

# CONNECTED

the LA ROCHE COLLEGE Magazine | SPRING/SUMMER 2015



## TEACHING *WITH* TECHNOLOGY



IN THE MOMENT ...





# BACCALAUREATE MASS

Mother of Divine Providence Chapel | Friday, May 8





PHOTO: HECTOR CORANTE

**T**hrough state-of-the-art technology, La Roche College is connecting students to the world in unique ways. We are in the era of SMART Boards, bug-in-ear technology, webcams, Skype and Bluetooth. Evolving technology even allows lectures to occur outside of the classroom, meaning professors are able to reserve classes for discussion, experimentation and interaction. While enabling our students to understand course material at a deeper level, we are better positioning them for workplace success.

La Roche professors are not only using technology; they are developing it, too. For instance, Jeff Ritter, Ph.D., department chair of Communications, Media and Technology, recently developed TeachBack, a mobile app that gathers student feedback and allows instructors to view results in real-time. And Jane Arnold, chair of Computer Science and Natural & Behavioral Sciences Division, spent her recent sabbatical programming mobile apps, including one she hopes to test on campus this fall.

Technology has certainly transformed the way we learn and the way we apply that learning to our rapidly changing world. These are exciting times for higher education. And we have so much more to look forward to, with mobile app development, social media and the arrival of 3-D printing. I think our founding Sisters would be amazed, and very proud, of how La Roche College continues to change and grow with the times.

They also would be proud – as I am – of our alumni and the contributions they continue to make to their professions and communities. This spring, we had several opportunities to recognize and celebrate alumni successes.

A graduate of our Pacem in Terris program, Miguel Ntutum Evuna Andeme '03, was named Equatorial Guinea's ambassador to the United States. He and his wife, Purificacion '04, and their children met with President Obama at the White House for a formal ceremony in which he presented his credentials.

We added 11 additional alumni to the La Roche College Distinguished Alumni Circle this spring. The breadth and depth of their accomplishments prove that they exemplify the College's mission of faith and service.

Another Distinguished Alumna, Christine Spadafor '79, delivered the commencement address at the College's 50th Commencement Ceremony in May. She shared insights with graduates from her career as a lawyer, board member, management consultant and entrepreneur, encouraging them to apply their skills "boldly in the service of others."

Several of our students followed Ms. Spadafor's advice and participated in Alternative Spring Break, joining the Office of Mission and Ministry to serve others in Logan, West Virginia. Many also attended the 10th annual Global Problems, Global Solutions conference to learn about the critical issues around immigration policy and the impact these issues have on children and families.

"Boldly in the service of others" ... what an appropriate motto for the entire La Roche community, as we conclude another academic year and look forward to all that the next has to offer.

Blessings,

*Sister Candace Introcaso*

Sister Candace Introcaso, CDP, Ph.D.  
President  
La Roche College

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SPRING | SUMMER 2015



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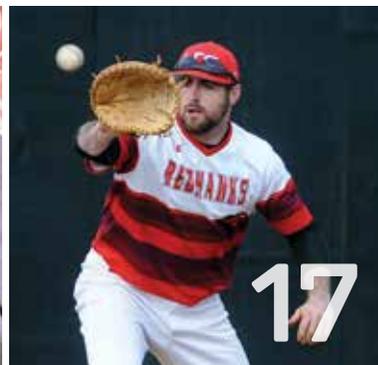
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The La Roche College magazine, Connected, is published twice a year by the Office of Marketing & Media Relations and provided free to alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff and friends of the College. The contents are selected to demonstrate the interests and pursuits of the La Roche College community and to provide news about the College.

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**INSIDE COVER:** Valerie Szpalski, a student majoring in dance and health science, performs during Baccalaureate Mass at the Mother of Divine Providence Chapel.



## La Roche Announces Master of Science Degree in Information Systems

**L**a Roche College recently developed a Master of Science in Information Systems program to prepare students for a growing demand in today's workforce.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the increased marketplace demand ranges from 15 percent for computer and information systems managers to 25 percent for computer systems analysts in the years 2012-2022. La Roche's new 30-credit program, beginning in fall 2015, offers a broad-based study of information systems and current industry trends to prepare students for this growing field.

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean Howard Ishiyama, Ph.D., said, "La Roche College is excited to have developed a competitive curriculum that is consistent with an increased demand in the local, regional and international marketplace. The College designed the Master of Information Systems program so that students receive a strong foundational basis applicable across multiple industries and career paths."

The degree is ideal for business professionals who are looking for career advancement and those who hold a bachelor's degree in information technology, management information systems and computer science. Designed to keep pace with the future

of today's industry, La Roche's Master of Science in Information Systems explores key topics such as big data, social media, cyber security and project management to prepare students for the organizational and technological challenges in the design, application, implementation and management of information systems. Before graduating, students will develop competencies in five main areas:

- Integrated technical expertise
- Project management, change management and best practices in information systems development, implementation and management
- Ethical business practices and governance of information
- Professional delivery of oral and written communication
- Development of information systems strategies within the context of organizational goals and strategies

The accelerated, 30-credit format also allows students to complete a master's degree within one year, with classes held in the evenings to accommodate working adults with busy schedules. Other benefits of the new graduate program include faculty members who hold years of experience in information technology and information systems, as well as on-the-job experience and directed

*"La Roche College is excited to have developed a competitive curriculum that is consistent with an increased demand in the local, regional and international marketplace. The College designed the Master of Information Systems program so that students receive a strong foundational basis applicable across multiple industries and career paths."*

*- Howard Ishiyama, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean*

research opportunities for students to apply classroom learning to real-world situations.

Candidates of varying knowledge levels, abilities and diverse backgrounds can view the application process and apply at [laroche.edu](http://laroche.edu). Interested candidates also may contact the Office of Graduate Studies & Adult Education at **412-536-1260** or [graduateadmissions@laroche.edu](mailto:graduateadmissions@laroche.edu).



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**Learn more at [laroche.edu/corporatediscount](http://laroche.edu/corporatediscount)**

# La Roche Confers 392 Degrees at 50th Commencement Ceremony

Distinguished Alumna Christine Spadafor '79 shares career advice with the Class of 2015 | PHOTOS: PHIL PAVELY

On Saturday, May 9, the Class of 2015 at La Roche College learned the importance of agile career strategies for uncertain times. Management consultant Christine Spadafor '79 delivered the College's 50th commencement address, advising graduates on lessons learned during her career as a lawyer, board advisor, management consultant and entrepreneur. La Roche conferred 392 degrees at the ceremony.

"Aspire to develop an uncommonly effective 'toolbox' of skills and capabilities," Ms. Spadafor told the graduating class. "Then apply those tools boldly in the service of others — addressing the complex challenges where talent and commitment are always in demand."

La Roche presented Ms. Spadafor with an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, which was awarded in recognition of her longstanding service on behalf of at-risk children and individuals unable to advocate for themselves. For nearly 10 years, Ms. Spadafor served as CEO of St. Jude's Ranch for Children, a nonprofit organization caring for abandoned and abused children. She also has served as a CEO, fundraiser, board advisor and volunteer to charitable groups and causes.

Ms. Spadafor is president of the SpadaforClay Group, a management consulting firm specializing in board advisory services and the turnaround of under-performing organizations. Before



Above: President's Awards for Leadership and Scholarship recipients Jalyn Yael Evans and Yasmina Murad.

founding her own firm, Ms. Spadafor was a partner in the Boston Consulting Group and other global management consulting firms. An alumna of La Roche College and a member of the College's Distinguished Alumni Circle, Ms. Spadafor went on to earn an Sc.M. Degree from the Harvard School of Public Health and a Juris Doctorate from the Harvard Law School.

During the ceremony, La Roche College presented the Woman of Providence Award to Sister Myra Rodgers, CDP, whose life of service, as part of the mission of the Congregation of Divine Providence, is a compelling example of God's providence made visible.

The College also presented the President's Awards for Leadership and Scholarship, which are the most prestigious awards offered to

undergraduate students of La Roche College. These awards are conferred by President Sister Candace Introcaso, CDP, Ph.D., to two graduating students: a traditional-aged student and nontraditional-aged student who have exemplary academic records, who exemplify the values and characteristics of the College's mission, and who are effective leaders either on campus, in the workplace, or in the community.

## 2015 Traditional Recipient

### Jalyn Yael Evans

Bachelor of Arts  
Sociology | Political Science

## 2015 Nontraditional Recipient

### Yasmina Murad

Bachelor of Science  
Interior Design

## College Celebrates Class of 2015 at Baccalaureate Mass

Graduates, families and friends gathered for a Baccalaureate Mass at the Mother of Divine Providence Chapel on Friday, May 8.

This special Mass celebrated the College motto, Ad Lucem per Amorem (To Light through Love), and included the traditional candle lighting ceremony as part of a closing prayer and final blessing.



## Alumni Perspective

Support from family members and colleagues helped Jill Huwe '14 return to school 20 years after earning a bachelor's degree. | PHOTO: COURTESY OF JILL HUWE '14

**M**y journey to complete a master's degree in nursing administration at La Roche College began when my employer required me to continue my role as a unit director of a nursing unit.

I was reluctant to pursue this degree. My nursing career, in addition to my busy family life, left little time for anything else. Going back to school seemed like an almost impossible task.

I feared that I would not have enough time to succeed in school, at work and especially at home. It had been 20 years since I graduated with my BSN, and I worried whether I could be a student again, whether I could handle the work, and I especially worried about writing papers.

*In the end, graduation was not so much about what I accomplished – it was a celebration with my family and all the people who supported me in obtaining my degree.*

- Jill Huwe '14

Most of all, I worried about what I had to give up in my family life. What would my children and husband have to sacrifice in order for me to go back to school? What would I have to miss out on because I had a paper, a project or an assignment?

To help me with these fears, I talked to my husband and children about the commitment required of me to complete a degree – and what would be required of them.

After researching multiple programs, I felt La Roche best met my needs. The program offered me flexibility with all online courses, summers off, and full access to professors and student

colleagues. The program's online format enabled me to maximize my time spent on schoolwork. For example, I would take my daughter to dance and while waiting for her, I read and worked on assignments.

Since I work in a large academic medical center, I was lucky to have many colleagues who helped me face my fears. I talked to those who had gone back to school under similar circumstances, and I asked several colleagues if they thought going back to school was something I really could do. The more I talked with people who had already earned a master's degree, the more I realized I had a support group at my fingertips.

I recommend having a mentor – whether a professor or a colleague – to help you jumpstart your thought process and provide reassurance that you are on the right track when developing a project or writing a paper.

Some unexpected things happened during my back-to-school experience. For example, when I shared my frustration with creating a PowerPoint presentation, my 11-year-old son offered to help me (he had just finished a nine-week PowerPoint course). That day, I learned how to create a PowerPoint presentation with moving clip art, and he learned Lewin's Theory of Change!

My seven-year-old daughter also found a creative way to spend time with me while I was doing schoolwork. Her piano is located in the dining room (aka my desk for homework). She practiced

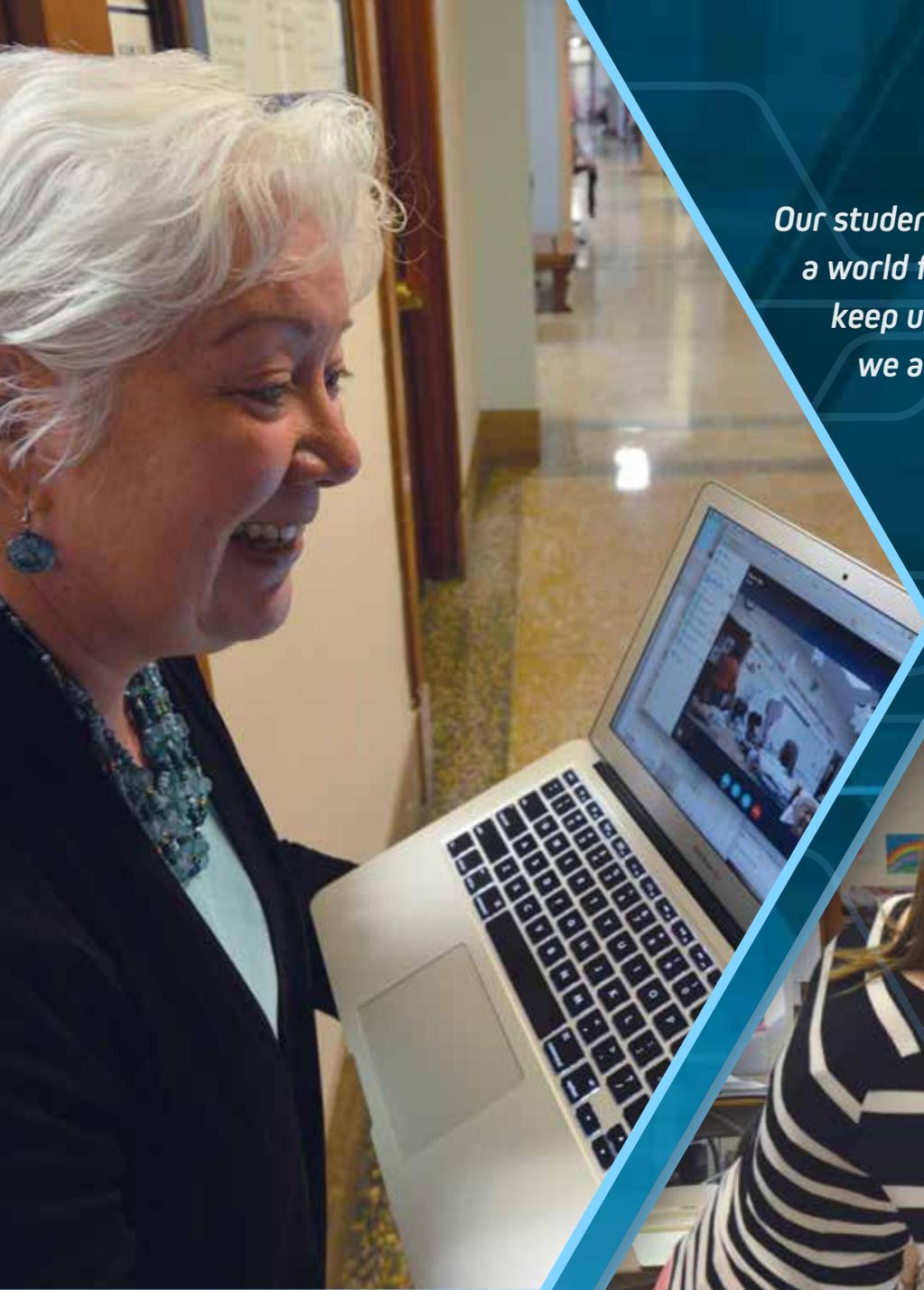


Jill Huwe '14 with family members Megan, Logan, Jeremy and Pete.

piano while I read and completed assignments. I learned to enjoy my daughter's music while finishing my work, and she advanced quickly to the next lesson book.

Over time, my family became interested in my assignments and papers, and they asked about my progress. I even posted my grades right next to my children's on our refrigerator!

In the end, graduation was not so much about what I accomplished – it was a celebration with my family and all the people who supported me in obtaining my degree.



*Our students here are going out into a world full of technology. If we can't keep up here in preparing them, we are doing them a disservice."*

- María Almendàrez Barron, Ed.D.  
Assistant Professor of Education



# TEACHING *WITH* TECHNOLOGY

From virtual coaching and patient mannequins, to online learning and mobile applications, the power of technology is alive and growing at La Roche College. Professors are implementing and even inventing new technologies to match or improve the quality of traditional learning. | PHOTOS: JIM JUDKIS

## EDUCATION

**T**he white glow of a SMART Board shines across Hannah Bevington's face as she stands in front of a room full of second-grade students on an early Thursday morning.

As she presents her lesson on possessive nouns, Ms. Bevington, a junior majoring in PreK-4 and Special Education at La Roche, hears a familiar voice: "Great example," the voice says. "Good job."

The discreet, affirming voice belongs to Assistant Professor of Education Maria Almendárez Barron, Ed.D., who uses Skype and a Bluetooth earpiece to coach Ms. Bevington from a remote location.

For the past three years, Professor Barron has used bug-in-ear technology to e-coach her students as they stand in front of real, live classrooms for the first time during their Teaching Reading and Language Arts Practicum course.

Bug-in-ear technology was brought to the forefront of education by Dr. Marcia Rock, a seasoned researcher and educator at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Rock observed that virtual coaching, compared to traditional coaching, offers a time-efficient and cost-effective method to help

students improve their lessons as they happen. While bug-in-ear is not a new technology, webcams, Skype, laptops and Bluetooth headsets have changed the way instructors such as Professor Barron utilize it.

"This type of coaching helps students to be reassured when they are doing good things, and it helps them to get immediate correction," Professor Barron explained. "The most difficult thing with any kind of instruction is if you have to wait until after something has been done to explain what was wrong. When you use bug-in-ear, you prevent bad habits from being started."

At La Roche, this technology doesn't replace human interaction; instead it serves as an advantage to students and instructors when face-to-face communication is not possible. The classrooms used for practicum are equipped with a webcam, and the student wears a Bluetooth earpiece so that Professor Barron can give immediate feedback as she watches lessons unfold from her computer screen.

"Our students here are going out into a world full of technology," Professor Barron said. "If we can't keep up here in preparing them, we are doing them a disservice."

## CYBER SECURITY

**A**s security breaches and sophisticated cyber attacks continue to frequent today's headlines, it's no secret that cyber crime is a very real and growing threat to people, businesses, governments and organizations.

With the Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting a growth of 37 percent in the employment of information security analysts from 2012 to 2022, there is a high demand for professionals who not only know how to solve cyber crimes, but also prevent them.

At La Roche, the Computer Security and Forensics minor brings together the disciplines of technology and criminal justice to prepare this new type of professional to protect a company's personal data.

In the Computer Forensics Investigations course led by Adjunct Professor Michael Overholt, a retired Pittsburgh Police Cyber Crime Task Force investigator, students apply computer security techniques to the physical evidence of a crime.

"My main focus is twofold. One is for law students and criminal justice students

to understand how the law developed, evolved and now works, and how the Internet itself created opportunities for crime,” Professor Overholt said. “The other side focuses on internal crimes, and how you can help IT departments and corporations that use these big networks and the Internet be aware of the threats that are out there.”

Students analyze crime scenarios through AccessData, a leading provider of Computer Forensics and Cyber Security software. AccessData includes Forensic ToolKIT (FTK), which collects data inputted by users of Windows machines and indexes information for examiners.

Using the FTK, students can view a forensic collection of information and data from the registry of Windows computers to identify the machine’s owner, when the operating system was originally loaded, the last time it was logged onto and the last device that was plugged into it.

*“You should understand how that technology is working, what you are doing when you’re clicking away on those keyboards, and why certain rules and regulations are out there.”*

**- Michael Overholt**  
Adjunct Professor,  
Computer Forensics Investigations

The class also uses a technique called Dictionary Attacked on encrypted files, and students attack encryptions based on information that the user has entered into the computer system.

“Students learn where data is kept and how it’s stored. Most people come in here and have a good grasp of how a computer works, but all of this gives you the bigger picture,” Professor Overholt stated. “This information gets students set and ready to go in the real world with the idea that we can be proactive against these threats and that we don’t have to wait for them to happen.

“There isn’t a field out there right now that doesn’t use technology,” he continued. “You should understand how that technology is working, what you are doing when you’re clicking away on those keyboards, and why certain rules and regulations are out there.”



*Nicole Jones, SRNA practices her clinical skills in the Medical Simulator Lab as Program Director Deborah Davison CRNA, M.S. and her assistant, Melody Vetica DNP, CRNA, control the medical mannequin.*

## NURSE ANESTHESIA

It happens with the click of a computer mouse in Room 205 of the Palumbo Science Center: A patient has an adverse reaction to surgery. His heart rate rises, his steady breathing turns to a slow wheeze.

Above him stands a student nurse anesthetist, who must analyze the situation and react appropriately before it’s too late. In the operating room, there’s no time to think. But in La Roche’s Medical Simulator Lab, with its lifelike patient mannequin, there’s time to learn.

Students are introduced to the lab in the first year of the two-year Master of Science in Health Science (Nurse Anesthesia) graduate program offered through a partnership between La Roche and Allegheny School of Anesthesia.

Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies & Adult Education Rosemary McCarthy, Ph.D., said, “What the Simulator Lab does

is augment the actual experiences that students will come upon in real life and assist them to handle rare occurrences in the OR.”

The lab includes all of the technology found in a typical operating room: an advanced monitoring system, a gas delivery system and technology that supports surgical and resuscitative care. The instructor controls the patient mannequin – which has the ability to talk and breathe – and can even manipulate the patient’s blood pressure and heart rate.

“As the instructor makes changes to the mannequin, the students respond in a way that they’re supposed to. If the student is having trouble or doesn’t know what to do, the instructor is right there,” Dr. McCarthy explained. “It’s a dialogue that goes back and forth between the instructor and student. There is constant feedback. The instructor can certainly see whether the student is struggling or knows what to do.”



## CHEMISTRY

**C**hemistry students at La Roche can now forget about scribbling notes or relying on memory to study or learn classroom material.

This year the Chemistry Department will incorporate Tegrity, an arm of McGraw-Hill Higher Education and a leader in lecture capture technology, to provide video recording and cloud-based storage facilities.

Room 103 of the Palumbo Science Center will be outfitted with a ceiling mounted camera and software which will enable General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry lectures to be video-recorded, and fully synchronized with Microsoft PowerPoint, white-board notations and word-processed handouts.

This new technology will allow chemistry students to replay content-heavy lectures as often as they like, and download lectures from Blackboard onto their laptops or Smartphones.

Students also will be able to search for any word or phrase presented during lectures, and Tegrity will instantly jump to that portion of the lecture that discusses the topic.

"Students can re-listen to a lecture as many times as necessary to master every concept that is discussed," Chemistry Department Chair Don Fujito, Ph.D., said. "A concept, such as nucleophilic substitution, is discussed several times during the year, then Tegrity will enable students to jump to the exact instance in a particular lecture where this concept is discussed, and will enable students to jump to the next instance two lectures later where it is brought up again.

"The Chemistry Department will be monitoring the usage regularly and testing to see if this technology improves mastery of each student's learning," he added.

The Tegrity system, which will cost \$8,000 during this pilot year of operation, is funded entirely by Chemistry Department grants.

*"The main goal is to promote patient safety. This allows students to make critical decisions in a safe environment where there will not be any adverse reactions to a real patient."*

**- Rosemary McCarthy, Ph.D.**  
*Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies & Adult Education*

This technology makes it possible for students to apply their clinical skills before they even step foot into a real operating room. With a mannequin that is very much like a living, breathing person, the Medical Simulator Lab introduces students to rare, but very real, occurrences in today's hospitals.

"The main goal is to promote patient safety," Dr. McCarthy added. "This allows students to make critical decisions in a safe environment where there will not be any adverse reactions to a real patient."

## Students and professors hone in on app development, 3-D printing, social media and more.

Senior **Toni Burley** was a first-place winner at the 2014 Smart Tag App Hackathon powered by AT&T.



Produced by the AT&T Developer Program, the Smart Tag App Hackathon challenged participants to collaborate and put their development

skills to the test by designing and creating a mobile app. The competition was held at the University of Pittsburgh and was open to student developers from surrounding colleges and universities.

Students competed for prizes across several categories, and Ms. Burley placed first in the Best Use of IBM Technologies from a Student Team, receiving \$1,000. Other categories included Best Overall Mobile App, Best Smart Tags App, Best App From a Student Team, Best App Using IBM Technologies and Best Use of an AT&T API.

"The biggest challenge of the Hackathon was forming a diverse group that could commit to the challenge at hand," Ms. Burley said. "My current high-level courses at La Roche College prepared me to work in a group dynamic and use other resources to find valid answers to problems."



**Peter Biernesser**, a junior, was the recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship from the Association of Information Technology Professionals (AITP).

This year AITP's essay competition challenged students to discuss the future of 3-D printing, but Mr. Biernesser did not have to look far for inspiration for his award-winning submission.

“Ironically, after hearing about this challenge, a featured video on YouTube was of a boy, who unfortunately only had one arm, receiving a new, fully-functioning, 3-D printed prosthetic arm,” he explained. “After seeing that video, I knew there couldn’t be any better future use of 3-D printing than helping the disabled overcome their impairments.”

Mr. Biernesser is double majoring in management information systems and business management, with a minor in information technology (IT).

“IT is not just a field, but a cross-functional operation that is integral in almost every type of business,” Mr. Biernesser said. “I like having to come up with new and innovative ways to resolve problems, possibly before they even arise. IT can be a challenge at times, but that is what I like most about it. I like the challenge.”



**Jane Arnold,** chair of Computer Science and the Natural & Behavioral Sciences Division, focused on

programming mobile applications during her recent sabbatical.

Professor Arnold studied Android programming and also enrolled in a Stanford course, CS193p Developing iOS 8 Apps with Swift, on iTunesU. Swift is the new programming language designed by Apple to replace Objective-C for iOS development.

“My sabbatical is extremely well-timed as it allows me the time I need to master the new skills as huge changes are happening in the mobile app industry,” she said. “I am excited to share these new skills with my computer science students when I return in the fall.”

Aside from sharing these new skills, Professor Arnold also will apply them to create her first real-life app for Android and Apple devices: an attendance tracker for the La Roche Experience program.

Her idea is to create an app that enables instructors to scan a student’s La Roche ID card as they enter a workshop. Professor Arnold said she hopes to beta-test this app in fall 2015.

“If it’s a success, I believe it can be generalized for any activity that wants to record attendance: student-life events, community service or even regular class meetings,” she said.

*“My sabbatical is extremely well-timed as it allows me the time I need to master the new skills as huge changes are happening in the mobile app industry.”*

**- Jane Arnold**  
Chair of Computer Science  
and the Natural & Behavioral  
Sciences Division

When she returns from sabbatical, Professor Arnold said she also hopes to design new upper-level computer science elective courses in Android and iOS development.



**Kaylee Zozos** received departmental honors in Communications, Media and Technology for her thesis, “Rebelling

**Women: Developing a Brand Identity for the PA Rebellion and Women’s Professional Softball.”**

Ms. Zozos focused on the PA Rebellion, a women’s professional fast-pitch softball team in Washington, Pa. that joined the National Pro Fast-Pitch League in 2014.

The project was to create a marketing plan aimed at developing relationships between the organization, its players and the community. Ms. Zozos’ main focus was multiple social media platforms and promotions to engage the organization’s audience. The marketing plan offered a revised and enhanced brand identity designed to express the values of the PA Rebellion to new and existing fans.

# Q&A

La Roche College professors do more than lead the classroom – they develop the tools to improve it.

Take for instance, **Jeff Ritter, Ph.D.**, department chair of Communications, Media and Technology.

Dr. Ritter recently developed TeachBack, an easy-to-use mobile application for teachers, professors and administrators across all disciplines. This new educational tool gathers student feedback through premade and custom-designed surveys, and allows instructors to view results in real-time.

Dr. Ritter released TeachBack under Relative Content, a company he founded to develop educational tools to empower teachers and students to achieve the best education possible.

*What inspired you to develop this product?*

I always wonder how students perceive a class, especially an active learning class that I put a lot of time into preparing. I figure there are other teachers and professors like me around the world, and the feedback would be helpful.

In one of my classes a few years ago, we looked at a new company that was getting instant feedback for services in different types of businesses. The class agreed that something like this, but for teaching, would be great.

*How long did it take you to develop the application, and what are some of the challenges and rewards of creating a new educational tool?*

Development took about a year and a half, and I worked with a programmer, a designer and a public relations company in managing the project.



## What are the challenges and opportunities of using technology as a teaching tool?

The potential of going too far to entertain or keep students' attention can obfuscate the reality of high-level and college-level learning. It is challenging, and it demands focus and attention, and it isn't easy or even possible for everybody.

But the reality we face is that many people need help in keeping focused on anything today. An instructor or professor can try to help make that process work, or they just can complain about it. Maybe TeachBack can help some instructors make the leap they haven't made before.

## What do you enjoy about implementing new technology in the classroom?

It is a challenge to find the best ways to use technology without just throwing it at the problem. But using the best features of technology can enhance empowerment, active learning and attention in the classroom.

## Are you working on additional features or enhancements? What are your plans for the future of TeachBack?

If it continues to grow, and people use it in English, Spanish and Chinese around the world, I am thinking of developing it as a generic polling app for use by any organization looking for instant or anytime feedback from a subscriber. The application might be good for any media company, cultural organization or even different kinds of research. I may start charging for it by then too! But right now it is free.

*TeachBack is available to download for free on the iTunes App store and Google Play Store. Available in English, Spanish and Chinese, the application works seamlessly across iOS and Android devices. Educators in any field may use the tool as long as their students have smartphones or iPads. Visit [teachbackapp.com](http://teachbackapp.com) to learn more.*

Deadlines are the biggest challenge. With everyone working on multiple projects, it was hard to meet deadlines.

The rewards are incredible. It is incredible to hear great feedback on the product, to have something on the iTunes app store and Google Play, to see the website hits and to track downloads around the world.

## What are the benefits of students and educators using TeachBack?

Teachers can get feedback on a class right after it happens, which is different than waiting until the end of the semester to see the class evaluations. You can always give out a poll in a class, but unless it is anonymous, you really can't expect honest responses. Through TeachBack, students get to feel like their opinions matter.

Education has become so difficult today, mostly because getting a student to feel engaged with the material in the class is so hard – due to both the distractions available and a general resistance that many students have. TeachBack can make students feel like the teacher really wants to know what gets through to them and grabs their attention.

## What are some of the best features of TeachBack?

I think the best feature is that the poll is so quick and easy for the student to complete. A touch screen is the gold standard for quick feedback today, and I am thrilled that it is there.

The other great feature is the effect I have already seen and been told about:

Students like being asked for their opinions. It brings a good feeling to the students, or to anybody, to know their opinions are important.

## How does student feedback improve lectures and enhance the classroom experience for students?

It gives teachers the chance to find out more about the students' perceptions of what is going on in the classroom such as: Do they perceive the instructor as enthusiastic? Do they perceive other students as engaged in the material? Do they think the facilities are adequate?

I hope TeachBack leads many teachers to make their classrooms more interactive and active instead of just lectures.

## How does this product improve a professor's effectiveness in ways that traditional methods can't?

You can always ask your students, "How was that?" If you know them well and already have a good relationship with them, you'll get a reliable answer. But I am sure that a huge majority of professors, trainers or teachers around the world don't have that level of comfort and trust with some of their students. So, I think this will be good for them. TeachBack also would be beneficial to new teachers and graduate assistants.

Of course, you don't want any professional to get too dependent on direct feedback. Learning to read the room, and gauge student attention and interest, are important skills to develop for anyone in front of students. But technology should be there to assist in that process.



## Raising the Bar

A new professor on campus reaches beyond traditional methods of teaching

**W**hen Michaela A. Noakes joined the La Roche College faculty as an assistant professor and chair of management in 2014, she wasted no time setting high standards for students she barely knew.

Last fall Professor Noakes' theory-driven Distributing Data Processing course included classroom discussion and traditional instruction, term papers and final exams. But to Ms. Noakes, traditional rigor was not enough – students had to live what they learned.

“I wanted to take theory and apply it in a practical manner,” she explained. “I wanted to give our students a hands-on experience with how we design networks, how we make business

decisions, what type of impact those decisions have in an organization and the type of resources that are needed.”

Professor Noakes accomplished this goal by developing a class-wide project that would teach students the roles and responsibilities of project management during a 15-week period: planning, constructing and financing a new STEM facility for the La Roche campus.

Though a hypothetical challenge, the assignment offered a very real-life experience in what breaking new ground requires. Professor Noakes challenged students to conduct research; obtain appropriate approvals from the township, county and state; seek subject matter experts on campus; and develop

a scope document and project charter.

Working with a budget of \$30 million, the group identified a piece of land on campus to build a STEM facility from the ground up. The project scope covered everything from building, lab, network and room deliverables, to building constraints, financial constraints, location, business value, tax advantages and grant opportunities.

The students worked in a core team, with various individuals taking on leadership roles such as senior project manager, assistant project manager and chief financial officer. This gave students the ability to take on additional roles and responsibilities within outside majors. Junior Peter Biernesser, for example,

served as the assistant project manager and business analyst. His responsibilities included: creating a detailed outline for the project's overall scope, developing a business strategy for the STEM facility, compiling research, coordinating team objectives and ensuring the project was accurate and able to be implemented in the real world.

"The project taught me how to look at systems, identify a latent problem and create a solution," Mr. Biernesser explained. "It tested my planning, organizing and implementing skills. It challenged my time management skills and tested my determination."

The project even exposed students to two widely used software programs that were not included in the course's original curriculum: MS Project and Visio.

"Both programs were great assets to the team during the project," Mr. Biernesser said. "Visio provided a great way to visually represent structures, server stacking and organization, and organization charts. MS project provided an easy to use interface for keeping track of goals and objectives, while also providing an outline on how to create work breakdown structures."

Bryan Weimerskirch, the lead designer for the STEM building, was responsible for meeting weekly deliverables, completing floor plans and designing the building using REVIT, an architectural software.

Together students established goals and met deadlines through frequent meetings, timelines and milestones.

"Without constant communication with my team and the project manager, tasks would have never been completed," Mr. Weimerskirch said, adding that technology played a major role in the project.

"To help with keeping everything organized we collaborated over Google Drive to upload all of our documents while communicating through

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***"I raise the bar in my classes for a couple of reasons: I want students to reach farther than they thought possible so that they can become the best for themselves and so that they can prepare a path for the students that follow behind them."***

- Michaela A. Noakes  
Assistant Professor, Chair of Management

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WhatsApp. This app is designed for people to quickly chat – either in large groups or as separate individuals," he explained.

Constant communication, along with implementing technology to facilitate the process, also taught students what theory can't: the human dynamic.

"Communication is crucial in a large-scale project and with collaboration software we were able to coordinate research efforts, share information and keep up-to-date on weekly, monthly, and overall project objectives and goals," Mr. Biernesser stated.

The STEM Scope project was Professor Noakes' way of combining theory with practical application so that students could gain the skills that employers seek on a regional and global basis.

"In the competitive global economy, employers not only need someone who has theoretical understanding but someone who can see the practical issues that they encounter and find plausible solutions," she said. "By giving students the opportunity for hands-on engagement, we create a more employable, more flexible student who will become a more knowledgeable worker.

"As a college, I think we have a responsibility to prepare our students in all levels of experience – not only in the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment but to develop them morally and ethically, and to create behaviors that employers will value," she added. "We create opportunities for internships and job opportunities, and we create a path to success for our students."

This particular project led to an internship for its chief financial officer, senior Boniface Ngigi. After explaining his role in this assignment at a second interview for a summer internship with UPMC, Mr. Ngigi landed the position.

"They were very impressed. They said they have never seen other students complete a project of that magnitude," Mr. Ngigi said. "The interview pretty much became about that project. I never knew it would open some doors for me. It was just a class project, but it became more than that."

Although Professor Noakes is a newcomer to the La Roche campus, she is no novice, holding three master's degrees in information systems management, business administration, and social and public policy administration. A doctoral candidate in instructional technology and leadership in Duquesne University's School of Education, she is an internationally published co-author in teaching best practices, transformational e-Learning and STEM in education. In her first year as a professor at La Roche, she received the Father Gregory Nugent Excellence in Teaching Award.

"I raise the bar in my classes for a couple of reasons: I want students to reach farther than they thought possible so that they can become the best for themselves and so that they can prepare a path for the students who follow behind them," she said. "It's not enough to just say, 'Let's work harder.' You have to see how much more you can personally push yourself if someone says, 'Try. Do more. Go farther.'"

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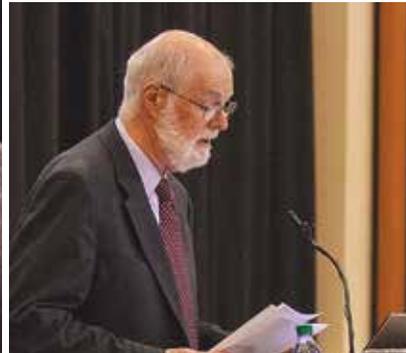


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PHOTOS: JEFF ZOET



## La Roche Hosts 10th Annual Global Problems, Global Solutions Conference

This year La Roche College partnered with sponsor organizations Brother's Brother Foundation, the University of Pittsburgh, Buzz Word and the Children's Museum to host the 10th annual Global Problems, Global Solutions conference.

Organized to focus on critical global concerns, this year's theme was Saving Our Children: A Global Issue – A Local Response. The conference connected this theme to the Millennium Development Goals, established by the United Nations to battle issues such as hunger and poverty, peace and justice, gender inequality and child mortality.

"The critical issues around immigration policy and the impact they have on children and families require our attention and our action," President Sister Candace Introcaso, CDP, Ph.D., said. "This conference makes me even more aware of the importance of our colleges and universities in educating global citizenship and working with our students to create a passion for promoting justice and peace."

Maureen A. Dunn, division chief of the Office of Policy and Strategy at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, delivered the keynote address at this year's conference.

Ms. Dunn began her federal career in 1992 as a supervisory asylum officer at the Arlington, Va. asylum office with the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (now DHS). From 1996 until late 2003, she worked as an attorney-advisor at the U.S. Department of Justice's Board of Immigration Appeals.

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***"The critical issues around immigration policy and the impact they have on children and families require our attention and our action."***

- Sister Candace Introcaso, CDP, Ph.D.  
President

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In October 2003, Ms. Dunn became the director of the Unaccompanied Alien Children's program at the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). As the first director of this newly created program, Ms. Dunn saw the program grow from seven employees to more than 50 and the number of children in HHS custody grow from 500 to more than 13,000.

"[These children] have suffered so much trauma and so much loss in their lives, but you never come away after talking with them [feeling] depressed," Ms. Dunn said. "They just hold so much hope in their hearts, and they have infinite positivity. After working with

them for nine years, I always come away thinking that if these children could have a little leg up and have half of what our children have, then our future ahead is looking pretty good."

In her current role as division chief, Ms. Dunn supervises a team of subject matter experts in family immigration and visas for victims of trafficking, domestic violence and other crimes. She also oversees the formulation and drafting of immigration policy and regulations that impact vulnerable youth and families.

In addition to the keynote event led by Ms. Dunn, the College hosted a faculty-led workshop, "Child Slavery Within the Apparel Industry," to raise awareness of child slavery within the global fashion industry. Other events included a discussion examining local and international child issues, as well as a presentation by La Roche students on "The History, Biology and Global Impact of Vaccinations."

Global Problems, Global Solutions is a free, annual conference. La Roche leads and co-sponsors the conference with local colleges, universities and nonprofits known for their global activism. The conference discusses progress, plans and initiatives related to the U.N. Millennium Development Goals.



## ALTERNATIVE OUTLOOKS

Service in the coal-mine county of Logan, West Virginia gives students a better understanding of themselves and the world.

**I**t wasn't your typical spring break destination: a small town sprinkled with rundown houses and rain that turned soil to sludge; a dark and wet coal mine where humble men made an honest living; a mobile home that required countless renovations and repairs.

And for the group of La Roche College volunteers who traveled to Logan, West Virginia, spring break was anything but typical; it was a time to serve others and self-reflect.

## The Call to Service

After Catholic Charities of West Virginia reached out to La Roche College for help with home repair in Logan, the Office of Mission and Ministry decided it was an ideal service project for this year's Alternative Spring Break.

The Office invited students, faculty and staff to volunteer for a family of four in Logan: two children with special needs, a mother battling a mental illness and a working father who made roughly \$400-500 per month. At the time, the family's current residence was falling apart, and volunteers were needed to help build the family's new mobile home.

In late March of 2015, a group of eight students and three staff members traveled more than 200 miles from campus to offer assistance. La Roche staff included Coordinator of Service Sister Karina Conrad, CDP, Campus Chaplain Father Dan Langa and Candace Okello, assistant director for multicultural affairs.

## A New Perspective

When the group arrived in Logan, some students immediately noted how different the area was from home.

"The environment was mostly depressing," Matthew Puller, a senior, said. "A lot of the homes were in bad conditions. It was very different [from Pittsburgh] in that sense – where you see everything is neater and cleaner."

While the unfamiliarity of a new environment can be intimidating, Sister Karina said exposure to other areas and lifestyles is what challenges students to think critically about the world.

"Sometimes life experience teaches you a lot more than just sitting in a classroom," Sister Karina said. "I guess that's what I enjoy about my job. I get to take students to places to help them experience life in a whole different view."

The group attained that new view, not only through physical labor – such as hanging dry wall, sanding and insulating the new home – but by examining the social and economic issues within the community.

"Seeing just how humble all the people who live and work there are showed us how much we take for granted and that we need to be more appreciative of what we have," junior Breanna Wong said.

Students learned about living and working in a town where one industry drives its economy. The group discovered how cutbacks – such as Murray Energy Corporation's recent layoffs of more than 1,400 West Virginian workers – have devastating effects on a community where the median household income is less than \$25,000.



Students Jennifer Lentz and Dena Mastromatteo pose with Candace Okello and Sister Karina Conrad, CDP, during a weeklong Alternative Spring Break experience in March.

"Their entire economy is focused on if the mine is going to stay open or not," Ms. Wong said. "A lot of the mines are only open for so many years, and then those people are out of a job. That trickles down to the different stores, other employees and other areas. It was really eye-opening to see a community where the main resource and drive of their economy is one industry, compared to around here [Pittsburgh] where there are multiple industries happening."

## An Exercise In Reflection

The group also toured a coal mine to understand the type of work Logan residents perform to provide for themselves and their families.

"You hear a lot about the negative of coal mining, but when you actually put faces to the profession, it changes your perspective. It drives their economy there – it's how they make their living," Ms. Okello said. "It was an incredible experience at 300 feet under the ground. It's wet, it's dark. They spend hours down there every day. It was impressive what happens down there."

"It was difficult, hearing that even with the salaries that they do get, it's still not enough to sustain them," she continued. "You think about how they work so hard, yet it's only just to get by. There was a lot of self-reflection happening."

Ms. Okello and Sister Karina said that reflection was just as important as the physical labor and service, which is why each night the group discussed the work they were doing and how they could use knowledge and awareness to benefit others.

"It was encouraging because a lot of students said they couldn't wait to do something else and that they had a new passion to serve in this way. They were considering how what they were doing – and how various passions—can be used to build their communities and serve others," Ms. Okello said. "I think it's important to take students out of what's comfortable and begin to think introspectively about what they have that others don't."



# Rowe, Ferguson Developing Redhawks Winning Culture

BY KURT HACKIMER '12 | PHOTO: JIM JUDKIS

Left to right: John Watson, Colin Williamson, Tanner Wilt, Franzee Barlamas and Colin Fiekles; Center: Brian Tougher

**A**sk any coach to name the best player on his or her team, and the response is usually diplomatic.

Sometimes the answer includes a typical sports cliché such as “You win as a team, you lose as a team” or “Your team is only as strong as its weakest player.”

But when asked about star players during the La Roche baseball team’s 2015 season, Head Coach Chase Rowe gave a pointed answer.

“Tyler Ferguson,” Coach Rowe said. “He is the best player in school history.”

Of course, that response isn’t meant to slight the rest of the 2015 Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference champion La Roche Redhawks baseball team, which won a school-record 32 games this past season, was ranked nationally for the first time in program history, and narrowly missed out on a trip to the Div. III College World Series.

But when the left-handed Ferguson graduated with a degree in business management this past May, the Redhawks lost their program’s most accomplished pitcher. Ferguson has since signed a contract to play professional baseball for the Washington Wild Things.

Ferguson’s name is all over the La Roche record books. His 243 career strikeouts are the most in school history and 22 career wins are tied with current Assistant Coach James Connolly for the most in the program’s history. He also set the school record for wins in a season,

11 in 2015, and his 107 strikeouts in 2015 also are tops for a La Roche pitcher. Raised in the small town of Roaring Springs, Pa., Ferguson was attracted to La Roche’s small campus when he was looking at colleges at which he could ply his craft.

“I was looking for a smaller school because my high school only had 400 kids in it,” he said. “I came to Pittsburgh expecting to be one of 10,000 kids, or something, but was surprised and happy to find only 1,500 or so students at La Roche.”

Former Redhawks Assistant Coach Dan Novak spotted Ferguson at an ERA Sports showcase in nearby Altoona, Pa., and recommended that he visit the campus and meet with Coach Rowe. Ferguson saw an opportunity to pursue an education in a comfortable environment, as well as compete for a starting job in his freshman year, and decided that La Roche was the right place for him.

While his performance in high school and at the College proved that Ferguson was a standout athlete, Ferguson credits Coach Rowe and the La Roche coaching staff for turning him into a more complete pitcher.

“Coach Rowe does a lot for [his players] on and off the field,” Ferguson said. “He reads his players really well and notices when there’s something wrong with you. He pays attention to the details and always keeps us in check.”

Much of Coach Rowe’s ability to relate with his team comes from his relatively young age. Coach Rowe was only 23 years old when he was hired as La Roche’s manager in 2006, which

made him one of the youngest coaches in collegiate sports.

When he joined the Redhawks as an assistant coach in 2005, Rowe was just one year removed from a successful run as the standout right fielder for a Slippery Rock University team that won four conference championships and went to the Div. II College World Series in 2003.

“I thought I was ready to coach,” he said. “That year there were a lot of seniors coming back, and they all were really adamant about me getting the job. They had my back.”

La Roche’s commitment to Coach Rowe, despite his young age, has proved to be successful.

This season, Coach Rowe was named Mideast Region Coach of the Year after he was named AMCC Coach of the Year for the fourth time in the past five seasons. His Redhawks teams have continually broken school records and have regularly improved upon their own accomplishments.

La Roche won its second consecutive AMCC Conference Championship this year and made it to the NCAA Mideast Regional Championship before falling to Frostburg State. They had three players on the All-Region Team and eight named to the AMCC All-Conference Team.

“It’s the furthest anybody has gone from our conference,” Coach Rowe said. “I got to play in a College World Series, and I was probably most excited about letting our guys experience that. So hopefully, that seed is planted in our guys now, and they’ll be a lot hungrier than they were this year to get back there and move further.”

Ferguson, the AMCC Pitcher of the Year, made the All-Region First Team for the second straight season after posting stellar numbers in conference play. He led the AMCC with a 0.32 ERA and ranked third in strikeouts with 33. He also threw two complete games in the NCAA Regional Tournament.

In addition to Ferguson, junior starting pitcher Tanner Wilt made the All-Region Third Team. Wilt racked up 63 strikeouts in the season and finished seventh in the nation with 12.06 strikeouts per game.

Offensively, La Roche continued to post dominant numbers, as it has for most of Coach Rowe's tenure as head coach.

Slugging senior outfielder Cory Podvasnik broke the school's single season home run record with 11 on the year, including three in the AMCC Conference Tournament and another in the NCAA Mideast Regional.

Senior outfielder John Watson also was one of the top offensive players in the AMCC ranking in the top five in batting average, on base percentage, slugging percentage, triples, home runs, RBIs, total bases and stolen bases.



PHOTO: MARTY SANTEK



PHOTO: PHIL PAVELY

Third baseman Brian Tougher, who hit for a .348 batting average along with one home run and 29 RBIs, joined Ferguson, Wilt, Watson, and Podvasnik on the AMCC All-Conference First Team. Center fielder Luis Navedo and designated

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***“Our culture of winning and working hard has progressed to where it’s unacceptable to not work hard and perform at a high level.”*** - Chase Rowe, Head Baseball Coach

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hitter Alex Simone were recognized on the All-Conference Second Team while freshman right-hander Regis Sauers made the Third Team.

Coach Rowe spoke proudly about the team's grit and determination, but emphasized that the 49 young men on the Redhawks roster would not have been able to maintain their success if it weren't for their upperclassmen's ability to operate as clubhouse leaders.

“It's definitely challenging being the only person around them every day,” Coach Rowe said. “It's important that [the team] has leaders among them and lets their peers influence them. Our

culture of winning and working hard has progressed to where it's unacceptable to not work hard and perform at a high level. That kind of peer pressure is going to weed out the ones who are not in that mold.”

Despite integral players such as Ferguson, Podvasnik, Watson, Tougher, Simone and the clubhouse's vocal leader Franzee Barlamas graduating this past May, the Redhawks have successfully built a culture that hopefully will bring continued success on their drive toward the College World Series.



### Six Lady Redhawks Named to AMCC All Conference Team

The La Roche College softball team advanced to the AMCC Tournament Semifinals for the second consecutive season, and they finished with their most wins since 2007.

Six Lady Redhawks were named to the AMCC All-Conference Team. Second baseman Sara Kohli garnered AMCC All-Conference First Team recognition after finishing fourth in the AMCC in batting average (.414). Kohli was the first Lady Redhawk to make the All-Conference First Team since Alex Spain in 2012.

Catcher Kaylee Zozos (.308 BA, 4 HR, 32 RBI) and right fielder Elizabeth Palumbo (.410 BA, 55 H, 38 R) made the AMCC All-Conference Second Team for the second straight year, and third baseman Kara Sainato (.379 BA, 3 HR, 35 RBI, 45 R) also was on the Second Team.

Freshmen Savannah Leonard (14-6, 2.70 ERA, 90 SO) and Andie Lippman (.364 BA, 48 H, 32 R) were just two of five first-year players to make the All-Conference Team; they earned Third Team honors.

### College Announces Addition of Div. III Women's Lacrosse

La Roche College will add NCAA Div. III women's lacrosse to its roster of athletic programs for the 2015-16 academic year.

"Lacrosse continues to grow in popularity, especially for female athletes playing at the high school level across the country, but especially in Pennsylvania," Director of Athletics Jim Tinkey said. "The addition of women's lacrosse was in the plans when the College renovated its athletic complex and built a turf field this past year. It will be a celebration when the Redhawks play their first game next spring."

The Redhawks will compete within the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference with four other colleges and universities. There will be a women's lacrosse championship in the conference in 2016.

Women's lacrosse will be the 13th varsity athletic program offered by La Roche, joining men's and women's basketball, men's baseball, men's and women's cross country, men's golf, men's lacrosse, men's and women's soccer, women's softball, women's tennis and women's volleyball.

Interested athletes should apply for admission to La Roche at [laroche.edu](http://laroche.edu). For questions, please contact the Office of Freshman Admissions at 412-536-1272.



### Bajgora Named AMCC Newcomer of the Year

La Roche freshman center Arnes Bajgora was named the AMCC Newcomer of the Year after putting together one of the strongest freshman seasons in school history.

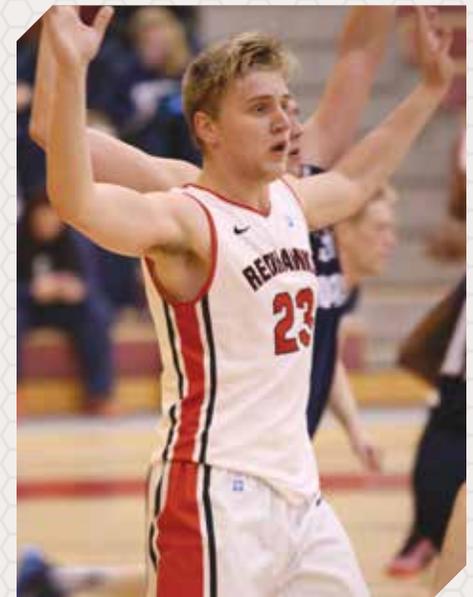
Bajgora finished at the top for the Redhawks in points while also leading the AMCC in freshmen scoring (15.7 ppg) and rebounding (6.3 rpg). He ranked seventh overall in the AMCC in scoring and tenth overall in rebounding.

Bajgora is the third Redhawk to win Newcomer of the Year. He joins Dom Joseph who won in 2003 and Devin Taylor who won in 2005.

### Zang Breaks Single Game Goal Record

The lacrosse team opened their first season on the turf field with their best record in school history. The Redhawks won four games including three on their home turf.

Freshman midfielder Jeremy Zang scored seven goals in La Roche's 22-11 loss to St. Vincent to break the school's single game goal mark. Zang passed Dustin Reykdal and Jonny Monahan who held the record with six goals.



PHOTOS: PHIL PAVELY



The women's basketball team becomes the first in AMCC history to win five back-to-back championships after defeating Pitt-Greensburg 73-55 in the title game.

## Lady Redhawks Shoot To Succeed

BY KURT HACKIMER '12

**T**he La Roche women's basketball team finished off their 22-5 season with a pair of decisive tournament victories to earn a fifth consecutive Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference title and a trip to the NCAA Div. III Tournament to play the Eastern Mennonite Royals.

But when Eastern Mennonite guard Alisa Brown drove to the rim and sank a basket to give the Royals a 77-76 lead with only 4.5 seconds left in the game, the Lady Redhawks' dominant season came to a shocking and abrupt end.

"It was like a scene from a movie, it was really tough," Redhawks head coach Kam Gissendanner said. "We had three seniors who had been really involved throughout their careers. It was sad, very sad. They wanted it so bad."

Forward LaShauna Brothers, a senior who earlier in the season recorded her 1,000th point as a Redhawk, scored 32 points before fouling out of the game.

They were up by 18 points with 12 minutes remaining in the second half.

However, as more of the Redhawks team, who ran a rotation of eight or fewer players for most of the season, fell into foul trouble, Eastern Mennonite was able to claw back into the game.

The Redhawks clamped down defensively as the two teams traded the lead in the waning seconds of the game before Brown's layup sealed La Roche's fate.

"[The end of that game] was the worst thing ever," La Roche sophomore Danasha Harris said. "We played so well that game, but we learned that you have to go hard all the way out, even when you think the game is over."

The loss was a difficult one, especially for Brothers and the other two seniors, guards Shataya White and Demetria Coleman, who won't get a chance to play in another game for La Roche. But, with Coach Gissendanner's

guidance, the Redhawks are able to take the loss with an enlightened perspective.

"It's not about wins or losses," sophomore guard Sabrina McLin said. "Our goal every year is to become a better team and become better people. The wins are just a bonus."

Coach Gissendanner came to La Roche after serving as an assistant coach at St. Francis (Pa.) and playing a season in Finland.

Gissendanner was a standout forward at Penn State University and spent time playing basketball in Denmark, Colombia, Puerto Rico and other countries.

Because she's not far removed from her playing days, Gissendanner is able to relate to her players in a more personal way than many college basketball coaches are able to.

"I've already made the mistakes before they even have to make them,"

Gissendanner said. "I've been there, done that. Whether they want to listen to me is totally up to them. I just try to preach to them to do it the right way every single time, and nine out of 10 times it won't let you down."

Judging by the amount of success the team has had on the court, it seems that they have been learning something positive from their coach.

La Roche had four players receive AMCC end of season awards in 2015.

Sabrina McLin was named to both the AMCC All Conference First Team and the 2015 All-Great Lakes Region Team. She averaged 17.9 points per game and was second in the AMCC in scoring.

LaShauna Brothers was named to the AMCC All Conference Second Team, sophomore McKenzie O'Connell made the All Conference Third Team, and Danasha Harris won the AMCC Defensive Player of the Year award, all for the second consecutive season.

Shataya White was a regular starter and guards Demetria Coleman and sophomore Gloria Schifino all contributed to help the Lady Redhawks remain on the very top of the AMCC pile for the fifth consecutive season.

For Gissendanner, however, her achievements in the scorebook are secondary to preparing her players to achieve in life after La Roche.

"I try to relate basketball to the real world," Gissendanner said. "In basketball, just as in life, you're forced to be accountable, you're forced to be responsible. You have a boss that you have to turn your work in to. Then you have your teammates, who are kind of like your co-workers working toward one common goal. Everybody's trying to make sure their boss and everybody else looks good."

"I've learned that, to get anywhere in life, you have got to keep working to get better," McLin said. "There's no way you can progress without practice, hard work and dedication."

With their recent string of winning seasons, the women's basketball

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***"I try to relate basketball to the real world ... In basketball, just as in life, you're forced to be accountable, you're forced to be responsible. You have a boss that you have to turn your work in to."***

- Kam Gissendanner, Women's Head Basketball Coach

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team has become the most successful team on campus, and Gissendanner has made it a point to make sure her players understand that they are expected to represent the College in a respectable manner.

"The women's basketball team is the premiere team on campus," Gissendanner said. "We get a lot of attention. The girls know that they're on the basketball team and that they better act accordingly."

"When I came to La Roche, everyone was friendly and that's been true for all of my years here," Danasha Harris said. "The people here are just a joy to be around."

Next season, the Redhawks will have five sophomores returning for their junior seasons along with several new faces as the team looks to continue on the success they have built and compete for a sixth consecutive conference championship.

"[To maintain a winning team] you just have to reload year after year," Gissendanner said. "The kids who are in the program have to get better every year because, every year, the goal of every other team in the conference is to beat La Roche. We wear that as an honor and don't take that lightly."

To overcome conference foes eager to knock the Redhawks off of their lofty pedestal, the team will rely heavily on the chemistry they have built with their teammates and the work ethic they've developed with the help of Coach Gissendanner.

"We know how each other plays," O'Donnell said. "If we're going after something, we know that person is going to be there. It makes it easier knowing where everyone is going to be."

The Lady Redhawks will begin their journey toward a sixth consecutive AMCC championship this November.



# Collaboration Between Countries

Miguel Ntutumu Evuna Andeme '03 Named Ambassador to the United States

BY VANESSA ORR | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WHITE HOUSE

**F**or most people, having the opportunity to speak one-on-one with the President of the United States is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

But for Miguel Ntutumu Evuna Andeme '03, it's already happened twice.

"In 2000, I visited the Oval Office as a student ambassador for the Pacem in Terris Institute," Mr. Evuna Andeme explained. Established in 1993, the Institute brings students from war-torn and developing nations to study at La Roche College.

"When I met President Bill Clinton, it was an unforgettable moment," he continued. "Not only was it my first trip to the White House, but the President

offered us words of encouragement and shared insights into the state of world affairs, which was very meaningful to us as international students. He told us what a difference we could make."

Mr. Evuna Andeme took this advice to heart, rising rapidly through the ranks of government service in his native country.

In January 2015, he became Equatorial Guinea's ambassador to the United States and presented his credentials to President Barack Obama at the White House during a traditional ceremony marking the formal beginning of an ambassador's service in Washington, D.C.

"In a nutshell, it was an unforgettable experience," he said. "We talked about

bilateral relations between Equatorial Guinea and the United States. And on a more informal level, we also talked about my kids adjusting to their new lives in America. It was a very positive moment."

Born and raised in Malabo, the capital city of Equatorial Guinea, Mr. Evuna Andeme was 19 years old when he first came to the United States.

"My sister had a job here and was able to call me to be with her," he explained. "Coming to the United States gave me the chance to further my education and presented me with opportunities to advance. I was lucky enough to get a scholarship through the Pacem in Terris Institute at La Roche. The rest is history!" College, he added, was the best four

years of his life. Mr. Evuna Andeme took his studies seriously, graduating in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in international studies.

"I really enjoyed going to class. I might have been a little bit annoying because I was always raising my hand, asking questions," he said, laughing. "I fully enjoyed the opportunity that I was given."

As a student, Mr. Evuna Andeme and classmate Peter Otika Okema, who was from Uganda, formed the International Forum of African Students to bring awareness to African issues on the La Roche campus.

"For some reason, I didn't have trouble fitting in at La Roche, perhaps because in Equatorial Guinea, we are well aware of popular culture – both in America and throughout the world," he said. "I think what I liked most is that I was given the opportunity to learn about another culture, while not necessarily negating my own culture, or made to feel ashamed of it."

After his wife, Purificacion, graduated in 2004 with a degree in management, the couple and their child returned to Malabo in 2005, and Mr. Evuna Andeme joined Hess Corporation as a procurement and contracts adviser.

Three years later, he left the private sector to serve as director general for administrative affairs for the Presidency of the Republic in Malabo. Eventually he progressed to the position of general director of cabinet at the Department of Missions, where his responsibilities included preparing statements, speeches and correspondence for the president.

"In my position as ambassador, I serve as the face of the Equatorial Guinea government in the United States," Mr. Evuna Andeme explained. "It is my job to look after my country's interests, which requires a lot of meetings with people who want to work with and invest in our country."

While the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is one of the smallest nations

on the African continent, with a population of about 1 million people, it has developed very rapidly since oil was discovered there in the 1990s. The only Spanish-speaking country on the continent, Equatorial Guinea boasts the highest literacy rate in Africa and the second-highest per capita spending on health. The U.S. has maintained

willingness to collaborate. The opportunities are waiting for Equatorial Guinea here in America."

Mr. Evuna Andeme added that his undergraduate experience at La Roche gave him the foundation that he needed to move forward in his career.




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***"La Roche provided me with the education I needed to return to my homeland to make things better. My experiences at the College have been key to the successes that I am having now."***

- Ambassador Miguel Ntutumu Evuna Andeme '03

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diplomatic relations with the country since 1968.

In his role as an ambassador to the United States, Mr. Evuna Andeme will continue to promote and foster his country's growth and its relationships with American businesses and government entities.

"It is exactly what I expected it to be," he said of his new role. "The best part is the support that I get for my country from the people I meet and their

"La Roche provided me with the education I needed to return to my homeland to make things better. My experiences at the College have been key to the successes that I am having now," he said. "My education not only opened my mind to see so much more – it also gave me the tools to better understand how to use what I've learned."

# DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI 2015



Established during La Roche College's 50th anniversary year, the Distinguished Alumni Circle honors La Roche graduates for their outstanding professional contributions and service to others. In April 2015, La Roche inducted 11 additional alumni who exemplify the College's mission of faith and service.



**Eucario Bakale  
Angue Oyana '06**

*Minister in Charge of the Taxes & Contributions*

Government of Equatorial Guinea

Eucario Bakale Angue Oyana '06 achieved academic and career success by learning how to lead.

Currently he works as Minister in Charge of the Taxes & Contributions for the government of his native country, Equatorial Guinea. In this role, he is responsible for designing and executing government tax and custom policies, as well as reforming and ensuring the functioning of tax administrations.

Outside of work, Mr. Bakale serves his community. He cofounded Casa-Rancha, an organization that aims to empower adolescents, widows and the elderly, and is a member and honorary president of the Akurenam, a youth organization that promotes social inclusion through cultural activities during summer vacations.

As an international student at La Roche College, Mr. Bakale received the President's Award for Leadership and Scholarship, the College's most prestigious honor for undergraduate students.

"La Roche College taught me two important things that serve me greatly in my present professional career: leadership and the ability to think critically," Mr. Bakale said, adding that his involvement in college activities provided the skills he needed to manage groups of people.

In addition to his Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and computer science, Mr. Bakale holds a Master of Science in mechanical engineering from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He and his wife, Fidela Evang, have two children.



**Very Rev. Andrew J.  
Deskevich '92**

*Protosyncellus  
Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy  
of Pittsburgh*

Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich '92 leads a life devoted to the Catholic faith.

After being ordained a priest in 1997, Rev. Deskevich has served various parishes within the Archeparchy for the past 18 years. Currently he serves as Protosyncellus and assists Metropolitan

Archbishop William Skurla in governing the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

In addition to this ministry, Rev. Deskevich also pastors Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Warren, Ohio, and St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Newton Falls. His community work includes feeding the hungry, cooking with his parish and serving more than 100 meals two to three times per month at Trumbull Deanery St. Vincent de Paul Kitchen.

At La Roche College, Rev. Deskevich earned his bachelor's degree in religious studies. His professors, he said, provided the support and encouragement that he needed to succeed in life after college.

"Growing up in a small coal mining town and attending a small school district, I was used to smaller classes. The size of La Roche appealed to me for this reason," he explained. "The small class sizes gave an opportunity for the professors to get to know their students and for the students to get to know their professors. My professors encouraged me, and all their students, to be the best that we could be."

In his free time, Rev. Deskevich enjoys traveling and has visited Italy, Slovakia and Ukraine, each on three different occasions. He had the distinct honor of meeting Pope John Paul II in 1995 and Pope Francis in 2013.



### Peggy H. Eddens '87

*Executive Vice President & Chief  
Human Capital Officer*

WSFS Bank

Peggy Eddens '87 is the Executive Vice President and Chief Human Capital Officer for WSFS Bank in Wilmington, Del., where she manages all aspects of human capital.

In this position Ms. Eddens oversees talent strategy, succession planning, learning and development, human sigma/engagement, organizational synergy/efficiency, innovation, communications, wellbeing, culture assimilation and strategic planning.

Dedicating her time to others through her career and volunteer service, Ms. Eddens serves as a member of the Independence School's board of trustees and sits on the Employer Advisory Boards for University of Delaware and Goldey Beacom College. As an executive committee member and personnel committee chair, she also supports the Delaware Human Association.

A graduate of La Roche College's Master of Science in Human Resources Management Program, Ms. Eddens said that earning

a graduate degree played a role in furthering her profession.

"The curriculum, the smaller class sizes and the engaged learning environment equipped me well for broader responsibilities," she said. "My master's degree from La Roche certainly helped me to advance my career in the human resources field."



### Steve Fleisch '78

*Artist/Curator*

Self-employed

Artist and Curator Steven C. Fleisch '78 studied commercial art while attending La Roche College. Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Science in administration, management and design, Mr.

Fleisch served as art director and account executive for several New Jersey advertising agencies.

"La Roche was a wonderful incubator for the creative process, from the challenges of the professors to the energy of creating the artwork," he said.

In the early 1990s, Mr. Fleisch was seriously injured in a sports accident. While in recovery he was forced to reexamine his future and turned to fine art to release his creative talents. His first juried art show rejection provided the impetus needed to advance his artistic aesthetic to the next level.

In subsequent competitions, Mr. Fleisch went on to garner top awards in painting, sculpture and digital imaging, and was recently recognized for his photography.

Gail Levin, noted Edward Hopper authority; Clare Bell, former associate curator the Solomon Guggenheim Museum; and Rupert Ravens, contemporary art dealer; are among the judges who have presented Mr. Fleisch with honors. Mr. Ravens specifically noted that not only was Mr. Fleisch's artwork inventive and fresh, but the artwork also pushed past the boundaries of perceived limitations.

As a curator Mr. Fleisch has assembled noted artists for numerous benefit art shows and was invited to produce the 10th anniversary art show for the Carol G. Simon Cancer Center. The shows that were spearheaded by Mr. Fleisch promoted hope and encouragement for patients, loved ones and the medical staff who performed various treatments.

Mr. Fleisch donated his time extensively with "Arts and Healing" and served on steering committees. He often is invited to participate in art auctions to benefit various charitable organizations such as: LOVE (Leave Out Violence), For Art's Sake, Integrity House, N.J. Cares and La Roche College's 50th Anniversary Gala.



### Natasha Garrett '96, Ph.D.

*Director, International Student Services*

La Roche College

Natasha Garrett '96, Ph.D., was born in Skopje, Macedonia, and came to the United States as an undergraduate student at La Roche College through

the Pacem in Terris Institute in 1993.

After graduating from La Roche, Dr. Garrett obtained a master's degree in English literature from Duquesne University and a Ph.D. in social and comparative analysis in education from the University of Pittsburgh. Today she works at La Roche as the Director of International Student Services.

"The La Roche College spirit of inclusion inspired me to pursue my career. The College's commitment to global education, the faculty and staff who are passionate about what they do and really connect with students – all of that made me the professional I am now," she said.

Dr. Garrett's dedication to international education is evident at La Roche and beyond. She has served as a translator and interpreter, a volunteer to welcome new U.S. citizens, and a liaison between international students and their respective national and ethnic groups in the Pittsburgh area. Dr. Garrett also serves on the Advisory Council for Global Pittsburgh and regularly presents at regional and national conferences related to international education and cross-cultural communication.

In 2014 the United Macedonian Diaspora named Dr. Garrett to its first-ever 40 Under 40 list, which recognizes Macedonian leaders and community role models who have excelled in their professions.



### Kevin M. Gyke, M.S. '10

*P.O. Management Group Manager*  
Alcoa Inc.

After completing two undergraduate degrees and a master's program at La Roche College, Kevin M. Gyke, M.S. '10 established a career in business.

Today he is a manager at Alcoa Inc., managing a group of centralized buyers who purchase maintenance, repair, operating goods and services for all plants in the U.S.

"La Roche prepared me with real-life case studies and examples to ensure I was ready to handle the corporate environment," he explained, crediting the College for training him to meet the demands of his career.

To this day he continues a relationship with La Roche, serving as vice president of the College's Alumni Board. In addition to supporting his alma mater, Mr. Gyke is an executive board member for Beverly's Birthdays, a nonprofit organization that provides birthday celebrations for youth in shelters in the Pittsburgh region.

As a project management professional, he holds a master's degree in human resources management and two bachelor's degrees in marketing and management.



### Dana Z. Keefer '87, M.S. '95

*Vice President of Talent Management and Development*

Northrop Grumman

Dana Zappia Keefer '87, M.S. '95 has achieved success as a human resources management professional.

As Vice President of Talent Management and Development for Northrop Grumman, Ms. Keefer's areas of expertise include succession planning; professional, leadership and technical development; talent management systems and tools; performance management; career development; employee engagement; university relationships and recruiting; and talent acquisition strategy.

A graduate of La Roche College's Master of Science in Human Resources Management program, Ms. Keefer is certified to teach human resources programs, including behavioral interviewing, civil treatment for managers and employees, and Hogan assessments.

Ms. Keefer uses her professional knowledge, along with her experience as a parent, to promote equality in the workplace. She served as a board member for True Ability Dell ERG, an employee resource group for people with disabilities and special needs, and volunteered as a speaker at the Mazzoni Transgender Conference to discuss her family's journey as well as professional efforts to secure employment for members of the transgender community.

"I am the mother of two amazing children — one who is adopted from India and is multiply disabled and another who is transgender. Ironically, my career and global experiences have prepared me professionally but even more so personally," she said.



## Zachariah Milch '02

*Director of Outpatient Services*

Progressions Behavioral Health Services Inc.

Zachariah Milch '02 has dedicated his career and volunteer work to improving the lives of today's youth.

Mr. Milch is a certified Pennsylvania school counselor who started his career as a school-based behavior therapist. Today he works as Outpatient Director for Progressions Behavioral Health Services Inc.

Mr. Milch oversees all aspects of services in the company's outpatient and school-based therapy program, which provides school-based behavior therapy to more than 500 low-income students.

At La Roche College, Mr. Milch earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and played baseball for the Redhawks. During his senior year he caught the ceremonial first pitch from Pittsburgh Pirates Shortstop Jack Wilson during the dedication ceremony for La Roche's John Arnold Memorial Baseball Field. After graduating, he coached baseball professionally for the White Sands Pupfish of the Pecos League and obtained a master's in education from Kutztown University.

"My professors at La Roche always encouraged me to strive to become a better student and to work my hardest day in and day out – not just when someone was watching," he said.

Currently Mr. Milch is the head varsity baseball coach for Wyomissing Area High School and Wyomissing's American Legion baseball program. He also is a mental health professional for Berks County's Disaster Crisis Outreach and Referral Team, and serves on the board for Berks County's Children and the Youth Citizens Advisory Board. Mr. Milch enjoys volunteering his time as a basketball coach for Reading Youth Sports and participates as a holiday celebration volunteer for Olivet Boys and Girls Club of Reading, Pa.



## Stanley M. Pittavino '78 (posthumously)

*Pre-press Technician*

First Impression Printing Company

Stanley M. Pittavino '78 was an accomplished graphic artist, a devoted husband and a loving father.

For more than 16 years, Mr. Pittavino worked as Pre-press Technician at the former First Impression Printing Company in Pittsburgh, Pa. His responsibilities ranged from assembling and examining hard proofs, inspecting the quality and integrity of printing plates, distributing jobs to the pressroom and maintaining equipment.

Inspired by his alma mater, Mr. Pittavino lived a life that represented the values of La Roche College's mission: compassion, perseverance and excellence. An avid bicycle enthusiast, he exhibited great compassion for others by raising funds for the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society and participating in the annual MS 150 biking event.

"Stanley was the teacher we all wanted to impress, the brother we wanted to live up to, the good neighbor we all hoped to be fortunate enough to have, and the favorite uncle we wanted to spend time with," Joy Shelly, a former coworker, said.

At La Roche Mr. Pittavino not only received an education – he also met his wife, Jeanne. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in administration, management and design, he married Jeanne in 1978. Together they had three sons: Gregory, Anthony and Michael.

As the leader and backbone of his family, Mr. Pittavino never sought the spotlight but always took a supportive role in the activities of his family. He helped his sons with scout projects, transported them to activities and events, and supported his wife in her many volunteer endeavors.

Even as Mr. Pittavino struggled with a brain tumor and Gorham Syndrome, a rare bone disease, he never abandoned his ideals; instead he exhibited kindness and gratefulness to all of the specialists who worked diligently to help him back to health.

"It is how Stan lived his life that has touched us all. His quiet strength, caring ways and thankful heart will always be remembered," family members said. "Stan lifted everyone up and made you want to be a better person."



## Lejla Uzicanin '97

*Sustainable Energy and International Development Expert*

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

After graduating from La Roche College with a Bachelor of Science in administration and management, Lejla Uzicanin '97 went on to earn her MBA from Cass Business School at the City University in London, UK.

A sustainable energy and international development expert, Ms. Uzicanin is in charge of providing sustainable energy and private sector development policy, as well as technical advisory services, in developing and transitioning countries.

Ms. Uzicanin was a student in La Roche's Pacem in Terris Institute, an experience she said laid the groundwork for all that she later achieved.

"La Roche provided excellent knowledge and skills – foundations on which I could further build through work experience and additional education programs," she said. "The knowledge I gained enabled a productive, professional engagement and successful career."

Recently Ms. Uzicanin decided to pursue an additional master's degree to expand her knowledge of sustainable energy, natural resource use and climate change. A full-time graduate student at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada, Ms. Uzicanin expects to graduate with a master of resource and environmental management.

In addition to work and academic obligations, Ms. Uzicanin supports victims of domestic violence and their children at a safehouse in Sarajevo.



**Richard L. Vareha '84, CPA**  
*Chief Financial Officer*

Keystone Clearwater Solutions LLC

Richard Vareha '84 has worked in the accounting and finance field for approximately 28 years. His career began with Ernst & Young, where he worked as a certified public accountant

and served multiple industries, including manufacturing, software, retail, and oil and gas. Mr. Vareha also worked in the Entrepreneurial Services Group, assisted three different companies with their initial public offering of securities, and was a trusted business adviser to multiple clients.

Presently Mr. Vareha works as Chief Financial Officer of Keystone Clearwater Solutions, LLC, managing all financial aspects of the company, including banking relationships, preparing budgets and forecasts, and providing monthly reports to the Board of Directors. He currently leads a group of 10 individuals.

At La Roche College, Mr. Vareha earned a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and was involved with several campus organizations, including the Student Government Association. "La Roche College was the place where I became a confident

## CELEBRATE LA ROCHE!

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS CEREMONY 2015

### CLASS of 1965



*La Roche recognized the Class of 1965 in honor of its 50th anniversary. Above: Joy Kronenberger, Sister Candace Introcaso, CDP, Ph.D., Sister Marilyn Bergt, CDP, and Sister Maria Fest, CDP, D.A. Not pictured: Judith Masucci, Eleanore Rathke, Rose Tomko and Teotista Brignoni Vera.*



PHOTOS: JAMES KNOX

young man," he said. "The accounting program gave me the foundation needed to sit and pass the CPA exam and positioned me for success working for one of the Big Eight firms."

Giving back to the community is one of Mr. Vareha's core principles. For more than 10 years, he was involved with the Mars Area Soccer Club, coaching and assisting in the administration of the league, serving more than 500 young people each season.

He currently supports the American Field Service youth foreign exchange program and is active in the local chapter management, including hosting three young men from Germany. In addition, he contributes to support cancer research.

Mr. Vareha and wife, Anne, a fellow La Roche graduate, have three children: Olivia, Kaitlyn, and Kyle.

# ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES



Enjoy ocean-view accommodations, first-class entertainment and unforgettable excursions to the beaches of the Bahamas during a four-night adventure with La Roche College.

The Office of Alumni Relations has partnered with Fox Chapel Tours and Cruises, an alumni-owned business, to launch its first alumni travel vacation from Monday, Feb. 15, 2016 to Friday, Feb. 19, 2016. Two package options are available to all alumni and their guests.

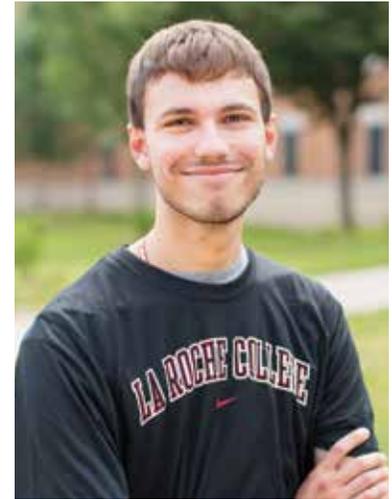
Limited spots are available. Deposit today at [laroche.edu/cruise](http://laroche.edu/cruise) to reserve your cabin aboard Royal Caribbean's Majesty of the Seas.



## DO BUSINESS WITH OTHER LA ROCHE ALUMNI

The next time you need to hire a professional, consult our Alumni-Owned Business Directory. With more than 50 businesses listed, you might find an alumnus who provides the services that you need.

Search for alumni businesses now or add your business to the directory at [laroche.edu/businessdirectory](http://laroche.edu/businessdirectory). This directory is offered as a free service, and we do not attempt to endorse any of the services listed.



## SHOW YOUR LA ROCHE PRIDE

If you are traveling this summer, send us a photo of yourself wearing or holding La Roche memorabilia, and tell us where the photo was taken so that we can share your photo on La Roche College's alumni Facebook. Email your photo and description to [gina.miller@laroche.edu](mailto:gina.miller@laroche.edu).



## ALUMNI RECONNECT AT HOMECOMING WEEKEND 2015

On Saturday, April 19, more than 200 alumni returned to campus for La Roche's annual Homecoming Weekend celebration.

The event included academic reunions, a cocktail party and dinner, alumni soccer games and an off-campus happy hour.



## SUCCESS STORIES NEEDED FOR ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Are you a La Roche graduate who has found success in your chosen career or made a difference in your community through volunteer service? Whether you're making an impact in the region, the nation or around the world, we want to hear your story.

The Alumni Spotlight, a new feature on the College's website, will highlight the success of our graduates and how their lives embody the College's mission.

Visit [laroche.edu/spotlight](http://laroche.edu/spotlight) to complete a questionnaire about your background, career and experiences. Submissions may be edited for length and content. We cannot guarantee that every submission will be published.

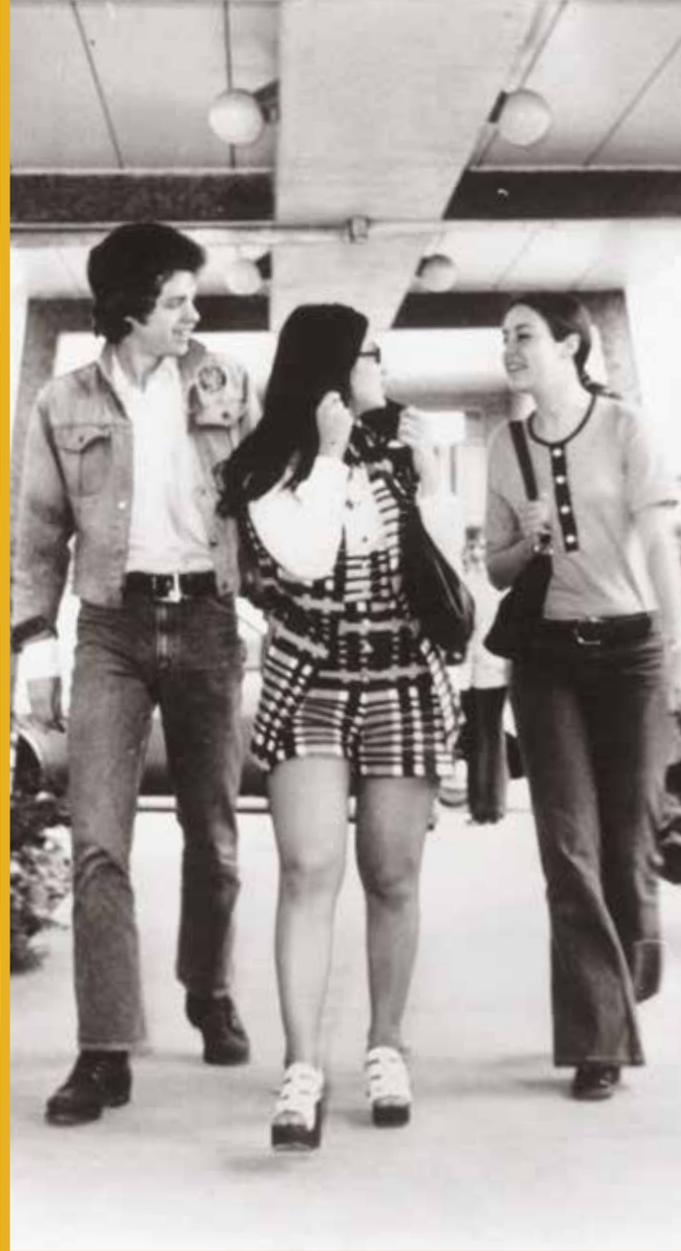


## WRIGHT LIBRARY PRESENTS ALUMNI BOOK COLLECTION

The Office of Alumni Relations has partnered with the John J. Wright Library to showcase alumni-authored books.

With many La Roche alumni enjoying careers as writers in numerous disciplines, the book collection features a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction works. Books rotate on display in the library, but the entire collection is available for check out at any time.

If you are an alumni author who wishes to have your book(s) on display, please contact Gina Miller, director of alumni relations, at [gina.miller@laroche.edu](mailto:gina.miller@laroche.edu).



# Curfews and Culottes: Early Student Life at La Roche

BY ELIZABETH WILLIAMS-HERRMAN '07 | PHOTOS: LA ROCHE ARCHIVES

In 1963, through the hard work of many, La Roche College, with its unique mission of providing a quality education to sisters and sisters in formation, became a reality.

At the start of the first fall semester, La Roche College had 173 full-time female students, 70 Saturday students, four majors, an operating budget of \$32,280, and no buildings to call its own. Often referred to as “the college in the basement,” many of the first classes took place in the basement of Ketteler Hall.

Later, the first building on campus, the John J. Wright Library, was completed in 1967, and by the first decade of La Roche’s existence, more than the campus had changed – the entire face of the College and the lives of its students were very different.

By 1965, La Roche opened its doors to all women, and five years later, in 1970, La Roche became co-educational.

Student life also changed, evolving with the needs of the College. In 1964, the College’s first women were reminded in their student handbook that, “Punctuality, courtesy, and consideration for others are the marks of refinement in the ideal woman. She is recognized as a cultured person by her tone of voice, her manner of dealing with others, and a sincere awareness of her role in the activities of the group.” The young sisters were expected to maintain a “spirit of silence and religious refinement” in both the classrooms and in the hallways.

Even after lay-women were admitted to the College in 1964, La Roche exercised a great deal of control over their lives. A dress code was put into place by 1969; students were to wear dresses, skirts, slacks or culottes in all public areas of the college. Slacks were only permitted if the temperature was below 25 degrees, and no jeans or stretch pants were allowed in the classroom. Short shorts were only allowed on the tennis courts or when walking from the dorms to the tennis courts.

Beginning in 1967, resident students were housed in Kearns Hall (now Kearns Spirituality Center). Students were allowed to wear robes and pajamas while in their dormitory, but shoes or slippers were required at all times, and set hair-dos were required to be covered.

The girls living in Kearns were allowed to have male visitors under certain circumstances. In 1967, male visitors only were allowed on the first floor unless they were escorted by the housemother. By 1969, girls were allowed to spend time with their male visitors in either the dormitory’s cafeteria or the main lounge.

The girls’ relatives were not treated any differently than anyone else – with one exception. Girls could get permission for their fathers or brothers to help them carry luggage from their dormitories when they were leaving or returning from a school break.

The rules governing resident students were strict by modern standards as well, and relied on the input of the girls’ parents as well as the College’s own rules. Typing, radios, television and showers were prohibited during “quiet time” in the dormitory, which took place between 7 and 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Rules were enforced by the housemothers, who also inspected each room to make sure that beds were made and the girls’ rooms were kept clean. Smoking was allowed inside the dormitory’s lounge if girls had their parents’ permission to smoke.

In 1967, students had to be in their dormitories by 7 p.m. on weeknights (Sunday-Thursday). On the weekend, freshmen and sophomores had to be in the dormitory by midnight, and juniors and seniors could stay out until 1 a.m.

By the time curfews were semi-abolished

in the 1972-73 school year, the entire face of the campus had changed. La Roche had already begun to spread out from the Motherhouse to its current campus.

The college’s third president, Sister De la Salle Malher (for whom Malher Hall is named), managed to steer La Roche through its first major financial crisis, keeping the doors open in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Men were admitted to campus in 1970, and through a partnership with the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, the Graphics Design program got its start in 1971. La Roche’s first collegiate conference-level men’s basketball team, the Red Devils, also was launched in 1971.

The first co-educational dormitory, Schneider Hall, opened in 1973. Even though curfews for resident students were abolished, parents were allowed to impose a curfew on their son or daughter. Students who were subject to curfew could not sign out of the dormitory overnight without the permission of their parents.

Although the curfew system was only in place on a case-by-case basis, students were still expected to respect the dormitory’s quiet hours and not type after midnight. Showering was restricted as well; students could not shower after midnight on weeknights or 2 a.m. on weekends.

Even though the rules and regulations governing La Roche’s student population seem draconian by today’s standards, they were not uncommon in the 1960s and 1970s particularly at a small Catholic college. As time passed, many of these policies were relaxed to accommodate an ever-changing student body.

**Lisa Vera Mikolajek Barton '99** graduated with a Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry from Duquesne University in December 2014. She is utilizing her new knowledge and skills to establish a pregnancy loss ministry and outreach programs in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and continue to work full-time at Duquesne University. This year she plans to celebrate her 10th wedding anniversary and her youngest child's third birthday.

**Amber Michele Fritz '08** became engaged to Micahel Bennitt Zalewsky. Ms. Fritz is the daughter of John and Susan Fritz of Gibsonia. Mr. Bennitt Zalewsky, an alumnus of Le Cordon Bleu Institute of Culinary Arts, is the son of Anthony and Charlotte Zalewsky of Cresent Township. A September 2016 wedding is planned.



**Rob Gasowski '11** and **Michelle Holt '12** became engaged in December 2014.

**Karen (Hughes) Kersting '79** participated in the Bridge House/Grace House Recycled Fashion Show for the fourth year. Using clothing and household items from the BH/GH Thrift Store, she created two outfits, including a cocktail ensemble accessorized with "purse dog" clothing and modeled by her own miniature Chihuahua, "B", a rescue dog. The annual fundraiser supports this New Orleans-based treatment center for men and women struggling to conquer their drug and alcohol addictions.

In early March, the documentary "Women of the Storm," directed by Dr. Wesley Shrum, was premiered in New Orleans.

The film chronicles the efforts of this grass-roots organization to lobby Congress to pass legislation that would earmark a portion of the BP fines for coastal restoration projects. Kersting was part of the team that went to Washington, D.C. and is mentioned in the credits.

Additionally, Ms. Kersting's garden, significantly altered and expanded since Hurricane Katrina, will be one of only two U.S.-based gardens featured in a soon-to-be-published book on gardens of the world. The book will include water-color renderings of the gardens and insights into the cities and the gardeners.

Ms. Kersting's design studio, Alane Design, marks its ninth year as a full-time business. Created in 1988 as a part-time venture, it was expanded into a full-time interior design business in 2006 in response to the economic changes in the Gulf South following Hurricane Katrina.

**Greg Kemper '99** and his band, Supervoid, will release a split album with fellow rock band, Red Desert (Minneapolis, Minn.) on the independent record label, Ripple Music (San Francisco, Calif.) this fall. The album will be issued on limited edition vinyl and also available for download.

**Steven Lucas '09** was promoted to PC Support Lead at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. In this position, he will directly manage the Clinical Desktop Team and the PC Support Team.

**Melissa Vrable Manny '07** is the new Global Learning Director at Alvernia University.



**Beth Ann Merry '05** was promoted to Vice President of Operation at Daly Care and married Richard Marks on Oct. 11, 2014.

**Jenn (Roberts) Miller '07** and husband Eric welcomed the birth of their son, Trace Miller, on Oct. 10, 2014. Ms. Miller and her family reside in Orlando, Fla., where she teaches digital cinematography at Full Sail University and recently was awarded the PROPS Education Leadership Award for Academic Innovation by an Educator.

**Andrea Peck '00** earned a Doctorate in Education from the University of Pittsburgh after successfully defending her dissertation titled "Middle School Transition: Building a Foundation of Educational Success." Her Doctor of Education degree in Administrative and Policy Studies, with a concentration in School Leadership, was formally acknowledged at the University of Pittsburgh graduation ceremony in April 2015.

**Walter Schulte '11** recently became engaged to Maggie Dudek, a graduate of St. Vincent College. The wedding will be held on Jan. 2, 2016, at St. Philip's Roman Catholic Parish in the Crafton area of Pittsburgh.

**Les Stearns '93** celebrated 30 years with II-VI Incorporated in January. He started with II-VI Corporate (Saxonburg, PA) before transferring to its VLOC Subsidiary (Port Richey, FL) in 1996. In 2011 he was promoted to Site Manager/Senior Sales Manager for II-VI Photop (New Port Richey, FL). He is member of the Student Advisory Council at Odessa Elementary (Odessa, FL) where he resides with his wife and two children.

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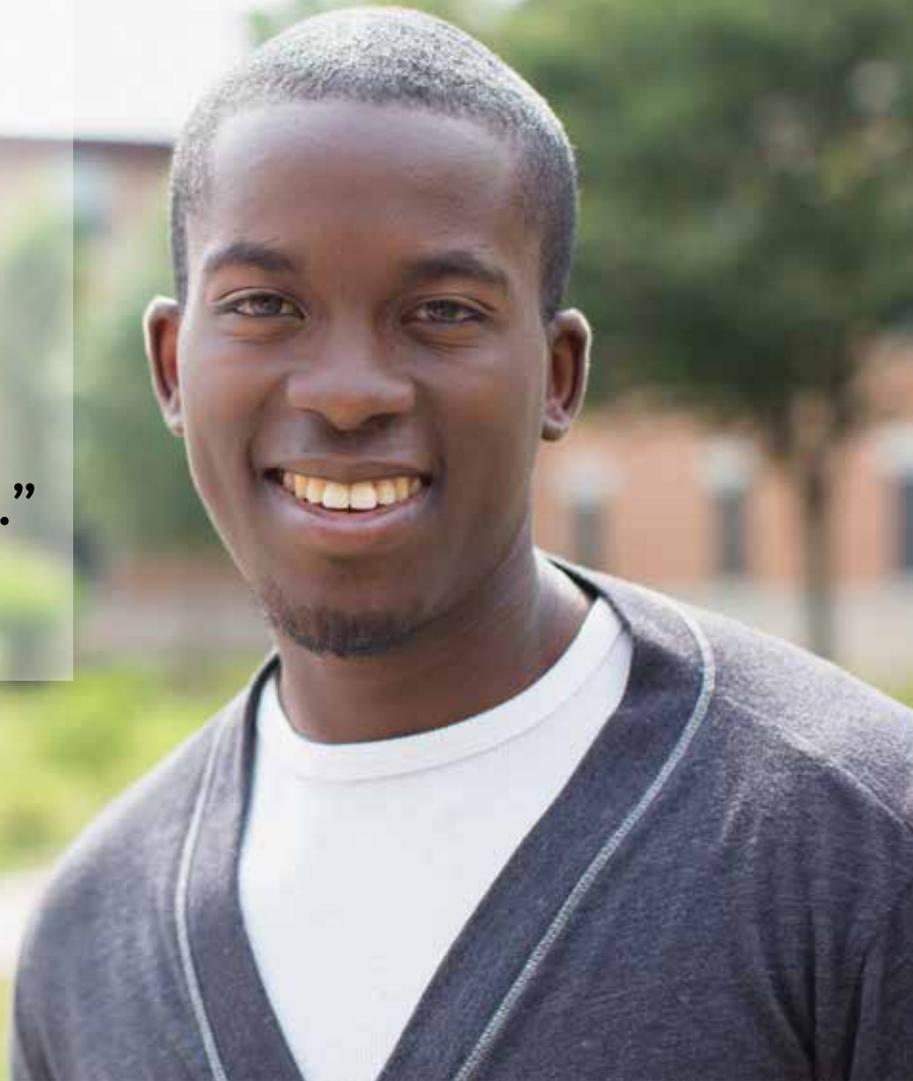
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