

connections





SUNY Showcase

The New York Times Knowledge Network Agreement Signed

SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, center, joined President Alan Davis, left, and Felice Nudelman, executive director, education, of The New York Times, right, at the signing of a memorandum of agreement between the college and The New York Times Knowledge Network in December. They gathered at the SUNY Showcase, left, at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City.

To learn more, go online at choose.esc.edu/nytn.

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On the cover: James Savitt, a mentor in the Center for Distance Learning's Emergency Management and Fire Service Administration program

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Connections

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Managing Editor – **Mary Caroline Powers**

Editor – **Maureen Winney**

Writers – **Helen Susan Edelman, Hope Ferguson, James Helicke, Karen Nerney**

Designer – **Gael Fischer**

Copy Editor/Project Manager – **Debra Park**

Photographers – **Marty Heitner, David Henahan, John Hughes, Casey Lumbra,**

Kirk Starczewski, Tom Stock

Production – **SUNY Empire State College Print Shop**

Plugged In



PHOTO: JOHN HUGHES

From left, Theater of War actors John Doman, Chinasa Ogbuagu, Glenn Davis and Jessie Eisenberg

Theater of War

In October, the college hosted two performances of readings from Sophocles about the effects of war by Theater of War Productions, at the New York State Museum in Albany and the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs.

The performances featured four professional actors, including Jesse Eisenberg, a 2010 Academy Award nominee for his role in "The Social Network." Eisenberg's father, Barry Eisenberg, is on the faculty of the School for Graduate Studies.

The cast also included John Doman, who has appeared in "Blue Valentine" and HBO's "The Wire;" Glenn Davis, who has appeared in "24," "The Unit" and "Jericho;" and Chinasa Ogbuagu, who has appeared in "Nurse Jackie" and "Petunia."

Readings from the plays were followed by discussion with panelists from the local civilian and military communities, and a town-hall-style audience discussion.



PHOTO: STOCKSTUDIOSPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Thomas Mackey

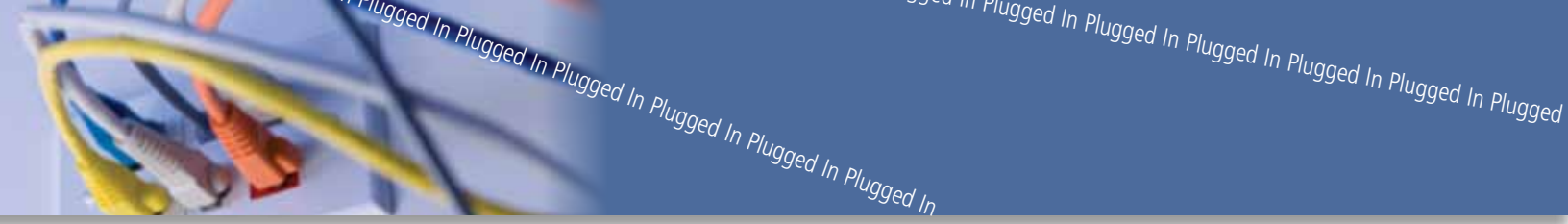
Thomas Mackey is New CDL Dean

Thomas P. Mackey, Ph.D. is the new dean of the Center for Distance Learning. He joined the college in 2008 as associate dean for CDL and later served as interim dean. Under his leadership, the center expanded partnerships with regional learning centers and the School for Graduate Studies, while building a stronger alliance with International Programs.

Mackey was an early adopter of online learning and has taught using the Web for more than 15 years. He is experienced in Web 2.0, social media and emerging literacy frameworks and has done extensive research and writing about metaliteracy, open learning and transparent design.

Prior to joining Empire State College, Mackey was associate dean at The Sage Colleges, overseeing the Sage After Work program for adult learners.

Mackey earned his doctoral degree in writing, teaching and criticism, his master's degree in English and his bachelor's degree in communications, all from the University at Albany; and an associate degree in liberal arts from Hudson Valley Community College.



Alan Davis in Cambridge

President Alan R. Davis was a keynote speaker at the 14th Cambridge International Conference on Open, Distance and e-Learning 2011 last fall in Cambridge, England.

Presented by The Von Hugel Institute, St. Edmund's College, Cambridge, in association with The Open University and The Commonwealth of Learning, the conference theme this year was "Internationalism and Social Justice: the Role of Open, Distance and e-Learning." Speakers and presenters explored the unique contribution of open, distance and e-learning to social justice and the role of cross-border education in supporting social justice.

Before coming to SUNY Empire State College, Davis had extensive experience in open-university environments, including senior positions at Athabasca University, the Open University of British Columbia, Niagara College and Vancouver Community College. His work has focused on the policy, organizational and resource issues related to the support of open learning, including online and distance education, prior-learning assessment and recognition and institutional collaborations.

Metro Center Expansion

The college's Metropolitan Center officially opened new space in Manhattan with the addition of 22,000 square feet – the entire third floor – at 325 Hudson St. An open house was held in October. The college now leases 55,663 square feet of space on Hudson Street.

The new space was designed to meet growing enrollment and the demand by students for both online and face-to-face education, known as blended learning. It is providing flexibility for multiple uses and modes of learning and state-of-the-art technology. The new space accommodates faculty and students from the college's Metropolitan Center,



PHOTO: DAVID HENAHAN

Alumni, faculty, staff and students applaud speakers at open house ceremonies at the Metropolitan Center.

The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, the School for Graduate Studies and the Center for Distance Learning.



Open Education Resources

SUNY Empire State College has joined the Open Education Resources university as the first anchor partner in the United States, and has established a presence on the WikiEducator community website, which is facilitated by the Open Education Resources Foundation.

The move expands the reach of the college far beyond its locations around the state of New York and extends it nationally and globally.

WikiEducator acts as a collaborative node for the OERu concept and aids in achieving goals such as planning educational projects to develop free, open-education resources and to develop free content for e-learning.

As an organization, the OERu has as its two primary goals the provision of free learning opportunities using open-education resources to learners worldwide and identifying and providing avenues for learners to obtain credible qualifications from recognized institutions of higher learning.

New Programs in Grad School

The college's School for Graduate Studies has introduced several new programs in recent months. They include:

- Master of Arts in Adult Learning, which began accepting students in January, and is geared to professionals working in literacy and English as

a second language programs, job retraining and workforce development, higher education, corporate training, and those working with career changers;

- Master of Arts in Teaching in Adolescence Education initial certification has been granted and final approval is awaited;

- Master of Arts in Teaching in Middle Childhood Education initial certification has been granted and final approval is awaited;

- Master of Arts in Community and Economic Development, which is a revision of the previously existing Master of Arts in Business and Policy, and is meant to help build the ranks of those who can successfully manage the complex undertakings that are part of economic and community development fields, which have a growing need for qualified professionals.

Also new to graduate studies are certificates in Veterans Services, as part of the Social Policy degree, and in Public Sector Labor and Employment Policy, housed in the Labor and Policy Studies program. For more information, go to www.esc.edu/Grad. ■

When It Comes to Education, It's a Family Affair



PHOTO: MARY HEITNER

From left, Charles Small with his two sisters, Ethel and Sheila, all Empire State College graduates.

By Hope Ferguson

It all began with Nelson Small '83. Then there was Ethel Small Taylor '95, Charles Small '97, '00 and Sheila Small '98. Yes, they're siblings and they all graduated from SUNY Empire State College.

"Education is the road to success," explains Nelson, 65, the second-eldest sibling of the graduates and a current Boca Raton, Fla. resident.

He should know. Nelson graduated from a teachers college in his native Barbados and had taught there for four years. When he moved to New York City, he joined IBEW Local 3, since his father and uncle had been electricians in Barbados. He worked for an electrical manufacturing company as a supervisor. But, after hearing about a medical technician program at Long Island University, he decided to switch gears to earn a degree in occupational therapy. While at Long Island University, someone told him about The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies at Empire State College, so he decided to return to his interest in labor studies, and earned his degree in industrial relations. From there, he went on to the New York Institute of Technology, where he earned a master's degree in



PHOTO PROVIDED

Nelson Small '83

labor and industrial relations. After his move to Florida, he landed a job with the Department of Labor Employment and Training, where he did vocational counseling and program management. Hoping to move up the ladder, he completed a second master's degree at Florida Atlantic University in counseling and education.

In 1993, Nelson went to work for Broward County, where he stayed for 18 years, moving up the ranks from teaching health and physical education, to working as a guidance counselor and then becoming certified in school administration. He went on for an Ed.D. in curriculum and instruction at Florida International University. He ended his career as an assistant principal before he retired two years ago.

"At the moment, I am relaxing – doing things I like to do," says Nelson.

Sheila Small, 58 and sixth in the overall birth order of the 10 surviving siblings, earned her associate degree in Community and Human Services in 1998 at the Metropolitan Center. Although she completed three years, she withdrew before finishing her bachelor's degree, as she was working full time as a home health aide and in the midst of caring for her only child, daughter Jennifer.

"I went to Empire State College because Nelson, Ethel and Charles all went. Nelson has always been an advocate for higher education," says Shelia. "He was always very encouraging. I remember when I wanted to get my high-school equivalency – I took the test and failed the first time. With Nelson's encouragement, I took a prep class and took the test a second time and I passed."

That was 1984. In 1986, Sheila, still employed as a home health aide, applied to Adelphi Business Institute, receiving a diploma. Then, she enrolled in Empire State College's Brooklyn Unit and was mentored by Rudy Cain, graduating with an associate degree in human services. When her daughter was born, her education got sidelined. She earned her nursing assistant certificate and stayed in the home-health-aide field to ensure that she could continue to provide for Jennifer, giving special importance to saving for Jennifer's college expenses.

Her decision paid off. Jennifer, now 27, attended SUNY Stony Brook and works for Goldman Sachs in London, and Sheila is extremely proud of her daughter's success. And she values her college degree. "It taught me how to better deal with people," she says.

Ethel Small Taylor, 66, who lives in a two-family house with Shelia in Brooklyn, works as a nursing assistant at Seacrest Healthcare. She earned an associate degree in Community and Human Services from the college's Metropolitan Center.

"Everything helps," says Ethel, when asked how her degree had assisted her on her job. "Earning my degree involved dealing with people, and that's what I do on my job. When I was growing up, I always wanted to be a nurse, to take care of people, and that's what I do now. So, everything really does help."

Charles Small, 49, is the "baby" of the family, the youngest of the 10 siblings. He investigated Empire State College at the urging of Nelson. As a lower-level employee of the New York State Unified Court System, Charles was looking for a way to complete his education while he worked. He found it at Empire State College. He earned his associate degree in Business, Management and Economics in 1997 and went on for his bachelor's degree in the same subject area in 2000. He was pleased that credits he had earlier

earned from the American Institute of Banking in 1991 were accepted toward his associate degree.

Upon graduation, Charles enrolled in Brooklyn Law School, earning his Juris Doctor in 2006, to "move up, broaden my employment options, and it also gives me the option to practice law. I would like to do that at some point," he says.

He is now the highest-ranking person of color who has ever served as chief clerk for civil matters in the New York State Unified Court system in Kings County.

In his job, he oversees the budgets of the Supreme Court and lower Civil Court; he takes part in shaping judicial policy; supervises a staff of 644 people; and is in charge of all court offices, including the court clerk's office and court reporters, and 100 affiliated attorneys.

"Yes, it's very challenging," he says. "There are always a number of issues, always problems, in human relations, legal issues. The judges call upon me often with questions about legal procedure."

Although primarily administrative, the job always has been held by an attorney, he says, because of the multitude of legal issues the chief clerk must deal with.

"Nelson is the person who referred me to Empire State College," says Charles, who was mentored by Emmanuel Egbe, who later went on to become dean of the business school at Medgar Evers College.

"I had a busy schedule, putting in lots of overtime. I went to an info session and looked into it, but didn't enroll at the time, but I went back," says Charles. "I think that independent study is tougher than actually going to a class. In a classroom, there are other people, and if you don't know the answer, someone else will. With one-to-one study, you have to be prepared."

For these siblings, education is no "small" thing. ■

Note: We think the Nelsons may hold the record for the most family members to graduate from Empire State College. If your family has more, let us know. Tell us at Alumni@esc.edu.



PHOTO: MONIKA GRAFF/GETTY IMAGES

When the WORST HAPPENS

by Helen Susan Edelman

Justin Mudge, above, walks across the wreckage of his great uncle's gun shop in Prattsville, N.Y. The village was destroyed by flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene on Sept. 1, 2011. New York's Schoharie Valley and several other regions in the state were declared disaster areas after rivers rose to record-high levels, destroying buildings, roads and bridges.

The photographs of Binghamton, N.Y., after the early September 2011 tropical storms Irene and Lee hit, were grim. The Home Depot store was under water, rivers were overflowing, roads were wiped out and homes were washed away. The disasters kept Jim Savitt, associate professor and area coordinator of emergency management and fire service administration, busy around the clock, scrutinizing the extensive pockets of damage on his computer screen and cross-referencing their locations on a Red Cross map, all the while reflecting on the response to the flooding and ongoing recovery efforts. During the worst of the downpours, he worked 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. in the Emergency Operations Center at New York State Police headquarters in Albany, N.Y. He returned there at the end of October during the freakishly early snowstorm that pummeled the Northeast from Maine to Maryland.



Savitt identifies storm-damaged locations on a Red Cross map.

PHOTO: STOCKSTUDIOSPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

“I don’t get into helicopters,” says Savitt, a Red Cross volunteer for three decades. “I work on the ground, in the office, coordinating food and shelter for those who have been left homeless, figuring out how many people we need, where, and with which supplies.”

He studied the photographs from fly-overs because, “I had to get an idea of what might happen,” he says, “I try to anticipate unpleasant surprises.”

The kind of dramatic weather that spurs these sorts of responses isn’t going to end any time soon. According to a

report released in November 2011 by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Savitt and his cohorts will be challenged increasingly to cope with extreme atmospheric events. Linking the frequency and severity of recent climate swings to greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activities, the panel predicts more intense heat waves and hammering rains on the horizon. The two-year study involved 100 scientists and policymakers and measured economic as well as physical impacts of the disasters. According to the National Climatic Data

Center, the cost of catastrophes in just 2011 was in the \$50 billion range.

It is exactly this kind of information that keeps Empire State College’s emergency management and fire service administration courses full.

Savitt has served two stints on the faculty at Empire State College, the first in the mid-1990s when he helped design the college’s MBA. He left the college for a position with New York Independent System Operators, helping to oversee New York’s electricity transmission grid, but returned in 2006, when climbing enrollment in emergency management courses demanded his full attention. Throughout, the Hartford, Conn., native devoted significant time to both regional and national Red Cross efforts, sometimes managing operations, sometimes instructing CPR and sometimes driving a truck to deliver food – whatever was needed most.

“They can’t pay me enough to do what I do, so I volunteer,” he laughs.

At the college’s Center for Distance Learning, Savitt oversees a steadily growing emergency management and fire service administration program. These bachelor’s degree-level concentrations within the Community and Human Services area of study are designed for emergency responders, firefighters, military personnel and other professionals who work full time yet seek to advance their careers. The college’s fire service administration program was established in the late 1980s; the emergency management program started after the 9/11 assault on the U.S., and has expanded with what Savitt calls “a more defined need.” His combination of practical savvy and academic credentials, including a Ph.D. from the University at Buffalo in environmental analysis and policy, makes him an ideal role model for students shifting from hands-on work to the management tier.

Classes in the Center for Distance Learning program are full and results are outstanding. For example, just

this past October, Gov. Andrew Cuomo appointed Steven Kuhr '11 as executive deputy commissioner of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services for New York state. Kuhr has written and lectured on emergency management and homeland security around the world and has taught at the Federal Emergency Management Administration Emergency Management Institute.

Mary Raymond '99, '04

Mary Raymond is another high-achieving grad. She came to the college with seven years of military service and training. After earning her degrees, she went on to the U.S. Secret Service, and then to the Department of Homeland Security, where she is the Northeast regional director.

"Empire State College was the perfect fit," she says. "I continue to recommend it to my staff and colleagues."

Working with both the private and public sectors on infrastructure protection, Raymond is excited by her work. She says, "Most people do not think about where they get their electricity, water and IT services. It is very important to understand the resiliency of the infrastructure and the interdependencies. Protecting the homeland is an important mission."

Savitt notes that often the college's program serves as a "completer" for adults who possess vast practical experience but need a degree to progress in their careers. He says one key to the college's popularity among this population is prior-learning assessment, which allows enrollees to get credit for what they already know and can do. Many go on for master's degrees, either at Empire State College or other institutions that offer compatible advanced programs.

Robert Delagi '91, '99

Robert Delagi exemplifies this profile. An emergency medical technician in the commercial ambulance sector and

Savitt gives to the Red Cross in many ways.



a volunteer firefighter for a dozen years, Delagi both valued formal education and needed to validate his considerable expertise to make professional headway. Already balancing several jobs and volunteer work with a busy family, he chose Empire State College, where he could take advantage of both prior-learning assessment and the college's flexible scheduling.

Delagi was clear he didn't want to "endure the physical labors of ambulance work" in the long term and, through course work, started laying the foundation

to become a health-care administrator. He completed both a B.S. in health administration and a master's degree in policy studies at the college. With the new credentials, he found work at a tertiary-care hospital and academic medical center as a supervisor, then moved to prehospital research. Today, he works for the Suffolk County (Long Island) Department of Health Services as chief of prehospital medical operations, overseeing his region's EMS system comprising 100 ambulance services and 5,000 technicians. In addition, he is the health

department's liaison to Suffolk County's emergency management infrastructure, involved in all aspects of public health emergency preparedness, and he teaches at Suffolk County Community College and for Empire State College. He says the college had a tremendous impact on his career path.

"It framed a large body of work I had amassed as an emergency medical provider, administrator, educator, researcher and author, and carved out a path for me to emerge as a leader," he says. "The college offered me an opportunity to capitalize on and refine prior learning and life experience, while simultaneously offering expert continuing education in a higher-learning environment, providing me with the skill set necessary to remain competitive and succeed in my field."

A 2010 Long Island Center distinguished graduate, Delagi has a long list of honors from the Islip Fire Department, including Fireman of the Year in 1983, Rescueman of the Year in 1996, and Chief's Award for Distinguished Service in 1996. Other awards include Law and Order Lifesaving Awards for the American Legion in 1998 and 2005, and Prehospital Save Awards for the Islip Fire Department in 2004 and 2008.

After 35 years, he says, "The adrenaline still flows."

Attending the college catapulted Delagi from applying his "trade training" to becoming an expert in the business of health care, including organizational behavior, health-care planning and evaluation, public organizations and government involvement in business,



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Clockwise from left: Colleen Walz, Robert Delagi, Mary Raymond, James Roth, Terrence Manning Jr. – all Empire State College alumni responsible for responding to catastrophic situations.

which, he points out, "allowed me to see issues from multiple perspectives."

He believes he has a wider sphere of influence as a manager who oversees curricula, protocols and policy for an entire county. What he worries about is, "a sagging economy and government budget shortfalls that affect our ability to remain well trained and well equipped." New medical technologies may improve patient care, Delagi points out, but it necessitates training for emergency medical personnel to stay abreast of current trends. "There are always new and emerging hazards and ways that people inflict harm on themselves or others, challenging our ability to remain prepared," he says.

David Kolb '07

Similarly, with his completed degree, David Kolb was able to fulfill his lifelong dream of becoming a New York State Police sergeant.

"I had 13 years in law enforcement before I went into the program, but the college provided me with the ability to research and comprehend emergency management, which helped me become a better manager," says Kolb, who also earned a master's degree. "I am excited by my work. Going to college helped provide the structure I needed to stay motivated and to become better at my profession."

James Roth '05

And James Roth appreciates his degree because it saved him from having to transfer sites or put in hours at night and weekends when changes occurred in his work environment. The retired Nassau County Police officer is now the emergency management coordinator for the North Shore Long Island Jewish Hospital, a job he says he landed because of his college degree. Since then, he also has earned a master's degree. Eventually, he hopes to teach.

Savitt is justly proud of the achievements of many of the program's students and alumni whose contributions he admires as a colleague as much as he did as a mentor.

Terrence Manning Jr. '06, '09

One such superstar is Terrence Manning Jr., who earned both a B.A. in Community and Human Services with a concentration in criminal justice through the Center for Distance Learning and a master's degree in Labor and Policy Studies with a focus on human resource management.

Formerly a detective for the U.S. Virgin Islands Safe Streets Task Force run by the F.B.I., Manning first enrolled at the college

at the urging of his work supervisor at the time, also an Empire State College graduate, who understood Manning's drive to accelerate in his career. A turning point came when Manning attended his undergraduate graduation ceremony. It motivated him to continue for a master's degree with three goals: achieving professional stature, teaching for the college, and delivering a commencement address. All his aspirations have been satisfied, including speaking at his '09 graduation.

Attending school was tricky for the peripatetic Manning, whose job required worldwide travel. "I would work diligently on my studies during those long flights. I had a system in place that allowed me to read, interpret and prepare the required work, and press 'send' upon landing," says Manning.

Now a supervisory federal air marshal based in Atlanta, a published author in the area of self-defense and an emergency communications instructor for the college, Manning credits the college and Savitt with preparing him to be adept at building strong, competent, responsible employees and students who demonstrate, what he calls "minute-to-minute commitment" to security and overall quality of life for the community.

"My duties for the government and for Empire State College inspire me daily," he says. "They are both challenging, but quite rewarding. The folks I supervise for the government are doing a job that ensures our free flow of commerce and capital, which is essential to everyone's sustainability."

Colleen Walz '08, '10

Another who has risen to the top is Colleen Walz, who says her jam-packed life as a wife, mother and firefighter, "was not conducive to sitting in a traditional classroom at traditional class times."

A battalion chief in Pittsburgh, Pa., when she started classes, Walz since has been promoted to deputy chief and

is in a master's program. Moreover, she reports, "I am the only female officer of any rank within the City of Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire."

Commenting on why she made the effort to advance in her field, Walz says, "Emergency work, firefighting, EMS and emergency management matter because we are prepared to address the needs of the people we serve in the worst possible moments of a community's or a family's life. That cannot be overstated."

Ken Willette '91

Another firefighter whose experience at Empire State College enabled him to spread his wings and influence is Ken Willette, who had been in fire services for a decade and just had become involved in his local emergency-planning committee when he enrolled as a student. In the meantime, he continued working as a firefighter and emergency medical technician in Wilbraham, Mass. He was promoted to captain/shift commander, then fire chief emergency management director for the town. Later, in Concord, Mass., he served in the same positions. He retired in 2009, only to join the National Fire Protection Association in Quincy, Mass., the following year as division manager of the Public Fire Protection Division.

Willette says the courses he took helped him shepherd two fire departments through periods of financial uncertainty to improved service and expanded community programs. Now, while he misses the hands-on operational work, he says he feels connected to saving civilian and responder lives and protecting property through his work for NFPA, where he is involved in setting standards in training, professional qualifications, personal protective equipment, and occupational safety and health.

He worries that the trend in fire service management is to do more with less. He notes that the nation's economic crisis has taken a toll on first responders who

have to adapt to what he says is "the new normal, before it is too late."

Willette says the individual who pursues emergency management or fireservice administration has to be willing to "go out on a limb because people depend on you and sometimes decisions are not popular. You have to be able to explain your actions and maintain credibility."

A Go-To Kit

For his part, Savitt – who admits that catastrophic events seriously stretch resources – sees the need for more focus on preparedness from individuals and communities in the future.

"People need to put together a go-to kit, for example," Savitt says. "Water, a flashlight, a blanket, extra clothing, medications ... and they need to know the people on their block. They need to know how to use their fire extinguishers."

Walz agrees. As deputy chief of the City of Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire, she is pushing for "preparation in every sense of the word." Pittsburgh is preparing for emergencies that effect such primary community entities as big business, energy producers, hospitals, "... anything that could be impacted negatively by a disaster or uprising," Walls says. "We need preparation of teams to address natural and manmade disasters with good organizational skills, positive outlooks and ability to work diligently and humbly behind the scenes. These people have to be prepared mentally and physically."

While knowing what his students and others in the field can do, and are preparing to do, Savitt expresses concern about the understanding the American public has for the demands on the field of emergency services and preparedness.

"We need to be more proactive and less reactive, more aware," Savitt says. "You've heard it: if you see something, say something. Americans are more complacent than we should be and less effective than we could be." ■

A woman with short grey hair, wearing a white hairnet and a blue surgical gown, is smiling and holding a white surgical mask. She is standing in a room with a white wall and several electrical outlets. To her left, there is a metal wire basket containing blue and purple items. The text "Helping Make the World Healthier" is overlaid in large white font on the image.

Helping Make the World Healthier



PHOTO PROVIDED

by James Helicke

“Sometimes I see myself almost as a bumblebee, a cross-pollinator. You pick up best practices wherever you go and share them with others. And, ultimately, it kind of brings the health-care world closer together. We (in the United States) can pick up good things that others are doing and we can figure out how to integrate them. We also can share our best practices with others.” – Judy Moomjian ‘76

Few issues are as divisive in U.S. politics as the debate over health care. With the Supreme Court set to rule on the constitutionality of President Obama’s health-care overhaul, the issue is key in this year’s presidential election. Judy Moomjian knows from her years of experience assessing and working to improve health care across the world that the question of how to make quality health care affordable is not just an American problem. Although she is hesitant to jump into the heated debate over health care in the United States, her extensive experience with healthcare systems throughout the world adds depth to the conversation in this country.

Moomjian, who earned a Bachelor of Science in health care administration at Empire State College, is a consultant for Joint Commission Resources and Joint Commission International, affiliated organizations that accredit hospitals and advise health-care providers and governments across the globe on how to improve health care. Moomjian has consulted for and evaluated hospitals domestically and abroad to make sure they adhere to JCI’s standards for patient safety and quality of care. As a consultant, she now crisscrosses the planet – from Chile to China, from Scandinavia to the Middle East – sharing best practices and helping hospitals move toward professional standards, while being mindful of local norms and regulations.

Over four decades, Moomjian, who also is a registered professional nurse and holds a master’s degree (MPA) in health-care administration, has held administrative posts at the Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation, Long Island Jewish Medical Center, Stony Brook University Hospital and other hospitals. She

Judy Moomjian dons a surgical mask in preparation for a hospital accreditation visit in Israel.

Moomjian poses with another consultant for the Joint Commission International in front of a plaque noting accreditation by JCI.



PHOTO PROVIDED

is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and also is a certified professional in healthcare quality of the National Association of Healthcare Quality. She has published on quality management, staffing, survey process and other issues. When she is not globetrotting, she conducts risk-management surveys of hospitals in the United States for her own consulting firm, JM Consulting LLC.

Moomjian’s work for JCI has taken her to some 20 countries in Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. She spoke to Connections during a brief stopover in New York between trips to Italy and Israel.

Q: How did Empire State College prepare you for your subsequent career?

A: What I remember most positively was the encouragement to read some very difficult and thought-provoking books – the kinds of books that I wouldn’t just pick off the shelf in a bookstore or library – and then read them, analyze them and compare them. Having the

opportunity to do so one-to-one with the professor made it really worthwhile to me.

While studying at Empire State in the 1970s, I became fascinated with the Chinese health system, so I prepared my final research project comparing the traditional and alternative Chinese medicine system with Western medicine. It was very hard actually to get information then because the Cultural Revolution was going on in China at the time. I ended up in a Chinese bookstore on 14th Street in Manhattan, where I was able to obtain much of the research information I needed. I learned a lot about the Chinese health-care system and the different modes of treatment and therapy. I also developed a great respect and appreciation for their alternative and historical modes of health care.

I’ve since done a lot of work in China. When I first started going over, they were impressed with how much I knew about traditional Chinese medicine – moxibustion, herbal medicine and alternative modes of treatment. It was wonderful to see the combined modes of treatment – Western medicine, traditional

Chinese medicine, and alternative medicine – all used to complement one another in the same hospitals.

Q: You’ve worked throughout the world. What are some of the biggest challenges that hospitals, health-care systems and countries outside the United States face?

A: Different places, different things. Some countries deal with socialized systems, which is a positive and a negative. The negative is that they have huge groups within their systems that are very challenged by scarce resources versus new requirements.

Many of them have huge problems with overcrowding and not enough bed space or staff to provide safe care. So, even if they’re committed to change and improvement, they still have a lot of challenging issues, such as wait times for necessary treatments, infection control-related issues, privacy for patients or having enough staff to provide care.

I worked at a private hospital in one Asian country that was extremely well funded and able to meet many of the challenges facing the public system. But

the public hospitals there are extremely challenged and have huge numbers of patients. It's almost impossible to have enough staff to provide the care that is needed. I am always worried about the overuse of antibiotics. I am really concerned about the potential for antibiotic-resistant infections. Patients come in with their children for IV antibiotics for almost everything. The ministry of health is working with world health organizations and JCI to address some of these challenges.

Q: Can you describe some of the better health systems you've seen?

A: Some of the best systems I've seen are probably in Scandinavia. Residents pay a huge percentage of their incomes in taxes that basically cover all of their needs. They have excellent facilities and

excellent modes of treatment available to them, and so their taxes do really pay for a very high level of care.

What I was most impressed with – I've actually shared it with people here in the United States – is Denmark's care for neonatal intensive care babies. So many hospitals throughout the world see neonatal care as an ultimately very sterile environment, so they limit visitation and the babies stay in the intensive care unit. In Denmark, they have the concept that the babies have the best chances of healing if they can bond more continuously with their families. They set up individual rooms for families – the mothers, the fathers and the babies, who are neonatal intensive care babies – so that they have skin-to-skin touch and hear their father's and mother's voice as a family unit. They're basically living in the

same room together, even though it's still an ICU.

Through research, they have determined that these babies are actually thriving, doing better and healing faster based on providing them a family experience from the first day. I share these conclusions with people from all over the world.

Q: Do all standards work in all countries?

A: The standards accommodate specific legal, religious and cultural factors within a country. End-of-life decisions pose major challenges for countries that are religion-driven.

The Chinese system is very different than any system I've ever worked with. One hospital where I worked had three modes of treatment: Western medicine,



Moomjian, in Seoul, South Korea, with faculty from the Joint Commission International, who presented a week-long practicum on conducting accreditation surveys in hospitals.



Moomjian listens as a member of the faculty of the Joint Commission International instructs on accreditation protocols.

PHOTO PROVIDED

traditional Chinese medicine and alternative medicine. This process is allowed by JCI standards, and it allowed me to compare all of that to my earlier research, which was exciting.

Q: Your travels and experience abroad allow you to see the United States from the outside. How does the United States compare?

A: That's funny because when you travel to other countries, they generally have the perception that the United States is the gold standard. They always ask, "How do they do it in the United States?" I tell them that things are not done the same from hospital to hospital and they're certainly not done the same all over the country.

We have some hospitals in the United States that are certainly the gold standard, but we have some hospitals that are far below and also are struggling to improve. I think some things are better in other countries.

Q: There's a lot of talk in this country about health-care reform. What are some of the biggest challenges facing the United States?

A: We used to have this feeling in the United States that if it was out there and available we should have it for ourselves. People would demand more and physicians would provide what was

demand, since insurance allowed for it. There were few restrictions on the lengths of stay or the number of diagnostic tests and work-ups, or the number of interventions that could be provided. Clearly, we overspent our budget.

We ended up moving over to managed health care, which then started putting very tight constraints on the health-care budget. In some cases, this hurt health care because it was no longer health-care specialists who were making the health-care decisions. We keep evolving, but I'm not sure that we're evolving in a direction where we can still provide the best quality health care, and still have some kind of cost containment.

People are afraid to give up what they've had, but also don't realize we risk losing everything if we continue functioning the way we always have.

Q: Why is health care so expensive in this country compared to rest of the world?

A: Several things. We have excellent technology that is available. We have very complex hospital systems. Physicians are often paid privately through fee-for-service, so additional costs are incurred, above and beyond what the hospital receives. We often overuse diagnostic work-ups, services and treatments.

We do not ration care at all. I think the most expensive costs are end-of-life care in this country from what I'm reading.

People will insist on it long after the treatment is no longer viable for them.

Q: Does that mean we have to ration care?

A: What we have to do is look at what is absolutely necessary and begin to recognize that we might need to sacrifice the excess.

If we can confirm it through three tests rather than one test, or through the use of three very expensive technological processes rather than one or two, our current thinking in the United States is we want to do it all. We might have to make some of these sacrifices and settle for less.

Q: What can the United States learn from other countries?

A: I think we can learn more than some people are willing to learn. People are afraid of anything that sounds like, looks like or smells like what they consider socialized medicine.

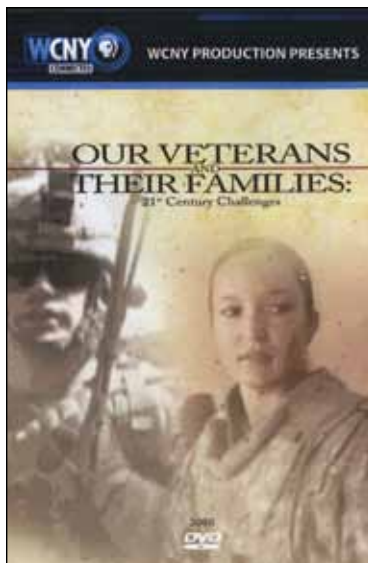
I sometimes see myself almost as a bumblebee, a cross-pollinator. You pick up best practices wherever you go and share them with others. And, ultimately, it kind of brings the health-care world closer together. We can pick up good things that others are doing and we can figure out how to integrate them. We also can share our best practices with others.

There are some really good practices in the United States. But there are some practices that I've brought back to hospitals and facilities in the United States and I say I've seen it done this way in other countries and it works really well.

The ability to share things from country to country, from place to place is, I think, having a profound influence on the quality of health care all over the world. ■

Portfolio

FILM

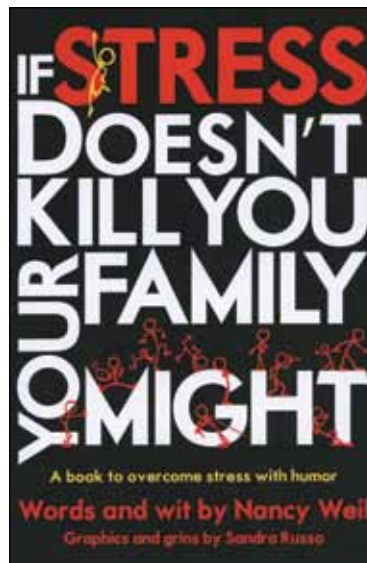


Personal Perspectives on Wages of Warfare

**Peter Spartano, student
Central New York Center**

Veteran newsman and filmmaker Peter Spartano's "Veterans and Their Families" is a stark, raw examination of the effects of war on human beings. Framed by a graphical image of what looks like floating debris, the documentary, shot for public television station WCNY in Syracuse, N.Y., now has been seen across the nation. It intersperses clips of veterans – male and female, black and white – telling their stories of war, with a panel of experts discussing the medical and psychological impacts of war. They explain what it takes to reintegrate soldiers suffering from PTSD, depression and physical disabilities into their families and communities. The documentary uses actual war footage from Army photojournalists. "I think what's interesting to me is that I am a Vietnam vet, so this became a labor of love for me, and cathartic," Spartano says.

BOOKS

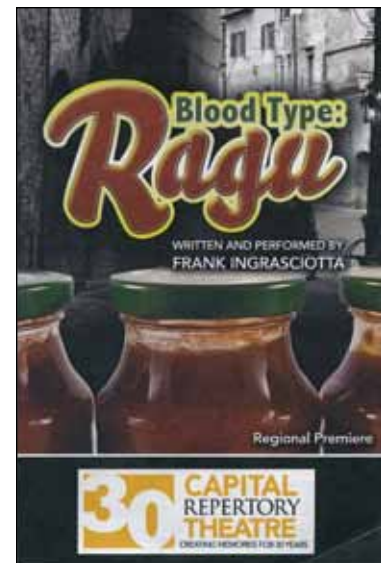


Laughter is Best Stress Medicine

**Nancy Weil '07
Niagara Frontier Center**

Nancy Weil's "If Stress Doesn't Kill You, Your Family Might" (ToolboxPress) is, according to the author, "a book to overcome stress with humor." In a forward, Weil's boss, Cemetery Director Jeffrey M. Reed, describes her as "compassionate, organized, a good listener and willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done." Weil works in the "death-care" industry as director of grief support and as a certified grief-management specialist. She also works as a motivational speaker. Her book – full of winsome asides and inspirational poetry, vignettes and catchy phrases, all delivered with a "just between you and me" intimacy – makes it a practical little guide in which the author shares tools she has used to overcome life's stresses. A portion of the proceeds of the book will help fund scholarships at Empire State College. To order a copy: www.TheLaughAcademy.com

PLAYS



Family Ties Bring Laughs Home

**Frank Ingrasciotta '97
Metropolitan Center**

Frank Ingrasciotta's "Blood Type: Ragu" has been drawing raves wherever it has been staged, from Albany to off-Broadway to New Jersey. Ingrasciotta takes on 20 personas during the show, described by him as "a hilarious and poignant ride through the Italian immigrant experience." It is the longest-running show in the 10-year history of the Belmont Playhouse in New York City. "For a lot of years, I had these stories about growing up that would make people laugh," he says. "They were rich and personal. People would tell me I should do it as a comedy piece. But I wanted it to be more than just funny." As he saw the response, he realized that his was a universal story. "It's really about a family, and we all have those ... People of all backgrounds resonate with it." For more information: www.bloodyperagu.com

Portfolio

PHOTOGRAPHY

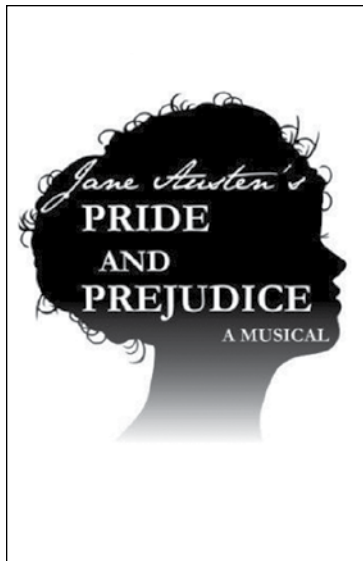


Student Completes Prestigious Workshop

Kevin Downs, student Metropolitan Center

Photography student Kevin Downs took part in a prestigious photojournalism workshop at the University of Missouri from Sept. 23 to Oct. 3, 2011. In its 63rd year, it is the oldest continuously run photojournalism workshop in the nation. "It was great," says Downs, who operates a photo studio in Brooklyn, N.Y. He studied under Empire State College photojournalist Mel Rosenthal, who recently retired after 40 years at the college. "You worked with professional editors and photographers (at the workshop) who volunteer to teach." Among them was Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Craig Walker of the Denver Post. The students took part in a documentary-journalism exercise in which they took photographs of a small town called Columbia. Downs says. "It showed me that you can find stories everywhere." For more information: <http://kevincdownsphoto.com>

PLAYS

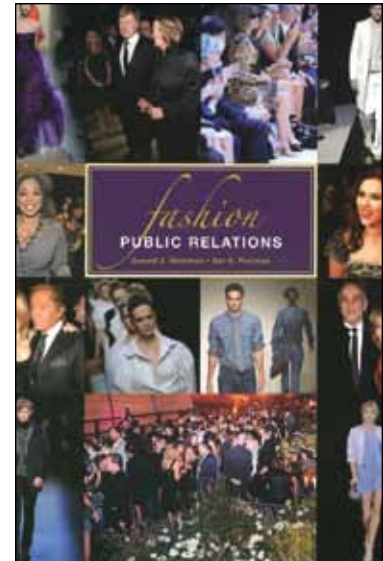


Duo Makes "Pride and Prejudice" Sing

Lindsay Baker, student School for Graduate Studies

"It was actually a mutual idea with my writing partner," says Lindsay Baker, about "Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, A Musical." The work won a spot in the competitive New York Musical Festival lineup last fall. Their rendering of the classic has a twist – Jane Austen is one of the characters. The musical had seven sold-out performances and The New York Times raved "... this gorgeously sung show captures the essence of the cherished novel with grace and skill." Baker and Amanda Jacobs had an epiphany about the musical's structure after visiting Chawton Cottage, in England, where Austen wrote her major works. They did not, however, take tampering with the great work lightly. "We had to take a lot of care with this project because of the high esteem the novel is held in by so many people," says Baker. "It's amazing how the story never gets old."

BOOKS



The Scoop on Fashion Spin

Gerald J. Sherman '75 Metropolitan Center

Longtime public relations whiz, sales and marketing executive, author and teacher Gerald J. Sherman and his co-author, journalist Sar S. Perlman, share the nuts and bolts of the PR business in "Fashion Public Relations" (Fairchild Books, 2010). Although targeted at the fashion industry, the wisdom shared is applicable to virtually any field. They present solid case studies featuring real companies and celebrities. Remember the famous rumor that Tommy Hilfiger didn't want people of color wearing his clothes? Well, the authors trace the truth and consequences of that Internet hoax. They also give step-by-step scenarios on how to build a PR campaign, including pitching and budgeting, and contrast national media with what they term "grassroots" media in the local markets, and the advantages of each.

PROFILE



Elaine Handley, D.A.

By Karen Nerney

Hometown: Portville, N.Y.

Teaches: Writing, literature and the humanities

Education: Doctor of Arts, SUNY Albany; Master of Letters, Middlebury College; Master of Education, Lesley College; Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts, SUNY Fredonia

Early inspiration: She wrote poetry passionately through high school. "I was lucky enough to have a very wise woman as an English teacher who saw how much that meant to me. The fact that she encouraged me made all the difference."

Why she writes: "To understand the world, to understand myself, to figure out what I don't know." As she's gotten older, her awareness of social justice issues has prompted her to write to understand the human condition – particularly as it relates to the effects of war.

Current projects: Her course on the impact of war prompted her, with colleagues Claudia Hough and Cindy Bates, to solicit stories from veterans and others in the college community affected by war resulting in an hour-long script, "War Stories," performed at Proctors theater in Schenectady.

Publications: She's published four chapbooks and a full-length book with poetry partners Marilyn McCabe and Mary Sanders Shartle, and a solo chapbook. In the works: a novel on slavery and another book of poetry.

On nature: "I live in the woods and that's become very important to me, to be someplace where I'm keenly aware of the seasons. I get a lot of inspiration from nature."

Little known fact: She won first-place prize for an apple pie she made for her son's elementary school. "I love to bake."

Of note: The 2011 recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. "It's humbling to get this award. There are a lot of good teachers here who should get it."

Looking ahead: She'll be writing ekphrastic poetry – inspired by art – during a spring 2013 sabbatical.

On poetry: "Poetry is sort of my touchstone in life. It centers me. Sometimes I think it's for me like prayer is for other people. Poems get at the essence of life."

Alumni and Student COMMUNITY

Center for Distance Learning

Dwight Good '08 had an article published in Fire Engineering magazine last autumn, Autism Spectrum Disorder: FireEMS Challenge. He began his fire service career as a volunteer firefighter for the Mariposa County (Calif.) Fire Department. Good is a fire apparatus engineer for Cal Fire in the Madera, Mariposa, Merced Ranger Unit. He has a bachelor's degree from Empire State College and a master's degree in science from Grand Canyon University.

Samantha Klanac '08, a dancer with the Aspen Sante Fe Ballet, was profiled in the Dec. 2011 issue of Dance Magazine. "Samantha Klanac has all the freshness and versatility you'd want from a dancer who performs in almost all of the ballets of Aspen Sante Fe Ballet," the introduction to the article, penned by Klanac herself, said. The dancer grew up in Orchard Park, N.Y., and trained at the Chautauqua Institution. She attended SUNY Purchase College Conservatory of Dance prior to joining the ASFB in 2002. She is newly married.

Melissa Lamb, a current student, is a Family Development Credentialing Program instructor and portfolio advisor for Oswego County Opportunities. Lamb, an LPN and certified Lamaze instructor, joined OCO in 2009. A case specialist, she works with pregnant and parenting teenagers in OCO's Options program. She is pursuing a bachelor's degree.

Vincent Smith '88 has been appointed as the next fire chief of Wayland, N.Y. He formerly was deputy chief. A 33-year veteran firefighter, he took over upon the retirement of current chief Bob Loomer in early 2012. Smith holds a Bachelor of Science degree in

fire administration from Empire State College and a master's in public administration from Framingham State College.

Central New York Center

Douglas Bowen, a student, was elected supervisor of the town of Ripley, after running on the Democratic, Independence and Conservative Party lines, with 71 percent of the vote. He and his wife own Double DAB Riding Stable, and he is proprietor of the Douglas Bowen Insurance Agency. He is earning his degree in land-use planning.

Timothy Van Camp, a current student, entered four photographs in a photography contest at the New York State Fair in the professional category, three of which were in color. One was of Marcellus Falls, one of a wild peacock, and one of an old barn falling apart in the dead of winter. Out of 7,400 entries in the professional level, all of Van Camp's pieces made it into the top 200. One made it into the top 10 (fifth place) and was displayed during the fair.

Kiandra McCain, a current student, was named volunteer of the year at the Victims Assistance Center of Jefferson County, N.Y. She was recognized for her "countless hours" volunteering nights and weekends to assist domestic violence victims.

Janet Romanchyk '99 was appointed as the new Loudoun County (Va.) controller in Sept. 2011. Romanchyk most recently worked in Fauquier County where she had been finance director since 2009. She began her service with Fauquier County in 2003 as a budget analyst for the school system before moving to the Fauquier County government as assistant finance director in 2004. Prior

to that, she was the financial manager for Oswego County Opportunities, a nonprofit organization, in Fulton, N.Y. Romanchyk received a bachelor's degree in accounting from the college, a bachelor's degree in public justice from the SUNY at Oswego and a master's in public administration from George Mason University.

Genesee Valley Center

Joanne Allen '00, who graduated from the Alfred Unit, along with other members of the Allegheny Arts Association, worked to install an exhibit at the Cohen Center Gallery in Alfred.

Photographer and Ontario County police sergeant **Michael Ford '11**, of Victor, was one of two interviewed by PenfieldPost.com about his sports photography of school games that he shoots for the paper. Ford told the paper that his first non "point-and-shoot" camera was purchased in 2007. He said that though many of his early shots were "trial and error," he did take a digital photography class at Empire State College.

Michael Pettinella '11, Batavia Daily News bowling columnist and association manager of the New York State United States Bowling Congress, recently earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Cultural Studies with a concentration in public relations from the college. Pettinella, who was listed in the Achievers column of the Daily News, also is a media consultant for Genesee/Orleans Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, where he formerly served as coordinator of the Genesee County Drug-Free Communities Coalition.

Fulbright Award Recipient Handles Gaelic and Garbage With Panache



Edward Shevlin '11

Edward Shevlin dropped out of high school and didn't earn his equivalency until he was 30, but that hasn't stopped the Empire State College alumnus from having big plans for the future. At 51, he has been employed by the New York City Department of Sanitation for nearly two decades. Last spring, he found out that he was the recipient of a Fulbright Award to study his ancestral language in an intensive four-week program, which he completed last summer. His accomplishments were highlighted in columns in the Daily News and Irish

Voice, three radio programs, two television specials, and he was scheduled to be featured on "All Things Considered," the national public radio news program, as this magazine was going to press.

Shevlin was one of just 20 Irish-language scholars in the U.S. who received \$7,000 for tuition and living expenses to study abroad through the Ireland-United States Commission for Educational Exchange, administered by the prestigious Fulbright program.

"I was really surprised," Shevlin told the Irish Voice in June, after his story was first publicized in the Daily News. "This is the most prestigious award I have ever received."

Shevlin told the Irish Voice that growing up, it seemed that most people he knew had both an Irish and an American parent. His own mother hails from County Cork, Ireland, and he would hear the Irish brogue while working his sanitation route in Far Rockaway, Queens.

What got him interested in learning Gaeilge (or Gaelic) was hearing Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams seamlessly flow between English and "Irish" during a speech.

Shevlin was immediately smitten. He first traveled to Ireland in 2009 on his own dime to study at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

His language teacher at Lehman College referred him to the Fulbright language program and encouraged him to apply. Shevlin's application stood out not only because of his high GPA, but also because he has been active in the Irish community, winning commendations from everyone from the NYS Assembly to the House of Representatives. He even had earned a merit award from the Department of Sanitation for rescuing a toddler in a car wreck.

Shevlin earned his associate degree in Irish studies (with a concentration in language and Irish history) last summer, and is going on for his bachelor's degree in the same at the Long Island Center. He is planning for a career in academe when he earns his master's degree.

Meantime, he couldn't wait to get started on a teaching career. He is teaching Gaelic to 25 students, mainly Irish Americans doing it for personal enrichment, in his neighborhood. As he gets deeper into his study, he finds the language becomes richer and more complex, he says. Learning Gaelic is "sort of like religion; some things you just have to take on faith."

Lakeisha Smith '10 has been working to raise awareness for child sexual abuse. In 2009 and 2011, she presented at the Student Academic Conference and told her very personal story. In 2010, she completed an autobiographical documentary on child abuse which has aired locally on cable access channels. She also has been doing local interviews and volunteering with Bivona Child Advocacy Center (www.bcac.org) to raise awareness.

Ann Putnam '90 recently read her poetry at Books, Etc. in Macedon, N.Y. She is a member of Borderlines Poets and Just Poets and is published in journals such as *The Aurorean*, *Lucidity* and *Borderlines*.

Patricia Uttaro '95 was the subject of an extensive profile in the Rochester Business Journal noting the 100th anniversary of the Central Library, which includes 10 Rochester city branches, 20 town and village libraries in Monroe County and the towns of Greece and Scottsville. The Central Library is part of the Rochester Public Library system and is the central library for the Monroe County Library system. Uttaro, in her role as director of the Central Library, oversees a \$17.3 million library budget. She joined the Central Library in February 2007 as its personnel and communications director and as assistant director for the county system. The boards of trustees of both systems named her director of the combined 34 library buildings in February 2009. She also holds a Master of Arts in Library Science from SUNY Buffalo.

The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

Denis Hughes '07, president of the New York State AFL-CIO, retired in December. Hughes, who graduated from The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies with a degree in industrial relations, led the 2.5 million member union since 1999. His last term would have ended in August.

Hudson Valley Center

Robert Aiello '90, who has served in the Ulster County Legislature for 16 years, was re-elected after running against two rivals – one on the Conservative line and the other a Democrat. The retired hairdresser holds an associate degree from Ulster County Community College and his Bachelor of Science in human services from Empire State College.

Chantell Brown '09 was invited to visit the White House in July for a Community Leaders Briefing Series. The briefing series ran from June to August 2011. It brings grassroots leaders from across the country together to hear from White House officials on issues affecting their communities. Federal administrators also hear from participants about what they are doing on the local level to improve their communities. Brown is director of Youth Development Services at Hudson River Health Care in Peekskill, N.Y.

Janet Ruhe-Schoen '97 has just published "Rejoice in My Gladness: The Life of Tahirh," a biography of 19th-century Iranian mystic poet and women's rights martyr.

Long Island Center

Rev. Laurie Cuise Cline '95, a graduate of Martin Luther School in Maspeth, was honored along with four other graduates with the Achievers Award at the school's annual Alumni Day in October. The award is given to people who are role models for the students, successful in their chosen profession and who exhibit the values and ideals of the school in their personal and professional lives.

Vicki Moller-Pepe, a student with the Hauppauge Unit, has been published at LongIsland.com.

Kathleen Pugh '89, '91 was appointed trial court administrator for the 17th Judicial

Circuit that serves all of Broward County. The circuit is the second largest in Florida. Besides her Bachelor of Science degree from the college, Pugh earned a juris doctor from Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law School and a Master of Law degree from the University of Florida. She will assist Chief Judge Peter M. Weinstein.

Metropolitan Center

Randall Barquero '07, Antonio Perez '06, Richard Garet '07 and students **Cristina Guzman** and **Alejandra Delfin**, had artwork featured in "Viva America! SUNY Empire State College Celebrates Hispanic Heritage," an exhibit that ran October through December 2011 at the Livingston Gallery at the college's Brooklyn location. The exhibit was curated by Raúl Manzano '05, a mentor with the Metropolitan Center who graduated from the college's School for Graduate Studies.

Barbara Bethea '97, '99, a graduate of Verizon Corporate College, wrote the poem for the ordination of Addie Banks, the first woman ordained in a Mennonite church in 100 years.

Frank Jump '98, a Brooklyn-based photographer who has made a career of shooting "fading ads" painted on the sides of New York City buildings, had a book of photographs, "Fading Ads of New York City," published last fall. The book is a compilation of 75 of his best photos, and was released to coincide with World AIDS Day, Dec. 1. Jump has survived HIV for 25 years. He told the Brooklyn Eagle that he was drawn to the "beauty of the colors and the old-style fonts" used in the ads. To see samples, go to: frankjump.com or fadingad.com.

Regina Nejman '98, a dancer and choreographer, saw her piece, "I Don't Have a Name Yet," performed at the Johnson Theater in New York City Aug. 14 - 21. A review in the City Guide NY described how the piece mixed "eclectic compositions, including Bach, Brazilian pop and Mio Morales' deconstructed sounds, as well as text created in collaboration with the dancers. The overall effect is a reflection on the collapse of systems and relationships through the exploration

Noted Alumnus Receives Presidential Medal



As part of the 40th anniversary celebration, President Davis bestowed the Presidential Medal on alumnus and former New York Times columnist, Bob Herbert '88, seen here with his mentor, Shirley Ariker. Also feted that evening was Morton Bahr '83, '95, president emeritus of the Communications Workers of America, who received our Citizen Laureate award. About \$25,000 was raised from the gala event for student scholarships.

Solar Car in the Race



This Tottenville High School solar car was raced at in the 2011 Solar Car Challenge in Dallas, Texas, in July.

Charles Dazzo '02 spent 30 years as a sheet-metal worker in Local No. 28, before deciding, at age 48, to return to school to get certified to teach. Mentored by Bob Carey, a professor and unit coordinator with the Metropolitan Center's Staten Island Unit, he completed his degree in Historical Studies and is now a teacher at Tottenville High School in Staten Island.

Last year, Dazzo and his technology, economics and government senior class fabricated a solar car to race in the 2011 Solar Car Challenge in Dallas, Texas in July. The car, which was built for \$15,000, was one of only two solar cars from New York state competing with sun-powered cars made by high school students in 26 states, including Mississippi, California, Minnesota, Florida and Texas. The site of the race, the Texas Motor Speedway, is the same one used by NASCAR for its races, something that particularly impressed the young men and women.

Dazzo, now 61, drew on his background as a steelworker and teamed up with another teacher, Gerard D'Ambrosio, who teaches auto mechanics at the school, to build the vehicle. The money for the car was raised by the students through fundraisers.

The race had several divisions and was won on the basis of endurance, not speed. The Tottenville team tied for seventh place among 14 cars that started in their division (only 12 finished). The project sought to teach students about green energy and conservation, and also how electric cars may be developed in the future, Dazzo explains. The 14-member team included four young women and 10 young men, who were divided into drivers, mechanics, electrical workers and crew chief. They raced Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon, and again from 2 to 5 p.m. each day.

How did the kids like the experience? Dazzo says many told him that it was the greatest experience of their young lives. Next year's seniors will try something even more daunting. "Are you sitting down?" Dazzo queries, before divulging that for the July 2012 race, the week after the Fourth of July, students will race a solar car from Dallas to Los Angeles in one week.

Of his second career, Dazzo says he is having the time of his life. "Nothing is more rewarding in life than impacting a kid," he says. "I only look forward and pray to God I can do this many years."

of uncertainty, waiting and mischief and creation." The New York Times calls Nejman, a native of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, "a modern-dance choreographer with a piquant imagination and visual sense to match."

Eiko Otake '01, was the subject of a panel discussion at Barnes & Noble in New York City, followed by a signing of her new comprehensive monograph, "Eiko & Koma: Time is Not Even, Space is Not Empty." The Walker Art Center published the monograph, addressing Eiko & Koma's oeuvre. The 320-page catalog includes scholarly essays, an interview and an illustrated and complete "catalog of works" detailing each of their projects to date, accompanied by reprints of primary materials, short essays on specific works and a bibliography.

As one half of the duo Eiko & Koma, she has been creating dance, movement-theater productions, theatrically staged performances, site-specific works, dance videos, gallery-based performance installations and intermedia collaborations with many leading music, dance and visual artists for nearly 40 years.

Charles Walters, a student in Staten Island, displayed his artwork recently for a show called "Island of Art: St. John's University Celebrates 350 Years of Staten Island History."

Niagara Frontier Center

Perry Dewey '86, of Madison, N.Y., was appointed superintendent of Madison Central School. Dewey had been employed by the Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga BOCES since 2007 as principal of career and technical education. Prior to that, he was employed by Cornell University as the director of the Cornell Agricultural Outreach and Education Program, according to a story in the Oneida Daily Dispatch. He earned his associate degree from Alfred State College and his bachelor's degree from Empire State College. He also holds a master's degree in educational leadership from St. Bonaventure University and completed the superintendent development program. Dewey is an active volunteer in his community.

James Allan Matte '76 completed his sixth novel, "Quest for the Holy Shroud," which was recently released through Amazon. Matte is an expert in the field of forensic psychophysiology and is a former special agent in the U.S. Air Force of Special Investigations and a retired special agent for the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division Command.

Vincent Pallini '08 received a promotion to regional sales manager for CXtec, a provider of networking, voice, cabling and data center technologies. Pallini will oversee the federal and health-care groups. He has 30 years of sales experience, most recently as national sales manager for UniLink Inc., and before that at Unisys Corp. He earned his degree in Business, Management and Economics from the college.

Northeast Center

Roxy Ashline '89, '94, a Republican, won a position on the town council in the town of Chateaugay, N.Y. She earned her associate and bachelor's degrees in business administration and was employed by Chateaugay Central School District for 33 years in the business office. She also became the district treasurer after she retired.

Buffalo Bills Fans



PHOTO: DAVID HENAHAN

Our annual Buffalo Bills game attendance keeps growing, and this season fans were treated to a great game with the New England Patriots.

Steve Kuhr '11 was appointed as executive deputy commissioner of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services and as director of the state Office of Emergency Management.

Ellen Murphy '99 is the new director of online curriculum at Empire State College's Center for Distance Learning. In this role, she will oversee a curriculum and design group to ensure the academic quality, design

and evaluation of all 500-plus undergraduate courses. Murphy also has been working with Moodle for many years and has extensive experience with e-portfolios, Second Life and emerging technologies.

Darcy L. Poppey, the incumbent town justice for New Lebanon, N.Y., ran for another term as a Democrat last November. Poppey, who also holds a paralegal certificate, is a student at the college.

Kent Stanton '94, '00 received his Master of Geographic Information Systems degree from the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences at Penn State University.

Northeast Center Anniversary Gala



PHOTO PROVIDED

In honor of the 40th anniversary, the Northeast Center held a gala dinner at which new members in their Alumni Hall of Fame were inducted. Pictured here are alumni, students, faculty and staff.

School for Graduate Studies

Several students and recent graduates received dean's medals last spring, the first time such an honor has been given at the college. The 2011 recipients are: **Charles Dyer**, Master of Arts in Social Policy; **Harlan Hall '11**, Master of Arts in Social Policy; **Cynthia Julian**, Master of Arts in Liberal Studies; **Earl McCray**, Master of Arts in Teaching; **Laura Murray '11**, Master of Arts in Liberal Studies; **Horace Nelson**, Master of Arts in Business and Policy Studies; **Meagan Nestleroad**, Master of Arts in Social Policy; **Laura Palmer '11**, Master of Arts in Social Policy; **Erin Sullivan '11**, Master of Arts in

Alumnus Reinvents Himself With Zoo Career

Liberal Studies; and **Janet Verneuille '11**, Master of Arts in Social Policy.

The dean's medal is presented for outstanding student work. Students are nominated by a faculty member, and their work is reviewed by a faculty committee that forwards its recommendations to the dean. The student submission is in the form of a poster appropriate for a poster session and an abstract.

Ronald DeSantis '94, '02 was named director of Yale Dining at Yale University in New Haven, Conn. In this position, DeSantis provides leadership for all facets of culinary concept design, development of innovative menus and cuisine, and training of a culinary team. He earned a B.P.S. and MBA at Empire State College. DeSantis is one of 62 certified master chefs in the United States. He brings to the post 25 years of teaching, consulting and director experience with the Culinary Institute of America.

Tom Dolan '07, who earned his M.A. in Social Policy from the college, was elected to his first full term as councilman for the Town of Coeymans, N.Y. He was appointed to the position when Councilman Jim Youmans was appointed to the supervisor position. Dolan has been the director of the CHOICES program for the past 16 years. He earned his undergraduate degree from SUNY Albany.

Susan Grissom '11 had three photographs featured in an art fair in New York City, through Zatisa.com.

Susan Hohenhaus '03, '05 was appointed executive director of the Emergency Nurses Association, which represents more than 39,000 emergency department nurses in the U.S. and overseas. Hohenhaus was previously the director of the agency's Institute for Quality Safety and Injury Prevention. She also is president of Hohenhaus and Associates, a health-care consulting company. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Community and Human Services, and her Master of Arts in Social Policy from the college.

Jerry Keller '02, '06, who, until October 2011 was the town of Kingston's police chief, retired after 40 years with the police department, and was the subject of an extensive retrospective interview in the



PHOTO PROVIDED

Steve Wood '10

making a number of phone calls and fanning out copies of his resume, Wood heard of a part-time position with the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse as a zoo guide coordinator. What that job entails is working with about 14 at-risk teens, teaching them about the zoo and the animals, and training them to be guides for the public. In the meantime, the kids learn important real-life job skills like showing up on time and being reliable.

Wood has found that the students are as easy to work with as any teens would be, and their issues are similar to other kids' of their age.

"I love working with the kids that I supervise," says Wood. "I learn something new every day. I spend a lot of time talking about how to step outside yourself and talk to strangers," Wood adds.

The program is run through CNY Works, a state-sponsored, one-stop agency that seeks to get Central New Yorkers to work. The agency takes the underprivileged and marginalized in society and trains them for any number of jobs in various fields – including as zoo guides. The kids have a cart – called a "biopack" that has information about the various animals, and they set up the cart in an area of the zoo and use the information to interact with the public. This year, the students had 80,000 different points of contact with the public. "That's a ton of people," Wood says.

The zoo patrons have responded well, respecting the kids as they would any other employee.

The kids go through a rather rigorous process after expressing interest; first talking to a guidance counselor and then getting a teacher recommendation, and submitting to the interview process.

Asked what the most gratifying thing about his job is, Wood, who still works part time as a consultant for AIDS Community Resources, says "everything. The most gratifying part is just being there. This has been a great opportunity for me to reinvent myself at 49."

Kingston Times. Keller, who stepped down at age 61, reminisced about his early days arresting pot-smoking hippies, and how in the '90s that was replaced with the dangerous scourge of crack cocaine. The article traced the chief's highlights and lowlights (including the arrest of a trusted associate for embezzlement of department funds). Keller earned his bachelor's degree in Community

and Human Services and his Master of Arts in Social Policy from the college.

Althea Luehrsen '02, '10 was named to the board of directors of the Western New York Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Luehrsen is executive director of Leadership Buffalo. She also is the president and owner of Strategic Solutions Group. She earned both a bachelor's degree and Master

of Arts in Business and Policy Studies from Empire State College.

Jason Russell '02, who teaches in both the Center for Distance Learning and the School for Graduate Studies, recently published "Perils and Prospects: the U.S. Labor Movement's Response to the Economic Crisis," in Michael Fichter, Melissa Serrano and Edlira Khafa, ed, "Trade Unions and the Global Crisis: Labor's Visions, Strategies and Responses" (Geneva: International Labor Organization, 2011). This book includes chapters written by academics in the United States, Canada, China, South Africa, Brazil and Turkey, and provides an overview of how workers' movements responded to the economic downturn that began in 2008.

Liz Seegart '10 was named a senior fellow at the Center for Health, Media and Policy at Hunter College. Seegart had been occasionally blogging for the center, and received their invitation in August 2011. "It's a perfect fit for my interests, education and skills, and totally unexpected," she wrote. The center is an interdisciplinary initiative for advancing the health of the public and creating healthy public policies. It is a catalyst for shaping crucial conversations about health and health care through media, research, education and public forums.

Edward Stever. '94, '00, an adjunct professor of English at Suffolk County Community College, had a play, "The Pulpit," selected as a semi-finalist in the Riant Theater's Strawberry One-Act Festival in Manhattan.

Please Stay Connected!

Tell us what's new with you.

Do you have a new job, a promotion, an award, a new publication, new exhibit, etc.?

We'd love to hear from you.

Send us your news and photos.

Just go to:

www.esc.edu/Alumni-Info

Floating Down the Hudson With Hudson Valley Center



A beautiful summer day was the backdrop for this sold-out Hudson River cruise sponsored by the Hudson Valley Center Alumni Student Association.

Stever is a poet, playwright, actor and director who has published two collections of poetry, "Transparency" and "Propulsion," with Writers Ink Press, and garnered numerous writing awards over the years,

including a Distinguished Graduate Award for poetry, performance and writing from Empire State College. ■

Alumni Honored at 40th Anniversary Celebration



One of the highlights of our 40th anniversary celebrations happened at our Central New York Center where they honored 40 alumni. Above are mentor Julie Gedro and one of the honorees, Bret Davenport '04.

Opening Doors. Changing Lives.

Average financial aid
award for a student
demonstrating need:

\$9,947

More than 40
years of mentoring
students and
developing
students' potential:

incalculable

Wireless laptop:

\$1,200

College textbook:

\$125

PHOTO: GARY GOLD

Help us make a difference in the lives of our students
by supporting an area that is important to you:

Greatest Need • Student Scholarships
Academics • Faculty Excellence



THE FUND FOR
EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

Go to the Fund for Empire State College at
www.esc.edu/SupportESC or call 800-847-3000, ext. 2773
and make your gift today.

The Last Word

As I'm fond of saying, "Forward!"



Well, 2011 was quite a year. All our hopes for celebrating the 40th anniversary of SUNY Empire State College were realized as we also engaged in wide-ranging discussions about the role of the college in the coming decades.

We wanted the 40th birthday to remind us about the past, and also to raise awareness of the importance of how this remarkable institution helps transform individuals and communities. One result of our anniversary is that the profile of the college as a "game changer" in higher education has grown considerably, within SUNY, across the nation and globally.

Our anniversary celebrations began in March with two outstanding presentations: the Boyer Family Lecture by Sir John Daniel and the Turben Faculty Lecture by Mentor Nataly Tcherepashenets of the Center for Distance Learning. We watched a wonderful video of our college's history, which we shared with our graduates and supporters throughout the state during the year, and together we all toasted the college, led by our colleague, Mentor Robert Carey.

Throughout the state, we hosted dozens of special events around the anniversary, and each of our 14 graduations across the state and internationally took on a special meaning. In Rochester, we awarded an honorary degree to our dear friend and

my predecessor, former Empire State College President Joseph Moore. At the Center for Distance Learning ceremony we honored Sir John Daniel for his work in the realm of open education, and at the Metropolitan Center graduation, we recognized the accomplishments of higher education leader Shirley Robinson Pippins. We also awarded a record number of degrees at these ceremonies, and brimmed with pride as our graduates shared their accomplishments with their families and friends. While exhausting at times, these graduations were most successful, and so important.

SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher has launched her own statewide celebration of SUNY through a series of 10 regional showcases, and we, of course, are participating in every one as they continue throughout the spring of 2012. The showcases gather the best that SUNY institutions have to offer in each of the 10 regions and are meant to help local decision makers and civic, business and political leaders see SUNY colleges and universities as a major factor in the economic revitalization of the state of New York. Obviously, because Empire State College has more than 35 locations in the state, the college can play a key role in this revitalization.

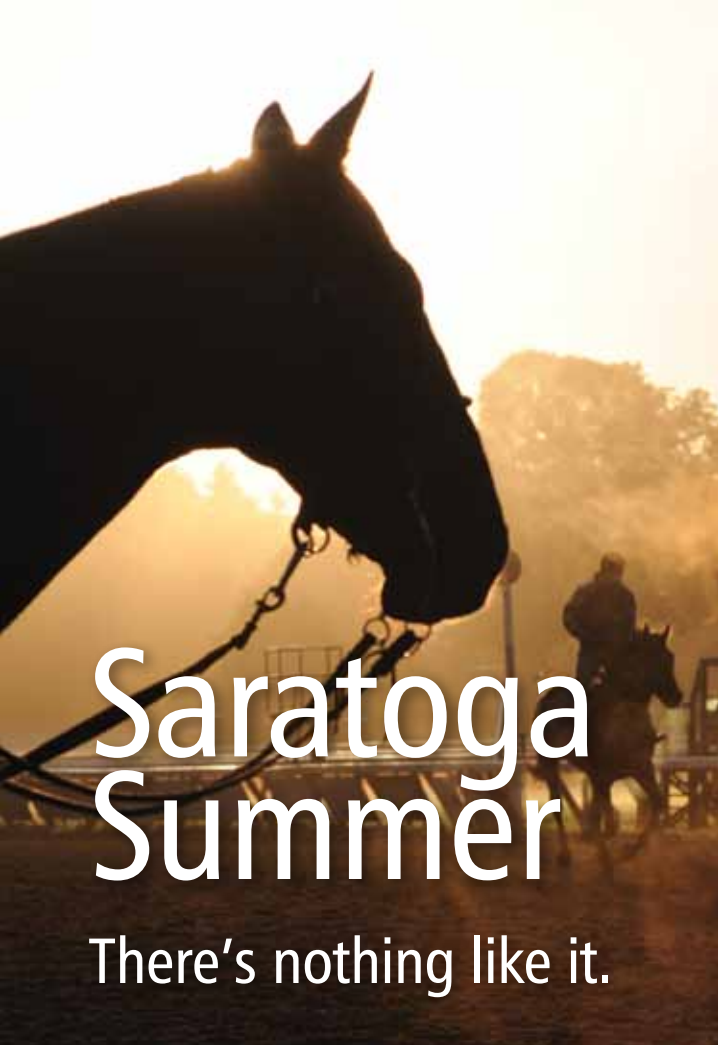
So, now what? Our challenges for 2012 are clear: We need to ensure the financial health of the college after the years of cuts

to our funding, and we need to build on the "buzz" we have created as a leader in open education, which itself has become the major theme of reform in higher education globally.

To the first point, I mentioned to alumni at the Northeast Center's 40th gala dinner that if every one of our more than 63,000 graduates pledged \$5 a month toward scholarships and strategic investments for the college, it would go a long way toward expanding opportunity for many learners and reinforcing the ability of the college to innovate and lead the advancement of open learning in its many forms. Please think about this the next time we reach out to you. With each contributing a little, we can achieve so much.

To the second challenge, I hope, by the next edition of Connections, to share with you how this college will play a lead role in Open SUNY, a major initiative that the chancellor announced in her State of the University address in early January. I believe this will represent the start of a new era for the college as it takes its rightful place, based on its 40 years of experience and success, as one of the most innovative institutions of its kind in the world.

President, SUNY Empire State College



Saratoga Summer

There's nothing like it.

It's time to start making your plans to come to Saratoga Springs for our signature summer events.

Our annual day at Saratoga Race Course is **Friday, July 27** and our annual evening at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center is **Friday, August 17**.

For our out-of-town visitors, we will secure room blocks at our local hotels.

We invite you to come and enjoy this charming and historic community and, of course, to spend time with good friends at SUNY Empire State College.

We hope to see you and your families!

For more information or to sign up online, go to www.esc.edu/AlumniEvents.

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
 EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

Make a decision today to create a better tomorrow

Create a better tomorrow by including Empire State College in your will today. Your bequest can make college more affordable for a deserving student in need. With your investment, you give the gift of opportunity to our students working to improve their lives and their communities.



Become a member of the Boyer Society by including Empire State College in your will. For more information on planned giving opportunities, please visit www.esc.edu/PlanGifts or contact **Toby Tobrocke** at 800-847-3000, ext. 2793.

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Empire State College

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Field of Flowers • Student Art Award 2011



Artwork by Ivy Stevens-Gupta, above, winner of the 2011 Student Art Contest, who explains in her artist's statement that her experience with the college inspired her to start painting again after many years away from her easel.