

Winter 2001

# Invention

THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE NEWS MAGAZINE



## Highlights in this Issue:

28th Annual  
Commencement

The Grande Ball—  
Trenton 2000

Distinguished Alums  
Receive Awards



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On the cover:  
Vance Warren received  
a Bachelor of Arts  
in Humanities degree  
at the 28th Annual  
Commencement.  
(see article, p.2).

Below: Linda Roan  
celebrates with  
granddaughter  
Taylor Eldridge at this  
year's Commencement

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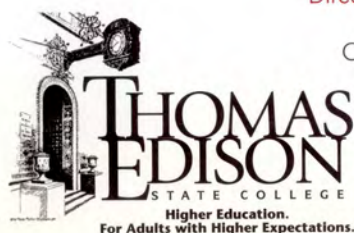
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Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,

As the year 2000 ends and 2001 begins, Thomas Edison State College takes a moment to reflect on all of our accomplishments of the past year.

Presently, more than 8,500 students are currently enrolled in the College, utilizing all of the innovative, flexible credit-earning options offered by the College. To date, the College boasts an alumni family more than 17,200 strong, working and living around the world, making a difference in their communities and organizations, with the foundation of a Thomas Edison State College degree helping them to lead the way.

This past year the College launched its second master's degree—the Master of Arts in Professional Studies degree, which joins its predecessor, the Master of Science in Management degree. As each semester passes, the College's graduate program grows, proving that a post-baccalaureate degree from Thomas Edison State College is becoming increasingly desirable to adult professionals looking for a high-quality graduate program that accommodates their busy lifestyles.

In January 2000, the College celebrated its most recent expansion project when it dedicated its new historic townhouse facility—a row of five 19th-century townhouses which have been restored to their original architectural splendor. A new 28,000 square-foot addition to the townhouses was also constructed. The addition houses electronic classrooms wired to allow the College to connect electronically to other colleges and universities around the world. Since the townhouse renovation has been completed, the College has received numerous awards for the project and its effort to preserve the history and heritage of Trenton, N.J. In this issue of *Invention*, you'll read about two more recent College celebrations—the 28th Annual Commencement ceremony and the Grande Ball.

Expanded information is now available on the College's Web site ([www.tesc.edu](http://www.tesc.edu)), which was completely revamped and re-launched in the summer of 2000. Each month, tens of thousands of prospective and current students visit the site to learn more about what the College has to offer and to log onto online courses. The Web site is a good place to find the latest news and information about Thomas Edison State College.

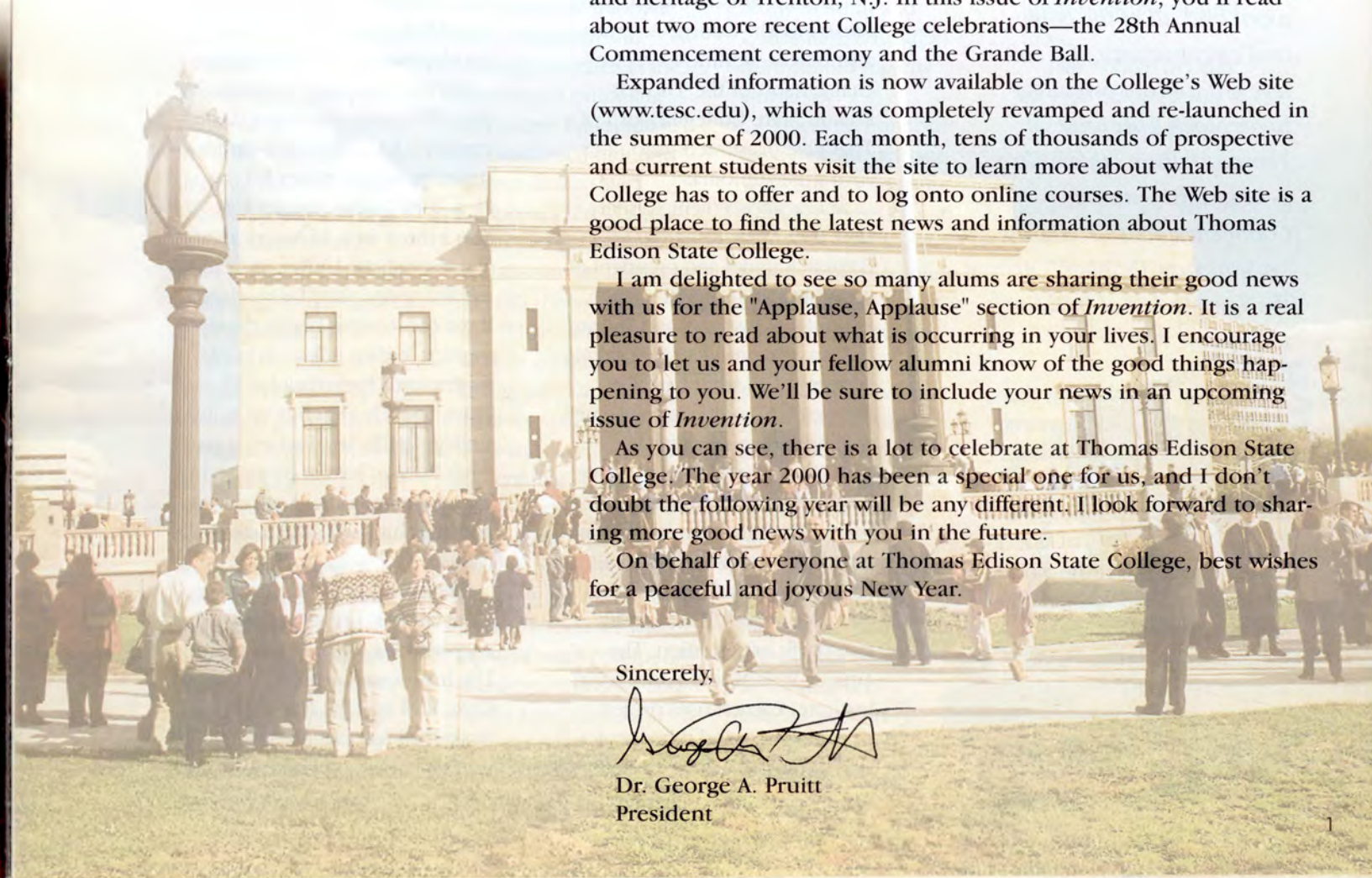
I am delighted to see so many alums are sharing their good news with us for the "Applause, Applause" section of *Invention*. It is a real pleasure to read about what is occurring in your lives. I encourage you to let us and your fellow alumni know of the good things happening to you. We'll be sure to include your news in an upcoming issue of *Invention*.

As you can see, there is a lot to celebrate at Thomas Edison State College. The year 2000 has been a special one for us, and I don't doubt the following year will be any different. I look forward to sharing more good news with you in the future.

On behalf of everyone at Thomas Edison State College, best wishes for a peaceful and joyous New Year.

Sincerely,

Dr. George A. Pruitt  
President







# 28th Annual Commencement Proves to be a Day of *Pride & Accomplishment*

*William J. Conklin and family (top left) show lots of smiles as they celebrate his graduation on October 7 at the War Memorial in Trenton. Frank McTague and his family celebrate as well (middle right). Janet Rosenstein gets a big hug (bottom right) to mark her graduation.*



*Although October is not generally considered the month of the year to think about graduations, at Thomas Edison State College October is the month that caps are donned, gowns are worn and all of the pomp and circumstance of a college graduation ceremony takes place. This year, Thomas Edison State College held its 28th Annual Commencement Ceremony on Saturday, October 7 at the War Memorial Building in Trenton, N.J.*

This year's graduating class numbered 981 adult learners who completed their Thomas Edison State College degree using distance education and experiential assessment opportunities throughout the world. Of this number, a total of 155 students from 23 states, including California, Florida and Texas, were on hand at the War Memorial to receive their diplomas.

Thomas Edison State College President Dr. George A. Pruitt and Carole Nerlino-Cerepak, chairperson of the Thomas Edison State College Board of Trustees, presented graduates with their diplomas.

At Commencement, former New York Knick Richard (Dick) Barnett, founder and president of the Athletic Role Model Educational Institute, and William Philipp, vice president for Lifelong Learning, PBS Adult Learning Service (ALS), were also presented with honorary doctorates.

As a successful former player for the New York Knicks, Barnett has used his background and status to serve at-risk students and has distinguished himself as an educator as well. Through his non-profit organization, The Athletic Role Model Educational Institute, Barnett uses professional athletes and other professional role models to set exam-

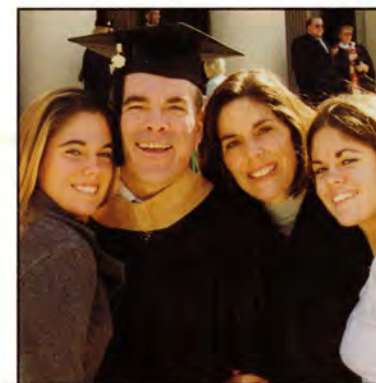
ples and positively influence the social behavior and cognitive development of "at-risk students."

Barnett is a prime example of the role models his organization employs. An outstanding professional basketball player for the New York Knicks, Barnett was also a three-time All-American at Tennessee State University, leading Tennessee State University to three consecutive league championships, before going on to play professional basketball for 15 years. Like Thomas Edison State College graduates, Barnett is an adult learner, having continued his academic studies both during and after his successful basketball career.

He has been a consultant for many athletic organizations and corporations, including New York Life Insurance Company, Coca-Cola, IBM and the National Basketball Association. Barnett was also a staff consultant for the

Portland Trailblazers, where he assisted players in making the transition from professional basketball to "real-world" circumstances.

An active participant in higher education, Barnett has served as adjunct professor at Baruch College in New York City and as special consultant to the Dean of Education at the



University of San Francisco. Barnett earned a Bachelor of Science degree from California Poly College, a Master's in Public Administration degree from New York University and a Doctor in Education degree from Fordham University.

Philipp, in his capacity as vice president for Lifelong Learning at PBS, oversees the development and provision of products and services in the form of college-credit television courses, TeleWEBcourses®, audiovisual resource programming, and live, interactive videoconferences and videostreaming events. New initiatives that Philipp leads are Going the Distance®, Ready to Earn®, LiteracyLink®

and ALSO® (Adult Learning Service Online). He is also working with a Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant to develop PBS ACCESS and PBS you™, a new lifelong learning DBS channel. (See Philipp's Commencement Remarks on p. 4.)

PBS Adult Learning Service and Thomas Edison State College have engaged in a long and fruitful relationship. Many of the College's students and graduates have used PBS/ALS materials in their courses.

Philipp joined ALS in 1984 to launch the marketing and promotion department. Previously, he was an administrator for a variety of informal adult education and training programs as the director of Continuing and Career Education at Catonsville Community College in Maryland. Philipp worked as a television producer-director at Maine Public Television and ABC News, New York.

He is noted for his work in educational marketing, program development for special populations and several successful ventures in international education and telecommunications in Peru, Iran and the Sudan. Philipp is an active presenter for distance learning with many community college, university and media associations as well as a member of *Catalyst Magazine's* editorial board. He is also a

member of the leadership team for Skills Standards, National Alliance of Business; Extended Diploma Program Task Force, American Council on Education (ACE); the Advanced Distributed Learning Initiative; and the Commission on Technology and Adult Learning (ASTD and NGA).

Philipp earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English at Loyola College, a Master of Science degree in Mass Communications at Syracuse University and a Master of International Administration degree from the School for International Training. He also has earned a Certificate of Advanced Study in Adult and Continuing Education from Johns Hopkins University.

"It was an honor to have Dick Barnett and Will Philipp join us for Commencement," said Dr. Pruitt. "Mr. Barnett has distinguished himself as a dedicated educator and leader in guiding the youth of our community. He also completed his education later in life, like most Thomas Edison State College students. Mr. Philipp has been an advocate for lifelong learning and an innovator in the delivery of distance education. I am sure their presence at Commencement

was an inspiration to our graduates."

The Commencement ceremony also included a student address by Melanie Clark McManus of Lambertville, N.J., a 2000 Bachelor of Arts in Social Science/History graduate.

At the conclusion of the Commencement ceremony, family and friends joined the graduates in and around the War Memorial for cheers, hugs, good wishes and celebration. It was evident from all of the smiles, flowers, balloons and happy faces that it doesn't really matter what month graduation takes place; it's the sense of pride and accomplishment realized by the graduates and their loved ones that matters most.

(See related articles on PHT Banquet and Alumni Award Winners on p. 5.)





# Alumni Awards Presented to Three Distinguished Alums

Prior to this year's Commencement ceremony (see article p. 2), the Thomas Edison State College Alumni Association held its Annual Meeting in the College's newly restored townhouses. Thomas Kosdemba, Vice President for Alumni Member Relations, presented three distinguished alums with special awards at the meeting.

Gilbert Scheetz, of Sellersville, Pa., was presented with the Outstanding Service to Society Award; Michael J. Smilak, of Succasunna, N.J., received an award for Outstanding Service to the

Alumni Association; and Mark Meara, of Hamilton Township, N.J., was presented an award for Outstanding Professional Achievement (see Alumni Profile, p. 11).

Scheetz was chosen as an award recipient because of the many lives he has touched in service to his country, those in need and through his work with various community organizations.

Scheetz began his military service when he was drafted in 1943 and served as a rifleman stationed in the Italian Theater of Operations. He received numerous awards for his service including, among others, the Purple Heart, Silver Star and Bronze Star. He was discharged at the end of World War II, but found himself enlisting in the Air Force during the Korean Conflict. After leaving the service for the second time, Scheetz decided it was time to further his education. The first steps were an associate's degree in nursing from Bucks County Community College (Pa.) and



Mark Meara, Gilbert Scheetz and Michael J. Smilak proudly show their awards at the awards ceremony.

an associate's degree in physical medicine/rehabilitation from Lehigh County Community College (Pa.) in 1979. He then spent ten years as a physical therapist at Grandview Hospital helping many individuals regain their health.

In 1980, Scheetz achieved a bachelor's degree in social sciences from Thomas Edison State College. He also holds a master's in education from Temple University. During this time, Scheetz has played an active role in numerous organizations. He has been a volunteer fireman since 1937 and continues to serve in various capacities. He is active in the VFW Post 245, the American Legion Post 255, and the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 94. He also serves as a citizen member of the Community Development Advisory Board, was a member of the Bucks County Community College Alumni Council for 10

years and is active at Doylestown Hospital in Pennsylvania.

Helping the community and veterans continues to play a large part of his life. "I have been blessed with long life and am trying to return to other individuals some

help I have received along life's pathways" said Scheetz.

Smilak graduated from Thomas Edison State College in 1995 with a bachelor's degree in computer science and soon became active in the Alumni Association as an associate director. This year, he took on the added responsibility of vice president of Development for the

association. In his role, he oversees the functions of the annual Phonathon. He also manages the Alumni Association's souvenir program and, with the help of the souvenir committee, has added several exciting new items to the line available through the College's Web site (see back cover).

Smilak works in the information systems field and is a service delivery director for CAP Gemini. He has been married for over 33 years to Virginia and has three grown children, Zachary, Eveline and Daniel.

Please see the Alumni Profile (p. 11) to read more about Mark Meara.

## Remarks by Will Philipp at Thomas Edison State College's 28th Annual Commencement

Thank you for this special honor. A "collection" of master's degrees never seems to equal the doctorate! This is an exceptional recognition from an exceptional college—your college—Thomas Edison (State College).

You are graduating today from America's premier college and the number one PBS four-year university partner for adult learners. This is the kind of institution that most other colleges in the U.S. want to be today. You are the graduates who are models for doing it all...with classwork, family, community and a college degree.

PBS and our Adult Learning Service is very proud to have been a central part of (Thomas Edison State College's) distance learning curriculum since 1982. In fact, this semester Thomas Edison (State College) will pass the 20,000 enrollment milestone for students learning with PBS' 80 courses via satellite, cable television, on Public Television and on the Internet—at the time and place that is best for you.

Currently, PBS' newest project, "PBSyou," (which stands for Your Own University) on DirectTV and DishTV, has learners seeking to complete their degrees turning first to Thomas Edison State College as they tune in to PBSyou.

At Thomas Edison State College, your faculty, your administration and you have collectively made high quality, personalized, anytime, anywhere learning the gold standard for all other institutions of higher education worldwide. PBS and all of our 300 stations nationwide salute Thomas Edison State College and your great success today. You represent the best in distance learning for the 21st century. Congratulations to you and all of your family and friends who supported you in this significant achievement.



Dr. Pruitt awards Philipp with the honors cape at the Commencement ceremony.



## PHT Banquet Recognizes Friends and Family of Thomas Edison State College Grads

Each year after Commencement, Thomas Edison State College's Alumni Association hosts the Putting Him/Her Through (PHT) Banquet for graduates and their friends and family. During the banquet, graduates have the opportunity to recognize those people in their lives who helped them achieve their dreams of a college degree by awarding them a PHT (not to be confused with a Ph.D.) certificate.

This year, 25 graduates were in attendance at the banquet. John Thurber, Thomas Edison State College's vice president for Public Affairs, conferred the PHT certificates and Howard Butt, president of the Alumni Association, toasted the honorees. Donna MacNeil-Millar, vice president for Alumni Programs chaired the event.

Kelly Anne Meyers (Top photo—center with her child on her lap) was one of 25 graduates in attendance. Howard Butt, (left) president of the Alumni Association toasts the graduates, their friends and families.



# Thomas Edison State College Hosts The Grande Ball- Trenton 2000

## Prestigious Spirit of Edison Awards Presented

On Saturday, November 18, 2000, the Board of Directors of the Thomas Edison State College Foundation hosted the Grande Ball—Trenton 2000 at the War Memorial in Trenton, N.J.

The black-tie gala began with a silent auction, followed by an evening of dinner and dancing.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 7th Annual Spirit of Edison Awards. Prior to dinner, Thomas Edison State College President Dr. George A. Pruitt presented the 2000 Spirit of Edison Awards to Eric S. Pennington, Alumni Award; Maurice T. Perilli, Family of Edison Award; and Albert Stark, Community Leader Award.



"The prestigious Spirit of Edison Awards are presented each year to recognize community leaders and alumni whose creativity, commitment and entrepreneurial spirit reflect the pioneering genius of Thomas Alva Edison," said Gala Chair S. John Quattrone in his introductory remarks.

Selected leaders must demonstrate that they embody the commitment to innovation, concern for public good and the spirit of excellence associated with the mission of

Thomas Edison State College and its namesake. "Recognition is given to those who have made a difference at the local, national and international level, which is fitting, given the global nature of Thomas Edison State College's higher education programs," said Dr. Pruitt.

*"Recognition is given to those who have made a difference at the local, national and international level, which is fitting, given the global nature of Thomas Edison State College's higher education programs."*

Criteria for the Spirit of Edison Awards include adherence to a high standard of excellence, innovation and imagination in professional life; dedication to humanitarianism and to serving the public good; devotion to the ideals of self-discipline, hard work and persistence in the pursuit of excellence; enthusiasm for the improvement of quality of life through the continued availability of higher education for adults; and distinguished service at the community, national or international level.

Eric S. Pennington, attorney and partner at Hand, Little, Pennington & Codrington, has more than 20 years of experience in law and management.

250 guests attended the College's Grande Ball—Trenton 2000 held in the beautifully restored War Memorial in Trenton, N.J.



Dr. Pruitt said, "His remarkable record of commitment to the community through public service and his devotion to improving the quality of life through higher education precipitated his selection as the alumni recipient of the Spirit of Edison Award."

Pennington began his career with New Jersey Bell/Bell Atlantic (now Verizon) in 1979 and worked his way up to assistant manager of Interexchange Services. During that time, he earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree from Thomas Edison

State College and went on to Rutgers School of Law in Newark, N.J., completing his J.D. in 1992.

He launched his law career with Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison in New York in 1992 as an associate in the corporate department. A year later, he served as a law clerk for The Honorable Robert N. Wilentz, chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court. In 1994, he worked as a law clerk for The Honorable Damon J. Keith with the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in Detroit, Mich. Pennington returned to Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison in 1995 as an associate in the litigation department for two years and then joined Gibbons, Del Deo, Dolan, Giffinger & Vecchione as an associate in the Labor and Employment Group.

Continued on page 12



Top: Spirit of Edison award winners Eric Pennington, Albert Stark and Maurice Perilli pose with Dr. George A. Pruitt.  
Bottom: (left to right) Dr. Pruitt, Albert Stark, Maurice Perilli and Eric Pennington speak to the guests of the Grande Ball.



Guests of the Grande Ball enjoyed an evening of dancing at the War Memorial.



# "Applause, Applause"

## Jo-Ann C. Dixon

1976 AA  
1978 BA

Jo-Ann has recently been elected president-elect of Executive Women of New Jersey, the foremost organization for women who have "broken through the glass ceiling." Jo-Ann is also the chairperson for the New Jersey Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Program. This initiative, housed at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospitals' Emergency Center in New Brunswick, N.J., aims to train first-aid squads, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, nurses and physicians in specialized pediatric trauma care techniques and ensures that every rescue rig in New Jersey is supplied with child-size life saving equipment. In addition, Jo-Ann is a past president of the Kiwanis Club of Caldwell/West Essex in New Jersey.

## Rolf Basler

1979 AA  
1980 BSBA

Since his graduation from Thomas Edison State College in 1980, Rolf says his career has improved significantly. At that time, Rolf was employed as production manager for a large flooring company in New Jersey. In 1996 he accepted the position of president and managing director of Tarkett Ireland Ltd., a mid-size flooring company in the Republic of Ireland. In 1999 he joined Domco Tarkett, Inc. headquartered in Quebec, Canada as vice president of manufacturing. He oversees resilient flooring plants in Quebec, Alabama, Texas and New York. Rolf says without a degree from Thomas Edison State College his career path would not have been as successful. He sends his thanks to all College staff who helped make it possible for him to earn a degree.

## Howard K. Ostran

1982 B A

In 1999, Howard opened "Grandma's Dollhouses," a full-service miniature and doll-house store, in Shrewsbury, N.J.

## Frank Muzzi

1984 AA  
1984 BSBS

Frank has been promoted to vice president for finance and administration/chief financial officer at Vitronics, Inc. in Eatontown, N.J. He says if it wasn't for his degree from Thomas Edison State College, this promotion would not have been possible. He truly appreciates what Thomas Edison State College has done for him and his career.

## Ruth Olinsky

1984 BA

Ruth recently exhibited her painting and poetry in a juried show at the Trenton City Museum in Trenton, N.J.

## Adrian Restivo-Levitt

1987 AA  
1989 BA

Adrian received his Ph.D in Counseling Psychology from Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J. in 1999. Dr. Restivo-Levitt has been an assistant professor at Kean University in Union, N.J. since the fall of 1999.



## Steven Herman

1993 BA

Steven has joined Asia's broadband giant, Pacific Century CyberWorks, as senior vice president based in Tokyo, Japan. For the past four years, Steven was director for Discovery Channel Asia in Japan. He was recently re-elected for a third consecutive term as Chairman of the Foreign Press in Japan (FPIJ), which represents more than 150 media organizations throughout the country. In the photo above, Steven (right) meets with Monaco's Crown Prince Albert.

## Patricia & Richard Tavis

1993 AA (Patricia)  
1995 ASM (Richard)

Patricia and Richard are proud to announce the adoption of their new daughter, Samantha Mari, from India. Samantha was born on October 17, 1996 and according to her parents, arrived at JFK International Airport in New York on September 5, 2000 to join the Tavis family. Patricia and Richard are also the proud parents of sons Richard, Shaun, Ryan and Christian.



## Norman Hart

1994 BA

Norman received his Master of Arts in theater degree from the University of Kentucky in 1996 and just received his Ph.D. in theater degree from the University of Maryland. Dr. Hart will be teaching at Loyola College in Baltimore, Md., in the fall of 2000.

## Alice M. Rainey

1994 BA

Alice has recently completed her Master of Arts degree in humanities from California State University. Alice works at Atlantic Cape Community College in Mays Landing, N.J. as the Articulation Coordinator. She is the liaison for Atlantic Cape Community College students wishing to enroll at Thomas Edison State College. Alice is planning to apply to a Ph.D. program in the fall of 2001.

## Kurt B. Treftz

1994 BA

Kurt graduated with a Master of Arts in Applied Behavioral Science, Systems Counseling track, from LIOS/BASTYR University in Bothell, Wash. in June 1999.

## Marjorie Martin Ellis

1997 BA

On April 29, 2000, Marjorie received the Community Service Award for Outstanding Service and Achievement from the Trenton, N.J. chapter of the National Women of Achievement.

## Thomas L. Page

1994 AA  
1994 BA  
2000 MSM

Thomas is an adjunct professor at Passaic County Community college in Paterson, N.J. In addition, Thomas also teaches English as a second language and the pre-GED program for the Passaic County Sheriff's Department. He is the choir director and church musician for the Grace Bible Class Church, also in Passaic, N.J. Thomas thanks Thomas Edison State College for the opportunity to complete his degrees and helping guide his course to success.



Thomas Page and his son DeAndre Malachi.

## Jamie R. Quinones

1997 BSAST

Jamie earned his MBA degree from the University of Phoenix in Puerto Rico. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Costa Rica.

## Michael Helme

1998 BA

Michael's translation of a Chinese book on the treatment of schizophrenia and mental diseases with acupuncture has been published by Paradigm Publications. The book is published under Michael's pen name—Thomas Dey. While attending Thomas Edison State College, Michael completed portfolio assessment courses in advanced Chinese which allowed him to finish his degree. He is also very appreciative that the College recognized the years he spent living and learning in China as an important learning experience that was worthy of academic recognition.

## Victoria Robinson

1998 BA

After graduating from Thomas Edison State College, Victoria went on to Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research. In May 2000, Victoria graduated with a Master of Social Service degree. She has recently passed the clinical licensing exam in Pa., and is now a licensed social worker (LSW). In August, Victoria accepted a position as a social work care manager at the Coatesville VAMC. She works in the geriatric line, working primarily with veterans who have dementia or who are in nursing homes.



**Kent Wallace**  
1998 BA

In 1992, Kent was drafted by the New York Yankees and has been playing professional baseball ever since. This past year Kent had the unique experience of playing baseball in Merida, Mexico, located on the Yucatan peninsula. Kent has played in Canada, Venezuela, Mexico and in 37 of the 50 United States. Kent is currently under contract with the San Diego Padres. His career highlights include three championship rings from the minor leagues including a AAA World Series ring when he played with the New Orleans Zephyrs (Houston Astros' AAA affiliate) in 1998. In his spare time, Kent writes journal entries for the baseball Web site, [www.attheyard.com](http://www.attheyard.com). Kent lives

in Paducah, Ky. Once he retires from baseball, he plans on building an indoor baseball facility there to teach local youth about the game. He says this will allow him to continue using his baseball knowledge and experience along with his college education.



**Douglas William Bennett**  
1999 AA

Douglas says he is so excited to have completed his AA degree from Thomas Edison State College in 1999. He is also delighted to have a Thomas Edison State College ring to mark his achievement. He sends his thanks to College staff who helped him along the way.



**Jennifer S. Iucolino**  
2000 BA

Jennifer and her husband Fabio welcomed the birth of their daughter, Francesca Gabrielle, on September 8, 2000. Francesca weighed 6 lbs., 13 ozs. and was 21 inches long.



## "Applause, Applause" Information for *Invention*

**New Job? Promotion?  
Award? Marriage? Baby?**  
*If it's news to you, it's news to us!*

To better serve our family of Thomas Edison State College alumni, we invite you to tell us about the exciting things happening in your life. Let us know what's new with you and we'll include your updates in a future issue of *Invention*. Please tell us how your experience at Thomas Edison State College changed your life. To make it easy for you to contact us, please fill out the form below and mail it to: Thomas Edison State College, *Invention* Editor, 101. W. State Street, Trenton, N.J. 08608; fax it to (609) 984-1376; or e-mail your good news to [kbrown@tesc.edu](mailto:kbrown@tesc.edu). Feel free to send us photos to accompany your news. We'll publish them as space permits.

Thank you for this opportunity to better serve our valued Thomas Edison State College alumni family.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Former Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Day Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Evening Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Year \_\_\_\_\_  
Degree \_\_\_\_\_  
Information for *Invention*:  
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## Meet One of Our **Best...**

### *Mark J. Meara '88, Bachelor of Arts*



Sitting in his office in Princeton, N.J., it is blatantly apparent that Mark J. Meara has combined his expertise in technology and architectural creativity to create a workspace that is not only functional, but also warm and inviting.

As the president and co-CEO of Princeton Internet Group (PlnG), a consulting and development provider of Internet and other new media related services, Meara has combined his Bachelor of Arts degree in Computer Science from Thomas Edison State College with his Associate in Science degree in Architecture from Mercer County Community College to build an organization that has served hundreds of companies such as AT&T, Bell Atlantic NYNEX Mobile, McGraw-Hill, New Jersey Transit and Coldwell Banker to name a few.

Established in 1995, PlnG is a premier architect of integrated information, communications and commerce solutions. PlnG leverages the power of internetwork technology to deliver business advantages by enabling its clients to break barriers, develop superior business models and reach new markets.

Meara said, "PlnG combines form and function to deliver innovative and creative solutions to our clients' digital challenges. We develop intranets, extranets, e-commerce and Web solutions that help our clients gain efficiency, improve their internal and external communications, develop new sales channels and demonstrate their market leadership."

At PlnG, Meara oversees corporate operations while continuing to maintain an active role in project management and strategic consulting. In 1999, Meara was honored by the Chamber of Commerce of the Princeton Area with its Small Business Person of the Year award, in recognition of his business success and contributions to the community.

Meara has been managing and applying information technology in a variety of business environments since 1993. Prior to co-founding PlnG, he was employed for over six years as a manager of Information Systems at ENVIRON Corporation, a nationally based, multidisciplinary, environmental health services consulting firm. He began his career at CUH2A, a large architectural/engineering firm where he held a variety of positions in computer operations, support and development.

Prior to enrolling at Thomas Edison State College, Meara was attending what was then called Trenton State College, now known as the College of New Jersey. Meara says he decided to transfer to Thomas Edison State College to take advantage of its flexible credit-earning options. "By transferring to Thomas Edison State College, I was able to cut two years off the time it would have taken me to complete my degree at Trenton State," he said. "The College leveraged my work experience and allowed me to complete a bachelor's degree in computer science quicker than I could have anywhere else."

In addition to his associate and bachelor's degrees, Meara earned an M.S.A. with honors in General Administration from Central Michigan University. He is an adjunct faculty member of Central Michigan University's Information Resource Management Graduate Program, and at Mercer County Community College where he presided on the Internet Task Force, helped develop curricula and teaches several Internet-related courses.

Meara said, "As the digital economy matures, it will continue to prove new challenges and opportunities for all organizations, regardless of their industry or size. To excel in this environment, companies need a partner that will explore and push the development of

new technologies, help them make sense of the changing rules of business, and create innovative solutions that empower them to be leaders. PlnG's vision and proven expertise make it the partner that leading companies turn to for exceptional results."

Prior to this year's Commencement ceremony in October, Meara was presented with an award for Outstanding Professional Achievement by the College's Alumni Association (see related article, p. 4).

In a May 1999 interview with the *Princeton Business Journal*, Meara said the key to success as a small business owner is "the ability to know your own strengths, accept ownership for your role in the overall strategy and keep plugging away." He added, "It takes perseverance, courage and a lot of people willing to support your venture."

On the homefront, Meara receives support for all his ventures from his wife Cynthia and their two daughters, Morgan, 3 and Melanie, 1. The Meara family lives in Hamilton Township, N.J.

**The College leveraged my work experience and allowed me to complete a bachelor's degree in computer science quicker than I could have anywhere else."**



A partner with Hand, Little, Pennington & Codrington since November 1999, Pennington currently concentrates in employment discrimination and civil litigation. He is admitted to practice in the State Courts of New Jersey and New York; the United States District Court for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York; the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey; and the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

Among his many community activities, Pennington is a board member of Family Connections in Orange, N.J. and the Thomas Edison State College Foundation. He is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and a grader for the New Jersey Board of Bar Examiners. He has also served as a member of the New Jersey Supreme Court Ethics Committee, the Newark Advisory Board of Education, the Newark Zoning Board of Adjustments and the Newark City Council Education Committee.

Pennington and his wife of 17 years, Ellen, live in Newark, N.J. with their 7-year-old daughter.

Maurice T. Perilli was honored with a special Spirit of Edison Award—the Family of Edison Award.

Dr. Pruitt said, "As a strong supporter of higher education, Maurice's unfailing dedication to Thomas Edison State College and his exemplary service to our Board are the true measure of 'spirit' for which the award was designed."

A member of the Thomas Edison State College "family" for more than seven years, Perilli has served on the College's Foundation Board of Directors since 1993. It is his unwavering dedication to Thomas Edison State College that has enabled him to foster support for the Foundation board and its projects over the years. He has also provided leadership on the Foundation's nominating committee.

Among his many civic activities, Perilli has served as a member and vice chairman of the Hamilton Township Planning Board; member and chairman of the Hamilton Township Zoning Board; director of the Hamilton Township Engineering Department; and police commissioner and mayor of Hamilton Township. He is the former chairman of the Board of Trustees of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton and a current board member; a member of the Board of Directors of the Hamilton Area YMCA; a trustee for Trenton Business Assistance Corporation and a member of the Mercer County Unit of the American Cancer Society.

Currently the chairman of the Board of Roma Federal Savings Bank, Perilli's banking career spans

two decades. He also has 40 years of printing and publishing experience. He is the former owner and publisher of *La Nuova Capitale*, an Italian language newspaper, for 15 years and was part owner of The Mercer Messenger from 1964 through 1980.

Born in Trenton, Perilli now resides in Hamilton with his wife, Josephine. They are the parents of four grown sons. They have seven grandchildren and two great-grandsons.

This year's Spirit of Edison Award recipient from the business community was Albert Stark, shareholder, Stark & Stark.

"Albert has a distinguished career in law with a remarkable record of commitment to the community and public service. He is most deserving of the Spirit of Edison Award," Dr. Pruitt said.

A member of Stark & Stark since 1964, Stark practices in the Personal Injury Group. He concentrates on seriously injured clients, many of whom have suffered severe brain injuries.

Stark is a member of the Mercer County, New Jersey State and American Bar Associations as well as the Association for Trial Lawyers of America and the Mercer County Estate Planning Council. He has been qualified as an arbitrator with the United States District Court, District of New Jersey since 1985, and has been designated a Certified Civil Trial Attorney by the Supreme Court of New Jersey, Board on Trial Attorney Certification. Prior to joining Stark & Stark, he was an assistant to the governor. He has also served as assistant city attorney and assistant county prosecuting attorney.

Stark received a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in political science, from Dartmouth College in 1960 and a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1963. He was the host of "Law Line..." on WHWH for which he received the First Prize Media Award of the New Jersey State Bar Association for radio broadcasting. He is the host of "In the Public Interest" on WIMG radio in Trenton, a program that presents topics of current importance to the community and has appeared as a Comcast Newsmaker. He has written extensively in the areas of the brain injured client, pro bono work and other legal issues.

Stark lives with his family in Princeton, N.J.

At the gala, 250 guests spent the evening dining, dancing, reminiscing with old friends and becoming acquainted with new ones. The proceeds from the spectacular event will support the ongoing efforts of the College to provide high quality, flexible learning opportunities for adults around the world.

# News from Alumni Affairs



## Patricia Memminger Appointed Director of Alumni Affairs

Patricia Memminger of Ewing Township, N.J., has been appointed director of Alumni Affairs in the Office of Development at Thomas Edison State College.

In her new role with the College, Memminger is responsible for the planning and implementation of an overall alumni program. She also serves as the liaison between the College and the Alumni Association and oversees the Alumni Annual Phonathon.

Memminger, who has been with the College for more than five years, earned her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Thomas Edison State College in 1997. Currently attending Rider University in Lawrenceville, N.J., she is pursuing an MBA with plans of completion in summer 2001. Prior to this position, Memminger was the College's acting director of Alumni Affairs. She is a member of the Sons and Daughters of Erin (an Irish organization), Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Executive Women's Golf Association.

Memminger can be reached at (609) 633-8592 or via e-mail at [pmemminger@tesc.edu](mailto:pmemminger@tesc.edu).

## Pre-Phonathon to be Held in March

Each year the College's Alumni Association hosts its Annual Phonathon to call alumni, students and friends of the College and request donations to help support the work and mission of Thomas Edison State College. This year, the Alumni Association's Pre-Phonathon will be held in March 2001. The Pre-Phonathon callers help to recruit volunteers for the actual Phonathon which will be in April 2001. If you would like to contribute your time to the Pre-Phonathon or Phonathon, please call the Alumni Office at (609) 633-8592.

## Donor Makes Million Dollar Bequest to College

Recently, a Thomas Edison State College alum, who wishes to remain anonymous, announced the intention to leave the Thomas Edison State College Foundation a \$1 million bequest. This substantial charitable gift is the largest ever received by the College.

Although million-dollar bequests are rare, remembering Thomas Edison State College in estate plans at any level is not.

Have you made Thomas Edison State College a part of your estate plans? Have you named the College in your will? Please contact Stephanie Bray, Director of Development or Patricia Memminger, Director of Alumni Affairs if you would like information on how to increase your tax savings while making a charitable gift to Thomas Edison State College. Call (609) 984-1588 or e-mail [sbray@tesc.edu](mailto:sbray@tesc.edu) or [pmemminger@tesc.edu](mailto:pmemminger@tesc.edu).



# ***New*** **College** **Memorabilia** **Available** **Online**

Thomas Edison State College's online Gift Shop offers a variety of customized college products that allow you to show off your school pride. Items include sweatshirts, tee shirts, mugs and hats, all emblazoned with the Thomas Edison State College logo. Recently, several new items were added to the gift shop. Be sure to check out the "Alumni & Friends" section of the College's Web site at [www.tesc.edu](http://www.tesc.edu) for the new line of souvenirs.



# [www.tesc.edu](http://www.tesc.edu)