

SUMMER 2007

# Invention

THE MAGAZINE OF THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

A man in a white dress shirt and a blue patterned tie stands with his hands on his hips in a computer lab. He is smiling at the camera. In the background, several other people are working at desks with multiple computer monitors. An American flag is visible on the wall in the background.

## When Preparation Meets Opportunity

Michael Brewster '93

### INSIDE ► Honor Roll *of* Donors

PLUS ► Partnering with Energy Providers Coalition for Education (EPCE)

► Former Student Honors Mentor With Gift To College ► Helping Our Forces Be Prepared





10

Honor  
ROLL  
of  
Donors



## Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,

The great Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

This issue of *Invention* is all about the people and organizations whose generous support of the College brings our extraordinary institution to life every year.

Every year, we are fortunate to benefit from the financial support of many individuals, businesses, corporations and employees of the College. The support we receive helps the College to continue to increase its academic excellence, expand educational programs and maintain its dedication to excellence.

I would like to tell you about two remarkable graduates of the Class of 1993, who have made significant contributions to the College every year.

One is Michael Brewster, an executive at Lehman Brothers, a regular contributor to our Annual Fund, and the subject of our cover story in this issue of *Invention*. An immigrant from Ireland, Brewster describes the role that Thomas Edison State College played in his ability to pursue a successful career in finance in America.

You will also read about Raymond Koski, a successful attorney whose commitment to earning his degree will inspire all adults who are seeking a return to college. Koski was so motivated by one of his professors, the late Jim Colazzio, that he created an endowment in his name.

On behalf of the entire Thomas Edison State College family, I would like to thank these gentlemen and everyone who participated in fund-raising efforts to support the College during this past year.

I would also like to extend sincere thanks to all of the talented individuals who make our fund-raising events so successful. The Thomas Edison State College Foundation is at the heart of these efforts and we are grateful for its extraordinary support.

Sincerely,

Dr. George A. Pruitt  
President

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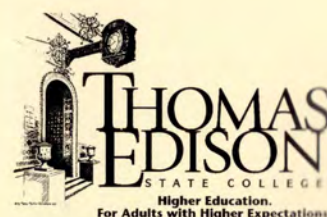
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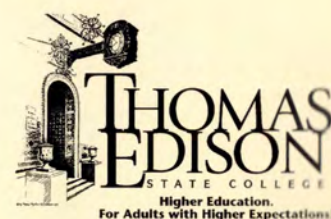
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Sincerely,

Dr. George A. Pruitt  
President



# Helping Our Forces Be Prepared

THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE PARTNERS WITH MCGUIRE AIR FORCE BASE TO PROVIDE DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES TO HELP MILITARY PERSONNEL PREPARE FOR OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENTS

Thomas Edison State College and McGuire Air Force Base are using distance education to help prepare military personnel scheduled for overseas deployments through courses on Islam, the Middle East and other world cultures and religions.

Thomas Edison State College is one of two institutions in New Jersey currently taking part in a pilot program that provides military personnel with college courses focusing on the cultures, religions and languages of the places the United States military is currently deployed to in order to make active duty military personnel more culturally aware of the regions in which they are engaged. Burlington County College is also providing courses to assist troops for overseas deployments.

"We're hoping to take away some of the prejudices that people may have about the religions and cultures our troops will be exposed to during their deployments," said Linda Richardson, 305th Mission Support Squadron education and training flight chief at McGuire Air Force Base. "Understanding the differences between our culture and the cultures of the Middle East and other locations where they are

deployed will help military personnel better understand the people we are trying to help liberate and those we are fighting."

Thomas Edison State College is currently offering eight courses to military personnel in a variety of distance learning formats. Each of the 3-credit courses fit into the College's Bachelor of Arts degree program in liberal studies.

The courses currently include:

- ▶ The Middle East (blended)
- ▶ Introduction to Islam (blended; online)
- ▶ Eastern Religions (blended; online; independent study)
- ▶ Chinese History & Culture (blended; independent study)
- ▶ African History & Culture (blended; online; independent study)
- ▶ Dealing with Diversity (blended; online; independent study)
- ▶ Elements of Intercultural Communication (blended; online; independent study)
- ▶ Introduction to World Religions (blended; online; independent study)

Blended courses are structured around an eight-week schedule and

combine an online format with four classroom sessions where students can meet their instructor, known as a mentor. Classroom sessions for blended courses take place at McGuire Air Force Base. Online courses are structured around a 12-week schedule and may be completed anywhere a student has access to the Internet. Independent study courses, also known as Guided Study courses, are structured on a 16-week schedule and may be completed wherever a student is deployed.

Currently, nearly 6,000 active duty military personnel are enrolled at Thomas Edison State College, including approximately 3,000 who are presently deployed.

"We are honored to take part in this important program designed to better prepare our troops for deployments in the Middle East and other locations overseas," said Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College. "We have a long history of serving the educational needs of the United States military. By leveraging our unique format and our core competencies, we hope to support the brave men and women serving our country any way we can."



## Thomas Edison State College and Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce Expand Professional Development Opportunities

*New Online Program on Leadership and Management Available to Chamber Members*

The Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce and the School of Professional and Continuing Studies at Thomas Edison State College are partnering to expand professional development opportunities to chamber members through

“Each course is offered completely online, making it convenient for Chamber members to gain new skills on a schedule convenient for them.”

a new online program designed to develop skills in leadership and management.

Through the partnership, chamber members can register for the *MBA Essentials* Professional Certificate Program, an online, 30-week noncredit certificate program, which focuses on leadership and management, accounting, finance, economics, marketing and strategic planning at a discounted rate.

"The Chamber is proud to partner with Thomas Edison State College on this program," said Michele N. Siekerka, president/CEO of the Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce. "The MBA Essentials Professional Certificate Program is an exciting opportunity for businesspeople to gain valuable knowledge that will not only help them advance in their chosen field but will make them more valuable to their employers. I encourage Chamber members to take advantage of this worthwhile endeavor."

The curriculum of the *MBA Essentials* program has a strong focus on assessment and outcomes, which makes each course directly relevant to a student's work and professional development. Chamber members may take individual courses of special interest to them or complete the sequence of



five courses to earn the professional certificate.

"We are delighted to partner with the Chamber to offer its members this opportunity for education and training," said David M. Grossman, PhD, vice provost and dean of the School of Professional and Continuing Studies at Thomas Edison State College. "Each course is offered completely online, making it convenient for Chamber members to gain new skills on a schedule convenient for them."

For more information on developing partnerships at Thomas Edison State College, contact us at (888) 442-8372, or visit [www.tesc.edu](http://www.tesc.edu).

 **Mercer Regional**  
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*Get Connected. Get Results.*



## Fast Track to Success

Raymond A. Koski likes to move fast. So, when he was 47 years old, Koski realized that he needed to complete his degree requirements at an accelerated pace.



Raymond Koski, BSBA '93

Koski, BSBA '93, was attracted to Thomas Edison State College because it provided the flexibility and quality he was looking for, and because the institution could keep up with his pace for completing his degree. He has been on the fast track ever since.

"It absolutely changed my life," recalled Koski, about his time at Thomas Edison State College.

By the time he received his diploma at Thomas Edison State College's Commencement ceremony, he was already in the sixth week of his first year of law school.

"I was notified by CLEP (College-Level Examination Program) that I

had passed my accounting examination on Tuesday, Thomas Edison State College was notified on Friday, and I started Seton Hall University School of Law in Newark, N.J., the following Monday," said Koski.

He went on to graduate from Seton Hall and scored high enough on the New Jersey Bar to receive automatic admission in the District of Columbia Bar, which has reciprocity in some 20 other state bars.

Today, he practices property tax law throughout the United States, Canada and the Caribbean with his firm Raymond A. Koski & Associates, P.C. He also owns National Realty Counselors, a national real estate tax service, which has been merged into his national law firm and consulting practice.

"Prior to attending Thomas Edison State College, I had accumulated college credits in the military and by attending five other colleges," Koski explained. "When I enrolled in Thomas Edison State College, I had 70 credits. I finished 50 credits in seven months."

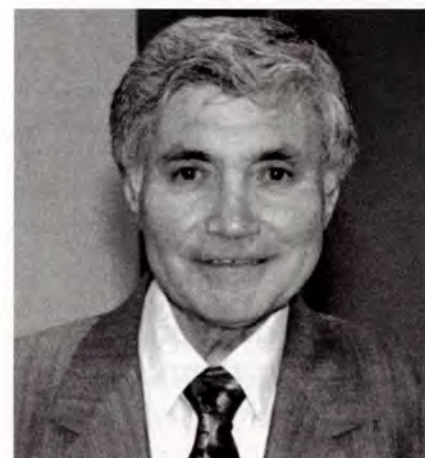
While he pursued his bachelor's degree at Thomas Edison State College, Koski worked at National Realty Counselors. He said it was challenging to balance both course work and career because of the accelerated pace at which he was working.

"First, I determined what way I should seek to successfully complete

the course, by challenging the exam, by CLEP, by paper," said Koski. "Then, I registered for the course and had it ready to go as soon as one was completed. I was completing generally two courses simultaneously."

Koski said the pace he set made it easier to visualize his goal and see the results occurring.

"The Thomas Edison State College program is designed to have people achieve at a level they never thought was possible," he said. "You can really push yourself."



Jim Colazzio, a former mentor at Thomas Edison State College, made such an impact on Raymond Koski that the 1993 graduate established an endowment in his memory.

Recently, Koski sent a letter to Thomas Edison State College President George A. Pruitt and enclosed a check in support of the College and its mission.

"Many of the blessings I have in life today are because you and others at

*Continued on the back cover*

## Thomas Edison State College and Energy Industry Partnering to Help Meet Nationwide Labor Shortages

Thomas Edison State College is partnering with the Energy Providers Coalition for Education (EPCE), a national coalition of some of the largest energy providers in the country, to offer the Bachelor of Science in Applied Science and Technology degree in Energy Utility Technology to energy workers nationwide and help the industry meet labor shortages expected over the next several years.

ing the value of our programs," said Dr. Marcus Tillery, dean of the School of Applied Science and Technology at Thomas Edison State College.

Thomas Edison State College initially launched the online program, the first of its kind in the United States, in 2006 with Public Service Electric and Gas, New Jersey's largest utility. The program focuses on the technical core competencies

“By aligning with EPCE, we are able to work directly with the majority of the country's electric utility industry, thereby maximizing the value of our programs”

Industry forecasts indicate that approximately half the energy industry workforce will likely retire within the next 15 years. This, combined with a 45 percent increase in the national demand for electricity, as estimated by the Edison Electric Institute (EEI), has many energy providers anticipating critical workforce shortages in the energy industry.

"By aligning with EPCE, we are able to work directly with the majority of the country's electric utility industry, thereby maximiz-

integral to the utility industry and the principles of business and management, and has a strong focus on leveraging a utility worker's professional training and previous education.

For EPCE, the program is a logical next step for students completing the coalition's initial degree program – the Associate of Applied Science degree in Electric Power Technology – launched in 2001 in partnership with Bismarck State College in North Dakota.



The College's Bachelor of Science in Applied Science and Technology program is an important part of EPCE's overall mission to support industry workforce development through quality online education.

"EPCE is actively working on solutions, in a collaborative manner, for the approaching workforce shortage," said Eugene Jenkins, manager of EH&F and Training for Oklahoma Gas & Electric, an EPCE member utility. "This is a key benefit of partnering as a coalition — translating what would have been separate individual efforts into national industry-wide solutions."



# IN BROTHERS

## When Preparation Meets Opportunity

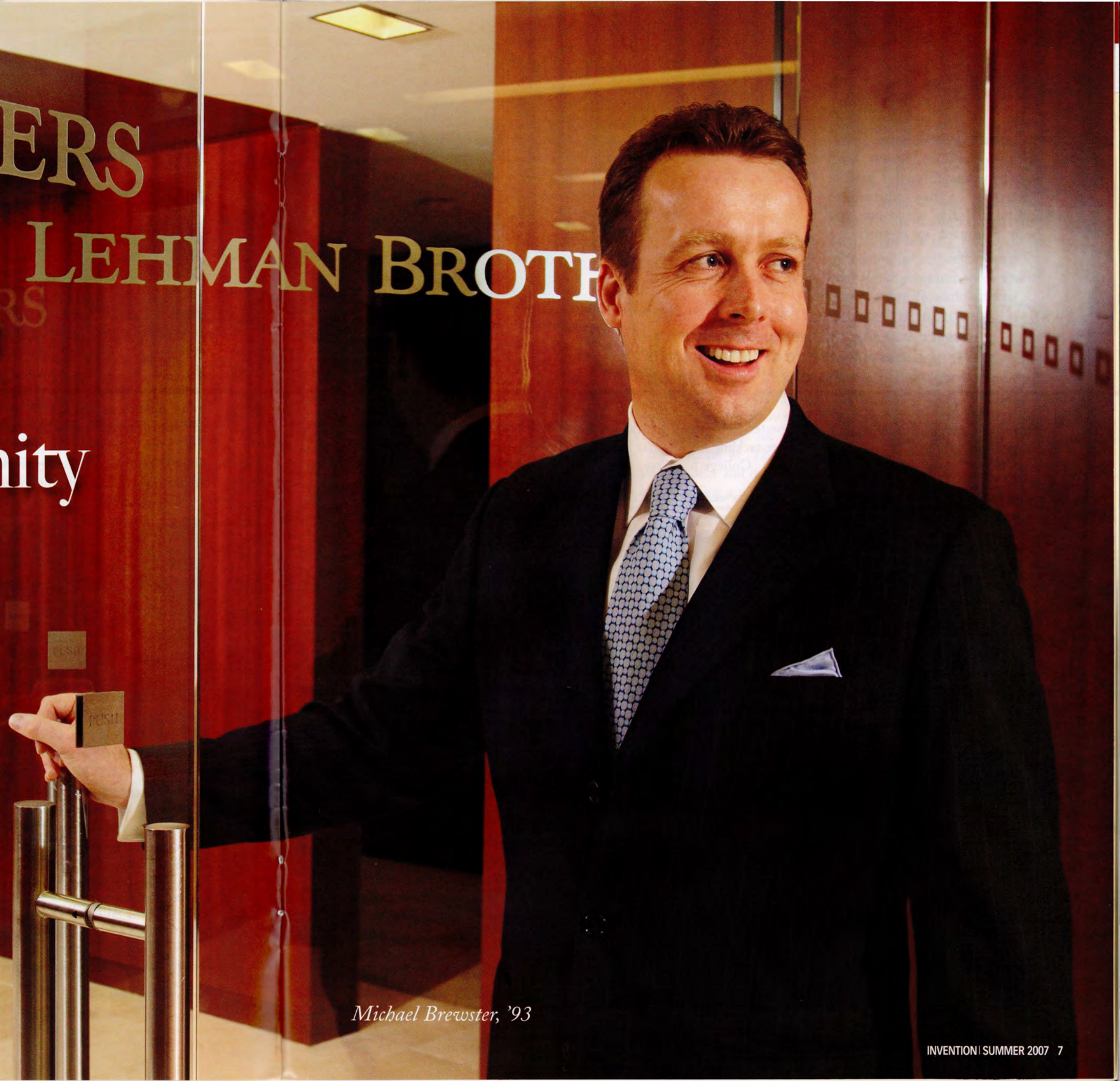
# LEHMAN BROTHERS

*How Thomas Edison State College Helped Michael Brewster, '93, Achieve His Professional Goals at One of Wall Street's Most Respected Firms*

**M**ichael Brewster traveled more than 3,000 miles to pursue his dream, but when he arrived in Manhattan he realized his journey had just begun.

A native of Longford, Ireland, an inland county located approximately 100 miles west of Dublin, Brewster came to America in the early 1990s to pursue a career in finance. But before taking on Wall Street, he soon discovered there were two big hurdles to clear: earning a bachelor degree from an American college; and securing U.S. citizenship.

"In order to remain in this country, I had to apply for a Morrison Visa through the program's lottery and keep my fingers crossed," recalled Brewster, who earned a three-year degree from the Athlone Institute of Technology in



*Michael Brewster, '93*



Westmeath, Ireland, before immigrating to the United States. "I had already overstayed my J-1 Student Visa, so if I had returned to Ireland, I simply would not have been permitted to re-enter the United States."

“In order to get into the firm, a bachelor degree was the minimum necessary – that, or the ability to present a completed degree within six months of employment.”

During this time, the unemployment rate in Ireland was hovering around 23 percent, and the type of

at the Trump Castle Casino Resort in Atlantic City, N.J. During this time, he also enrolled as student at Thomas Edison State College, juggling his studies with late-night shift work that often kept him on the job until 4 a.m.

Despite these accomplishments, his new job and degree offered no assurance of U.S. citizenship, and he felt that his dream of a successful career on Wall Street was even more remote.

But fortunately, his luck would soon change.

Eventually, Brewster was successful in securing a coveted visa and headed to New York City to take the necessary stock exchange exams. He also started looking for a position at financial firms in Manhattan.

"I was accepted at Lehman Brothers in February 1993," noted Brewster. "To supplement my entry-level income, my nights were spent chauffeuring tourists around in a horse-drawn carriage."

Spending his days in the fast-paced world of securities and his nights amid the bright lights of the city in a horse-drawn carriage was a far cry from the quiet farmlands of Longford, but it was exactly where Brewster wanted to be.

An intrepid and ambitious worker, Brewster started to rise among the ranks at Lehman Brothers. He was quickly promoted from an associate supporting a group of brokers, to a broker associate; and then, in 1998, to the position of vice president.

Today, he serves as managing director and portfolio manager in Private Investment Management, a global business unit of Lehman Brothers Investment Management focusing on comprehensive investment, wealth advisory and capital markets execution services for high net worth individuals and businesses.

completing his assignments around his busy schedule. His perseverance paid off in 1993, when he completed his degree and earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Around that time, Brewster was able to get a position at the casino as an accountant.



Michael Brewster (right) and his partner, Mark Sullivan, review an analysis at Lehman Brothers.

career opportunities Brewster was seeking did not exist in the country. "I was very eager to remain here," he said.

Shortly after his arrival in America, Brewster found a job as a bartender



Michael Brewster and his wife, Margaret, during a visit to Ireland.

"I would not have been able to obtain my first-level position at Lehman Brothers had I not earned a bachelor's degree," said Brewster. "In order to get into the firm, a bachelor degree was the minimum necessary – that, or the ability to present a completed degree within six months of employment. The solution for me was Thomas Edison State College, which I had heard about through a guidance counselor. The flexibility, coupled with a high standard for excellence, was the remaining inducement I needed to register for courses."

During his first years in America, an old friend from Ireland offered Brewster support and guidance at a critical time.

"My good friend Patrick McBrien was a significant and positive influence on me," he said. "We were the same age, had come from the same background, and had gone to the same college in Ireland. It was through Patrick's insight that we both ended up working on Wall Street and were both fledglings together in the securities industry."

Today, McBrien is a managing director at Deutsche Bank Securities

and the men remain close friends.

"Success in life is where preparation meets opportunity," noted Brewster. "The 'preparation' part for me was earning my degree at Thomas Edison State College and it helped directly in my landing a position in my chosen field."

Fortunately for the College, Brewster remembers his alma mater each year and has become a College benefactor who has donated consistently to the College since 1997 and

in 2007 created an endowment. Creating an endowment at Thomas Edison State College secures the future of the institution and provides an essential and reliable source of funding for the development of new degree programs and partnerships that benefit adult learners.

"The one thing in life that I feel people should be offered is an unencumbered education," said Brewster. "Folks like me, who have received an education, should give back. I donate so that Thomas Edison State College can further innovate and expand its programs for students."

Brewster currently lives in New York City with his wife, Margaret, who is also from Ireland. She currently works for a dermatology practice in Manhattan and is completing course work at Marymount College in New York to become a physical fitness instructor.



After the closing bell rings, (from left) Harrison Katzen, Michael Brewster and Mark Sullivan enjoy time away from the pressures of Wall Street.



# Honor Roll of Donors

## Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,

It is my honor to present you with the 2007 edition of the Thomas Edison State College Foundation Honor Roll of Donors.

On behalf of the Foundation, we extend our sincere thanks to everyone who provided financial support this year. Your contributions are critical to enhancing and expanding the unique programs that Thomas Edison State College provides to adult learners seeking to accomplish their educational goals.

The generous support we received from alumni, students, friends, board members and College staff has enabled Thomas Edison State College to achieve remarkable growth this year, and continue to strategically plan for the future. This year, the Foundation committed \$150,000 toward the creation of the College's new Master of Arts in Educational Leadership degree program, which is scheduled to launch this fall.

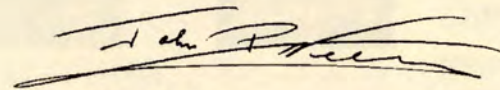
Our corporate supporters continue to play a key role by providing major sponsorships to Foundation events. The College has also developed new corporate partnerships with national organizations, such as United Parcel Service, McDonald's Corporation and the Energy Providers Coalition for Education, which is bringing our new Energy Utility Technology program to utility workers throughout the country.

Your support has also helped the College maintain its commitment to providing high-quality educational opportunities to the men and women serving in all branches of the U.S. military, including those deployed in the Middle East.

As we continue our work, it is important to remember how important your donation is to the College. Public funding levels remain at an all-time low for colleges and universities throughout the country, especially in New Jersey. Private funding is crucial in bridging this gap and ensuring we can continue to create new courses and expand existing programs that meet the needs of self-directed adults.

Your support secures the future of this outstanding institution and makes the success of Thomas Edison State College possible.

Sincerely,



John P. Neary

Chair, Thomas Edison State College Foundation



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## Tamra Burnett BA '02

Tamra Burnett has accepted the position of education and medical case manager for the Arkansas Baptist Boys Ranch in Harrison, Ark.

## Michael A. Cadena BA '07

Michael A. Cadena was recently selected as one of nine individuals to receive an IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Sciences) grant from the New Jersey State Library to attend graduate school at Rutgers University to study library and information science. This grant will pay the entire cost of tuition for Cadena, who noted that he is very honored to have been selected and added, "None of this would have been possible without my education from Thomas Edison State College."

## Russ Carfagno ASAST '97

Russ Carfagno completed his MBA with a focus in marketing at DeVry University and is currently working as the business unit manager for refrigeration controls at Carel USA. Carfagno believes that without the opportunity to use what he has learned in the military to pursue his college education, he likely would have never begun his educational journey. Continuing his education has allowed Carfagno to provide a better life for himself and his family. "Education is the key to having choices, which in turn provides happiness and success," noted Carfagno.

## Randal Chance AA '73

Randal Chance, a retired inspector general with the Texas Juvenile Correctional Commission, recently wrote a book titled *RAPED by the STATE: FRACTURED JUSTICE — LEGAL ABUSE*. Published through AuthorHouse, the book focuses on the operation of the juvenile justice systems throughout the United States with the intent of improving those systems. He and his wife, Onella, are currently working on a second book titled *Living with Death*, which is inspired by the tragic death of their son. Chance, who went on to earn a baccalaureate degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in police and public administration, is also a retired U.S. Air Force law enforcement superintendent. He currently is a firearms instructor for the West Texas region.

## Theresa L. Deehan BSBA '03

Theresa L. Deehan recently completed a graduate program at Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) in New Jersey, earning a master's degree in administrative sciences. In addition, Deehan is an adjunct professor for FDU teaching courses in the school safety and security administration concentration.

## John A. Detore BSHS '97

John A. Detore recently started a new career as a sales consultant at Family Ford of Netcong, N.J.

## Steven L. Herman BA '93

Steven L. Herman has relocated to New Delhi, India, to assume his new posting as South Asia bureau chief and radio/TV correspondent for the Voice of America. Herman's previous position was in Japan for the last 17 years.

## Gerald Lyons BA '02

Gerald Lyons completed his MA in education technology from New Jersey City University in 2005. A teacher of social studies for Hudson County Schools of Technology, Lyons was recently honored by The Jersey Journal with the Everyday Hero — Newspapers in Education Award for the use of newspapers in the classroom to promote social awareness and community service. Lyons, who is pursuing a guidance certificate, noted, "Another dream made available after receiving my BA from Thomas Edison State College."

## Sherry Mitchell AAS '84

Sherry Mitchell has launched the company On Way to Zion to provide life coaching services. Mitchell's company specializes in motivating people with chronic diseases such as multiple sclerosis as well as helping everyone to recognize and achieve their potential. Mitchell received a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science degree from Monmouth University in West Long Branch, N.J., and Master of Arts in Counseling Services degree from Rider University in Lawrenceville, N.J. She is a national certified counselor.

## Christopher Nyerges BA '05

Christopher Nyerges, the editor of *Wilderness Way* magazine, and an ethnobotany and primitive skills teacher, teaching plant use and applied archaeology, recently authored his seventh book "How To Survive Anywhere." Published by Stackpole Books, "How To Survive Anywhere - A Guide for Urban, Suburban, and Wilderness Environments" is not just a guide for dealing with emergencies — it is a guide for how to live ecologically and economically. Released in October 2006, this book is already in its third printing. Nyerges, who also co-authored "Extreme Simplicity: Homesteading in the City," has lead wild food and survival walks for more than 30 years.

## Kevin O'Brien BA '80

Kevin O'Brien recently celebrated 15 years as president of Shamrock Enterprises, Ltd., a land use planning and transportation consulting firm based in Rahway, N.J. O'Brien, a New Jersey licensed Professional Planner, was selected for membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners in recognition of his career accomplishments as a land use planner.

## Donna M. Pedota BSBA '03

Donna M. Pedota graduated from Concordia University in St. Paul, Minn., in May 2007, with a Master of Arts in Organizational Management degree.

## James Risner BA '05

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## Rebecca Robinson BA '04

Rebecca Robinson earned her certification as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) in January 2007. The certification was awarded by the

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degree he received from Thomas Edison State College. Shelley is currently pursuing a MEd at the University of Houston.

## Leong Sze Hian BSBA '85

Leong Sze Hian recently presented at the Inter-American Economic Forum in Cartagena, Columbia, on "How to Build a Sustainable Society: The Singapore Experience." Sze Hian has also been invited to speak at the Global Leadership Forum in Russia and the Caribbean Development Bank Meeting in Venezuela. He has delivered presentations at the Organization of American States General Assembly Business Roundtable in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and the Dominican Republic, and the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of Government Business Round Table in Costa Rica. Sze Hian, who has five degrees and 13 professional qualifications, is a Wharton Fellow, alumnus of Harvard University and the United Nations University International Leadership Academy. Sze Hian has served as honorary consul of Jamaica Burkina Faso, president of the Society of Financial Service Professionals, chairman of the Institute of Administrative Management, on the Board of the Singapore Professional Centre, and is founding advisor to the Financial Planning Association of Indonesia.

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## Tamra Burnett BA '02

Tamra Burnett has accepted the position of education and medical case manager for the Arkansas Baptist Boys Ranch in Harrison, Ark.

## Michael A. Cadena BA '07

Michael A. Cadena was recently selected as one of nine individuals to receive an IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Sciences) grant from the New Jersey State Library to attend graduate school at Rutgers University to study library and information science. This grant will pay the entire cost of tuition for Cadena, who noted that he is very honored to have been selected and added, "None of this would have been possible without my education from Thomas Edison State College."

## Russ Carfagno ASAST '97

Russ Carfagno completed his MBA with a focus in marketing at Rutgers University and is currently working as the business unit manager of refrigeration controls at Carel USA. Carfagno believes that without the opportunity to use what he has learned in the military to pursue college education, he likely would have never begun his educational journey. Continuing his education has allowed Carfagno to provide a better life for himself and his family. "Education is the key to making choices, which in turn provides happiness and success," Carfagno.

## Randal Chance AA '73

Randal Chance, a retired inspector general with the Texas Juvenile Correctional Commission, recently wrote a book titled *RAPED JUSTICE: FRACTURED JUSTICE – LEGAL ABUSE*. Published through AuthorHouse, the book focuses on the operation of juvenile justice systems throughout the United States with the goal of improving those systems. He and his wife, Onella, are currently working on a second book titled *Living with Death*, which is inspired by the tragic death of their son. Chance, who went on to earn a baccalaureate degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in police and public administration, is also a retired U.S. Air Force law enforcement superintendent. He currently is a firearms instructor for the West Texas region.

## Theresa L. Deehan BSBA '03

Theresa L. Deehan recently completed a graduate program at Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) in New Jersey, earning a master's degree in administrative sciences. In addition, Deehan is an adjunct professor for FDU teaching courses in the school safety and security administration concentration.

## John A. Detore BSHS '97

John A. Detore recently started a new career as a sales consultant at Family Ford of Netcong, N.J.

## Steven L. Herman BA '93

Steven L. Herman has relocated to New Delhi, India, to assume his new posting as South Asia bureau chief and radio/TV correspondent for the Voice of America. Herman's previous position was in Japan for the last 17 years.

## Gerald Lyons BA '02

Gerald Lyons completed his MA in education technology from New Jersey City University in 2005. A teacher of social studies for 11 years,

From \_\_\_\_\_

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## THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

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*Living with Death* is not just a guide for dealing with emergencies – it is a guide for how to live ecologically and economically. Released in October 2006, this book is already in its third printing. Nyerges, who also co-authored "Extreme Simplicity: Homesteading in the City," has lead wild food and survival walks for more than 30 years.

## Kevin O'Brien BA '80

Kevin O'Brien recently celebrated 15 years as president of Shamrock Enterprises, Ltd., a land use planning and transportation consulting firm based in Rahway, N.J. O'Brien, a New Jersey licensed Professional Planner, was selected for membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners in recognition of his career accomplishments as a land use planner.

## Donna M. Pedota BSBA '03

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## James Risner BA '05

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## Rebecca Robinson BA '04

Rebecca Robinson earned her certification as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) in January 2007. The certification was awarded by the Human Resource Certification Institute and signifies that Robinson possesses the theoretical knowledge and practical experience in human resource management, which is necessary to pass the rigorous examination.

## Claudia A. Samuels Newton BSBA '01

Claudia A. Samuels Newton received her Master of Management in Human Resources Management degree from the University of Phoenix in May 2006. Samuels Newton was promoted to credentialing manager at BlueChoice HealthPlan, a subsidiary of BlueCross BlueShield, in March 2007. She is also the founder of Rewarding Resume Services and has begun authoring a career oriented book. Samuels Newton noted, "My career has taken off since receiving my bachelor's degree from Thomas Edison State College. I am extremely grateful for the doors that have been opened for me since I graduated from the College."

## Curtis Shelly BSAST '04

Curtis Shelley was selected as the 2006 Employee of the Year at the Memorial Hermann Hospital Texas Medical Center campus in Houston, Texas, which has more than 6,000 employees. An educator for the Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital Respiratory Care Department, Shelley said he was able to achieve this honor largely due to the degree he received from Thomas Edison State College. Shelley is currently pursuing a MEd at the University of Houston.

## Leong Sze Hian BSBA '85

Leong Sze Hian recently presented at the Inter-American Economic Forum in Cartagena, Columbia, on "How to Build a Sustainable Society: The Singapore Experience." Sze Hian has also been invited to speak at the Global Leadership Forum in Russia and the Caribbean Development Bank Meeting in Venezuela. He has delivered presentations at the Organization of American States General Assembly Business Roundtable in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and the Dominican Republic, and the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of Government Business Round Table in Costa Rica. Sze Hian, who has five degrees and 13 professional qualifications, is a Wharton Fellow, alumnus of Harvard University and the United Nations University International Leadership Academy. Sze Hian has served as honorary consul of Jamaica Burkina Faso, president of the Society of Financial Service Professionals, chairman of the Institute of Administrative Management, on the Board of the Singapore Professional Centre, and is founding advisor to the Financial Planning Association of Indonesia.

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## Fast Track to Success (con't from Page 4)

Thomas Edison State College gave me encouragement and a path," he wrote.

Koski's impetus for donating to Thomas Edison State College was two-fold: In addition to his general appreciation of the College for offering him an avenue to complete his degree requirements in a short amount of time, he was particularly grateful to his advisor, the late Jim Colazzio, who motivated him throughout the process.

Koski was so influenced by Colazzio, that he established an endowment in Colazzio's memory.

"He motivated me to believe that I could complete those 50 credits in seven months; and I did," said Koski. "I was accepted by Seton Hall Law, while completing my education at Thomas Edison State College. It was his inspiration and belief in me that inspired me to stay the course."

According to David Miller, director of Development at Thomas Edison State College, the proceeds from the endowment will be used to strengthen and grow the College's academic programs and to constantly improve quality for the benefit of current and future students.

"We are extremely pleased that Raymond Koski has chosen to honor one of his former advisors through this generous gift," Miller said. "The creation of endowments is so important to the future of Thomas Edison State College because they provide 'permanent' funds that while increasing in value through investment; also provide a percentage of revenue that can be used each year to improve all aspects of our academic programs."

For adults considering returning to college, Koski advises them to stop thinking about it and start doing it.

"Most people who think about it are just procrastinating or negotiating with themselves," he said. "Every moment thinking is a moment you could be closer to earning your degree."

In his spare time, Koski volunteers with the Bergen County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals as an animal cruelty investigator for the county prosecutor's task force, and vacations in warm places.

Koski resides in Ft. Lee, N.J., with his 17-year-old cat, Boomer.

Koski said one inspiration for overcoming obstacles to earn a college degree comes from his father, who graduated from Fordham University during the depression.

He is very close to his mother, Jane, who lives nearby.

"She is celebrating her 90th birthday this year and our extended family took her to Rome and Naples at the end of March. She's in perfect health, drives day and night, flies anywhere she wants and still works part time," he said.

He has been invited to speak more than 100 times in 15 countries on five continents and has authored three books.

### **Maryann Youngman** **BSBA '03**

Maryann Youngman presented her Six Sigma Black Belt project to the AT&T Center of Excellence panel team. Upon completion process, Youngman attained unanimous support from the panel team and has received her Six Sigma Black Belt Certification.



*Frances Yuhas*

### **Frances Yuhas BA '02**

Frances Yuhas was recently featured in the national published Woman's Day magazine in an article titled "I did it!" The article celebrates her educational journey and her accomplishments since earning her degree. Following graduation from Thomas Edison State College, Yuhas was an alternate route teacher candidate with New Jersey City University (NJCU) in its debut experiment in July 2003. She began teaching family and consumer sciences at Monmouth Regional High School. Yuhas, who now teaches gourmet food exclusively at Manasquan High School in New Jersey, said she plans to begin working on her master's in educational technology this summer with NJCU.