson & Johnson. As a member of the College "family" for over 17 years, Ms. Novitt has served on the College's Foundation Board of Directors since 1990, as well as, providing leadership for the College's 20th Anniversary and 25th Anniversary galas and Dr. George A. Pruitt's 10th Anniversary Celebration at the Camden Aquarium. Ms. Novitt said of her award, "I was surprised to be the first recipient of this award and, recognizing the significance, greatly honored to be in the company of the other Spirit of Edison recipients. When I first became involved with Thomas Edison, I realized what a whole new world it was for education. It was an exciting and challenging time then." Her role with Thomas Edison has even crossed into her personal life as she has visited with alumni around the country during personal vacations including a recent visit with alumni in Sante Fe, N.M. Some of her other honors and activities include past president of the Middlesex County Alumnae Association of Douglass College, Rutgers University, vice president of the Douglass College Alumnae Association, recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from Thomas Edison State College in

1990 and being featured in *Who's Who of American Women*. In 1989, she was inducted into the Douglass Honor Society, Douglass College, Rutgers University in recognition of Career and Community Development. For her strong support and unfailing dedication to Thomas Edison and higher education, Ms. Novitt received the new "Family of Edison Award."

## Thomas Edison Provides Army Personnel With New Path to College Degrees

Soldiers and other Army personnel learn a lot in the military. Now, through a new exclusive partnership, they can apply that learning toward a career-oriented degree with Thomas Edison State College.

Thomas Edison, which specializes in higher education for adults worldwide, announces a new partnership with Servicemembers Opportunity College (SOC) to create the SOC Degree Builder Program. Under this program, service-members can convert specialized military training, including the Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Course, into credits toward a college degree.

"This program is ideal for military personnel who have transferred from base to base over the years," said Dr. Patricia Sparks, academic dean and vice provost at Thomas Edison. "It prepares them not only for continued success in the Army, but also for rewarding post-military careers."

The program helps service-members match degrees with their areas of specialization, such as aviation maintenance,

and offers optimum credit for military training and education.

"Each participant in the program receives a Degree Builder, a personalized plan to help them move toward a degree," said Dr. Sparks. "The Degree Builder includes their military education, other college credits, licenses and certificates and other credit-bearing elements. It's a clearly defined, convenient path to a relevant degree."

Thomas Edison State College provides adults with access to the best choices in higher education. One of New Jersey's 12 senior public institutions of higher education, the College offers 13 associate, bachelor's and master's degrees in more than 100 areas of study. Students earn degrees through a variety of rigorous, academic methods, including documenting college-level knowledge they may already have and by completing independent study courses. Rated "one of the Top 20 Cyber-Universities" by Forbes Magazine, this accredited public college is a national leader in the assessment of adult

learning and a pioneer in the use of educational technologies. The College administers the New Jersey State Library as well as The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy which provides public policy analysis and other assistance to government, community groups and the private sector. Further information about admission to the College may be obtained by calling (609) 984-1150, via e-mail [admissions@call.tesc.edu](mailto:admissions@call.tesc.edu) or by accessing the College through the World Wide Web at <http://www.tesc.edu>.

## Historic Conference Focuses on Public Education Issues

With the assistance of the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy, the N.J. Urban Mayors Association hosted a conference Feb. 10 at Thomas Edison State College with superintendents and school board presidents of the 28 urban districts impacted by the state Supreme Court's *Abbott v Burke* decision of 1998. That decision requires each district to provide full-day kindergarten and half-day pre-school for three- and four-year olds starting this fall.

This represented the first time that mayors and senior school officials met together to create solutions to benefit New Jersey children.

Prudence Hall was abuzz with activity as news media from throughout the state covered the historic event. Reporters and TV crews in attendance included Associated Press, AP Radio, New Jersey Network, News 12, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Trenton Times*, *Star-Ledger*, *Home News & Tribune*, WHYY Radio and others.

"The goal of the conference was to develop a vital working relationship among mayors and school district leaders to create a stronger voice on the issues of public education," said Trenton Mayor Douglas Palmer, president of the N.J. Urban Mayors Association. "Resolution of some of these issues involves a very short time frame and will have lasting impact on each municipality."

The 1998 New Jersey Supreme Court's decision in *Abbott v Burke* created a number of issues for the 28 Abbott Districts. Among the most pressing of these issues is "Early Childhood Education," which requires that programs be in place by the 1999-2000 school year.



Graduates and their families enjoy the festivities of the 1998 PHT Banquet held after the Commencement exercises on Oct. 3, 1999.

## Thomas Edison Advisor Elected Editor of National Human Service Newsletter

Theresa A. Bowman Downing is a senior academic advisor at Thomas Edison State College and a member of the National Organization for Human Service Education (NOHSE) where she completed two and one half terms as national secretary and member of NOHSE's Executive Committee. Now she has been elected editor of *The Link*, NOHSE's quarterly member newsletter.

"NOHSE has meant a lot to my career and involvement in the human services movement," says Bowman Downing. "I found the organization a few years after joining Thomas Edison. It has been the catalyst and foundation of my professional development and growth in human services and as a leader. I was delighted when I was asked to run for the position of editor of *The Link*. Again, NOHSE is

providing an opportunity for me to use another talent—writing. It's great to be a member of the Board of Directors again and to be able to serve the NOHSE membership in a new capacity. I feel blessed."

NOHSE was founded in 1975 at the 5th Annual Faculty Development Conference of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The organization, with early support from SREB and the National Institute for Mental Health, grew out of the perceived need by professional care providers and legislators for improved methods of service delivery. NOHSE's focus includes supporting and promoting improvements in direct service, public education, program development, planning and evaluation, administration and public policy. This is accomplished through the



Theresa A. Bowman Downing

professional efforts of NOHSE members. Many of these efforts have resulted in programs of care developed to address unique social, behavioral and educational issues in society.

*The Link* is distributed to all NOHSE members including human services educators, practitioners, students, and organizations. *The Link's* goal is to keep NOHSE members informed about the happenings and trends in the human services profession.




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### INVENTION

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 This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

## Esther Paist appointed executive assistant to the president and director of Institutional Planning

In her new position at the College, Paist assists in the development and implementation of College policies, and the development, management and control of College plans, programs and operations; expedites the work of the College through appropriate channels; and serves as a member of the president's cabinet. Paist is responsible for all committees that report to the president, including the Advisory Council, the Committee on Institutional Research and the Minority Services Committee.

"Esther Paist has demonstrated exemplary leadership in higher education and in the community," said Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison. "The College will benefit from the knowledge and expertise Esther will bring to her position with this office."

Prior to her appointment to this position, Paist was director of Distance Education Programs at Thomas Edison. She came to the College in 1994 from the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Independent Study, where she was assistant director



Esther Paist

of Course Development. During her career, Paist also has worked as a senior editor and a teacher. She earned her M.S. in music and education from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where she also completed Ph.D. coursework in musicology. Paist is a member of the University Continuing Education Association, the American Association of Collegiate Independent Study, the Association of Higher Education and Disability, and the American Musicological Society.

## Deborah Ware appointed Learner Services representative in the Office of Learner Services

In her new role as Learner Services representative with Thomas Edison, Deborah Ware is responsible for performing a variety of advisement and recruitment activities in each phase of the inquiry, application and enrollment process. General responsibilities also include student advisement through staffing pre-enrollment sessions and the preparation of recruitment, evaluation and program planning materials.

Ware, who brings more than 11 years of experience to this new position, joined the College as a principal clerk typist working for an associate dean and two senior program advisors. Prior to joining the Thomas Edison staff, Ware was a clerk typist for the Pennsylvania National Insurance Company in West Trenton, N.J. She completed her Associate in Arts in General Studies degree and her Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences/History degree from the College in 1993. She also has an Associate in Science in Computer-Based Small Business Information Systems degree from Harcum Junior College in Bryn Mawr, Pa.



Ann G. Prime-Monaghan

## Ann G. Prime-Monaghan appointed program advisor in the Office of Learner Services

In her position as program advisor, Ann G. Prime-Monaghan is responsible for providing information and advisement to students enrolled in the College's degree programs.

Prime-Monaghan brings more than 10 years of educational advisement and counseling experience to this position. Prior to joining the Thomas Edison staff, Prime-Monaghan held a number of positions at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md., including director of Admissions and Support Services, Division of Undergraduate Studies-School of Continuing Studies and senior academic advisor.

Prime-Monaghan earned her Master of Science in Counseling degree from Johns Hopkins University and her Master of Arts in Developmental Psychology degree from Temple University in Philadelphia. She also holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology degree from The Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pa.

## Angelina S. Zimnes appointed assistant administrator, Student Fees and Revenues, in the Office of the Controller

As assistant administrator, Student Fees and Revenue, Angelina S. Zimnes is responsible for overseeing the daily deposits for students, reconciling and billing of corporate accounts, answering general staff and student inquiries, and preparing weekly, monthly and quarterly reports.

Zimnes, who brings more than 13 years of experience to this position, came to Thomas Edison from The College of New Jersey where her duties included managing the federal student loan programs, managing and supervising the student refunds, and managing and supervising the Academic Management Payment Plan.

Zimnes completed her Bachelor of Science degree from Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey) in 1974 and received Certification in Finance

## Marie R. Power-Barnes appointed director of Marketing and College Relations

In her role with Thomas Edison, Power-Barnes is responsible for providing leadership of the College's integrated marketing and college relations efforts. She manages the implementation and continued development of the College's marketing and communications strategy and coordinates the efforts of the College's institution-wide marketing and communications team. Power-Barnes, who is responsible for all marketing, college relations, publications and communications activities of the College, supervises a team of marketing relationship managers and communications professionals, and has overall accountability for the outcomes associated with the marketing plan.

"We are very excited to have the benefit of Marie's expertise to lead the College's integrated marketing and college relations effort," said John P. Thurber, vice president of Public Affairs. "Marie has had highly successful experience leading integrated marketing efforts in both the public and private sectors. Her skills and insights will be extremely helpful as she oversees the College's marketing strategy and coordinates the efforts of the College's institution-wide marketing team."



Marie R. Power-Barnes

Power-Barnes is a communications professional with 18 years of experience in marketing, market research, publishing, corporate communications, public relations, media relations, strategic planning and project management. Prior to joining the Thomas Edison staff, Power-Barnes was the marketing/advertising manager for The Times of Trenton. She also has worked as the director of Public Relations and Marketing for Hamilton Hospital (now Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton) in Hamilton Township. Power-Barnes earned her Master of Business Administration and her Bachelor of Arts in journalism from Rider College (now University) in Lawrenceville, N.J., and currently serves as chair of the Publicity & Promotions Committee on the Alumni Association Board of Directors at Rider. A life member of the New Jersey Communications, Advertising and Marketing Association (NJ CAMA), Power-Barnes served as president during the 1996-97 term. She also holds memberships in the American Marketing Association and the American Advertising Federation.



Deborah Ware

## Coast Guard...from p.1

Joyce Taylor, chief of the Voluntary Education Department of the Coast Guard Institute in Oklahoma City, said Thomas Edison's program was selected for its "versatility and the various ways that can be used to satisfy degree requirements."

"Thomas Edison also is one of the few colleges in the nation that offers a major in procurement," she said. "We already have a wonderful rapport with Thomas Edison. They provide the level of service and support that our people demand."

Under the Clinger-Cohen Act, some civilian employees are required to possess a bachelor's degree and 24 semester hours of business/management-related credit to advance above their current level after the year 2000 (the 24 hours may be part of or in addition to the bachelor's program). After much research and review, the U.S. Coast Guard recommended that Thomas Edison State College provide the opportunities its personnel need for educational growth and to meet these mandated requirements through the College's Military Degree Completion Program.

Notable aspects of the partnership between the Coast Guard and Thomas Edison include:

- Educational programs of the highest academic quality
- No residency requirements
- No annual fees
- Personalized degree plan
- Maximum credit for military and government experience and training
- Access to full range of College services

"Thomas Edison is an innovative, academic leader able to respond to the Coast Guard's programmatic demands with flexible instructional methods," said Dr. Patricia Sparks, academic dean and vice provost. "We meet the needs of our students so that they can achieve success in meeting their own educational goals."

## Former High School Dropout Turns Life Around, Discovers TESC, Becomes Rabbi and Ph.D.



Dr. Marc Jordan Ben-Meir,

Dr. Marc Jordan Ben-Meir graduated in 1984 with his B.A. from Thomas Edison State College. Since then he has gone on to earn three other college degrees, a number of licenses and certifications and ordination as a rabbi. This knowledge and academic success has assisted him in building a distinguished career as a counselor and psychologist serving individuals in need, particularly parolees and battered women and children. With all of this success, one finds it hard to believe that he was once a high school dropout.

Eleanor Roosevelt said, "Life was meant to be lived and curiosity must be kept alive. One must never, for whatever reason, turn his back on life." However, in 1963, Dr. Ben-Meir turned his back on his education and dropped out of high school. "For the first half of my life I was a highly skilled underachiever. Being unable to deal with the scholastic requirements of high school, I quit," he said in his remarks at the Oct. 3 commencement ceremony.

Dr. Ben-Meir had difficulty reading and understanding

what he read all through school. By the time he reached high school, the commonly held belief was that if you made it that far and still couldn't read, you simply weren't intelligent enough. But no one suspected that his problems with learning had a name, dyslexia, and was not from a lack of intelligence. "I had been told all along that I wasn't intelligent enough and couldn't think as quickly as others," says Dr. Ben-Meir. "I was even told that I would never be able to do college level work. So I quit high school."

After dropping out of high school, Dr. Ben-Meir survived as a folk singer playing his guitar for tips on the streets of New Brunswick, N.J. and living in his 1955 Plymouth. Then in 1968, Dr. Ben-Meir took a step up in life and off the street. Although opposed to the Vietnam War, he joined the U.S. Army to be trained as a first aid instructor. "I thought this would help to focus what I was doing with my life," he says. After arriving at Fort Dix to begin his training, his orders were changed, and he was put on a plane to Vietnam where he served a 13-month tour.

Following his four years in the military, he spent some time traveling through Europe eventually settling in Israel and joining the border police. Although he was extremely bored and frustrated by trying to learn Hebrew, he forced his way through it. He realized that

by listening he was able to learn and could certainly sing or chant it. Thus he discovered he could indeed learn and began reading voraciously, pushing through when needed. To this day, though, he still needs to sound out new words like a child when he encounters them.

After returning to the states, Dr. Ben-Meir re-entered the service as an Army recruiter and became a medic with the Army reserve. Part of the training he sought during that time included certification to help victims of drug and alcohol abuse. "It was a natural thing to slide into and for the first time in my life I was able to deal with someone who needed help in a positive way." He also started college courses in the evenings to "learn why people do what they do and how he could really help." He was able to complete his associate degree and wanted to continue to get the best education possible while dealing with his needs and circum-

stances. "That was Thomas Edison," he says, and so he enrolled in 1980. With the support of the College staff, his life began to drastically change. "There was always someone available to give me direction or just listen," says Dr. Ben-Meir. "Thomas Edison is a great school. I really love Maureen McGuire (director of Development), Dr. (George A.) Pruitt and the staff at Thomas Edison."

Motivated by earning his bachelor's, Dr. Ben-Meir went on to complete his M.A., cum laude, in organizational behavior and his Ph.D. in organizational psychology. He also graduated from a rabbinical seminary and was ordained as a rabbi. Today he still wears his Thomas Edison college ring with great pride.

With his border police experience in Israel, Dr. Ben-Meir became a licensed reserved peace officer with Hood County, Texas. This laid out a path that would eventually lead him to working with parolees and battered women and children in his practice. His specialty is working with addicts and co-addicts, the spouses and children who are affected by the alcohol or drug abuse. He began working with state-mandated clients for a number of reasons. Primarily he was hopeful that he could teach them to deal effectively with their addictions and find

the kind of happiness he has today, a happiness he never thought was possible while living on the street.

"Many people are in the prison system because they are frustrated, and they explode. Some people think cognitively and while others don't, so a bridge needs to be built between the two," he says of his work. "I've spent hours teaching inmates how to knot a tie or just deal with a check-book." Among his many other honors is a published dissertation on criminal behavior named Concepts of Prisoner Rehabilitation. Still used in many Texas prisons, it deals with the criminal from the perspective of the inmate's background.

As a licensed chemical dependency counselor and social worker associate, Dr. Ben-Meir's success has culminated with the opening in 1990 of the Springhaven Clinic in Fort Worth, Texas. The clinic today still handles many state-mandated clients who are in need of counseling for addictions.

John Dewey tells us, "Education is a social process...education is growth...education is not preparation for life; education is life itself." Although Dr. Ben-Meir's adult life began on very tenuous ground in 1963, it has been a steady and successful climb ever since.

## Alumni Web Site

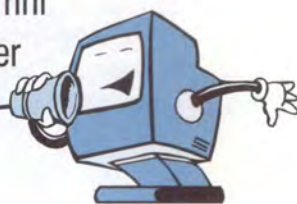
<http://www.tesc.edu/newalum/index.htm>

Job Postings!  
Resumes!

New on-line career capabilities for alumni!



Alumni of Thomas Edison now are able to access a job placement service through the Alumni Web Site. Alumni can post or create a resume, or look for job postings to which they can electronically send their resumes. Visit the Alumni Web Site and click on Career Services for job postings.



### Each One, Reach One

Pass this along to a friend who can benefit from Thomas Edison State College's services for adult learners!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this coupon to: Thomas Edison State College, Office of Admissions  
101 W. State St., Trenton, N.J. 08608-1176

Questions? (609) 984-1150

Each One, Reach One Campaign Reaches Out Once Again!

s/99

# Three of our best

## success profiles

### Paul Hays

"During his tenure as president, Paul Hays guided the Alumni Association through a period of growth and success that is a tribute to his abilities," says Howard Butt, vice president of Alumni Member Relations. "The College and the Association are stronger from his efforts." Paul Hays' active involvement in the Alumni Association could make one think he lives right next door to his alma mater. In fact it is more than an hour drive from his home in Forked River, N.J.

Hays was chosen as this year's recipient of the Outstanding Service to the Alumni Association Award. His dedication to Thomas Edison State College exemplifies the spirit of innovation and dedication characteristic of the Alumni Association.

Hays earned his BSAST from Thomas Edison in 1989. Following an inspirational call received during the 1991 Phonathon, Hays jumped into the Alumni Association with both feet. Because of his expressed enthusiasm,

the Board of Directors asked him to be an associate director. After attending the initial Alumni Annual Fund Phonathon meeting in 1992, and because he was so impressed with the synergy of the group and the dedication of the Board members, he volunteered to co-chair the fundraising effort. Hays' effort, combined with that of current Vice President of Development Gail Palatine, resulted in the Alumni Association surpassing its Annual Fund goal for the first time.

In 1996, Paul held the position of Alumni Association president. This allowed him to lead the Association's events during the College's 25th Anniversary celebration including a visit to Thomas Edison's laboratories and increased Annual Fund revenues.

However, Hays' involvement doesn't end there. Hays is also involved with the College's Corporate Advisory Council. The Council was developed to help the College understand developments "out in the field." According to



Dr. Sonja Eveslage, associate vice president, "Alumni representatives provide a unique perspective to the Council. They not only understand their field – in Paul's case, training and development – but they also understand the College."

Hays' commitment to innovation and quality service does not end with Thomas Edison. His commitment is also reflected in his service as Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 156 in Lacey Township, N.J. and as a member of BPOE Lodge 2518 and its National Soccer Shoot Out Committee. Hays also is a dedicated family man raising two sons with his wife, Fern.

We are pleased to award Paul Hays with the Outstanding Service Award for his leadership and enthusiasm to the life of the Alumni Association and Thomas Edison State College.

### William Scott

served in the Air Piracy Patrol and as courtroom protection for officials and witnesses who were under severe threat of death during high-profile hearings. Of his experiences with the U.S. Marshals office, Scott says, "I wanted to make this a better place to live. We are here to do our part and to give back to society the best we can."

Scott's job with the Marshals Service was not easy. Once while escorting prisoners from one jurisdiction to another, he was seriously stabbed. But even with his grievous injuries, he was able to subdue three men. He then spent nearly a year recovering from those life-threatening injuries.

"Bill is a very quiet man and it is not easy to obtain the stories of his acts of heroism. We only learned, for example, of his bravery and near death by watching a TV series in which his ordeal was listed," states Gerald Arenberg, the founding director of the American Police Hall of Fame and Museum. For his "unselfish line of duty heroism in which this law enforcement officer, at perilous risk to his own life, performed his duty in such a manner as to reflect courage, dedication and initiative becoming to the professional law enforcement officer," Scott was awarded the American Police Hall of Fame Silver Star for Bravery. When asked about his thoughts on receiving the Outstanding Professional Achievement

Award, Scott commented, "I felt that someone else is more deserving than I, but I was very honored to receive the award from Thomas Edison."

Scott's illustrious career has included many other honors as well. He was awarded the United States Department of Justice's Meritorious Award for his superior performance of duties on a continuing basis in 1984. And he was the recipient of the American Law Enforcement Officer of the Year in 1991, an honor that included a letter from then Vice President Dan Quayle commending and saluting Scott for his commitment to fighting crime.

Scott also is retired from the United States Marine Corps with a distinguished record. He is a member of the World Martial Arts Hall of Fame. Although retired from law enforcement, Scott still continues to serve the American public as the founder and chief executive officer of the U.S. Marshals and Peace Officers Association of America.

For his bravery and commitment to law enforcement, William Scott is awarded with this year's Outstanding Professional Achievement Award.



Superheroes are usually only found in the comic strips. But there is one man who comes close to one in real life. William Scott has dedicated his life to fighting crime, battling villains and risking his own life for others and is this year's recipient of the Alumni Association's Outstanding Professional Achievement Award.

Scott is a retired Deputy U.S. Marshal and served with the United States Marshals Service for over twenty years. From an early age, Scott was exposed to the military and law enforcement. As a child, his uncle was an Army Ranger who later became a New York City police officer. From his uncle, Scott learned how to box and practice self-defense. His uncle was also responsible for introducing Scott to another NYPD cop, Patrolman Kelly. Patrolman Kelly became a mentor and guide to Scott while growing up in New York City.

Following graduation from high school and a tour with the Marine Corps, Scott joined the U.S. Marshals office. During his time there, Scott participated in the capture and arrest of hundreds of fugitives from justice that were sought on charges of murder and other felonies. He led undercover assignments that led to the seizures of drugs and firearms. Scott also

### Marjorie Martin Ellis

Even if Marjorie Martin Ellis did not author, "It is better to give than to receive," she personifies this simple sentiment in every aspect of her life. It is for her boundless energy and continuous community support that Marjorie Martin Ellis is this year's recipient of the Alumni Association's Outstanding Service to Society Award.

Ellis' daughter, Tara, lovingly says, "Because I have been exposed to the importance of helping other people, I feel fulfilled. It is just as important to give of your time as well as your money, and no other person has been a better example of that to me than my mother." From a very early age, Ellis' two children, Troy and Tara, were exposed to her "giving" ways as she took an active role in her children's PTO.

Ellis began giving to the community in the 1960s by tutoring students in reading, serving as an unpaid camp aid for the YWCA and visiting house-bound senior citizens or the sick to read to them. Ruth Anne Thomas, a friend, boasts, "Over a lifetime of less than half a century, Marjorie has helped stuff and hide more than 3,000 Easter baskets for needy children; helped fill or deliver at least 450 Thanksgiving dinner boxes to senior citizens; sung approximately 90 verses of Silent Night to some 600 octogenarian pairs of ears; and sold dozens and dozens and dozens of cupcakes, undaunted by frigid wind and swirling snow, at late season football games to pay for Morrisville (P.A.) High School's band uniforms."

Other gifts over the past 15 years have included used clothing drives, youth mentoring programs, voter registration drives, fundraising for the New Jersey Network, turkey dinners for seniors, involvement with the Delaware Valley United Way and the Zipporah Chapter #11 of Eastern Star. Currently Ellis is president of the Urban League Guild of Metropolitan Trenton.

Ellis' gift for giving never ceases to amaze friends, family and recipients of her gentle kindness. Her lifelong pursuit of service to the community is why Marjorie Martin Ellis is this year's recipient of the Thomas Edison State College Outstanding Service to Society Award.

## applause...applause...

'86

Joseph P. Linskey (BSHS) of North Brunswick, N.J., was awarded a Doctor of

Education degree from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., on June 1998 and an M.Ed. from Seton Hall University in August 1998. "It is because of Thomas Edison State College that I have been able to go this far and for that I am forever grateful," Linskey noted.

'96

Navy Ensign Larry D. Mabe, Jr., (ASAST) recently participated with more than

15,000 sailors, Marines, airmen and Coast Guard members in a pre-deployment exercise in the Eastern Pacific Ocean while assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, based in Bremerton, Wash. The exercise was designed to evaluate and assess Mabe's ship, which was deployed in November to the Western Pacific Ocean and the Persian Gulf. A 1981 graduate of Olympic High School in Charlotte, N.C., Mabe joined the Navy in September 1981.

'94

Linda Flores (B.A.) of Oaklyn, N.J., received a Master in Science in Library Science and

Information Studies from Drexel University in Philadelphia in March 1998.

'98

Navy Chief Warrant Officer Brian M. Fogarty (ASAST) recently reported for

duty aboard the aircraft Carrier USS Enterprise, which is based in Norfolk, Va. Fogarty's rotation to a new duty station, exemplifies the worldwide assignability of Marines and sailors. A 1978 graduate of East Syracuse-Minoa High School in East Syracuse, N.Y., Fogarty joined the Navy in August 1978.

'95

Marla Benson (BSBA) of Blairstown, N.J., graduated from the

University of Phoenix (online program) with a Master of Arts in Organizational Management (MAOM) on May 31, 1998. The second, and most important achievement, was the birth of daughter, Alexys Elizabeth Benson, on June 23, 1998. "Needless to say," Benson noted, "May and June were busy months."

# “Precious Memories and Proudest Moments”: A New Graduate Recalls Commencement ‘98

by Janice R. Blinder, Class of ‘98

What a thrill it was for me to participate in Thomas Edison’s Oct. 3 graduation ceremonies held at Princeton University! Of course, I’d been celebrating the completion of my course work since May, but the formal graduation made the culmination of my years of work seem that much more real.

Let’s back up a moment, and look over the path that took me to that graduation ceremony. A child of the 50s, I was not encouraged to pursue college after high school graduation (Parsippany High—class of 1968), but rather to get out there and get to work. In 1969, I began taking evening classes at County College of Morris (CCM) and, in 1971, having saved up enough money to get through three full-time semesters, quit my full time job and earned my Associate in Humanities/Social Science in May 1972. I went back to work full-time and in 1973 began taking evening courses at Montclair State College (now a university). Marriage, children, full- and part-time employment followed, and my education was set aside for another time, another day.

Part of my job in 1995 was reviewing employee tuition reimbursement paperwork,

and a co-worker, Norm Watkins, was taking courses through Thomas Edison. He gave me the number for the Office of Admissions, and once again I was a student. Evaluation of my credits gave me a few choices of a major. My love of reading led me to pursue my Bachelors of Arts degree in literature. What an experience those three years proved to be! My two children were in high school when I began. Today, my daughter is a junior at the College of St. Elizabeth, and my son is a sophomore at Ramapo College of New Jersey. And as for me, I’m a 48-year-old, celebrating her 30th-year high school graduation, who is just thrilled to death to be a college graduate.

People, my parents and children included, have asked me what I intend to do with a degree in literature—what career path will be enhanced by this knowledge? You know what? I don’t really care.

My persistence in the completion of my degree was a matter of my seeing younger people, no smarter than me, who had college degrees because of opportunity, not because they were any more intelligent than I. Although I haven’t turned into a person who believes that you can’t get any-

where in life without a college degree, I have turned into a person with well-rounded knowledge and a sense of closure.

We residents of the state of New Jersey should be exceptionally proud of our state colleges, especially the innovative Thomas Edison State College. Through Guided Study courses, a portfolio assessment, courses taken through the University of Kansas and the University of Oklahoma, and with those “oldies but goodies” from CCM and Montclair State, I am now a college graduate, and am I ever proud of myself! Without Thomas Edison State College’s dedication to adult learners, I doubt my education would ever have been completed.

To those of you who were eligible to participate in October’s festivities but didn’t make it, I’m sorry I didn’t get to meet you at Princeton University. I made it a point to speak to as many people as possible—find out where they came from, what they majored in, and to congratulate them on their achievements. I know that they, and you, worked just as hard as I did to earn their degrees. To those of you who will be invited to a future, formal graduation, try to



go. It will be a day you can store away with all your most precious memories and proudest moments. Remembering the celebration of you and your accomplishments, the whistles and applause from your family and fellow graduates... Well, the whole day

was so special to me—can you tell?  
P.S. Norm Watkins graduated the same day as I did. If you’re reading this, Norm, congratulations, and thank you!

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## A Lifetime of Giving

“Don’t count the days, make the days count” is the outgoing message on Marjorie Martin Ellis’ answering machine. It is the epitome of her generous spirit and a lifetime of making her days count.

Ellis’s family is very large and diverse spreading across several countries and continents. She was born in New Jersey. But her mother died when she was only four months old and her grandparents in Florida raised her. It was through her grandmother that she was first exposed to helping others.

“My grandparents are remarkable. My grandmother was always helping people and she started me at an early age,” says Ellis. “It might only be an activity at church, but you were encouraged to volunteer. With my grandparents, you really didn’t have a choice and my grandmother would always say that ‘you must give back.’ And that was fine with Marjorie because she has always liked to help someone or teach them to do things they couldn’t on their own. Her grandparents are still her role models today.

Growing up in Florida had its challenges for Ellis. It also had some rewards such as being the first African American to attend the Harlem Academy in Florida. As a teenager, Ellis moved back to the Trenton area where she graduated from Trenton High School. She then graduated from the Institute of Computer Technology with a major in computer programming. For the next 26 years, she had a highly technical job with Proctor & Gamble, raised her own family and still found the time to tutor students in reading, plan used clothing drives, voter registration drives, volunteer as a camp aid for the YWCA, work with senior citizens, volunteer with the Delaware Valley United Way, and assist in fund raisers for school band uniforms and the New Jersey Network.

Ellis also had the day-to-day responsibilities of raising her two children, Troy and Tara, as her husband was in the Marine Corps and was moved around yearly. Although she was always giving she never seemed to take time away from her own family. “There weren’t any problems with the kids, everyone got a fair amount of time and attention. And I got them involved in volunteering too,” says Ellis. Other ways Ellis balanced the many demands she

placed on her time included leaving meetings or work a little early and then stopping by Troy’s basketball game on her way to pick up Tara from dance class. She would even use her vacation time to volunteer and help others.

During this time, Ellis had also been taking college courses here and there. Then came a time when Ellis wanted to complete her bachelor’s degree, which had always been her grandfather’s dream. Her husband had earned his degree while in the military through Regent’s and suggested that Ellis explore the possibility of applying her educational and work experiences to a Thomas Edison State College degree. The acceptance of previously earned credits and the flexibility of earning additional credits would fit nicely into her already demanding schedule. Ellis fulfilled her grandfather’s dream as she graduated from Thomas Edison in 1997.

Ellis left Proctor & Gamble and went to work for the Urban League as both an employee and volunteer. While with the Urban League, she created a program in partnership with the state’s Welfare to Work Program to find jobs for people on the welfare rolls. “Our primary goal is to get the participants jobs and off welfare,” Ellis says. One aspect of her program included a series of seminars on topics such as How to get the Job, Time Management, Dress for Success, and Budgeting. Ellis and her staff would work with potential employees and the hiring companies to make successful matches. After being hired, they would follow up with the hiring company for 90 days to ensure continued success. Ellis is currently the president of the Urban League Guild of Metropolitan Trenton.

Her energy and enthusiasm seems to be endless. When asked how she keeps going, her response is, “I don’t know how to say no and I have the drive and want to do it, so I always found a way. And as mothers we tend to push ourselves even further, to go beyond the call of duty and find the time for family, work, cooking, cleaning. We just do it.”

Ellis is currently working for McGraw Hill in Hightstown, N.J. She would like to change to a career in social services and is considering working on her master’s degree to make this a reality. Until then, Ellis plans to continue giving.