

SUMMER 2017

Invention

THE MAGAZINE OF THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY



HUMANITARIAN LOGISTICS

LUIS SANDOVAL, BSBA '12, MSHRM '15

SHOWING HIS APPRECIATION: ED MURPHY, BA '02 | THOMAS C. STRECKEWALD MEMORIAL GOLF CLASSIC RAISES NEARLY \$85,000

DR. GEORGE A. PRUITT TO RETIRE AS PRESIDENT OF THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: REBECCA ELLISON, BA '14 | MAINTAINING A LEGACY: FRANCES PARRALES, BA '12, MSM '15



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DEAR ALUMNI, STUDENTS AND FRIENDS,

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate; to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”

The alumni introduced in this issue of *Invention* have lived lives of honorable service to others as evidenced in each of their stories.

We are grateful to introduce you to Luis Sandoval, BSBA '12, MSHRM '15, a 41-year veteran of the United States Coast Guard based in Texas. Sandoval shares his journey and experience throughout his time in the Coast Guard as well as his passion for aiding the military's most important asset: its people.

Also in this issue, we are proud to be able to share the story of Frances Parrales, BA '12, MSM '15, principal management assistant for the chair for the Department of Emergency Medicine at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in Newark, N.J., and former University student trustee.

Finally, we meet Rebecca Ellison, BA '14, a United States Army veteran, Army spouse and current graduate student based in Virginia. She recounts her experience serving the nation and the constant relocations that fueled her desire to finish her degree.

I am also pleased to share with you the official announcement of my retirement as president of the University after 35 wonderful years. It has been my honor and privilege to serve this community.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Invention*.

Sincerely,

Dr. George A. Pruitt
President

Dr. George A. Pruitt to Retire as President of Thomas Edison State University

Dr. George A. Pruitt will retire as president of Thomas Edison State University at the end of this year, after more than three decades of leading New Jersey's only institution of higher education dedicated exclusively for adults.

"Serving as president of this wonderful University has been the single, greatest privilege of my professional life," said Pruitt. "I have no words to express my appreciation to the trustees, past and present, as well as my colleagues who have joined in the work of transforming the lives of the students we serve."

"I COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED THE CAREER I HAVE HAD, AND BEING ABLE TO WORK WITH SUCH AN INCREDIBLE GROUP OF PEOPLE."

DR. GEORGE A. PRUITT

Pruitt formally notified the University Board of Trustees of his decision to retire in early June. Brian Maloney, chair of the Board of Trustees, said the board has formed a search committee to oversee a national search to find the institution's next president.

"It is hard to imagine Thomas Edison State University without George Pruitt as our president. The impact that he has made on our University and on higher education in this country is extraordinary," said Maloney. "We are grateful for Dr. Pruitt's remarkable leadership and his record of accomplishment over the past 35 years."

Pruitt was appointed as the school's third president in December 1982. Since then, he has led the institution's evolution into a comprehensive University with diverse academic programs that serve a wide range of students and organizations. He is one of the longest-sitting college or university presidents in the country.

"SERVING AS PRESIDENT OF THIS WONDERFUL UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN THE SINGLE, GREATEST PRIVILEGE OF MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE."

DR. GEORGE A. PRUITT

Prior to his appointment as president, Pruitt served as executive vice president of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. He previously served as vice president for Student Affairs and professor of Education at Tennessee State University in Nashville; vice president, executive assistant to the president and associate professor of Urban Studies at Morgan State University in Baltimore; dean of



Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State University, will retire at the end of 2017 after serving 35 years as president.

students at Towson State University in Towson, Maryland; and assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and director of the High Potential Students Program at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois.

"I could not have imagined the career I have had, and being able to work with such an incredible group of people," said Pruitt. "I believe the future of Thomas Edison State University is bright and look forward to the next chapter in my career."

Following a one-year sabbatical, Pruitt will serve as a distinguished fellow at the University's John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies, where he will concentrate on public policy work focused on leadership, governance and quality assurance.

School of Business and Management Earns ACBSP Accreditation

The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Board of Commissioners has awarded accreditation of the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA), Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Science in Management (MSM) and Master of Science in Human Resources Management (MSHRM) degree programs offered by the School of Business and Management at Thomas Edison State University.

“Thomas Edison State University has shown its commitment to teaching excellence and to the process of quality improvement by participating in the accreditation process,” said ACBSP Chief Accreditation Officer Dr. Steve Parscale, who presented the University’s Certificate of Accreditation at the ACBSP Conference 2017 in Anaheim,

Calif., on June 26. “This accreditation is evidence that TESU is committed to providing the highest quality business education for its students.”

Established in 1988, ACBSP is the only organization offering specialized business accreditation for all degree levels, from associate to baccalaureate to doctoral degree programs. ACBSP accreditation certifies that the teaching and learning processes within the undergraduate and graduate business programs offered through the School of Business and Management meet the rigorous educational standards established by ACBSP. The accreditation is effective as of April 27, 2017.

“On behalf of the University, I commend Dr. Michael Williams, dean of the School of Business and Management, and his team on their excellent work to earn ACBSP accreditation and ensure our business programs meet



ACBSP’s high standards of quality,” said William Seaton, University provost and vice president. “I would also like to extend our sincere thanks to the students, alumni, staff and mentors who participated in the ACBSP accreditation process and helped make this accomplishment possible.”

Thomas Edison State University Partners with American Red Cross NJ Region

Thomas Edison State University is partnering with the American Red Cross New Jersey Region to enable its volunteers and staff members to advance their education and increase their capacity to help prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies.

The partnership allows volunteers and staff of the American Red Cross New Jersey Region to benefit from tuition discounts that may be applied to most undergraduate and graduate programs offered by the University, which are designed to work around the unique needs of the organization’s volunteers and staff.

“Our workforce is our most valuable asset,” said Ana Montero, CEO, American Red Cross New Jersey Region. “They are highly dedicated and passionate about carrying out the Red Cross mission. The partnership with

Thomas Edison State University will help our volunteers and staff members increase their knowledge and skills.”

Any active volunteer or staff member of the American Red Cross New Jersey Region is eligible for this exclusive partnership that makes transferring credit, taking courses and earning a degree or certificate as seamless as possible.

“This partnership is historic and illustrates why we were a pioneer in providing educational opportunities to the public service sector,” said Dr. Joseph Youngblood II, vice provost and dean of the John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies.



(Seated from left) Ana Montero, CEO, American Red Cross New Jersey Region; American Red Cross volunteer Susan Hassmiller; and Dr. Joseph Youngblood II, vice provost and dean, John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies at the University. (Standing from left): Christopher Schultz, assistant dean, John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies at the University; Michael Prasad, disaster support functions director, American Red Cross New Jersey Region; Carol Chang, officer, information and decision support, American Red Cross; American Red Cross volunteers Julie Daigle and Steven Goldstein; Ann Prime-Monaghan, associate dean, John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies at the University; and Jessiah Styles, associate director, Office of Strategic Partnerships at the University.

Dean Discusses Leadership and Patient Care in Interview with Kennedy Health CEO

Dr. Michael Williams, dean of the School of Business and Management at Thomas Edison State University, sat down with Joseph W. Devine, president and CEO of Kennedy Health, as part of the Camden County Regional Chamber of Commerce’s ‘Game Changer Series,’ at Hotel ML, in Mount Laurel, N.J. Here are some excerpts from Williams’ discussion with Devine as part of the fifth interview in the series:

Q: You started your career as an internal auditor at Kennedy Health and are now its CEO and president; was this your career plan or evolution?

A: People often ask me why I stayed here for 31 years when I had opportunities to go other places. When I came to South Jersey, my intention was to spend three years here and go back to Philadelphia. In New Jersey, a majority of the hospitals are not-for-profit, meaning that the public responsibility we have as hospital executives and as individual leaders is to give back to the community. I had been fortunate enough to work for Mr. Pirollo, who actually founded the Kennedy Health System on farmland in Stratford, N.J., in 1965. Many people said Kennedy wouldn’t survive 10 years. We weren’t sure we were going to make it.

“IF YOU DON’T WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM TO IMPROVE THE ORGANIZATION, YOU’RE NOT GOING TO BE SUCCESSFUL.”

Joseph W. Devine

But I think that’s the great thing about healthcare: it is community-based, and it’s all about caring for people. And for me, caring for people means not only caring for the patients that come to us, but looking at everyone as a potential customer. I’m an executive; I’m not a doctor, but I provide a different level of care and give our team the things they need. Yes, we care for our patients but the most integral part is that we’re a community organization that employs 4,800 people. If I don’t care for them

first, we have no success. I think when you look at those factors, that’s why our associates and physicians stay here — and that’s what makes South Jersey unique.

Q: Community, caring and collaboration; are these accurate descriptors of your orientation to your engagement with others?

A: Everyone has their role. When I ran all three hospitals for seven years, they called it reengineering, to take some cost out of the system. They put me in charge of our three acute care hospitals, and that didn’t come without some failure. There were a lot of challenges that occurred along the way because senior management tried to encourage three hospitals to act as one — and that was not an easy task. I really believe that when you connect with people and do the things that are important, people really will commit to you. I’ve always believed that to be a member of a management team means that you don’t have to be the most important person. It means that you have to have influence and the ability to communicate. You need to keep in perspective who you are. I came from a very humble background. My father dropped out of high school and worked three jobs, but he did a lot for the community. It wasn’t what he did, it was who he was. And to me, who

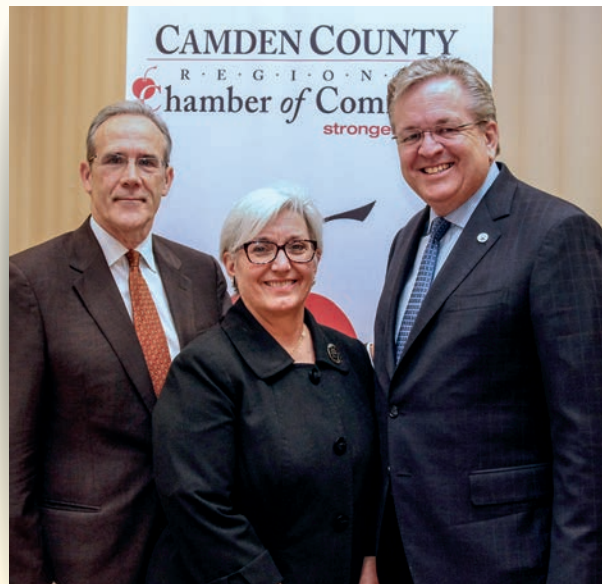


Dr. Michael Williams, dean of the School of Business and Management

you are as a leader in healthcare is a reflection of who you are to the patients. I think an organization works for their leader as much as a leader wants to work for them. As I say to my team, ‘I know sometimes I make you all go 150 miles per hour and I know that people won’t always please me, but don’t feel like you have to always please me all the time.’ As a leader and a member of the management team — whether you’re the CEO or someone new to a supervisory role — if you don’t work together as a team to improve the organization you’re not going to be successful.

Q: What advice would you give to others that your father may have given to you?

A: One, is never ever give up, no matter what your challenges are. Two, is that other people are much more important than you are. My father had a very balanced perspective; he used to say, ‘You put your pants on the same way as everyone else.’ And he was right. That perspective really worked for him. He had a lot of confidence. He worked for



Pictured at the event, from left to right, Dr. Michael Williams, dean, School of Business and Management at the University, Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean, W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at the University, and Joseph W. Devine, FACHE, president and CEO, Kennedy Health.



Joseph W. Devine, president and CEO of Kennedy Health

“THE MORE PEOPLE YOU MEET WHO ARE DIFFERENT FROM YOU, THE BETTER A LEADER YOU BECOME.”

Joseph W. Devine

the same company for 50 years and was married to the same woman for 50 years. My father was a guy who was very committed and loyal to people. I think the lesson is that it's OK to want to stay committed and connected. It's great to have a legacy to be attached to.

When I came to Kennedy, I saw that potential: to do things for people. In healthcare, we have a lot of decisions to make, but the patients are why we're there. People ask me what keeps me up at night. I say, '4,800.' I have 4,800 employees because of the job I have. I'm not just responsible for those 4,800; I want to make sure those 4,800 have good lives as well as their loved ones and families. That's what it means to be successful. We encourage all of our leaders to follow that philosophy as well. It's more important for us to do things for other people. My father had an old expression and it's hanging in my office, 'It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice.' If you follow that belief, people will do anything for you — and you will do anything for them.

Q: What are the key reasons for investing in staff development?

A: We invest in our senior leaders because I want people to understand that, as a leader, we deal with conflict matter-of-factly. There's no issue we try to hide behind. Whether it's a conflict with a physician or a patient, my goal is to get to the root of the issue, resolve it and, ultimately, close the loop. An article recently appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* about CEOs who are huggers. I'm a hugger. That's just who I am. I think when people trust you, they know you're going to treat them fairly in any conflict. It's all

about listening to them. We want to be sure we give them an opportunity to speak and have a dialogue. There are three things to keep in mind. One, did we make the best decision in the interest of the patient? Patients come first. Nothing else matters. Not money. Not bond ratings. We're not in the banking business. We're in the business of taking care of patients. Two, is to make decisions in the best interest of the community. We're owned by the community. Our board members, many of whom are business people, also live in the community. Third, are we making the best decision for our employees? Ninety-nine percent of the time those decisions will come together. But there will be times when they don't. There's going to be a time when our associates do not like a decision that I made. But I'm OK having a dialogue about it. The priorities are patients, the community and then our associates. We have to realize what our priorities are and always have the dialogue.

Q: You put your leadership team through servant leadership training. What influenced you to come to this decision?

A: I wanted to do something that was going to get our leadership team connected to our employees. I believe I'm a servant leader and I have followed that philosophy throughout my entire career. We interviewed several organizations, looked at curriculums and sought one that would be built specifically for us. The irony is that I called Chris Gheysens, the president of Wawa, as they had just gone through the same training. Chris reconfirmed for me that it was one of the best things Wawa had ever done. If you go into a Wawa store, you can hear in the fundamental language spoken by their employees that they are servant leaders. I picked

St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pa., because they had an impressive roster of educators. We hold refreshers every once in a while because we do get away from the concepts. I believe that if you have one way you are committed to treating one another, everyone in your organization will get on board.

Q: In your career, were there significant experiences or influencers that helped to make you a better person and leader?

A: As a leader, you have to be constantly learning. Being a leader at Kennedy has given me the opportunity to be involved with and meet many people from different backgrounds. It helped me become more respectful of diversity. When I was involved in organizations that didn't have a direct healthcare connection, I did it because I knew it was best for the community and I knew that ultimately we're all somehow connected. I think collaboration is a reflection of who you are as a person. You don't do it for accolades, you do it because fundamentally you believe you should give back. If leaders don't think they should give back, they shouldn't be leaders. Not every hospital in the state gets along about every issue, but we know how to work through conflicts with dialogue. The more people you meet who are different from you, the better a leader you become.

Thomas C. Streckewald Memorial Golf Classic Raises Nearly \$85,000

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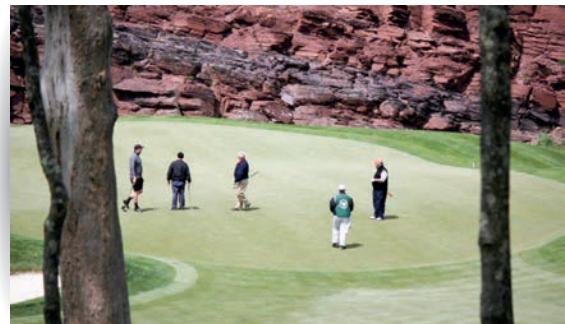
The 23rd annual Thomas C. Streckewald Memorial Golf Classic, which took place at The Ridge at Back Brook in Ringoes, N.J., on May 8, helped raise nearly \$85,000 for the Thomas Edison State University Foundation. This year, 110 golfers and guests attended and supported the event.

“Hosting our outing at The Ridge has provided a first-class experience for our wonderful group of participants who enjoy a day at a beautiful venue while generously supporting the mission of the University. All net proceeds support the Thomas C. Streckewald Endowment Fund, which has become increasingly important in the University’s ability to invest in new programs to serve our students,” said Misty Isak, associate vice president of Development at Thomas Edison State University. “We have been holding this event for 23 years to honor the memory of our colleague, Tom Streckewald, and it is very special to have his family involved.”

Following a record shattering year in 2016, this year’s tournament raised the second largest amount in the event’s history, surpassing the next highest total revenue by more than \$12,000. The outing featured a scramble format and the first-place foursome was comprised of the team representing Corporate Sponsor, Precast Systems, Inc. Congratulations to Bruce Post, Robert Crawford, Matt Balitsaris and Chuck Scholer. Our non-golfers enjoyed a painting and wine experience where participants custom painted a set of wine glasses while overlooking the beautiful grounds.



Golfers warming up on The Ridge’s diving range.



The Ridge for which the course was named.



The winning foursome with Foundation Board Chair Michael Toscani. Pictured, from left to right, Toscani, Bruce Post, Matt Balitsaris, Chuck Scholer and Robert Crawford.



Golf Committee member Kim Owens of NJM Insurance Group setting up to participate in the putting contest.



Celebrating a great day on the course.



Dr. George A. Pruitt and Dr. Pamela Pruitt with Thomas Streckewald’s sons Kevin and Daniel.

Showing His Appreciation: Ed Murphy, BA '02

Enlisting in the U.S. Coast Guard shortly after high school, Ed Murphy holds a deep appreciation for the nation's military.

Having grown up in Ithaca, N.Y., Murphy initially began his degree pursuits directly out of high school at Cornell University in Ithaca.

"I, admittedly, didn't apply myself at Cornell, so I eventually ended up enlisting in the U.S. Coast Guard, serving as a marine science technician in both the Coast Guard and the reserves," he recalled.

In 2000, Murphy applied to Thomas Edison State University to in order to complete his undergraduate degree in environmental studies, transferring credits he'd earned from Cornell as well as earning credit for military training he'd completed as a member of the military.

"The bulk of my courses I'd taken through distance learning at Thomas Edison, coupled with those from a local community college as well as the University of South Florida, and credit-by-examination credits earned through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP®)," he said.

While completing his degree, Murphy was recalled to active duty immediately after Sept. 11, 2001, serving the nation for an additional year. "Thomas Edison allowed me to continue to work while completing my degree and my GI Bill benefits aided me in paying for my education," he explained. "While it was a bit of struggle for me financially, without my degree, I would not have the well-paying job I do now that I thoroughly enjoy."

In 2002, Murphy earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in environmental studies, working in various capacities related to emergency management ever since.



Ed Murphy, BA '02

Since 2012, he has been working as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, currently residing in Alexandria, Va.

"I have always felt that whatever I give to Thomas Edison is put to good use," he expressed. "If my contributions can help even one student, especially a military or nursing student, complete their education, then I am satisfied."

New Jersey Council for the Humanities Grant Gives Rise to "Dialogues on the Experience of War"

Thomas Edison State University, the University's Heavin School of Arts and Sciences and its Office of Military and Veteran Education, presented the first of two discussion-based workshops entitled, "Dialogues on the Experience of War." Funding for the workshops was made possible through a \$19,800 grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities (NJCH).

"Thanks to grant support from the NJCH, we are able to co-sponsor workshops intended to ease the burdens of reintegration for military veterans to civilian life," said Dr. John Woznicki, dean of the Heavin School of Arts and Sciences at the University. "In helping them synthesize the experience of war as described by humanities scholars and workshop presenters with their

own experiences, we intend to provide a positive learning experience and constructive sessions for participants."

Both two-day workshops consist of multiple sessions on different war-related topics. Presenters and military veterans participating in the discussions focus on the experience of war, the reintegration of the veteran into civilian society and the personal conflicts often rooted in this process. The workshops lend insight on war's impact on individuals and society.

The first of the two, two-day workshops was held June 5 and 6 at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home in Menlo Park, N.J., and featured candid discussions of personal experiences and reactions to the workshop materials. The second workshop is slated to be



held on Sept. 25 and 26 at the Joint Military and Family Assistance Center in Bordentown, N.J.

"The workshops employ aspects of humanities disciplines such as history, literature and philosophy to provide an interesting way to provoke discussion and reflection," said NJCH Executive Director Dr. Briann Greenfield. "We are proud to support an audience-focused program like this one, as public humanities workshops can bring a wide variety of individuals together that can benefit from the shared exploration of similar experiences."

*This program was made possible by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.





HUMANITARIAN LOGISTICS

LUIS SANDOVAL, BSBA '12, MSHRM '15



Luis Sandoval
enlisted in the
United States
Coast Guard more
than 40 years
ago to support its
greatest asset:
its members and
their families.

LUIS SANDOVAL, BSBA '12, MSHRM '15

HUMANITARIAN LOGISTICS

Inspired by the Coast Guard's humanitarian philosophy, Luis Sandoval put this thinking to work through his position as chief of logistics at the Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston, Texas, homeport.

"I loved helping people and their families, guiding them through the complex regulations and policies of this great organization including helping them transition from military to private sector life," said Sandoval. "The Coast Guard's mission of aiding people on land and at sea, as well as protecting the nation's merchant vessels to ensure that our national economy is not negatively impacted by natural disasters or terrorism, were some of the highlights of my career."

"This was the beginning of my working directly with people, helping them understand the various administrative processes and benefits available to them as service members," he said.

During the next 24 years, Sandoval was relocated a number of times, all while being promoted to various positions and ranks of increasing responsibility, with his appointment to lieutenant and logistics chief of the Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore, Md., in 1998.

In 2003, Sandoval was assigned to Coast Guard Sector San Juan in San Juan, Puerto Rico, as the deputy of logistics. Seven years later, he was promoted to commander and assigned as the commanding officer of Coast Guard Sector Field Office in Galveston, Texas, which would lead to cementing his place in the Lone Star State. In 2013, Sandoval assumed his final position before retirement: chief of logistics.

Amidst his relocations and promotions, he consistently kept academics in the back of his mind, realizing that advancing his education would eventually lead to further opportunity within the Coast Guard.

"In the midst of my career, several peers were completing their degrees and I had only completed my associate degree," Sandoval explained. "To start

the conversation, I decided to meet with my educational services officer and I was directed to file my military service training and academic education to our Coast Guard Institute, where educational counselors would conduct an academic evaluation. Upon receipt of the results, the Coast Guard Institute recommended several educational institutions, one of which was Thomas Edison."

After researching his options and the best fit, Sandoval contacted the institution to discuss his plans and needs.

"The professors and staff were very professional and instrumental in my completion of courses," he said. "I found them to be extremely understanding of my occupation as a member of the military and flexible to my needs."

In 2012, Sandoval graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree from TESU, enthusiastically and almost immediately re-enrolling. This time, he chose to focus on human resources in pursuit of his graduate degree, graduating with a Master of Science in Human Resources Management in 2016.

"Throughout the completion of my graduate work, I was able to take my classmate's best practices and apply them to my own position," said Sandoval. "The programs helped to validate my actions as I dealt with personnel, training, benefit entitlements, promotions and evaluations. I was formerly a firm believer in traditional classroom settings, but after engaging in several

"MY GREATEST INSPIRATION WAS MY DESIRE TO HELP PEOPLE IN THEIR EMPLOYMENT, PROMOTIONS, PAY ENTITLEMENTS AND TRAINING. I WAS CONTINUALLY INSPIRED BY THE GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION THAT PERSONNEL EXPRESSED WHEN I TOOK THE TIME TO SIT AND HEAR THEM."

Luis Sandoval

After enlisting in April 1975, Sandoval completed his basic training in Alameda, Calif., and assumed his first assignment at the Coast Guard Group in San Francisco on Yerba Buena Island. Between being a search and rescue crewmember and his administrative duties, Sandoval's responsibilities began to take shape.





“I WAS FORMERLY A FIRM BELIEVER IN TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM SETTINGS, BUT AFTER ENGAGING IN SEVERAL ONLINE COURSES, I BECAME A STRONG ADVOCATE FOR DISTANCE LEARNING. THOMAS EDISON WAS A STRONG FIT FOR ME AND WORKED EXTREMELY WELL WITH MY MILITARY LIFE.”

Luis Sandoval



online courses, I became a strong advocate for distance learning. Thomas Edison was a strong fit for me and worked extremely well with my military life.”

Sandoval, who completed his 41st year of active-duty service in November 2016, retired in June of this year. He led a staff of commissioned officers, enlisted personnel, federal and contract employees, and had direct oversight of \$43 million-valued shore infrastructure as well as Coast Guard tenant commands as part of his role.

“I directed the facility security, supply and finance, services personnel office and engineering branches as well as medical and clinic office staff,” he

explained. “I had oversight of more than 1,500 active-duty and reserve personnel in our areas of responsibility that covered the southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana regions. I also supervised the administrative process of separations, pay benefits and compensations as well as medical review and disciplinary boards.”

As a logistician, Sandoval said, he used the lessons learned in his courses to amplify his appreciation for his staff in their use of good ethical practices, which at the same time, validated his management and leadership skills of processes and personnel.

“It wasn’t until I finished both my bachelor’s and master’s degrees that I

felt validated in my job,” he said. “My greatest inspiration was my desire to help people in their employment, promotions, pay entitlements and training. I was continually inspired by the gratitude and appreciation that personnel expressed when I took the time to sit and hear them. Listening was a key to my success in my career in human resources.”

Even today, Sandoval admits, he stands by his own philosophy that noble management of the most important asset to the any organization remains: people.

Sandoval lives in Texas with wife, Rosie, and son, Luis Jr., and has a daughter, Monica, who resides in upstate New York.

Frequent base moves did not stop Rebecca Ellison from getting the

MISSION ACCOMP

Rebecca Ellison, BA '14

As a United States Army veteran and an Army spouse, Rebecca Ellison, along with her family, was always on the move, which made it nearly impossible to earn a college degree.

“As a military spouse, my family has lived in five different states over the last 10 years,” Ellison explained. “Raising two kids while holding down a full-time job with a husband who was deployed frequently in support of Army Special Operations missions and relocating every two to three years does not leave a lot of time for school.”

During her three- and a-half-year enlistment, Ellison was a broadcast journalist who was involved in television and radio news and entertainment at Fort Bragg, in North Carolina, and abroad.

“ONCE I MADE THE DECISION TO COMPLETE MY DEGREE, THOMAS EDISON MADE IT SO EASY FOR ME TO ATTAIN MY GOAL. REALLY, THE HARDEST PART WAS JUST MAKING THE DECISION TO DO IT.”

Rebecca Ellison

“I had 17 years of experience in the communications field, but found it difficult to advance without a degree,” said Ellison, who earned a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in communications from Thomas Edison in 2014. “I was deployed to Bosnia twice and worked at the American Forces Network (AFN) radio station in Tuzla the first time, and my unit ran the newspaper and internal communications for the region the second time. Thomas Edison provided me the flexibility to complete my degree anywhere in the world, and I am grateful for that.”

Despite being on the move, Ellison was able to complete her BA degree in approximately four years. Thomas Edison’s flexible program allowed her to transfer in a number of credits from both military training and former schools, while also using TESU’s prior learning assessment, online and Guided Study courses.

Ellison, who was an E-4 specialist (SPC) when discharged from the Army, landed a job with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Washington, D.C., as a program assistant in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, where she handled a variety of program and administrative tasks. Recently, however, she left that position to continue her education and pursue a master of social work (MSW) degree at George Mason University in Virginia.

“I left my position at USAID so that I could pursue my MSW full time,” Ellison explained. “The MSW requires students to spend 16 hours a week in an internship the first year and 20 hours the second. I am currently interning at a homeless shelter in Reston, Va. I chose the clinical track, so I hope to intern with either Inova Hospital or Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for my advanced clinical placement next year.”

Getting her degree was a game changer. “Obtaining my degree from Thomas Edison allowed me the ability to move forward with my decision to go to graduate school,” Ellison enthused. “I believe my degree in communications

will greatly enhance my career as a social worker no matter what area I decide to work in. While I had planned on getting a master in public administration, I spent about a year researching different types of degrees and settled on a master’s in social work.”

Grateful for the ability to achieve her aspiration, Ellison is quick to share the attributes of the institution that made it all possible.

“I have absolutely recommended Thomas Edison State University to others,” Ellison extolled. “I tell others about how easy it was to register and get started. I share my experience of talking to the counselors and picking classes, taking tests and connecting with mentors. Once I made the decision to complete my degree, Thomas Edison made it so easy for me to attain my goal. Really, the hardest part was just making the decision to do it.”

Ellison’s goal now is to get her license to practice as an independent Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), and she hopes to find a position serving military families through Family Advocacy or, perhaps, as a Military Family Life Consultant. As an LCSW, Ellison explained that she can do counseling or program design and management for many populations, but she wants to specialize in military social work to give back to the community that has given her so much.

Ellison and husband Joshua, AAS '10, who recently retired from the Army after serving more than 20 years, have two sons, Justin, 14, and Joshua II, 10. A military spouse for 14 years, Ellison noted that what she loves most is spending time with her family in their home in northern Virginia but, she added, she also still enjoys traveling.

LISHED

“OBTAINING MY DEGREE FROM THOMAS EDISON ALLOWED ME THE ABILITY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH MY DECISION TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL. I BELIEVE MY DEGREE IN COMMUNICATIONS WILL GREATLY ENHANCE MY CAREER AS A SOCIAL WORKER NO MATTER WHAT AREA I DECIDE TO WORK IN.”

Rebecca Ellison



MAINTAINING A

LEGACY

❖ Frances Parrales, BA '12, MSM '15

As a teen growing up in Bronx, N.Y., Frances Parrales watched her mother work tirelessly to achieve the 'American Dream.'

At the age of 20, Parrales' mother came to the United States from Puerto Rico, speaking only her native Spanish. She struggled for years to provide for her family, holding multiple jobs while attending Bronx Community College, where she later earned an accounting degree.

"My mother set an example for us," she began. "She served as a constant reminder to my siblings and me that education is vital. If we didn't want to struggle the way she was, we needed to work hard to earn our education. I never finished high school and earned my General Educational Development (GED) in my early 20s. It wasn't until later in my life that I took the opportunity to enroll in college."

Years later, with the encouragement of family, friends and co-workers, she enrolled in Thomas Edison's Bachelor of Arts degree program in social sciences, graduating in 2012.

"Admittedly, when I began my online education I was nervous. However, I quickly discovered that everyone was friendly, professional, helpful and very dedicated to student success. From the staff all the way up to the board members, I was blown away. My academic advisor, Vanessa Meredith, was the most influential person throughout my journey. She assisted me with ways to complete my degree as quickly as possible, while never sacrificing my human service-oriented goals."

Even bigger than academic and moral support, Meredith gave her a gift she never anticipated. "Behind the scenes, she had nominated me to serve as a student trustee as part of the Board of Trustees at Thomas Edison. She and the institution gave me the ability and gift to share two wonderful years learning, growing and being exposed to talented leaders who have propelled Thomas Edison to the successful platform it currently stands on."

Parrales took this experience with her and coupled it with her lifelong passion for the sciences, healthcare and helping others. She found her niche as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), later moving into a medical office administration program, which aided in expanding her knowledge about healthcare operations.

She later obtained a position as a patient advocate at the University of Medicine and Dentistry (UMDNJ) - University



Hospital in Newark, N.J. “This position gave me the ability to learn how to problem solve and interpret for the Latino population, staff and medical professionals as well as provide medical services to the Newark community,” she explained.

That same year, she lost her mother to ovarian cancer; the difficult experience serving as a lesson in understanding the needs of patients and families when facing terminal illness. Though Parrales’ mother did not get to witness her daughter’s impending accomplishments, Parrales’ further resolved to exceed even her own expectations by taking her education even further than she ever thought possible.

While at the hospital, one of Parrales’ mentors encouraged her to return to school to earn her master’s degree. She didn’t hesitate, she said, when she chose Thomas Edison, taking advantage of the institution’s Bachelor’s to Master’s Program. Parrales was able to transfer 9 credits instantly to her master’s degree program, an appropriately chosen Master of Science in Management degree with a focus on public health/public policy.

“The nights when I’d come home from working a long day, and know I’d need to begin to do my homework were tough,” she admitted. “But I kept the goal in mind that one day it would all be worth it. I had to finish what I started not only for me, but for my children, mother and mentors. Being a high school dropout, becoming a mom at 16 years old; these life events caused the journey to be more significant. I wanted to prove to myself that I could do it and Thomas Edison helped to make that possible.”

Parrales now serves as the principal management assistant for the chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in Newark. She cultivates her skills in the medical field through aiding the department and physicians with her management abilities, taking part in tasks such as evaluations, appointments, reappointments, problem solving and the on-boarding of new physicians under

the umbrella of the university hospital. Additionally, Parrales recently completed an interpreter program at New York University to broaden her skill set further.

“My family has been most inspiring; helping me to remain focused and steadfast in all aspects of my life. Although

“MY MOTHER SET AN EXAMPLE FOR US. SHE SERVED AS A CONSTANT REMINDER TO MY SIBLINGS AND ME THAT EDUCATION IS VITAL. IF WE DIDN’T WANT TO STRUGGLE THE WAY SHE WAS, WE NEEDED TO WORK HARD TO EARN OUR EDUCATION.”

Frances Parrales

my mother did not have the opportunity to witness my accomplishments, I know she would have been immeasurably proud of all that I’ve done,” she said.

Parrales has since established a scholarship with the University in honor of her late mother, appropriately named the “Francisca Reyes Scholarship.” The scholarship supports

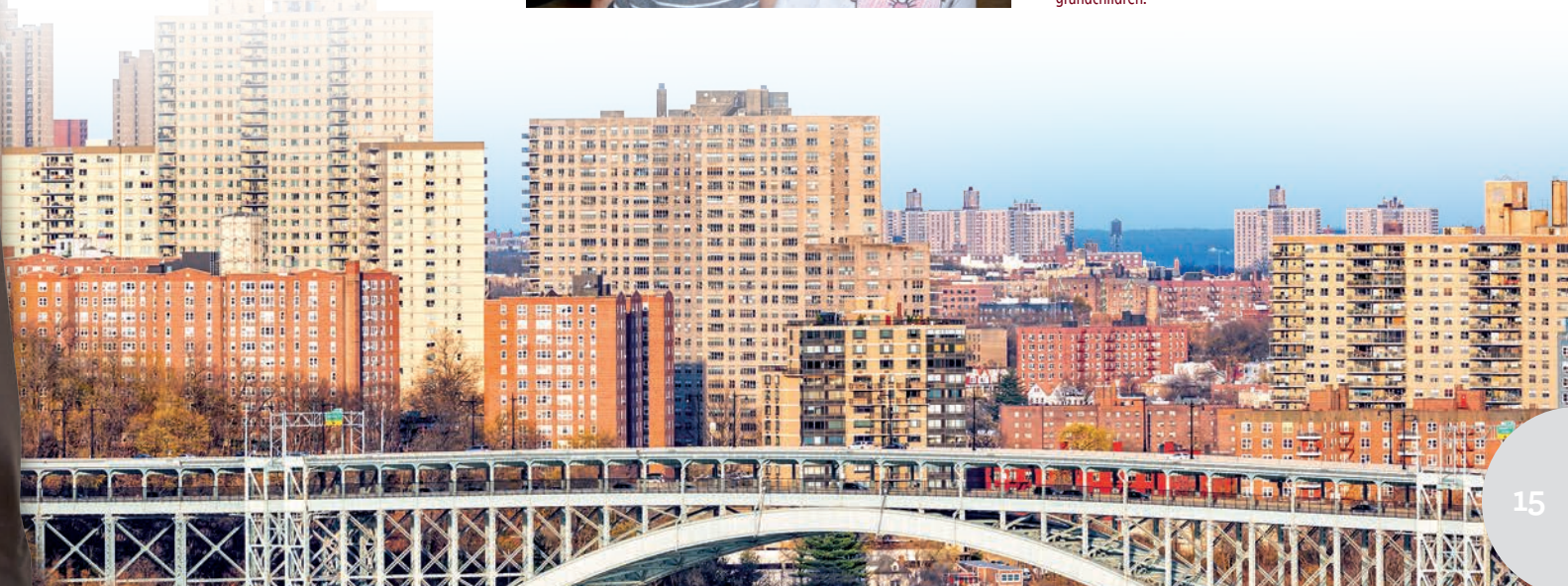
Latina students enrolled in public health or public service degree programs in the University’s John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies.

On setting-up and supporting her mother’s named scholarship, Parrales explained, “I wanted to support the dreams and desires of a woman and future student at the University seeking to enhance herself and her future.”

Parrales currently lives in Kearny, N.J., and has two adult children and four grandchildren ranging in age from 2 to 12 years old.



Frances Parrales at Thomas Edison State University’s Commencement ceremony, accompanied by her grandchildren.



class notes

❖ Ibis M. Abudo-Roman BSAST '91

Ibis M. Abudo-Roman has earned the Toastmasters Distinguished Toastmasters Award (DTM), which recognizes the highest level of achievement in both communication and leadership as part of the Toastmasters International organization.

❖ Vernon Brown

AAS '15, BS '15

Vernon Brown retired after 23 years of active-duty service in the U.S. Navy and started a new job as the deputy director of Emergency Planning at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, in Oahu, Hawaii.



❖ Dr. Elizabeth Cook

BSHS '01

Dr. Elizabeth Cook graduated from Walden University with a PhD in Public Policy and Administration with a concentration in homeland security policy and coordination in May.

❖ Dr. Dennis Devery

MSM '05

Dennis Devery has been selected as a fellow by the American Council on Education (ACE). ACE is the major coordinating body for the nation's higher education institutions and provides a unifying voice on key higher education issues. The Fellows Program is the nation's premier higher education leadership development program, preparing rising leaders to serve American colleges and universities. In this fellowship, Devery will be spending time at a college or university, mentored by the president or provost, to learn more about the operations and leadership of higher education institutions.



Miles Eakins BA '11

ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

Miles Eakins was promoted to corporate communications manager at Nonin Medical, Inc.

Barbara Flusk

BSBA '99

Barbara Flusk was named senior executive vice president, head of Real Estate Fund Services at Citco. Citco is a worldwide network of independent financial service companies serving the world's elite hedge funds, private equity and real estate firms, institutional banks, Global 1000 companies and high-net-worth individuals.



❖ Eldridge Hawkins Jr.

AAS '12

Eldridge Hawkins Jr. received the 'Male Role Model' award from the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. (Union County Club), in Garwood at its 45th anniversary luncheon. Hawkins is the owner and founder of Black Belt Security Investigations, LLC, former mayor of Orange, N.J., as well as director of Policy, Operations Governmental Affairs for the New Jersey Department of State.



❖ Matthew Hooker BA '16

ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

Matthew Hooker is pursuing his Juris Doctor at Wake Forest University School of Law beginning this fall after receiving offers of admission from six other schools.



❖ Tyshawn Jenkins

MBA '15

ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

Tyshawn Jenkins was recognized during the Knicks vs. Celtics game on April 2 with Knicks legend, Larry Johnson, at Madison Square Garden for service to his country and community. A U.S. Air Force veteran, Air National Guardsman and executive director of the Retouch Factory, Jenkins was selected for the award due to his efforts in creating a scholarship program for Asbury Park High School students in New Jersey, serving as a mentor for students at Willingboro Memorial Middle School in Willingboro, N.J., and as an ambassador for the Wounded Warrior Project and The Mission Continues Program, all while finding time to lend a helping hand at children's benefits as Spiderman.



Photo: Dave Saffran/MSG Photos

❖ Jack Meriwether BA '14

Jack Meriwether was named head men's basketball coach at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, W.Va. Meriwether arrived at Wesleyan in the summer of 2015 and served as an assistant coach for one and a half seasons before being named head coach.

❖ Dr. Matthew Morse BA '11

Dr. Matthew Morse was appointed assistant professor of music and associate director of bands at California State University, Sacramento, to begin with the 2017-2018 academic year, where he will share conducting responsibilities for the Symphonic Wind Ensemble and the Concert Band, and teach courses in conducting. Morse completed a Master of Arts degree in instrumental conducting in 2013 from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in Indiana, Pa. He graduated in May 2017 with a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in wind conducting from the University of North Texas. Morse retired as a chief warrant officer IV following a 25-year military music career in the United States Army, culminating with his assignment as the associate bandmaster and director of the Jazz Knights of the United States Military Academy Band at West Point, N.Y. He also holds a second degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do, awarded in October 2016.



❖ Michael Pasciuto MAEdL '14

Michael Pasciuto has been named principal of Lazar Middle School in Montville, N.J. Pasciuto previously served as assistant principal at Glen Rock High School in Glen Rock, N.J.



❖ James Schlett BA '78

James Schlett has recently "refocused" on his love of National Parks and photography. In June 2016, Schlett was selected as the Artist In Residence at the Whiskeytown National Park in California and plans on future exhibitions of his National Park photos.



❖ Quintin Siemer BA '09

Quintin Siemer was selected for an international award-winning district manager development program with General Motors (GM). This program is a six-month intensive training program where the candidates work alongside dealership and factory employees learning the role of a district manager. A capstone project and assessment will mark the completion of the program, and, from there, Siemer will be assigned a new territory within the United States, where he will assume the responsibilities of a district manager. He began working at GM in 2013, where he was hired as a product trainer. In 2015, he was promoted to the connected customer role and was later selected for the district manager development program.



ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

To learn more about the Alumni Ambassador program at Thomas Edison State University, please visit www.tesu.edu/ambassador

To connect with the Office of Alumni Affairs and fellow TESU alumni, join the conversation on social media:

Alumni Facebook Group: www.tesu.edu/FacebookGroup

Student and Alumni LinkedIn Group: www.tesu.edu/LinkedInGroup

Keep us posted!

Submit your news online at:
www.tesu.edu/classnotes

Updates can also be sent to:

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In Their Own Words



“I am a surface warfare officer in the United States Navy. I am very proud of what I do, but what I am doing now does not fulfill my life goals. I have always wanted to be a doctor and am currently finishing my bachelor’s in psychology.”

Edith and Oscar Smilack Memorial Scholarship Recipient

“I want to teach one day, and to pass along the greatest gift I think the world deserves: knowledge.”

Kajsa Butler, Fred C. Rummel Foundation Endowed Scholarship Recipient

“My goal is to help young women realize that they can break past the obstacles in their personal lives and reach their goals. There are so many young girls with so much potential, many of whom do not even realize it. These girls need an advocate and I plan to be just that.”

Stefanie Taylor, Edith and Oscar Smilack Memorial Scholarship Recipient

“My professional and educational goals complement one another in that I desire to know more about the world around all of us and in order to better serve our country.”

Daniel Kelley, TESU Military Scholarship Recipient

“My passion is bedside nursing as well as the desire to educate those that will follow. After guiding my three children through college, I am now able to follow my own dream to complete my MSN.”

Carole Smith, Switzer Foundation Scholarship Recipient

