

SUMMER 2018

Invention

THE MAGAZINE OF THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATOR

Joyce Serdinsky, BA '12



SHAPING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES: MICHAEL DEOSSIE AND GREGORY HENRY | LAMARR SMITH: 2017 ACE STUDENT OF THE YEAR

UNIVERSITY HOSTS CYBERSECURITY IN THE NORTHEAST REGION SYMPOSIUM | STORYTELLER: STAFF SGT. KYLE RICHARDSON, BA '13

MAKING HER IMPACT: SONJA 'SUNNY' SEMIDEI, BSN '16 | OUT OF HIS ELEMENTS: MAJ. ERIC PETREVICH, BSHS '05, MSM '09, BSBA '12



5



6

Photo by Tim Trumble for ACE



8



14



16

1 > Message from the President

UNIVERSITY NEWS

- 2 > Michael Mancini Named Chief of Staff of Thomas Edison State University
- > South Jersey Federal Credit Union Partners with Thomas Edison State University
- 3 > University's Accelerated BSN Grads Earn 100 Percent Pass Rate – Again!
- 4 > Shaping Sustainable Futures: Michael DeOssie and Gregory Henry
- 5 > University Hosts Cybersecurity in the Northeast Region Symposium
- 6 > LaMarr Smith: 2017 ACE Student of the Year

FOUNDATION NEWS

- 8 > His Commitment to Others: The Robert E. Campbell Endowed Scholarship
- > Janssen Pharmaceuticals Supports Future RNs
- 9 > Allison Polanski: AFT Scholarship Recipient
- > Stacey Bates: Donna and Richard Gillespie Endowed Scholarship Recipient

COVER STORY

- 10 > Compassionate Communicator: Joyce Serdinsky, BA '12

ALUMNI PROFILES

- 14 > Storyteller: Staff Sgt. Kyle Richardson, BA '13
- 16 > Making Her Impact: Sonja 'Sunny' Newhouse Spadaccino Semidei, BSN '16
- 18 > Out of His Elements: Maj. Eric Petrevich, BSHS '05, MSM '09, BSBA '12
- 20 > Class Notes

Correction: Images of Leila Banihani in the spring 2018 issue of Invention were taken by photographer Eric Kruszewski.

Invention is published quarterly and is produced by the Office of Communications and the Office of Marketing at Thomas Edison State University.

Merodie A. Hancock, PhD
PRESIDENT

Kristen Lacaillade
MANAGING EDITOR

Kelly Saccomanno
Linda Soltis
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Chris Miller
ART DIRECTOR

Thomas Edison State University is deeply rooted in the connections we make to our students and our community.

Every day we are inspired to provide our students with the tools they need to achieve their educational goals, giving them the opportunity to break barriers and become agents of positive change for those around them.

In this issue of *Invention*, we are pleased to share the stories of four extraordinary graduates who are making an impact in places around the world that need it the most:

Joyce Serdinsky '12, senior communications operator with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in Hamilton, N.J.;

Staff Sgt. Kyle Richardson '13, digital media division NCOIC with the U.S. Army at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.;

Sonja 'Sunny' Newhouse Spadaccino Semidei '16, school nurse at Saint John's School in San Juan, Puerto Rico; and

Maj. Eric Petrevich '05, '09, '12, military intelligence officer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The impact these graduates make on the lives of others continues to inspire us and reaffirm the work we do. The sense of pride we have in our students who transform their lives and, ultimately, strengthen their communities, is something that drives us every day.

I am thrilled to have this opportunity to build on our legacy of providing access to high-quality education for adult learners around the world and recognizing the powerful effect they have on their professions, families, our local communities and the world at large.



Merodie A. Hancock, PhD
President



Michael Mancini Named Chief of Staff of Thomas Edison State University

Thomas Edison State University President Merodie A. Hancock, PhD, has named Michael Mancini as chief of staff of the institution.

"I am extremely pleased that Michael has joined the University's leadership team as my chief of staff," said Hancock. "His track record of working across divisions, setting strategy and, most importantly, driving student success will make him a valuable addition to this special institution."

Mancini, who previously served as chief of staff at SUNY Empire State College, serves as the primary advisor to Hancock and works across divisions to help set and implement the institution's strategic direction. He started his position on May 21.

"I am excited to join Thomas Edison State University, New Jersey's flagship

institution for adults, as it enters a new era," said Mancini. "The University is a national leader in higher education, and I believe strongly in its mission. I am appreciative to President Hancock for putting her faith in me and look forward to serving the students, staff, alumni and mentors of TESU."

As a member of SUNY Empire State College's cabinet, Mancini was an integral part of the leadership and operations of the college. He joined the college in 2008 and served as director of community and government relations before his appointment as chief of staff in 2014. Mancini co-led the college's strategic planning process, which was completed in January 2018. Prior to



Michael Mancini, chief of staff, Thomas Edison State University

joining SUNY Empire State College, he served as the chief judicial officer at SUNY Fredonia.

Mancini earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from SUNY Purchase and a Master of Education from the University at Buffalo.

South Jersey Federal Credit Union Partners with Thomas Edison State University

South Jersey Federal Credit Union (SJFCU), a full-service, not-for-profit financial institution headquartered in Deptford, N.J., has partnered with Thomas Edison State University to offer educational opportunities to its 120 full-time employees who are interested in earning a degree or finishing the one they may have started.

The University's Corporate Choice® partnership agreement with SJFCU will result in access to certificate programs and undergraduate and graduate degree programs at the University. SJFCU staff serve more than 47,000 members and 600 employee groups in the southern New Jersey region.

"South Jersey Federal Credit Union is very excited to be partnering with Thomas Edison State University to offer discounted tuition to both our

employees and members," said Linda Laubach, assistant vice president of Marketing for SJFCU. "We strongly value education and offer our employees a tuition reimbursement program to support their academic goals. We look forward to working with the University to encourage both our employees and members to take full advantage of the opportunity to pursue their undergraduate and graduate degrees."

Under the educational partnership, SJFCU staff will have the ability to apply their previously earned credits and professional licenses, certifications and training that have been evaluated for credit toward a degree or certificate program at the University.

"Our institution is uniquely equipped to provide educational opportunities for SJFCU staff that are directly



Merodie Hancock, PhD, Thomas Edison State University President and Ernest D. Huggard, interim president and CEO of South Jersey Federal Credit Union.

applicable to their careers," said Janet Eickhoff, associate vice president of Strategic Partnerships and Outreach at Thomas Edison State University. "As credit unions such as SJFCU continue to evolve toward an even stronger member-centric model, continuing education opportunities for their talented staff take on even more significance."

University's Accelerated BSN Grads Earn 100 Percent Pass Rate – Again!

Graduates of Thomas Edison State University's Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) Program achieved a 100 percent pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) for 2017.

The University was the only public institution in New Jersey whose graduates achieved a 100 percent pass rate on the exam last year.

"We are extremely proud of our graduates and the hard work and dedication they put into the program," said Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing. "This outcome is a result of the outstanding preparation and performance of our students and the undergraduate nursing team who are fully committed to their success."

The 2017 outcome marks the third time that graduates of the program achieved a 100 percent pass rate on the NCLEX-RN exam in a given year. Graduates of the program who took the exam in 2012 and 2014 also earned a 100 percent pass rate. The 2017 cohort is the sixth graduating class of the program.

"The Accelerated BSN program at Thomas Edison State University was the perfect way to achieve my goal of becoming a nurse. I had looked into other programs but the 12-month program was one that stood out because of the affiliation with Capital Health and the affordability compared to other programs," said Katie Bello, RN, BSN '17.

Bello, a nurse at Capital Health and mother of four, said the program was challenging but allowed her to gain confidence as she progressed. "Not only did I feel prepared to enter the workforce as a new nurse, I felt extremely prepared for the NCLEX, which I passed in 75 questions," she said.

Launched in 2011, the Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program is an intensive, 12-month program designed for those who already possess a non-nursing bachelor's degree and are interested in becoming a registered nurse. It features online and campus-based courses and simulation lab experiences provided by Thomas Edison State University. Clinical experiences are held at Capital Health facilities in Hopewell Township and Trenton, N.J., and Holy Redeemer Homecare and Hospice as well as other community-based agencies in the area.



Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing

Pass rate information is reported to the University by the New Jersey Board of Nursing and provided by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, and reflects the results of all first-time NCLEX-RN test takers from the University who took the exam in 2017.



Pictured (from left), Vicki Brzoza, nursing program advisor, W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at the University, Kathryn Houghton, BSN '17 and Katie Bello, BSN '17.

"THE ACCELERATED BSN PROGRAM AT THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY WAS THE PERFECT WAY TO ACHIEVE MY GOAL OF BECOMING A NURSE."

Katie Bello, RN, BSN '17



Graduates of the University's Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program who earned a 100 percent pass rate on the NCLEX-RN exam in 2017.

Shaping Sustainable Futures: Michael DeOssie and Gregory Henry

When you're on active duty, your main focus is accomplishing your mission. Upon returning to civilian life, there are many choices to make and paths to choose.

For U.S. military veterans Michael DeOssie and Gregory Henry, PSEG is more than where they work. One of the largest utility providers in New Jersey, PSEG is an employer that offers a path to higher education that, in turn, can help them shape and secure their futures.

A U.S. Navy veteran, DeOssie is a nuclear shift supervisor in the control room at PSEG's Hope Creek Nuclear Generating Station in Lower Alloways Creek Township in southern New Jersey.



Michael DeOssie

"Many service members are much like myself and will have a family and financial responsibilities that require them to focus on working first while letting higher education sit on the back burner upon separation," said DeOssie, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Technical Studies at Thomas Edison State University (TESU).

Henry is a U.S. Army veteran and PSE&G Energy Strong Utility Mechanic in the Orange Gas District in northeastern New Jersey, where he installs, services, maintains, troubleshoots and repairs or replaces gas systems.

For Henry, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Electronics Engineering Technology also at TESU, finishing his degree is about

positioning himself for professional advancement.

"I am determined to finish ventures that I start," said Henry, who completed his Associate in Applied Science from the University in 2010. "Completing my bachelor's degree will increase my career worth and allow me to be more marketable."

Both are taking advantage of PSEG's longstanding partnership with TESU and the organization's generous tuition assistance benefits.

Since 2009, PSEG has been one of the University's Corporate Choice® partners – a designation that allows PSEG employees to earn credit for their military and PSEG training, maximizing the company's generous tuition reimbursement benefits, to complete their college degrees.

PSEG has funded several veteran-focused initiatives, including TESU's Military and Veteran Portal (MVP), which allows active-duty service members and veterans to learn how their military training can be applied as credit toward a degree. Recently, the PSEG Foundation also contributed \$200,000, a portion of which supports the University's career enhancement initiative, which provides career advising and job placement resources for veterans and active-duty personnel.

DeOssie explained that the enhancements to the portal give military personnel and veterans a better understanding that obtaining or finishing a bachelor's degree is within their reach.

"Letting military personnel know what opportunities are available to them while still serving and how the training they've already had can translate into college credits helps them accelerate the process," he said.

"Our country's veterans and active military professionals are exceptional

leaders and trained professionals that add tremendous value to our workforce," said Barb Short, PSEG chief diversity officer and senior director, Corporate Citizenship and Culture. "As a company of colleagues dedicated to service and operational excellence, we're proud to continue our longstanding partnership with Thomas Edison State University and support the University's



Gregory Henry

"I AM A DETERMINED TO FINISH VENTURES THAT I START...COMPLETING MY BACHELOR'S DEGREE WILL INCREASE MY CAREER WORTH AND ALLOW ME TO BE MORE MARKETABLE. "

Gregory Henry

career initiatives dedicated to service members and veterans."

Providing student veterans with the right tools can help to alleviate the pressures of their transition to civilian life.

"Going back to school as an adult can be intimidating," DeOssie said. "The realistic advice is it's never too late to start."

To learn more about the University's Military and Veteran Portal, visit: mvp.tesu.edu. To learn more about PSEG's partnership with Thomas Edison State University, visit: www.tesu.edu/pseg.

University Hosts Cybersecurity in the Northeast Region Symposium

Leaders from various sectors of the Northeast discussed the issues facing their organizations and networks at the Cybersecurity in the Northeast Region Symposium on May 10 in Jersey City, N.J., hosted by the School of Applied Science and Technology at Thomas Edison State University.

The event focused on current regional and cybersecurity trends, the impact of cyberthreats in the region as well as workforce needs for cybersecurity professionals.

As part of the Symposium's program, New Jersey chief information officer, director of the New Jersey Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Cell (NJCCIC) and University alum, Michael Geraghty, BA '09, delivered opening remarks, speaking on the state of cybersecurity preparedness across the state.



Michael Geraghty, BA '09, New Jersey chief information officer and director of the New Jersey Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Cell (NJCCIC)

"On a monthly basis, we see approximately five million attacks against the Garden State Network," said Geraghty. "These attacks are coming from all over the world. There

are no borders as far as cybersecurity is concerned. The threat is real and it's not only threats from outside, it's from inside. The focus that we put on cybersecurity is for the purpose of being able to focus on these threats and provide a coordinated response."

Geraghty also underscored the continued need for cybersecurity professionals in the field, with growing demand in government, military and business sectors.

Larry Clinton, president and CEO of the Internet Security Alliance (ISA), a multisector trade association based just outside Washington, D.C., which focuses on thought leadership, policy advocacy and developing best practices in cybersecurity, provided a private sector perspective as the event's keynote speaker. As part of his discussion, Clinton demonstrated the frequency and impact of cybersecurity using real-time data.

"Every minute on the internet, this is what goes on," he began. "We lose 5,500 records, about \$4,400 due to cybercrime, 832 new versions of malware are created, we spend about \$200,000 on cybersecurity tools and another \$200,000 on cybersecurity regulations and audits. This happens every minute of every day on the internet."

Clinton benchmarked the economic toll cybercrime has on the world, figures which he notes are projected to double

in the next few years with signs of continual, rapid increase.

The Symposium also included two panels focused on industry and critical infrastructure and government and defense, respectively. Experts in these fields spoke to the challenges they face in their scope of business as well as the impact cybersecurity has on their day-to-day responsibilities.

"The need for a strong public and



Larry Clinton, president and CEO of the Internet Security Alliance (ISA)

private sector partnership to combat cyberthreats is apparent," said Dr. Amjad Ali, associate dean, School of Applied Science and Technology at the University. "These areas are clamoring for educated and trained cyber professionals to continually monitor and respond to the threats to our infrastructure as they grow in number and sophistication."

To learn more about University's own cybersecurity programs in place to help address the shortage of cyber-prepared professionals in the field, visit www.tesu.edu/ast/programs/cybersecurity.



LaMarr Smith: 2017 ACE Student of the Year

LaMarr Smith's life has not been measured by the struggles he's faced, but rather by how he's conquered each one.

Smith, who battled depression and homelessness for more than a decade, determined not to let his setbacks define him.

"There were many times when I thought that I wouldn't be able to make it in or through life," he explained. "Many sleepless nights where I gained bits of traction here and there, marching toward my dreams and never giving up; giving all I have to become a better, truer version of myself has become my way of life."

This continuous process, he explained, was rooted in his focus on what he wanted out of life and how his goals would lead him in the right direction. As a child, Smith was often encouraged to seek out higher education as a means of cementing his future. He would be the first in his family to achieve this long-held goal once complete.

help they could provide. I really didn't have anyone to look up to as a role model; though I was surrounded by the best of intentions."

Smith discovered Thomas Edison State University by chance when researching his options specifically in distance learning. "I was already very familiar with the format of distance learning, having worked for the health insurance company UnitedHealthcare, where training was practiced on a regular basis via distance learning in its member services, claims and clinical services departments," he explained. "When I realized that I could finish my degree in the same way, I was excited."

He hit a self-professed "gold mine" when he stumbled upon information about the institution on discussion forum site, *degreeforum.net*, where he explains it was there he learned all he could about the University.

University."

He was enamored with the flexibility the University could offer him and soon realized his college degree was within reach.

Smith, who is pursuing his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree, noted that the existence of alternative credit methods have helped propel his degree completion. He has completed courses through alternative credit providers, including *Study.com*, and coupled those credits with more than 100 college credits he's earned for

"I WAS FACED WITH MANY MOUNTAINS AND VALLEYS, AND MOMENTS THAT I HAD NO IDEA WHERE TO GO, BUT I KEPT MARCHING FORWARD BIT BY BIT...FOCUS AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ON WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE."

LaMarr Smith

evaluated workplace training.

These credit earning methods, and Smith's story went so far as to capture the attention of the American Council on Education (ACE), a higher education organization that spearheads public policy advocacy, research and other initiatives related to key higher education issues.

As such, Smith was selected as a 2017 ACE 'Student of the Year,' an award that is presented annually to an adult learner who has benefited from the use of ACE credit recommendations to earn a college degree or advance a career.

"I am both excited and grateful to have been chosen as ACE's 'Student of the Year,'" Smith said. "I consider this recognition a high point in my life and am thankful to the ACE organization for seeing its ideals in me. I am also appreciative to the University for allowing me the flexibility to complete my degree as an adult learner. I'm thrilled to be part of such a great institution."

Smith accepted his award at ACE's annual conference on March 13 in Washington, D.C., and is the recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship from the organization to continue his studies.



Pictured, from left to right, Mary Beth Lakin, ACE; LaMarr Smith; Ted Mitchell, ACE President; and Marten Roorda, ACT CEO. Photo by Tim Trumble for ACE

"Not finishing my degree has long made me feel like a part of my life was missing," he explained. "Growing up, graduating from college and earning my degree was an expectation. However, none of my family members had finished and were limited in the

"When I was weighing my options, I was concerned about four primary factors: flexibility, time to completion, cost and regional accreditation," he said. "The clincher for me was when the institution was granted university status and officially became Thomas Edison State



LaMarr Smith speaks at ACE's annual conference on March 13 in Washington, D.C. Photo by Tim Trumble for ACE

“Mr. Smith’s orientation to his education is well aligned with that of the University’s mission to provide flexible, high-quality, collegiate learning opportunities for self-directed adults,” said Dr. Michael Williams, dean of the University’s School of Business and Management.

Smith said along the way he’s found that earning a business degree has helped him better understand what it means to run a business and how that business has an impact on society.

“My courses have taught me so much about communication, and I have a deeper understanding of business concepts and, even, people,” he explained. “I enrolled with the expectation of learning systems, concepts and ideas, which I have, however, they are all supported by the ‘how’s, why’s and ways’ that people interact with one another to achieve

specific goals, wants, needs and desires.”

Smith maintains that the value of a college degree cannot be understated and intends to become a business owner and teach financial literacy to youth upon completion of his education. For the past 11 years, he has worked in different facets of the healthcare industry, currently employed in the federal employee department of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Western New York in the Buffalo, N.Y., area. Smith plans to pursue his Master of Business Administration degree upon completion of his bachelor’s degree.

While Smith explains that it may be cliché to say that ‘success is not a straight line,’ he feels that this rings true for him and his own journey. “I was faced with many mountains and valleys, and moments that I had no idea where to go, but I kept marching forward bit by

bit,” he said. “Focus as much as you can on what you want out of life as well as who you need to become to achieve it, then become that person.”

Smith explained that the West African principle of Sankofa, translated as ‘go back and fetch it’ or ‘it is not taboo to go back and fetch what you forgot’ has also served as a primary motivator and internal compass throughout his educational journey.

Smith lives in the Buffalo, N.Y., area with his wife, Sabriyah. On his off hours, he enjoys learning about astronomy and technology as well as traveling across the country. Smith also acknowledged his late mother, who he loves dearly. “I want to thank my dear mother in heaven for being my mom,” he said. “I hope I’ve made her proud.”

His Commitment to Others: The Robert E. Campbell Endowed Scholarship

Robert 'Bob' E. Campbell has long understood the importance of helping others. His generous spirit has touched the lives of so many over the years and continues to do so today.

For Campbell, a retired vice chairman of the Board of Directors of Johnson & Johnson, living a meaningful existence means that people must make commitments beyond themselves.

"It always seemed readily apparent to me that those who are blessed with health, or wealth, or education have an obligation to give back to society," he explained.

Throughout his lifetime, Campbell has been a leader in philanthropic initiatives, chairing nonprofit boards including the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and lending his wisdom to numerous universities, and healthcare and community-service organizations. He has also leveraged his personal resources to help those who need it

most, supporting organizations close to him, including Thomas Edison State University.

"Many institutions provide opportunity, but Thomas Edison State University is special in the manner in which it affords that opportunity to so many adults who otherwise could not take advantage of higher education in a conventional approach," said Campbell. "Its leadership has been visionary and has become a model for others to emulate."

What's more, Campbell's longstanding support of the University has taken on a new form as of late. In 2017, he established the Robert E. Campbell Endowed Scholarship fund to support students enrolled at the University who have a financial need.

"It is gratifying to be able to reaffirm my commitment to Thomas Edison State University by establishing this scholarship," he said. "Supporting students by removing financial barriers



Robert E. Campbell speaks at Thomas Edison State University's 2012 Commencement ceremony.

provides opportunity for those seeking the benefits higher education provides."

In 2012, Campbell was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the University for his staunch commitment to education. He has also received honorary doctorate degrees from Fordham University and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He is a distinguished leader, and his work has resulted in invaluable and tangible benefits to higher education, industry, government and the community.

Janssen Pharmaceuticals Supports Future RNs

Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., has once again provided scholarship support for students enrolled in the University's Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) Program at the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing.

Students Steven Spadafino, William Toth and Jillian Rogers, who were each awarded scholarship funding, view Janssen's support as a windfall due to the focus and rigor of their academic program.

Students in the cohort are discouraged from pursuing outside employment due to the pace and intensity of the program's 12-month curriculum and their eligibility for federal financial aid is limited since they possess a bachelor's degree in another discipline.

"Becoming a bachelor's-prepared nurse is my primary focus and the

scholarship support will make that goal feasible," said Spadafino, a Hamilton Square, N.J., resident and former nursing assistant. "With my newly acquired skills, I plan to work in tandem with area nurse leaders in helping to deliver preventative care and disease management education to our communities. As I move forward, my hope is to become a nurse educator."

The scholarship support may be doubly important in a current healthcare environment that is increasingly turning to bachelor's-prepared nurses for expertise. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there will be more than 1 million RN position vacancies by the year 2024.

"We invest in programs that align with our mission to advance the health of patients and our local community," said



W. Cary School of Nursing's Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program students (from left to right), Steven Spadafino, William Toth and Jillian Rogers, are recent recipients of the 2018 Janssen Pharmaceuticals Scholarship.

Peg Forrestel, director of Community Affairs at Janssen Pharmaceuticals. "Nurses are critical to our healthcare system and are at the heart of this endeavor. We view our scholarship programs as an investment in students like Steven, Jillian and William as they rise to meet our region's demand for highly skilled, highly motivated bachelor's-prepared nurses."

❖ Allison Polanski: AFT Scholarship Recipient

ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

For Allison Polanski, moving from the boardroom to the classroom was a natural progression.

Polanski, who works as an elementary school Gifted and Talented program teacher in the East Windsor Regional School District in East Windsor, N.J., has always seen education as the right fit for her.

“Originally, I worked as a corporate policy trainer and insurance broker in New York City before deciding to stay home to raise my children,” she explained. “When I returned to the workforce, becoming a teacher made sense since my undergraduate degree was a double major in business and education.”

Now, she works with students in kindergarten through fifth grade in two elementary schools. When she found the University, she knew her goal of earning her master’s degree would be realized through the pursuit

of her Master of Arts in Educational Leadership degree.

“Through the course readings and assignments, I have been challenged to look at the school environment from a variety of perspectives and go beyond the walls of my classroom,” she explained.

Polanski has also been awarded a scholarship to assist her financially in reaching her goal. She was selected as a recipient of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 4277 scholarship that the organization established in 2013.

The scholarship, funded by matching grants from the AFT Local 4277 of Thomas Edison State University and its senior organization, the Council of New Jersey State College Locals, AFT/AFL-CIO, is awarded to New Jersey residents who are active union members and currently enrolled in or seeking enrollment in a graduate program at the University. AFT Local 4277 is comprised



AFT Scholarship Recipient, Allison Polanski, MAEdL '18

of professional staff employees at the University.

“I knew going in that this program required a somewhat substantial financial commitment, especially since my husband and I are at a time in our lives when retirement is a frequent discussion,” she said. “The scholarship not only helped alleviate some of our financial concerns, it just as importantly reaffirmed the idea that I was really worth the investment.”

❖ Stacey Bates: Donna and Richard Gillespie Endowed Scholarship Recipient

For the past 14 years, Stacey Bates has taken her talents around the world.

An English language instructor for community centers and language schools, Bates has had the ability to instruct in both Russia and Turkey, the latter where she and her family currently reside.

“I began my studies when my oldest child left for college by taking CLEP® tests and, when possible, a semester at the local community college,” she explained. “With my work and travel schedule, I realized that to complete my degree I would have to find an online school.”

When she learned about the institution, she found the University’s Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies and determined that the program was what she had been looking for.

“I was able to get the needed credit via testing for a foreign language I had

already learned in addition to all of my CLEP® credit,” she explained. “Because of the way classes are scheduled, I can take enough hours to qualify for financial aid while still maintaining my professional and personal life. It takes a lot of discipline and hard work, but it has been attainable for me.”

In addition to financial aid, Bates was selected as the recipient of the Donna and Richard Gillespie Endowed Scholarship. The scholarship, established in 1992 by the Gillespies, is granted to enrolled students pursuing an undergraduate degree program at the University. The Gillespies are, in fact, no stranger to the University. Richard is a longstanding member of the Thomas Edison State University Foundation Board, having served since 1984.

“This scholarship has enabled me to pursue a long-held dream of furthering my education,” said Bates. “As mothers, we often put every other need in front



Donna and Richard Gillespie Endowed Scholarship recipient Stacey Bates

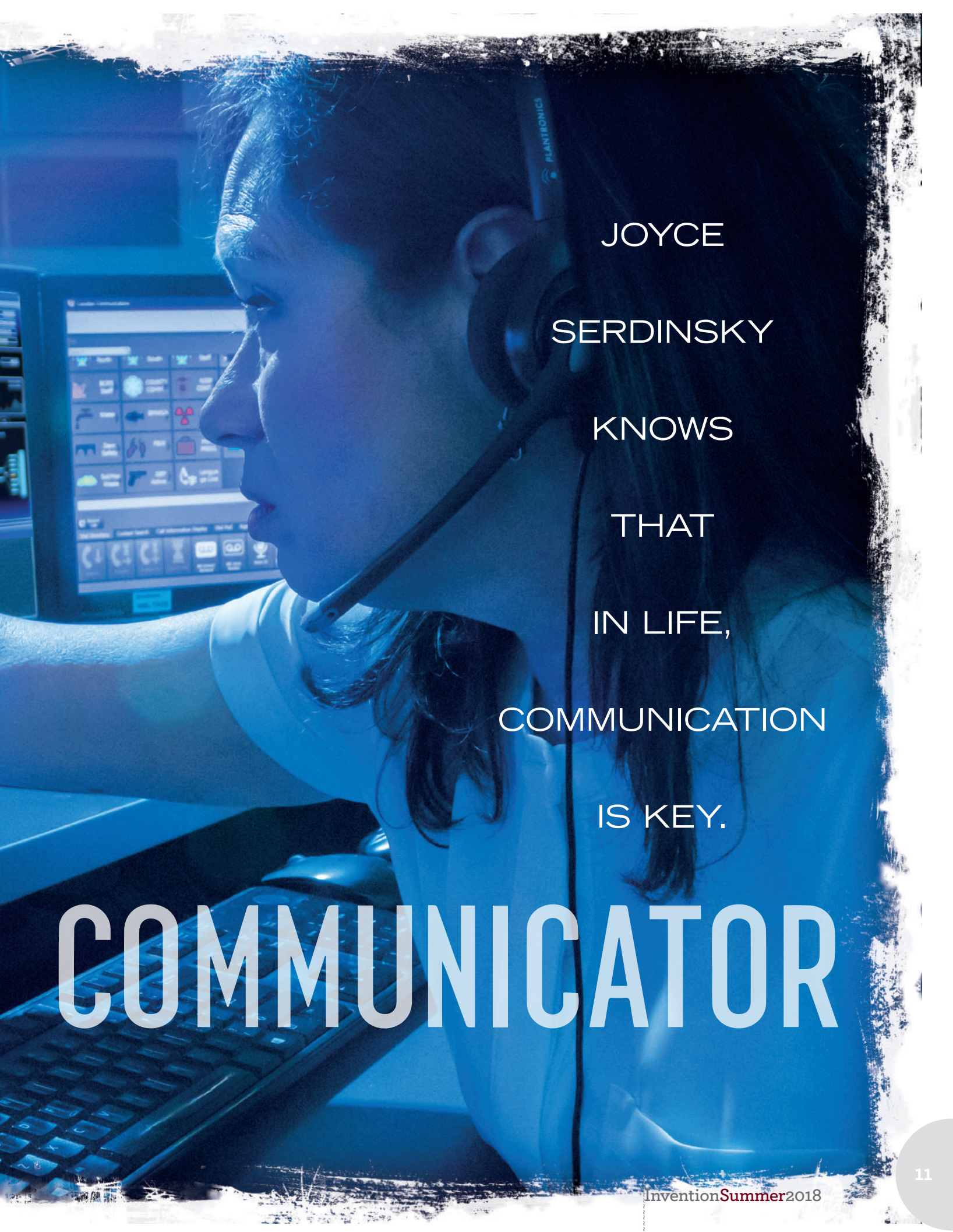
of our own so that we can ensure the happiness and success of our children. The scholarship not only quieted my worries about whether I was investing too much money in myself, but gave me a needed boost of confidence knowing there are people who recognize the value of what I want to do with my education.”

When not traveling for work or pleasure, Bates and her family call North Carolina home.



COMPASSIONATE

JOYCE SERDINSKY, BA '12



JOYCE

SERDINSKY

KNOWS

THAT

IN LIFE,

COMMUNICATION

IS KEY.

COMMUNICATOR

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATOR

Joyce Serdinsky, BA '12

For Joyce Serdinsky, transformation came in a tempest. It was Hurricane Katrina that fueled a cascade of actions that would define the twists and turns in her life.

"I volunteered to pack boxes for the families that were living out of their cars after the hurricane," said Serdinsky of the destructive 2005 storm. "It was a very humbling experience. People would line up in cars all around the facility and, as they drove in on one side, we would ask them what they needed; by the time they got to the other side, we would have that box packed and ready for them."

Serdinsky explained that it was all about being able to communicate with people and understand their basic human needs for survival.

"IT WAS THIS FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE – HOW HUGE THE IMPACT WAS TO HAVE JUST A LITTLE BIT OF LANGUAGE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM – THAT PLANTED IN MY HEART THE NEED TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL AND PICK UP WHERE I LEFT OFF."

Joyce Serdinsky

"You would ask them if they needed baby formula or diapers or drinking water or cleaning supplies – simple, basic needs," recalled Serdinsky, who works as a senior communications operator with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Bureau of

Communications and Response Services, Emergency Management Program.

Serdinsky recalls how often a car would come through whose occupants did not speak English. It was then she

"I had studied Spanish in high school, and I'm thinking, 'wow, I have a whole car full of people here that I need to communicate with,' and I was trying to draw from what little Spanish I could remember. I could say agua (water) and they would say sí. I could say, suministros para bebés (supplies for babies) and they would say sí. They would get so excited that you could communicate with them just this little bit because it was like a blank wall for them – they had needs and they couldn't tell you."



Serdinsky rides a camel just outside of Jordan near Jericho in Israel.

realized that she had a responsibility to communicate with them to ensure their needs were met.

Hurricane Katrina was just one of the experiences that convinced Serdinsky that she needed to explore completing her education.

"It was this firsthand experience - how huge the impact was to have just a little bit of language to communicate with them - that planted in my heart the need to go back to school and pick up where I left off."

Serdinsky's passion for service was ignited again in Nicaragua, where once or twice a year she volunteered at an orphanage. "I spent time there loving the children, connecting with them and trying to impart some hope to them," said Serdinsky, who began working on her Thomas Edison State University degree by taking Spanish classes, one at a time, so that she could connect with the orphans on another level. "After Spanish III, I thought, 'I might as well just keep going; I was working full time, but I was able to continue because of the University's flexible program.'"

Serdinsky noted that her favorite course at the University was sociology. "I felt drawn to it, but, I thought, what kind of job could I get with a degree in sociology? Once I went as far as Spanish could take me, and I had to complete my electives to finish, sociology was it. The sociology teacher



Serdinsky (center) in Nicaragua.

at Thomas Edison was brilliant, and he gave us certain things to read such as the novel, *Black Like Me*. The books took us through the plight of all different people; that class helped me to understand and to grow in that way."

Those experiences and her pursuit of a career were serendipitously linked.

"NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE, BE THERE; GIVE IT YOUR ALL AND STEWARD THE PORTION YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN. NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, DO IT WELL. THERE'S A DEGREE OF HUMAN CHARACTER YOU CAN DEVELOP THAT WILL SPILL OVER INTO HUMAN EXCELLENCE. IN THAT PROCESS OF GIVING BACK, YOU BECOME TRANSFORMED."

Joyce Serdinsky

"When I went for my job interview at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, I casually mentioned that I was reviewing Spanish as a second language," Serdinsky recalled. "I didn't realize that it was the fire that lit them to pick me out of the 200 people who had applied. That simple mention is one of the factors that got me the job. Upon beginning my employment and through the department's generous tuition assistance program, they even paid for my first two courses with the University."

As a supervisor with the DEP, Serdinsky continues to use all the communication skills she has developed over the years.

"It's a communications center, a hotline, so if you can't communicate with those on the other end of the phone, you have nothing to offer them," said Serdinsky, who earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies from the University in 2012. "It's civil service, so it's public service. We protect our air, land, water and natural resources like New Jersey state parks, and fish and wildlife areas, handling everything from black bears to bioterrorism. I've been there for 11 years, and Thomas Edison State University has been instrumental in that."

In addition to her volunteer endeavors in New Orleans and Nicaragua, Serdinsky has traveled to Israel three times, working with widows and children in a Palestinian refugee camp. Her many years of compassion and service helped shape her destiny, but it was Serdinsky's marriage that kindled the initial fire.

Serdinsky noted, "I share this to help someone else in a negative situation in their life. While I was married, we had the best; it was the top floor of a high-rise oceanfront. And, yet, I would go to sleep at night on the bathroom floor with the door locked afraid to come out for fear that my ex-husband was going to kill me. He had an alcohol problem; my fear was real. If you spend enough time crying yourself to sleep on a bathroom floor, you realize you need to be set free of the fear. Stopping the cycle helps you to relate to someone else who is enduring a similar situation and helps to convey to them that they don't have to continue to tolerate it. Had I not been in that place, I don't know where I'd be today. I'm living proof you can always start over."

Serdinsky appreciates that her journey has brought her to a place where life is rewarding and fulfilling, and she gratefully shares her philosophy.

"No matter where you are, be there; give it your all and steward the portion you've been given. No matter what you do, do it well. There's a degree of human character you can develop that will spill over into human excellence. In that process of giving back, you become transformed."

s t o r y t e l l e r

“THE INSTITUTION ACCEPTED MUCH OF MY MILITARY TRAINING FOR CREDIT AS WELL AS TRANSFER CREDITS I’D EARNED OVER THE YEARS FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS. ALTOGETHER, I ONLY NEEDED SIX COURSES TO FINISH MY DEGREE.”

Kyle Richardson



Staff Sgt. Kyle Richardson, BA '13

Staff Sgt. Kyle Richardson has seen many parts of the world, but not for the reasons you may think.

A 16-year member of the U.S. Army, Richardson, has been deployed countless times to serve the nation, falling into a public affairs position for which he has found his lifelong career match.

At age 17, Richardson joined the Indiana National Guard serving for four years, later transitioning to active-duty service in January 2011 with the Army while in college.

Upon completion of his first assignment at Fort Benning in Georgia, Richardson was deployed to Germany, later relocated to various countries and states including Afghanistan, Korea, Iraq, Hawaii, New York, Texas and Washington, D.C., at the Pentagon.

While deployed, he set the wheels in motion to return to complete his degree. In Iraq, Richardson tapped his fellow service members for advice about returning when they recommended the institution as the perfect fit for his military lifestyle.

"My fellow soldiers convinced me to give Thomas Edison State University a try and it worked out for me in ways I didn't think possible," he said. "The institution accepted much of my military training for credit as well as transfer credits I'd earned over the years from other institutions. Altogether, I only needed six courses to finish my degree."

Since the completion of his Bachelor of Arts degree in Humanities in 2013, Richardson didn't easily leave the University behind.

"I enjoyed everything about the school, so much that I've since returned to earn my Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree," said Richardson. "I've recently completed the MBA-Prep Program, and, while my schedule is fairly hectic, I'm looking forward to enrolling in my first graduate course. My goal is to move into a public relations or marketing career when I retire from the Army in two years."

Richardson's knack for all things 'people' came naturally. When he joined the Army, he worked as a combat medic, with the goal of simply helping and caring for others, later moving into a position as a mental health counselor, working with soldiers through the issues and stress that life often brought while enlisted.

"That was just my personality, and it still is," he explained. "I'm the guy you run into at the grocery store standing in line that you tell your life story to. I have the opportunity to tell soldiers stories as a military journalist and a public affairs professional. It's the one constant that keeps me going. I'm still helping people, just in a different way."

While stationed in New York in 2016, Richardson was given a chance to put his communications skills to work during a fellowship program with the National Football League (NFL) based in Manhattan, N.Y., through the Army's service member internship program, where he worked with and interviewed a number of the league's athletes.

"As a public affairs noncommissioned officer (NCO), we have different companies that we can work for through the program, including Google, the NFL and Siemens. At first, I wasn't going to apply because it's a coveted position and you have hundreds of people applying, but my mentor really encouraged me to pursue it."

The application process alone got Richardson thinking about his life after the military and what his next step would be.

"I didn't have a resume," he said. "I kept telling myself, 'I'll just stick with the Army and live this life.' But I had to get to thinking about what skills I have to offer and what I need to improve on. I couldn't remember the last time I'd done an interview, and I'd never had a real civilian job."

With this, Richardson put together his application materials and a few weeks

later received the news that he'd been selected. Another set of challenges presented itself.

"You think about how you need to conduct yourself, dress, what's appropriate and inappropriate in the corporate workplace," Richardson admitted. "I have 16 years of active-duty service where I've been around soldiers my entire adult life. I wear a uniform to work and have specialized training and a rigorous schedule. These are things I never took into consideration but the entire experience was one I will never forget."

After leaving New York in 2017, Richardson has since been assigned to work at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., where he is the social media manager for all of the Army's social media platforms. He is able to apply much of what he learned at his previous internship and through his course work to a learning experience he is now able to add to his resume.

"I work to manage the social media platforms for the U.S. Army and lead a team that creates content for those who interact and engage with the division," said Richardson. "We've all been to sites and profiles where no one is posting and it has the appearance that no one is listening. Our goal is to find and curate content from sources to show our followers that we're here listening to them. We're given the ability to shape a person's day through what we post and how we respond, and that's what makes the job so rewarding."

Richardson and his wife of 11 years, Nancy, have a 10-year-old son, Elijah, and a black Labrador named, Bella. In his off hours, Richardson fuels his passion for photography through shooting landscape, wedding and family photos, and he also finds joy in simply spending time with his family.

Making Her Impact

❖ Sonja ‘Sunny’ Newhouse Spadaccino Semidei, BSN ’16

When Sonja ‘Sunny’ Semidei enrolled at the University, she didn’t immediately set her sights on a degree.

What she could never have imagined, was the impact that degree would have on many others.

“I did not originally return to school to earn my Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree,” admitted Semidei. “Rather, my intention was to take a class or two to see what was happening in the nursing field since I hadn’t been practicing since 1984.”

Over the years, Semidei had maintained her licenses as valid in a handful of states, even after moving to Puerto Rico, the same year she ceased practicing as an RN.

Semidei’s move to the island led her to work in management for a precast manufacturing firm for 30 years until the plant closed in June 2013. With this, she realized that her critical-thinking skills and previous nursing experience were still valid. Determined for a fresh start, she enrolled in her first two nursing courses at the University, simply to test the waters.

“When I began my educational journey in October 2013, I was a full-time grandmother, caring for my young grandson,” she said. “With the flexibility online learning afforded me, I appreciated being able to care for him while I attended school. If my plant hadn’t closed, I likely would not have returned to school. The old adage, ‘when one door closes, another opens’ holds true for me.”

As she moved through her initial courses, Semidei quickly realized that she could still be valuable as a nurse and make a strong impact in her community.

“I spoke with nursing program advisor, Holly Leahan, many times throughout my first term and explained that though I didn’t know what my next steps were, I was certain I wanted to positively impact others,” she explained.

Upon completing her first two nursing courses, Semidei had experienced all she needed to in order to solidify her decision to continue on and complete her BSN degree.

“I was pleased to know that my previous credits were accepted, including transfer credits from my nursing school, TECEP® exams were available and that goals, as well as expectations, were clearly spelled out throughout the program,” she said. “I also appreciated that core nursing courses as well as general education courses were part of the program because they emphasized the global impact of current events with an emphasis on cultural understanding.”

Over the next two years, Semidei took notice that her learning style had changed as well as the evolution of her own self-discipline.

“My success depended solely on what I put into it,” she said. “I always said that nursing helped me to be a good leader and that my management experience has now contributed to me being a well-rounded nurse.”

After completing her degree in June 2016, Semidei began a position as a health educator, informing women and their families about the prevention, risks and transmission of the Zika virus, with the number of cases having skyrocketed on the island. She was contracted to work with agencies such

as Puerto Rico’s Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Health to help spread awareness and education about the epidemic.

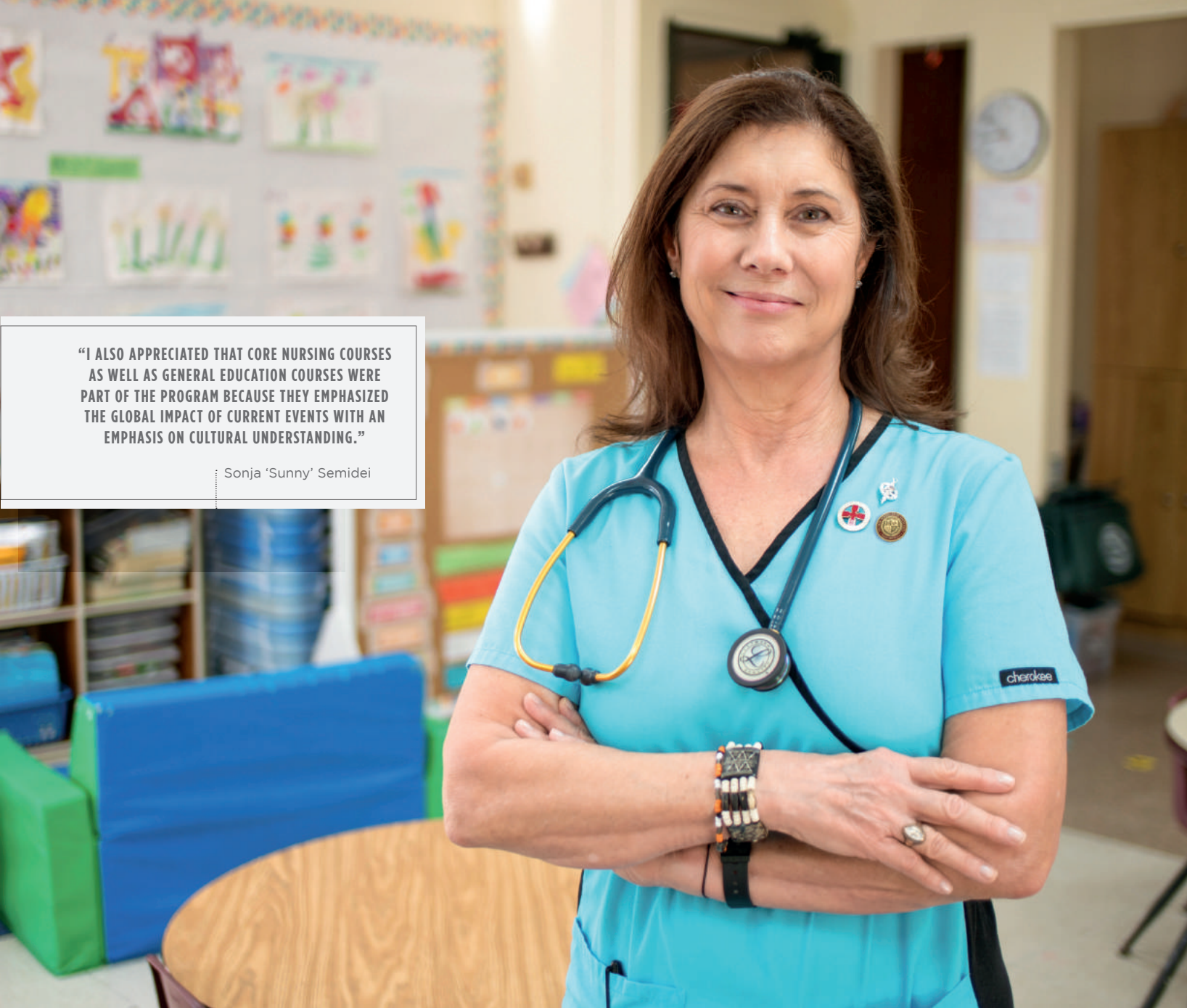
“This is a public health issue, and our group of nurses hoped to decrease the rising numbers of pregnant women with Zika and share what can keep them healthy, while creating a synergy that gets women and their families involved,” she said.

Soon after her contract position ended, Semidei took part in a medical mission trip through the Orphan Medical Network International (OMNI) mission, an organization focused on providing medical care for orphans.

Her trip took her to Zambia where she and a team of 13 others aided roughly 3,700 people who were living in extreme poverty. Semidei was charged with administering up to 800 prescriptions each day during a two-week period and educating Zambians about best health practices. As the group traveled and relocated to a new region of the country each day, her work was needed more than ever to move their medical site while still maintaining a high level of care.

“My trip to Zambia is far and away one of the best things I’ve had the privilege to take part in in my life,” she explained. “Being surrounded by likeminded people, all with the same common goal of providing quality care and treatment to Zambians, was such a fulfilling part of my experience. I look forward to joining OMNI again on a future trip.”

When she returned, Semidei accepted a job offer in August 2017 as a school nurse for children pre-K to 12th grade, where she serves as the caregiver for roughly 900 children. On an average day, an estimated 35 students will walk through her doors.



“I ALSO APPRECIATED THAT CORE NURSING COURSES AS WELL AS GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES WERE PART OF THE PROGRAM BECAUSE THEY EMPHASIZED THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF CURRENT EVENTS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING.”

Sonja ‘Sunny’ Semidei

“I enjoy my position on many levels, including my interaction with children and the challenges it brings to be able to work within different schemes to provide them individualized care,” she said. “Critical-thinking skills, evidence-based protocols and communication skills are paramount while considering children’s needs and weighing options in order to allow them the best opportunity for healing.”

Roughly a month later, in early September 2017, Semidei and millions of others living on the island were dealt a one-two punch in the form of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, two of the most devastating hurricanes on

record. Puerto Rico experienced one of the worst natural disasters in modern history, leaving the island’s entire power grid completely destroyed.

“The amount of devastation in Puerto Rico is overwhelming,” said Semidei. “For months, many were, and still are, without power and clean drinking water. But so many people have come together and communities have been able to thrive due to the love and compassion shown by neighbors and so many volunteers who have come to the island to render aid.”

Semidei is confident and humbled, she explains, by the amount of cooperation

being made by so many to help one another.

“Many weekends are spent by residents who now have access to some basic necessities, traveling to remote areas of the island to determine the needs of those who still have nothing: no food, water or electricity,” she said. “The goal is to understand who is still out there and what in our power we can do to help them.”

Semidei lives in northeastern Puerto Rico with her husband and her son, who is an electrical engineer in the process of completing his Air Force application.

Out of His

❖ Maj. Eric Petrevich, BSHS '05, MSM '09, BSBA '12 ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

In the wake of one of the most ferocious Atlantic hurricane seasons on record, three things stand out in the mind of U.S. Army Maj. Eric Petrevich: the scope of the damage, his pride in his country and the sheer resilience of the human spirit.

In his usual capacity as a military intelligence officer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Maj. Eric Petrevich researches and reports on the situational environments in which his units are currently operating or are planning to operate. "It's my dream job," said the Thomas Edison State University alum. "I get to study numerous countries and cultures so that we can safely and productively help to improve living conditions in all parts of the world."

Any global unrest Petrevich might encounter came in an entirely different form in 2017. For his new deployments, he had to switch uniforms.



Maj. Eric Petrevich, BSHS '05, MSM '09, BSBA '12

"IMAGINE HAVING TO BRING MORE THAN A THOUSAND MASSIVE GENERATORS TO DIFFERENT ISLANDS, PRIORITIZING WHICH ONES WILL GET CONNECTED FIRST, THEN, TRYING TO RESTORE POWER AND OPERATIONS AT MAJOR FACILITIES LIKE HOSPITALS, WATER AND SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS, GAS STATIONS AND SUPERMARKETS – ALL WHILE TRYING TO FEED AND HOUSE THOUSANDS OF DISPLACED PEOPLE AND ANIMALS."

Eric Petrevich

"I was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Engineers (OCE) as an engineer staff officer supporting hurricane relief efforts throughout the southern U.S. and Caribbean," he noted. Early on in his deployment, he said that he needed to get up to speed



Elements

quickly in acting as a liaison between OCE and the remainder of the Army branches focused on the massive hurricane response efforts. “Hurricane relief was not a position that I originally trained for, so I was ‘drinking from a fire hose,’ initially,” he said.

When he was activated to assist with Hurricane Harvey in August 2017, the hurricane season was already shaping up as an ominous one. After Harvey made landfall in Texas and Louisiana, Hurricane Irma quickly followed, decimating a number of Caribbean islands before pummeling Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. The onslaught continued through mid-September when Hurricane Maria caused catastrophic damage and a lingering humanitarian crisis throughout the Caribbean including the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

According to Petrevich, restoring the power grid on the island of Puerto Rico has been a particularly epic endeavor.

“When you think about the complexity of the restoration effort, you really appreciate just how hard the U.S. Army and our federal government work to bring back a sense of normalcy for those affected,” he noted. “Imagine having to bring more than a thousand massive generators to different islands, prioritizing which ones will get connected first, then, trying to restore power and operations at major facilities like hospitals, water and sewage treatment plants, gas stations and supermarkets – all while trying to feed and house thousands of displaced people and animals. But first, you have to consider all the debris and potentially fatal power lines that are everywhere. Now, add to that the residual infrastructure issues, such as the Guajataca Dam failure, caused by the torrential rainfall that came in the wake of the storm. And, finally, figuring out how to get more than 35,000 replacement telephone poles to the island and installed.”

In the aftermath, Petrevich said three things stand out to him. “The first was the wide-scale damage. The storms’ collective ferocity and impact continue to be overwhelming,” he noted.

“Secondly, my pride in my country and the U.S. Army. Most countries would be hard pressed to recover from just one of these storms. The U.S. and its military relentlessly responds, repairs and recovers – all while preparing for anything else that comes our way. Thirdly, I’m continuously moved by the resilience of the human spirit. A massive number of people were significantly affected by these storms with many of them losing everything they owned. Yet, the majority of them said they look forward to their future and have become stronger from the hardships they’ve endured.”

Petrevich has served in the U.S. Army since 1989. He moved from the enlisted side in 2004 when he enrolled in Officer Candidate School (OCS) to become a commissioned officer. While completing OCS, he also completed his first degree at the University, a Bachelor of Science in Human Services degree, in 2005. He continued his studies, later earning his Master of Science in Management (MSM) degree in 2009; and, because he needed additional credits in the area of accounting for a military leadership position, completed a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree in 2012.

“TESU made it possible for me to complete my degrees and OCS at the same time. I was deployed to Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan and Afghanistan while I was completing my course work, so I benefited from the flexibility of its programs. I would never have been able to accomplish this at a traditional university while I completed back-to-back deployments halfway around the world.”

When not on deployments, Petrevich lives in Hunterdon County, N.J., and serves as a principal intelligence analyst for New Jersey State Police Office of the Regional Operations and Intelligence Center (ROIC).

Petrevich received the 2007 Thomas Edison State College Foundation Spirit of Edison Award for his commitment to innovation, concern for public good and spirit of excellence associated with the institution’s mission and namesake.

class notes

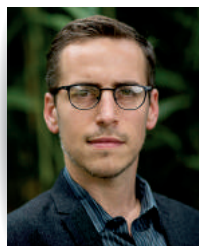
❖ Ken Boring BSAST '00

Ken Boring published his new book, *Remembering What I Forgot*, which describes the obstacles of dealing with those suffering from Alzheimer's disease and dementia.



❖ Dr. John de la Parra BA '09

Dr. John de la Parra has been granted an appointment as an associate at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. He has also recently been hired as a lecturer at Tufts University in Medford, Mass., to teach a course on the science of medicinal plants.



❖ Dr. Huguette Castaneda AA '91, BA '92

Dr. Huguette Castaneda earned a doctoral degree in Metaphysical Healing and a bachelor of arts degree in Psychospiritual Arts from Delphi University in McCaysville, Ga. She has also published a new book, *Messages of Love, Light, and Wisdom*, which is available on Amazon.

❖ Barbara Dan BA '86

Barbara Dan has published a historical novel, *Best Kept Secrets*. The novel is her 15th and the third Western in her popular Happy Valley series.

❖ Michael Duffin BSBA '14, MBA '15

Michael Duffin was awarded the "2017 Pickup and Delivery Manager of the Year" by FedEx Ground. In August 2017, Duffin was promoted to senior manager of FedEx Ground in Altoona, Pa.



❖ Dr. Ambrose E. Edebe BSBA '99

Dr. Ambrose E. Edebe has published a new book, *The Ultimate Leadership Style*, which provides students, supervisors, managers, leaders and others with the skills they need to develop their leadership abilities.

❖ Dr. Adele Ellis ASM '88, BA '94

Dr. Adele Ellis published her first children's book in April titled, *Is There an Elephant in Your Shoe?* Ellis' four granddaughters inspired the book, which can be found on Amazon.

❖ John Essick BA '96

John Essick has recently published his crime novel, *Last Respects*. The novel follows the exploits of Wes Byrne, a former investigative reporter, whose career is in tatters and who has returned to his boyhood town of East Hastings to attend the funeral of a murdered childhood friend. Essick lives in Arlington, Va., with his wife and theatre director, June Prager.

❖ Dr. Stephen Harlow BSAST '85

Dr. Stephen Harlow is founder and managing director of Harlow Consulting and Diagnostic Services, a laboratory and consulting management firm. Harlow is also chief security officer and founder of Logic Reference Laboratory, which specializes in Molecular Diagnostics and Genetics in the Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, metroplex. He is a Certified Laboratory Consultant (CLC) and Clinical Laboratory Scientist (CLS) and has been in the clinical laboratory field for more than 40 years.

❖ Stephen Jones BSAST '12, MS '16

Stephen Jones was named government relations regional manager of the International Code Council for North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. Jones spent the previous 25 and a half years working as a municipal construction official in local government.

❖ Dr. Terry Drew Karanen BA '08

Dr. Terry Drew Karanen has published his ninth book, *From the Trailer Park to the Pulpit: Reflections on the wise and wacky sayings of Grandma Esther*. Included are lessons for the reader to assist in working through self-doubt, finding personal power and communicating effectively with others.



❖ Barbara Lynch-Johnson BSBS '96

Barbara Lynch-Johnson has earned a Master of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pa.



❖ Jon Russell AAS '11, BS '12

Jon Russell has been named the newest columnist for the *Culpeper Star-Exponent* newspaper in Culpeper, Va. Russell is the founder and national director of the American City County Exchange (ACCE) based in Arlington, Va.



❖ Jason Manion BSBA '10

ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

Jason Manion was selected as the 2018 Simon Karas Fellow in the Appeals Section of the Ohio Attorney General's Office. The Simon Karas Fellowship offers one lawyer each year the opportunity to represent the state of Ohio and its agencies in major appellate litigation at the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit and the Ohio Supreme Court. Manion is a 2017 graduate of Harvard Law School.



❖ Hansel Tineo BSAST '08

Hansel Tineo has been named to the Boston branch of Siemens Industry, Inc.'s Building Technologies division as a senior project manager. Tineo oversees critical project upgrades and engineers, technicians and subcontractors on each project.



❖ Dr. Eric Mooney BA '00

Dr. Eric Mooney earned his Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership degree from Argosy University, Inland Empire Campus in Ontario, Calif., in December 2017. He currently serves as the director of Secondary Education for the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District in Placentia, Calif.



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

Alumnifire: tesu.alumnifire.com

❖ Christina M. Naughton, Esq. BA '06

Christina M. Naughton, Esq., was named one of Cape May/Atlantic County's 'Top 40 People Under 40' by *Atlantic City Weekly*. Naughton was recognized for her work on the Board of Directors of the Stop the Heroin Organization as well as other community organizations.

❖ Dr. Gail Pankey-Albert BSBA '10

Dr. Gail Pankey-Albert earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration degree with an area of study in International Business from Northcentral University in San Diego, Calif.



Keep us posted!

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

Updates can also be sent to:

THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY
INVENTION EDITOR
111 W. STATE ST.
TRENTON, NJ 08608

or Invention@tesu.edu



Thomas Edison State



@tesu_edu



@tesu_edu



Thomas Edison State University



blog.tesu.edu



Thomas Edison State



111 W. State St.
Trenton, NJ 08608

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
TRENTON, NJ
PERMIT #112

The Annual Fund at Thomas Edison State University

Supporting student
success through:

- > *Scholarships*
- > *New Academic Programs*
- > *Innovative Technology*

give.tesu.edu

Katie Bello, BSN '17
Helene Fuld Health Trust Scholarship Recipient