



Herkimer
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Connections

A Magazine for Alumni and Friends of Herkimer College

2025



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SUNY ASAP

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Connections is an annual publication of Herkimer College that is distributed to alumni and friends.

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Think Design

On the cover: Greg Farone '22, originally of Schenectady and a 6-foot-6 left-handed pitcher, was drafted by the San Francisco Giants in July. Read more on page 23.

Herkimer County Community College

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Dear Herkimer College Community,

As chairman of the Board of Trustees, I am privileged to witness firsthand the unwavering dedication and resilience of the Herkimer College leadership team, faculty, and staff. This past year

has been one of tremendous achievement and progress, and I am proud to extend my deepest gratitude to all who have worked tirelessly to make it possible.

From strengthening partnerships and increasing student enrollment to the launch of major campus improvement projects, these accomplishments reflect the vision and determination of our leaders and the commitment of our entire campus community.

Thank you to those who supported Herkimer College and our students this year. Whether you donated, attended an event, or referred a new student to us, we appreciate your interest and support.

As we look ahead, I am filled with confidence and optimism for what lies before us. Together, we will build on our strong foundation, guided by a vision that places students at the heart of every decision. With your support, Herkimer College will continue to be a place where lives are transformed, and futures are shaped.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Stalteri Sr.".

Michael A. Stalteri Sr.
Chairman, Board of Trustees



Dear Alumni and Friends,

This year has been a time of growth and achievement at Herkimer College, and I am honored to share some of the highlights.

For the first time in seven years, we are celebrating an increase in enrollment, complemented by higher housing occupancy—clear indicators of our momentum. We have also expanded our academic offerings with innovative new programs, including three microcredentials, designed to meet the evolving needs of students and employers alike.

Our campus is more vibrant than ever with the return of dynamic on-campus events fostering a strong sense of community. Meanwhile, we've made significant fiscal strides and efficiencies while also securing a remarkable \$25 million in capital funding through Herkimer County and New York State. These funds will drive essential improvements to our facilities, ensuring our campus remains a premier destination for education and opportunity.

We're also proud to highlight the continued strength of our athletic program. This year, our athletes excelled nationally once again, and we saw an increase in our athletic endowment fund—supporting the success of these programs. Hosting events like the NJCAA Men's Basketball National Championships continues to shine a spotlight on our campus and brings tangible benefits to our local community.

These achievements are a testament to the dedication and support of our entire Herkimer College family, including alumni, friends, and partners. Thank you for your continued belief in and support of Herkimer College.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicholas F. Laino".

Nicholas F. Laino
Officer-in-Charge and Sr. Vice President for
Administration and Finance

TORCHBEARER AWARDS 2024: Honoring Educators and the Profound Impact



Herkimer College hosted the 2024 Torchbearer Awards Ceremony on October 22, celebrating the accomplishments of four esteemed individuals, **Dr. Faye Eichholzer**, **Dr. Anne Greco** (posthumously), **Raymond Lenarcic**, and **William Pelz**.

Every five years since 1999, Herkimer College has presented the Torchbearer Award to honor those who have had a profound impact on the development and success of the College.

Detailing the significance of this esteemed award, Board of Trustees Chairman Michael Stalteri said, “The title of ‘torchbearer’ carries great significance... it represents leadership, vision, and the courage to guide others toward a greater future. Torchbearers are pioneers, trailblazers, innovators, and advocates. They’re individuals who light the way, inspiring us to think beyond the present and toward a shared goal that benefits everyone.”

Dr. Faye Eichholzer began her impact as an English instructor in 1978. She was promoted to professor in 1991, later serving as temporary assistant dean, interim dean, and chairperson of the Humanities/Social Science division. Eichholzer developed the campus childcare center, the “Writing Across the Curriculum” program, and a support group, NETWORK, for returning adult students. Eichholzer’s impact on education is evident not only in her named achievements, but

in the lives she impacted. Eichholzer’s dedication and life work earned her numerous accolades including SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1985 and Teaching on the Net Award in 2001.

Introducing Eichholzer was former student and colleague Cynthia Gabriel ’87, who said, “Your contributions to this college are innumerable, Faye, and tonight, I stand up for you and I honor you for all the times that you selflessly stood up for others, as it created your legacy that we honor tonight.”

In her acceptance speech, Eichholzer highlighted the dedication of others not only to students, but to supporting one another as colleagues, noting “Within the academic community I observed dynamic teachers who also gave their time outside the classroom advising student clubs and serving our college and community... I could count on my colleagues to share the workload on some pretty ambitious projects.”

Dr. Anne Greco was honored posthumously. She joined the College as instructor of English in 1968 and was promoted to professor in 1984. Her accomplishments included development of the Humanities program, serving as advisor to the College newspaper and literary magazine, and development of the writing lab and Honors Program. In her time at the College, she served as chairperson for the Humanities Division and

Made Through Their Careers



“...Their contributions are woven into the fabric of this institution and have touched the lives of many, shaping futures and fostering growth.”

several committees. Greco was an impactful creative writer and published author. She was recognized for her achievements in education in 1978, receiving the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Professor Emeritus Joseph DeLorenzo shared moving sentiments that illustrated the vibrant and authentic person Greco was in life, “She was unassuming and lived without pretense. She was contemplative. She liked silence and treasured her solitude, along with her dog that she always had... Although she is no longer here physically, she is now a light within me, always with me, and sometimes I know that she is still walking on my path.”

Raymond Lenarcic was among the founding faculty starting his tenure in 1967 as a history teacher, rising to professor in 1980. Lenarcic dedicated himself to advocacy and activism, with a focus on Vietnam Veterans and the Native American community. In his teaching, he focused on the imperative nature of keeping an open mind, participating in community service, and putting words into action.

Lenarcic was essential in the establishment of the Herkimer County Veterans Memorial Park, and a driving force behind College participation in the Gram Lorraine Children’s Christmas Program, Students for a Better World, Herkimer County Hunger Coalition and more. Lenarcic received the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1980.

Robert Palmieri emphasized the engaging way in which Lenarcic taught, “One thing I noticed about Ray with history is that he knows intimate details about people in history that I never read in the history books, and I think he can really draw you in.”

Lenarcic himself spoke not to his own numerous accomplishments, but the joy his life work brought him, choosing to dedicate his speech to those he taught, “I’m accepting on behalf of the hundreds of students—probably thousands— I had the privilege to teach, students who in different ways inspired me, making every day of my teaching career a joyous one.”

William Pelz holds the title of longest-serving faculty member at Herkimer College, having begun teaching psychology in 1968, and was promoted to professor in 1980. Pelz was instrumental in the creation of the Internet Academy and its success. His work in this endeavor led to invitations from universities in Chile and South Africa for Pelz to consult on their online programs. Pelz earned many awards throughout this career including two SUNY Chancellor’s Awards— Excellence in Teaching (1994) and Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities (2006). Pelz retired from his 50-year career in 2018 and continued to serve on a part-time basis.

Introducing Pelz, Dean of Academic Affairs Linda Lamb spoke to his many strengths and

continued on next page

Around Campus

accomplishments. Among them was the innovation and desire to build something new when the opportunity arose. Lamb stated, “When President Williams challenged the faculty at a staff meeting to ‘set up some kind of internet academy,’ Bill Pelz jumped at the chance to create something new and innovative and excellent at Herkimer... Bill thought about online learning holistically, considered the student perspective, and always focused on excellence.”

In his acceptance speech, Pelz spoke to the immense impact Herkimer College had on the trajectory of his life, “If it weren’t for this college, instead of going to Ilion, NY, I would’ve gone to Vietnam... my life would’ve been so different that I can’t even imagine what it would be... and I couldn’t be more grateful.”

Stalteri spoke to the lasting impact and success of these honorees and said, “The influence of these four educators extends far beyond their

classrooms. They have been steadfast role models for their students, as well as their peers and colleagues here at Herkimer, across the SUNY system, and beyond. Their contributions are woven into the fabric of this institution and have touched the lives of many, shaping futures and fostering growth.”



The 2024 Torchbearers have joined an exclusive group of 26 previously honored Torchbearers with engraved plaques displayed in the Robert McLaughlin College Center.



Celebrating Excellence in Education: Michael Oriolo Inducted into the Genesis Group Education Hall of Distinction

Michael Oriolo’s journey at Herkimer College began in 1981, when he joined the faculty as a mathematics instructor. For more than four decades, his unwavering commitment to academic excellence and student success has propelled him through the faculty ranks and administrative positions including division chair, division dean, dean of academic affairs, and ultimately, provost.

In his current role, Oriolo oversees the development and management of over 40 associate degree, certificate, and micro-credential programs, ensuring Herkimer College remains a leader in accessible, high-quality education. His leadership extends to vital campus areas such as academic support, career services, and workforce development. He has also provided leadership for transformative initiatives, including the College-in-Prison program, international partnerships,

and the College Now concurrent enrollment program.

Oriolo’s contributions to education have earned him numerous accolades, including the prestigious SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Professional Service in 1992.

Oriolo’s approach to decision-making is rooted in a singular question: *What is best for the students?* This guiding principle, paired with his deep expertise in both institutional and systemwide policies and programs, has helped shape the academic and professional lives of countless students.





MEET OUR NEW FACULTY

Michael A. Masi '00

Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice;
Director, Pre-Employment Police Basic Training

Education: Criminal Justice A.S., Herkimer County Community College

Professional Affiliations: New York State Law Enforcement Training Directors Association, New York State Chiefs of Police Association

Board Memberships: Herkimer College Criminal Justice Advisory Board

Community Involvement: Herkimer County Elder Abuse Task Force, Herkimer County Domestic Violence Task Force

What inspired you to become an educator? I would have to say, the people I learned from. We all experience good teachers/instructors/mentors, and we also experience bad ones. I have had the fortune of having some great teachers and instructors over the years. The ones that go that extra distance, who are clearly invested in your success and remain a part of your life far after you graduate. I wanted to be one of those people. I wanted to be a part of helping someone achieve their goal, and be successful in their profession.

What do you find most rewarding about teaching and why? There is nothing like getting calls from former students and hearing the excitement in their voices as they tell you about something they just experienced. You know they will go through many more similar experiences in their career, but listening to their excitement as they tell you about it makes you realize they value your approval and inclusion in their life.

What do you think makes the student experience at Herkimer unique? When I attended Herkimer, the thing that stuck with me is the personal commitment to student success that I experienced. Nothing has changed over the years. Almost daily I hear faculty talking with students and giving them advice beyond the college courses they are teaching, whether it be writing a letter of reference for them or connecting them with an employment/internship opportunity, faculty here are an integral part of the students' lives.

What interests you most about the subject area in which you teach? It is constantly evolving. There are always new techniques, new technology, and new concepts. It challenges you to stay in tune with the ever-evolving profession so you can best prepare the students.

What do students need to know in order to succeed in college? Students need to take it seriously. They need to value the opportunity they have to prepare them for the real world. It should be fun, exciting, and an adventure; but it should also be a meaningful experience to prepare them for their next phase in life.



Paving the Path to Poly

Herkimer College and SUNY Polytechnic Institute (SUNY Poly) have partnered to offer a streamlined path from an associate degree to a bachelor's degree. The Path to Poly dual admission program ensures a seamless transfer experience with study tracks in high-demand fields like communications, esports management, accounting and science.

The partnership goes beyond academics, with shared events such as College Night with the Utica Comets and RetroGameCon. The recent establishment of a SUNY Poly satellite office at Herkimer College highlights the significance of this partnership and provides students easy access to support and guidance on their Path to Poly journey. Alumni are also invited to utilize the SUNY Poly satellite office.

Around Campus

SUNY ASAP: Empowering and Supporting Students to Achieve Success

by Laura Simonelli '11

A resounding success story, SUNY Advancing Success in Associate Pathways (ASAP) is a two-year program designed to offer additional academic support, mentorship, and financial aid to help ensure students stay on track to graduate. The program was designed to eliminate opportunity gaps, improve student support and retention, and boost completion success of degree programs.

Students who participate in ASAP hail from a multitude of backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, and interests, yet all share the understanding of the importance of higher education and the opportunities that a degree unlocks on their paths to achieving their personal and professional goals.

On October 9, 2024, Herkimer College hosted a press event in recognition of the support the ASAP program has provided students since its implementation. The event brought SUNY officials together with college leaders, faculty, staff, and students in celebration of their success and recognition of the program benefits and expansion.

Along with its four-year counterpart ACE (Advancing Completion through Engagement), ASAP was implemented in the SUNY system in Spring 2024. The program was made possible in part by the SUNY Transformation Fund and private grants.

Herkimer College is one of 12 SUNY community colleges participating in the ASAP program. Herkimer's enrollment in ASAP has grown from 54 students at its spring 2024 implementation to 150 students in the fall 2024 semester. ASAP helps students by providing additional funding for textbooks, transportation, groceries, and other costs of attendance, academic assistance, personalized advisement, and career development activities.



During the ASAP event, Herkimer College Officer-in-Charge Nicholas Laino spoke about the College values and ASAP's support of them, "Herkimer College opted into the ASAP program because we believe in the power of accessible, transformative education for all. The program aligns perfectly with our strategic plan to improve retention, graduation rates, and student outcomes. It is an extension of our deep commitment to fostering academic excellence, equity, and success for every student on our campus."

SUNY Senior Vice Chancellor for Student Success Donna Linderman highlighted the impact of the

program, "At the heart of SUNY's mission is a deep commitment to student success, and programs like ASAP and ACE are helping us realize that commitment in life-changing ways." Linderman gave a special note of gratitude for those whom the ASAP program serves:

"I want to give a special thanks to our students – the ones here with us in the program today, and the ones who we hope to serve tomorrow as the program expands. We're so proud to serve you and so committed to your limitless potential. You're the reason we come to work every day."



NEW PROGRAM OF STUDY

Competitive Analytics A.A.S.

HERKIMER COLLEGE HAS ANNOUNCED THE APPROVAL OF A NEW A.A.S. DEGREE PROGRAM IN COMPETITIVE ANALYTICS. THIS PROGRAM WAS CREATED WITH THE GOAL OF ARMING GRADUATES WITH THE SKILL SET NEEDED TO ANALYZE COMPANY DATA FOR A COMPETITIVE EDGE.



The program is designed to equip students with valuable understanding and insight into business operations, information and data within business, and analytic skills required to succeed in numerous positions and applications. Students will benefit from a capstone course, giving them the invaluable experience of applying what they learn in a project with internal and external business partners.

Provost Michael Oriolo described the cutting-edge relevance of the program stating, "Business data is growing exponentially, and so is the need to translate that data into actionable information that can be analyzed to support business strategy fulfillment and day-to-day business decisions."

Competitive analytics is a highly sought-after skill set with an ever-rising demand in several industries including, but not limited to, finance, healthcare, and aerospace. Competitive Analytics is available to be taken online or in-person, but some aspects require on-campus participation. Applications are being accepted for Fall 2025.

ANYTHING is Possible in Retirement

George “Matt” Simmons ’79, Humanities

by Rebecca Ruffing

There’s no slowing down in retirement for Matt Simmons. After six plus years of service in the military, followed by a successful 30-year sales career, Simmons keeps busy as a new author.

Simmons has fond memories of his time at Herkimer. “It was a big awakening of course, because I was now responsible for my future, but it was among the most fun times of my life,” he shared. Simmons played basketball for coach Jack Alofs, alongside NJCAA All-American Kenny Black, and describes that experience as “highly memorable.” He also credits retired Professor Emeritus Ray Lenarcic with helping to shape his life recalling, “R.J. Lenarcic was the most amazing history teacher. He would instill humor into his lessons. We had fun in his class and learned a lot.”

After earning his associate degree at Herkimer, Simmons enlisted in the U.S. Navy and worked

in aviation administration on the USS Midway and USS Forrestal. While in the Navy, he completed his bachelor’s degree taking his coursework onboard an aircraft carrier and at other locations where he was stationed. Following his military service, Simmons enjoyed a highly successful surgical device sales career.

These days, Simmons and his wife Carol reside in Palmetto, Florida and are the proud parents of three grown children. However, Simmons isn’t ready to slow down anytime soon.

Simmons began putting book ideas together during his working career and was able to devote more time to the process once he retired, explaining, “I was responsible for preparing correspondence in the Navy and had always enjoyed writing and developing a finished product. The hobby then became a more serious passion once I retired.”

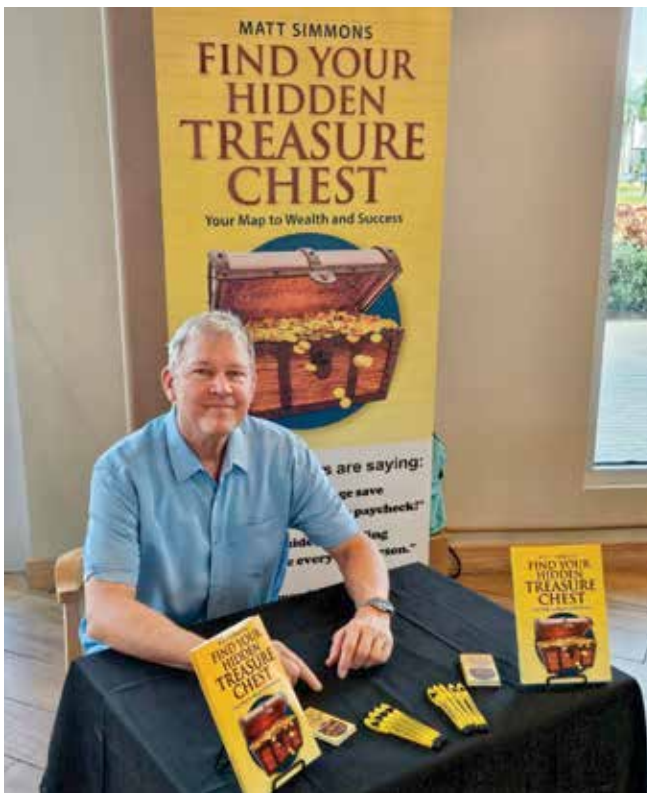
His first book *Find Your Hidden Treasure Chest* was published in December 2023. The self-help book is based on the premise that nearly half of American households have no retirement savings and no plan for their financial futures. “This book is designed for people having trouble saving. It takes the reader into their expenses and helps find savings without needing to devote more money out of their paycheck,” said Simmons.

Simmons has had three book signings thus far, been a guest on a podcast, and had multiple newspaper articles featuring the book, and word continues to grow. “It’s probably not going to be a best seller, but it’s far exceeded my expectations,” he said. Simmons has three additional books in the pipeline.

Simmons, excited about his new-found passion and success as an author, wants others to know:

“Retirement doesn’t mean it’s the end of your relevance, you can make it an opportunity perhaps to accomplish other things you’ve always wanted to do. Anything is possible.”

Find Your Hidden Treasure Chest by Matt Simmons is available in hardcover, paperback, and kindle on Amazon.





Affirming What's For You Will Be For You and Injecting Authentic Beauty Into Today's Work

Jawara Wauchope '05, Fashion Buying
and Merchandising A.A.S.

by Laura Simonelli '11

For celebrity stylist Jawara Wauchope, hair and fashion are a lifelong passion. Growing up, Wauchope spent a lot of time around hair and salons, as his aunts owned them. This experience, and the lasting impression it made, would play a major role in the trajectory of his life.

"I would see how people would come in upset and leave happy, and I would always feel like 'oh wow hairstyles make people feel better,'" Wauchope said. This ability to transform a person's day and attitude through hairstyling struck a chord, leaving a profound impact, "As I got older, I realized that your hair has a lot to do with how you feel, who you are, and how you present yourself, and it's an extension of you."

In his youth, Wauchope had other interests and dreams, including the aspiration to become a teacher. This idea would soon fade as his interest in hair and fashion grew in his preteen years.

In high school, Wauchope assisted in salons when able. In his senior year, he spent time on Madison Avenue, feeding his interest in fashion. This inspired his goal to attend the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), but by the time that realization came, he knew he wasn't on track to start college immediately following high school.

Wauchope spoke to this relatable dilemma that some teens face, sharing, "If you're going to a four-year school right out of high school, a lot of times you have to start applying in junior year. I didn't have time, but I knew I didn't want to wait."

Wauchope also felt torn between choosing to pursue hairstyle or fashion. At the same time, he was convinced hair and fashion were two separate interests, and was faced with the dilemma of which he would pursue. This decision was further challenged by the idea of corporate work:

"I had this fixation about going into the corporate world, and I felt like that is going to make me super successful."

continued on next page

Alumni

From there, Wauchope began to research his options. He was driven and knew he couldn't wait. This is where Herkimer College came in.

"I wanted to go away to school," he explained. "I didn't want to do four years away though. So I said, 'let me go to an away school for two years, get that experience, then I can come back and pursue fashion'."

Wauchope highlighted the benefits and challenges of attending Herkimer College in the early 2000s, touching on the local community culture, "At the time in Herkimer, the town was not that welcoming to students, especially students of color."

Despite this, Wauchope found community and comradery in shared fashion interests, cultural connections, and to his surprise at the time, other students he met from New York City who were attending Herkimer as well. "I didn't feel as isolated as I thought I was going to feel, because there were a lot of people from New York and Syracuse. I did feel I had a community of fashion people I just connected with."

Wauchope never lost sight of his passion for hair while at Herkimer. His entrepreneurial spirit shined as he continued to style hair in college, "I had these flyers I would pass out on the college campus, and girls would come to the room, and I'd do their hair."

"It taught me a lot and a good amount of self-sufficiency and understanding history in a way that I felt really made me be able to look at the fact I can fuse hair and fashion together. Learning from Ms. Ciccarelli and Ms. Jenny was definitely influential in the decisions I made after that."

Wauchope further highlighted the opportunity Herkimer offered to others, "What I loved about Herkimer was that children that would not have normally gotten the chance to go away to college got the chance to see what going away to college is." Wauchope spoke to the importance of this in the lives of those around him at that time, "I remember a couple kids in school that were like 'wow I got the chance to go away' and it kind of fueled them to go and do more. Because maybe what they were seeing at home or maybe what



Jawara Wauchope is an editorial hairstylist shaping the looks of influential women like Beyonce, Solange and Cardi B. Born in New York and raised in Jamaica, his passion for fashion and hairstyling led him to study at Herkimer College, FIT, and the Aveda Institute. Mentored by legendary stylist Sam McKnight, Jawara became a freelance stylist in 2013. His work spans Vogue, WSJ Magazine, and runway shows for Calvin Klein, Chanel Beauty, and Hermès. More about Wauchope here: www.jawarawauchope.com

they were seeing in their city was not really inspiring for them to be successful."

After graduating from FIT, Wauchope participated in a few internships in fashion buying offices. He realized that fashion buying wasn't his calling, but he never lost sight of hair.

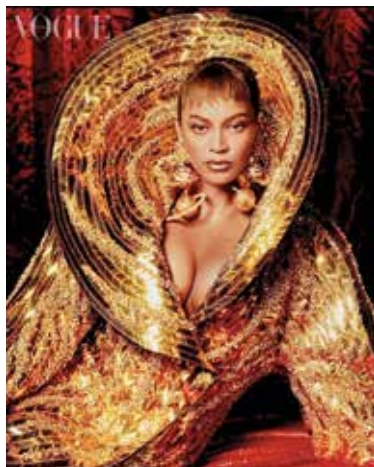
Wauchope spoke to this realization, recalling his drive to explore hair in fashion during his education, "As I was studying, I was still obsessed, I went deep into the fashion world and started looking up people doing hair in fashion. I was like, 'What if I do hair but work in the fashion industry?' So I started reaching out to them

while I was in school... once I graduated from FIT and cosmetology school, I started assisting people that do fashion shows and ad campaigns. I realized wow there's a big business around that."

Wauchope's career began by assisting others in the U.S. and Europe. From there, he stretched his wings to explore his work independently,

"I started to go on my own and do my own shoots and shows and tests with people and that's how my career grew. It was basically fusing my two loves together—fashion and hair."

Emphasis on the power of belief in oneself, self-advocacy, and making it a point to call out and challenge gatekeeping placed a spotlight on the issues of self-confidence and the impact of social media today. Wauchope shared, "Social media has such an effect on people feeling like they're not enough and they don't have enough because someone else is showing all that they have and all that they're doing."



Wauchope spoke to overcoming this effect of social media and self-comparison, "I think it's just putting yourself in the mindset of 'Oh okay that's something I'd like to achieve, how do I go about getting it?' as opposed to 'That's too big for me, I'll never make it'. I've never subscribed to that specific idea. I had my challenges, but there was this support system I had, my family, and



honestly just pushing myself to really see myself in that industry." Further underscoring the importance of determination and belief in yourself through it all, Wauchope shared the wise words, "What's for you will be for you."

"When I started assisting people in fashion and not seeing anyone that looked like me doing it, that was very deterring to me." Despite this, Wauchope was not going to shy away from what he knew was for him. He was determined, "I told myself 'You know what, I don't see myself in these rooms, that means that I need to be in these rooms,' meaning that I want someone else to see me in this room that can say 'oh wow he's doing it, so I can do it too.' And that kind of pushed me to keep doing and doing. I did deal with a lot, but it's definitely one of the things that pushed me."

This push to make an impact made it clear that though Wauchope may not be a teacher by trade, he is an incredible role model with much for others to learn from. "I can offer that to young people on my team... they would not have been accepted in those rooms maybe 10–15 years ago," he added.

About this impact and the legacy he seeks to leave behind, Wauchope closed with, "I inject a lot of beauty that I saw around me into fashion now. I think I speak to a lot of people who thought those same things were beautiful, but never got that representation. I feel like that's kind of what started my style, and that's something that I'd love people to remember about me. 'He went in there and changed it.'"



Tim Fischer on Self-Discovery and Transformation: Finding Yourself, Living Your Truth, and Embracing the Power to Change Your Life

Timothy Dingman, also known as Tim Fischer '13, Physical Therapist Assistant A.A.S.

by Laura Simonelli '11

Artist and author Tim Fischer is an inspiring testimony that the journey to becoming who you want to be and achieving your dreams isn't linear, or impossible. It simply takes persistence, faith in yourself, who you are, and who and what you want to be. Add to that a bold stroke of stubborn optimism along the way, and you start to see the path before you painted with added clarity.

Born and raised in Herkimer County by kind and loving working-class parents, Fischer had an upbringing filled with fond memories. However warm and loving his family and friends, Fischer was not without feeling lonely and out of place at times. This relatable sense of being foreign amongst those around you is something many experience depending on where you are and who you are surrounded by. For Fischer, it was in part due to his affinity for daydreaming and art, two things that few among his family or peers could fully understand or relate to.

"In retrospect," Fischer pondered, "my parents, I think, probably were a little bemused. Nobody in my immediate family was artistic, and here I was daydreaming and drawing. Looking back, I think they were a little unsure how best to support my interests, but they did their best and were as supportive as they could be."

As a teen, Fischer dabbled in numerous interests and hobbies beyond drawing. A few of these interests included self-taught photography,

videos, and writing a screenplay and a novel. Fischer never really viewed himself as an artist, and after high school, he enrolled in college for engineering. As an adult, Fischer gravitated to standard nine-to-five jobs to support himself.

"I was operating under a strong sense of obligation to do what I was 'supposed' to do." Fischer shared, speaking to the idea he once held, that to be successful, his life had to look a certain way.

"It's the struggle of understanding and living your truth." Fischer said, referring to the challenge of being a dreamer at heart with this sense of duty to be successful in a way opposite to his artistic truth,

"Like birds in the sky or fish in a stream, I always wanted to find my natural place in the world and just get on with it, but it's been a very elusive thing for me."

A profound moment occurred on one unassuming day in his twenties, in which Fischer challenged himself.

The task? Creating a new, complete piece of artwork, start-to-finish.

Sitting down with paper, charcoal, and pencils, he took to work, and sometime after, he was left with a newly completed work of art. From there, he gained momentum and continued to create with purpose.

Fischer never really stopped creating, but had periods where there was a gap between, in that way that tends to happen when artists and creatives get swept up in the mundane demands of everyday life and the things one must do day in and day out. In those periods, Fischer noticed he felt less himself when too much time passed between his artistic endeavors.

As he created, he began to share his art more and listed some of his work on Etsy. Eventually, he even sold a few through this platform. Fischer shared a profound understanding he came to realize as he allowed himself to create, “It was a slow journey of finding myself... It’s who I always was.”

Of his journey, Fischer expressed relatable stages many go through when finally finding yourself and embracing who you are and who you always were. Sometimes, in those moments we experience feelings of frustration or loss at the time that passed. Fischer emphasized the importance of all the stages in a journey, and not getting hung up on the loss of time gone by, “It was a winding path of happenstance... Ultimately, I believe we have the experiences we were meant to have.”

While reflecting on his influences and inspiration not only now, but throughout life, Fischer mused, “You find positive voices along the way.” Pointing out the inspiration and profound insight found in everything, from movies and books to people around you. You can sit down to simply watch a movie, but that movie can have an impact. A



character may say something or experience a challenge or defining moment that resonates with and impacts you in a way that inspires you as well.

Of his childhood, he recalled fond memories including his grandfather ushering him over saying, “Timmy come here,” and sitting down to watch Bob Ross together. This was a significant experience that not only brought him and his grandfather together, but gave him a role model too. Bob Ross demonstrated that art can be a career, and being authentically yourself and comfortable with who you are and what you do is possible.



Fischer spoke to integrating these lessons over time, “The upside to spending many years feeling aimless is that I think it also allowed me to become myself in a more authentic way, without the outside pressures.” He touched on the importance and impact of storytelling, not only in writing, but in how you speak to yourself too, “You are writing your experience.”

Life is a small part of what happens to you, but how you navigate external circumstances and how you speak to yourself and view yourself creates your reality.

After all, we are often our most vehement critic or passionate supporter.

Fischer’s journey to finding himself and his purpose brought him to many new places and experiences in life. At the time of this article,

continued on next page

Alumni

he resides in his hometown area with his wife, their beloved dog, and two cats. In 2023, Fischer published a profound and enchanting children's book, *Under the Blanket Sky* with Penguin Random House, which he wrote and illustrated. The story follows a boy and his fantastical owl friend as they forge a deep bond together throughout one fleeting summer.

Fischer currently works part-time as a physical therapy assistant and continues to live his dream as an artist and writer. Reflecting on the twists and turns in life, and what his life looks like today, Fischer voiced the deep truth,

"The greatest power we have is the power to change our lives by changing our minds." You are never stuck if you find yourself at a dead end, simply turn around and try something new.



ALUMNI STARS NAMED BY ON POINT FOR COLLEGE

At the 2024 On Point for College Utica Celebration, three Herkimer College alumni were honored as Alumni Stars for their success in college and beyond.



Klur Doh Soe '22 earned an A.S. in Business Administration from Herkimer College and transferred to SUNY Polytechnic Institute to earn a B.S. in Business Administration.

Soe excelled academically and was also active on the dance team and in clubs.

After earning an A.S. in Communication and Media from Herkimer College, **Kassandra Garcia '22** transferred to Pace University and graduated with a B.A. in Communication Studies. Garcia delivered the student



speech at her graduation from Herkimer College. She is employed as a workplace campaign and development specialist for the United Way of the Mohawk Valley.

Sharifay Mohammed '20 holds an associate in arts degree in Social Science. She continued her education at LeMoyne College and graduated in 2022 with a bachelor's degree in English.



Mohammed is bilingual and is passionate about creative writing. She was a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society while at Herkimer, and she graduated with honors.

This year, On Point for College celebrated 25 years of operations in the Utica area, supporting disadvantaged youth, new Americans, and first-generation college students to enroll and succeed in college.

Where in the world *you* will go..™



Brenda Episcopo '94: Empowering Communities, Inspiring Generations

by Rebecca Ruffing

BRENDA EPISCOPO EMBODIES THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF EDUCATION, DETERMINATION, AND PASSION.

A graduate of the Human Services A.A.S. program, Episcopo's journey began in Bridgewater, NY, as the daughter of a logging family. College was neither expected nor encouraged in her household, but inspired by her grandmother's words— "The way to break the cycle is to go to college." Episcopo worked hard to graduate in the top of her high school class and charted her path to success as a first-generation college student.

At 17, Episcopo balanced a rigorous schedule of academics, work, and volunteerism. Her time at Herkimer College was a pivotal period of growth and discovery. "I always knew I wanted to help kids and inspire young women," Episcopo recalls. Her involvement with the Human Services Club, working evening shifts at McDonald's, and volunteering overnight at the YWCA Rape Crisis Hotline exemplify her work ethic and passion. Episcopo recalls her classes at Herkimer as new and exciting, and the environment as close-knit.

"Herkimer provided a level of support you don't see at most colleges."

After Herkimer, Episcopo earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in sociology from SUNY Institute of Technology (now SUNY Poly). At this time, she was an intern for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), and when the program's funding ended, she found herself running the program as a volunteer. "I worked for free for a year, because I believed in it."

Her passion for serving high-risk youth and marginalized communities led her to roles of increasing responsibility, including executive director of the Peacemaker Program by age 30. In this role, she expanded staff, grew clientele, and launched four programs to support at-risk youth. Her leadership style—rooted in collaboration, innovation, and determination—set her apart and made her a sought-after leader. Episcopo's career trajectory took her to the United Way, where she held multiple leadership roles, including CEO of the United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica Area and later president and CEO of United Way of New York State. Among her many achievements, she secured \$10 million in community impact funding and spearheaded critical research like the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) reports. She also led statewide efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, coordinating resources and advocating for vulnerable populations while overseeing the state's 2-1-1 network.

Since 2021, Episcopo has served as CEO of Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York, overseeing programming for 15 counties and 5,000 girls. Joining during the height of the pandemic, she implemented a recovery plan that brought stability and growth to the organization. "I'm proud to see tangible impacts—double-digit membership growth and older girls staying



involved longer. These young women are articulate, passionate, and inspiring.” One standout project involved a 16-year-old Gold Award candidate transforming a vacant lot into a green space for her community, demonstrating the Girl Scouts’ profound ability to inspire change.

Episcopo’s advice to young people resonates deeply: “You don’t have to have it all figured out. Follow your passion, take one step each day in the right direction, and use your strengths for good.”

At 50, Episcopo reflects on her journey from a determined teenager at Herkimer College to a transformative leader impacting thousands.

“I think back to that 17-year-old girl who wanted to help people. Now, I do that every day with 5,000 girls at a time. It’s amazing.”

As Episcopo continues her work as a change-maker, she carries her grandmother’s wisdom with her—the reminder that education was her key to achieving her dreams and building a meaningful life. “I think my grandmother would be proud to see how far her encouragement took me,” Episcopo says. “She inspired me to create a future filled with impact and purpose.”



CLASS NOTES

Mary Perkins '73 (Liberal Arts A.A.) and her husband celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and have two children and five grandchildren.

Sal Colatarci '79 (Radio and Television Broadcasting A.A.S.) graduated from St. John Fisher with a B.A. in Communications/Journalism. Sal was news director at WGVA until he was elected and re-elected as town clerk for his beloved hometown for 32 years. He married HCCC and St. John Fisher alum **Nola Oddi** in 1983. They have a son, Gino. Sal retired from his position in 2022 and is enjoying his HUGE garden and traveling to tropical locations.

Nola Oddi Colatarci '79 (Radio and Television Broadcasting A.A.S.) transferred to St. John Fisher receiving her B.A. in Communications/Journalism. She began her career as a morning show producer for WVOR. Nola married HCCC graduate Sal Colatarci in 1983. They welcomed their son, Gino, in 1992. Nola retired from a 30-year career as a senior caseworker for Wayne County Department of Social Services in 2014.

Steve Newvine '77 (Radio and Television Broadcasting A.A.S.) recently published *Jack & Johnny- Benny, Carson and a Friendship Made for Television*. The book examines the friendship of comedians Jack Benny and Johnny Carson over their 20-year friendship. This is Newvine’s 14th book.

Dan Pelletier '79 (Radio and Television Broadcasting A.A.S.) is enjoying retirement in Chapel Hill, NC after 10 years in radio and 20 years as an elementary school reading teacher.

Tracy Guernsey '80 (Science A.S.) is an academic counselor at Ridge Technical College.

Michael Imhoff '80 (Criminal Justice A.A.S.) recently retired as the chief executive officer of the Air Force Museum Foundation.

Kevin Hall '81 (Computer Science A.S.) started his career programming computers for Eastman Kodak in Rochester. He went on to being a systems analyst, a master trainer (technology), a supervisor, and a certified project manager professional (PMP). Hall retired in 2018 and became a published author in 2022. He has published three books and is currently working on his fourth.

Alumni

Donna (Mosiurchak) Linton '84 (Office Tech – Court Reporting A.A.S.) received the Distinguished Service Award from the Virginia Court Reporters Foundation for her research and help in creating the Virginia Court Reporters Foundation (VCRF). VCRF was established to help students in court reporting programs with scholarships, equipment/software purchases, and to educate young lawyers on how to make a record. She is immediate past president of VCRF and just reached a milestone of a 40-year career in the court reporting profession.



Cosimo Tangorra Jr., Ed.D. '90 (Social Science A.A.) has retired from a 30-year career in education, serving as a teacher, principal, and administrator. He most recently was superintendent for the New Hartford School District, and he also served as superintendent for the Oppenheim-Ephratah, Trumansburg, Ilion, Central Valley and Niskayuna Central school districts. He also was deputy commissioner for the Office of P-12 Education for the New York State Education Department. In recognition of his dedication and years of service in education, Dr. Tangorra was inducted into The Genesis Group's Hall of Distinction during its 2024 Annual Celebration of Education.



In addition to an associate degree from Herkimer, Dr. Tangorra holds a bachelor's degree from Siena College, master's degree in special education from The College of St. Rose, a certificate of advanced study in educational administration from SUNY Cortland, and a doctoral degree in educational leadership from The Sage Colleges-Sage Graduate School.

Karne Conti '93 (Science A.S.) Conti is a program assistant for the Department of Homeland Security.

Michelle Andriano '94 '15 (Travel and Tourism A.A.S.) of Stormville, NY is the lead secretary at Epic Management LLC. Michelle says she'd love to reconnect with anyone from her class on Facebook.

Jacqueline Moreau Giruzzi '96 (Travel and Tourism A.A.S.) earned a degree in radiography in 2002 and has been employed as an MRI technologist for 22 years.

Christopher LaPage '96 (Criminal Justice A.A.S.) worked for the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Services for 23 years until retiring as a Lieutenant in 2020.

Kendrick Ashe '99 (Sports Management A.A.S) and **Francine Ashe**, who retired from HCCC in 2003, celebrated their 61st anniversary on November 23, 2024. They have four granddaughters and three great-granddaughters.

Joelle Hok Mead '05 (General Studies A.A.) completed his degree at Utica College and eventually secured employment as a marketing associate at ConMed in Utica. Mead is currently the director of physician recruitment for Mohawk Valley Health System.

Brandon Specht '06 (Science A.S.) is on active duty in the United States Air Force as a plastic surgeon.

Marc Barraco '13 (Radio and Television Broadcasting A.A.S.) recently joined Mohawk Valley EDGE as senior vice president of economic development. He is responsible for attracting and assisting new businesses, helping to revitalize our local communities, and promoting economic growth for the region.

Crystal Furman Bastein '13 (Science A.S.) Bastein recently graduated from the University of Lynchburg Virginia with a Doctorate of Medical Science in August 2024 (DMSc). She has been a practicing physician assistant at Bassett Primary Care in Herkimer for eight years.

Kavon Hall '13 (General Studies A.A) recently moved into his first apartment and is employed while working on learning two languages and martial arts.

Timmya L. Gary '15 (Human Services A.A.S.) is a business owner and works at the Syracuse Mobile Notary as a real estate underwriter, notary public, and appraiser assistant.

Michael Harrington '15 has been named pitching coach for the Mohawk Valley DiamondDawgs for the 2025 season. Harrington was an All-American and Regional Pitcher of the Year for Herkimer College, and he also played for SUNY Cortland. He currently serves as an admissions assistant and pitching coach at Herkimer College.

Christina DiSano '16 (Business Administration A.S.) resides in Rochester, NY and is the office and budget coordinator with the Simon Business School at the University of Rochester.

Christopher Jose Garcia '16 (Sports and Recreation A.A.S) is CEO of One Way Music Team Record and Chris Alexander Landscaping LLC.



Jasmil Ramierz '18 (Health Services Management A.A.S.) is completing a master's degree in business administration with a minor in business analytics. Ramierz recently started working as a practice operations supervisor for Columbia Doctors.

IN MEMORIAM

Professor Emeritus Lorraine Siniscarco passed away on Monday, January 29, 2024. Siniscarco was hired in 1989 as an assistant professor in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program and was promoted to associate professor in 2011. She also held titles of fieldwork coordinator and program director. After 26 years of service, Siniscarco retired on August 31, 2015, at which time she was named professor emeritus. Lorraine is survived by her husband, Joe, and two daughters, a son-in-law, grandson, and many other family members and friends.

Denise (Baylis) Kane '03, Early Childhood A.A.S. passed away March 27, 2024 after a long illness. She is survived by her son, Chance J. Kane and two granddaughters.

Ann (Urtz) Cotter '92, passed away March 28, 2024. Cotter, of Little Falls and formerly of Ilion, earned her A.A.S. degree in Business Administration and worked in the business office at Remington Arms for many years. She also was a volunteer with the Red Cross and Piseco Lake Fire Department Auxiliary.

Brice Rex Kistler, passed away April 14, 2024 at the age of 80. Brice joined the College faculty in 1981 to teach Occupational Therapy Crafts and Skills. In 1982, he was appointed to the position of assistant professor of occupational therapy. The

American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. appointed him in 1985 as program director of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program at the College. A dedicated professional, Kistler was granted tenure in 1987 and retired in December 2003.

Florence (Polansky) Cummins '90, passed away on May 18, 2024 at the age of 95. Cummins graduated from Patterson Park High School in 1946 and received her associate degree in Early Childhood Education at the age of 74, making the Dean's list every semester. During her career, she worked for the Air Force, Herkimer Library Bureau, Standard Furniture Company, and Mohawk Data Sciences. She also served on the board of the Herkimer Library for several years.

Sandra S. Hoyle '91, Data Processing A.A.S., passed away on May 19, 2024. She worked as a legal secretary for many years and retired from Lexington Center - Stahl Road. She and her husband, Jim, participated in many fishing derbies in the Herkimer area.

Raymon A. Upson '98, of Mohawk, passed away suddenly on Friday, May 31, 2024 at the age of 53. Upson was a proud Herkimer College graduate with an A.S. degree in Science.

Paul F. Cambridge passed away on October 3, 2024. Cambridge was appointed in 1987 as a full-time campus security guard and retired in 1998 after nearly 11 years of dedicated service. He then continued working part-time for another eight years.

Cynthia (Neff) St. John '76, of Cooperstown, passed away on October 26, 2024. St. John was a graduate of Mount Markham High School and earned an A.A.S. in Data Processing. For 36 years, she was employed by Bassett Healthcare Network in Cooperstown working her way up from a keyboard typist to computer programmer and programmer analyst. One of her passions was painting, and she often gifted paintings to family and friends.

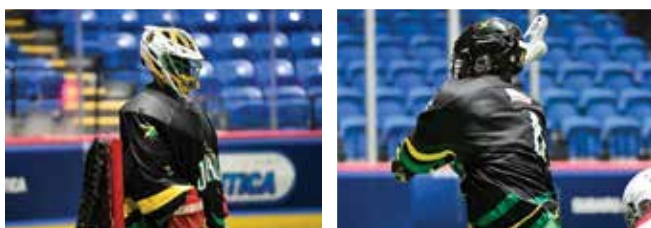
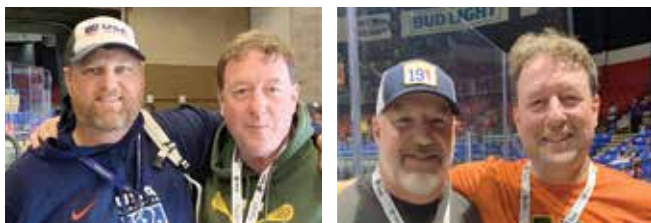
LACROSSE

HERK Pride on Display at 2024 World Lacrosse Box Championships

From September 20–29, 2024, the Nexus Center in Utica hosted the 2024 World Lacrosse Box Championships, highlighting the success and influence of Herkimer College alumni in the world of lacrosse.

The opening ceremonies on September 20 set the stage for a thrilling premier game featuring the Haudenosaunee Nationals vs. Team USA. Herkimer College was proudly represented on both sidelines: former Generals lacrosse standout Stu Montour served as an assistant coach for the Haudenosaunee Nationals, while fellow Herkimer alum and All-American Regy Thorpe '92 led Team USA as head coach.

Herkimer College Head Lacrosse Coach Bob Leary '85 secured a VIP box to celebrate this occasion with numerous Herkimer lacrosse alumni and former coaches, including Paul Wehrum, in attendance. Team USA won the silver medal and had its best finish ever with Thorpe at the helm. Thorpe is currently the assistant coach of the University of Florida women's lacrosse team, and Montour is on the staff of the Halifax Thunderbirds of the National Lacrosse League.



(Top left) Team USA Head Coach Regy Thorpe '92 and Bob Leary '85 (Top right) Herkimer alum and 1992 captain Jeremy Murphy '92 with Bob Leary, (Bottom left) current student Kiereek McLeod, goalie for Team Jamaica and Herkimer College (Bottom right) Channing Thomas '17, captain for Team Jamaica and assistant coach at the University of Bridgeport

The tournament also featured notable contributions from other members of the Herkimer family. Alumnus Channing Thomas '17 captained Team Jamaica, while Nick Suits represented the U.S. Virgin Islands. Current student-athlete Kiereek McLeod made his mark as a goalkeeper for Team Jamaica.

The Generals Lacrosse Club debut in LAXNAI



L to R: Rodney Redeye, Ron Cogan '12, Jeff Powless '01, and David Pavlick '04, and other notable alumni including Rich Dommer, Bob Leary, JoeJoe Brant, and Mikey Miccio.

The Herkimer Lacrosse alumni were well-represented at the 2024 North American Tournament, also known as LAXNAI, the largest international box tournament, held in October at the Nexus Center in Utica. It was the first LAXNAI for the Generals Lacrosse Club which included players pictured above.

BASEBALL



From Japan to Herkimer to the Big Leagues: Taishi Terashima's Journey in Baseball

Taishi Terashima '15, General Studies A.A.

by Rebecca Ruffing

In 2013, Taishi Terashima left his home in Japan to begin a life-changing journey at Herkimer College. Terashima said, "At that time, I had no idea what to expect in a country so different from the one I grew up in. From the moment I landed, everyone at Herkimer welcomed me with open arms and treated me like family, and it never changed until the day I left there."

Playing baseball for the Generals shaped Taishi's character and career. His experience on the field—culminating in an unforgettable trip to the NJCAA World Series—helped him grow as both an athlete and a person. Off the field, Herkimer's faculty ensured his academic success, especially as an international student.

Terashima continued his education at St. Bonaventure University, and then went to work for Japan's Hokkaido Nipponham Fighters as an interpreter, public relations liaison, and analyst for six years. His unique perspective as a former player allowed him to assist with scouting and training. In 2024, he took his talents to the Major League, supporting a former Fighter player as an interpreter as he began his MLB career with the Tampa Bay Rays and then moved on to the Boston Red Sox.

Terashima has since re-signed with the Fighters for 2025 as a professional scout. He credits Herkimer for laying the foundation of his success. "Herkimer transformed my life and career. I'm forever grateful for the experiences and friendships I made there."

"The people I met at Herkimer motivated me to become the best version of myself."

Farone Drafted by San Francisco Giants

On July 16, 2024, Greg Farone '22 was selected in the seventh round of the MLB draft by the San Francisco Giants. The left-handed pitcher is the seventh Herkimer College athlete selected in the MLB draft.

Herkimer College MLB Draft Selections:

2024: Greg Farone, 7th Round, San Francisco Giants

2023: Troy Butler, 20th round, Colorado Rockies

2022: Dale Stanavich '20, 8th round, Miami Marlins

2015: Jacob Shortslef, 26th round, Texas Rangers

2014: Patrick Dorrian '16, 12th round, Atlanta Braves

2012: Hassan Evans '12, 38th round, Chicago Cubs

2012: Willie Gabay '12, 15th round, Tampa Bay Rays

Farone was one of the most dominant pitchers in junior college history, setting the NJCAA record in 2022 with 2.32 strikeouts per inning. Farone

finished his Herkimer career with a 13-0 record while striking out 213 batters over 103 innings pitched.

Farone was named the 2022 NJCAA Division III Pitcher of the Year, Most Valuable Player of the World Series, a 2022 First-Team NJCAA All-American, and the 2022 Region III Male Athlete of the Year.

Following his standout career at Herkimer, Farone transferred to the University of Louisville, and then to the University of Alabama, where he finished his collegiate career.



BASKETBALL



Michele Davis '95, Humanities A.A. *A Trailblazer on and off the Court*

by Rebecca Ruffing

It all began at Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School, where Michele Davis signed herself up for the school's basketball team—despite her mother's initial hesitation. Her grandmother's insistence gave her the chance she craved.

A backyard basketball hoop at her grandmother's house became her haven. Davis spent hours playing with neighborhood kids, honing her skills and love for the game. Eventually she would have a half court in her own backyard.

At Notre Dame High School, Davis' talent blossomed, catching the attention of Herkimer College's coach, John Campagna. While Davis initially chose Nazareth College, Coach Campagna's persistence—and a thoughtful review of pros and cons—led her to choose Herkimer. Financial considerations and the chance for her parents

to see her play more often also factored into her decision.

“I called Coach and said, ‘I’m coming to Herkimer.’ He just kept trying to convince me, and I finally said ‘Did you hear me? I’m coming to Herkimer!’”

At Herkimer, Davis' performance was nothing short of spectacular. She scored 39 points in her first game and helped lead the team to a remarkable 59-8 record over two seasons. Along the way, she earned back-to-back Mountain Valley Conference Player of the Year awards, two NJCAA All-American honors, and set a career scoring record of 1,456 points—a mark that stood nationally for 11 years and remains Herkimer's all-time high.

“Herkimer was definitely the right move for me, both academically and athletically,” Davis says. “I loved my time with my teammates and Coach Campagna, who did so much for me.”

Her excellence at Herkimer led to a scholarship at the University at Albany, where she left her mark as a scorer, defender, and leader. With standout seasons in 1995–96 and 1996–97, Davis' name remains etched in Albany's record books for scoring, three-point shooting, and blocked shots. When her playing days ended, Davis wasn't ready to leave the game. Encouraged by her Albany coach, Mari Warner, she ventured into coaching. After assisting at Utica College and a brief stint at RPI, Davis became the head coach at Utica in 2000. After 25 years, on November 23, 2024, she earned her 300th career win as head coach. She has led the Pioneers to two Empire 8 championships and an NCAA tournament victory in 2010. “I was an English major and didn't know I wanted to coach until the path unfolded,” Davis reflected.

“When you're passionate about something, it works out. The path isn't always straight from A to B.”

Davis' contributions to basketball were recognized on October 6, 2024, when she was inducted into

the Greater Utica Sports Hall of Fame. Now a board member, she cherishes the honor of being celebrated for her impact as both a player and a coach.

“It’s an exciting time for women’s sports,” Davis says. “Seeing the growth and opportunities in women’s basketball is incredible. I loved Pat Summitt growing up when the Final Four was all we could watch. Now, there’s so much more

parity and exposure—it’s amazing to witness the evolution.”

Davis credits Herkimer College as a solid foundation for her journey. From unforgettable teammates like Marla Stagliano ’98 and Missy Chandler ’96 to supportive faculty members like Dr. Anne Greco and Dr. Robert Dorrance, Herkimer left a lasting imprint on her life.

“Don’t underestimate the junior college, I loved my time at Herkimer.”



Matt Lee to be Inducted into NYS Basketball Hall of Fame

Men’s Basketball Head Coach Matt Lee ’01 has been selected for induction into the New York State Basketball Hall of Fame, Class of 2025. In his 21st season as head coach, Lee

has compiled a career record of 502-139 (as of the time of this article).

Lee recently earned his 500th win at Clinton Community College on November 22, 2024. Lee joins the ranks of three other active NJCAA

Division III head coaches to secure 500 career wins and is one of two active head coaches in Region III to do the same.

A former player for the Generals, Lee returned to his alma mater in 2003 for the head coach position. Lee led the 2019 team to win an NJCAA national championship, and his 2024 team finished second in the nation. With Lee at the helm, the team has appeared in 10 national tournaments and won eight regional titles and 10 conference championships.



Herkimer Generals Athletics Ties for Second in NATYCAA Daktronics Cup

Herkimer College tied for second place in the 2023–2024 Daktronics Cup Standings released by the National Alliance of Two-Year College Athletic Administrators (NATYCAA).

Established in 2004, the Daktronics Cup recognizes excellence in two-year college athletics based on success in championship competition across all sports.

The Generals athletics program earned 120.5

points, the most points scored since the 2017–2018 season. Herkimer has finished in the top five all but one of the last 19 years and is the only junior college program to place in the top-10 since the award’s inception 20 years ago.

The Generals competed in NJCAA national tournaments in 11 different sports in 2024.

NATYCAA is the professional organization of two-year college athletics administrators, and membership is open to all two-year institutions from throughout the country. NATYCAA is administered by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA).

From the Executive Director



Dear Alumni and Friends,

Another busy year wrapped up recently for the Herkimer County College Foundation, and I want to thank all of you for your generosity and support!

The focus this year was on establishing an annual “Day of Giving” in support of the College and Foundation. The theme was “\$58 for 58 years,” and we went all in on utilizing electronic methods of communication and social media to create awareness for the event. I’m pleased with the result, particularly for our first attempt, as we took in close to \$20,000. We plan to grow the “Day of Giving” into a dominant fundraising event for the Foundation. It’s done by academic institutions of all sizes, and I feel strongly that it can become a tremendous program for us.

In other news, the Foundation hosted no fewer than five alumni events last year, and we look to continue those and add a few more where we can. It’s fantastic to see so many of you and to hear all your stories and memories of your time at Herkimer!

The 47th (yes 47th!) Herkimer County Arts & Crafts Fair was a resounding success with 2,000 visitors to the one-day event. The Fair remains a major fundraiser for the Foundation and one that should not be missed!

Thank you once again for the support of the Herkimer County College Foundation and the work we do to support Herkimer College and its students. I hope to see and speak with you in the coming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Fowler".

Rob Fowler, Executive Director
Herkimer County College Foundation



THANK YOU TO ALL

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the Herkimer County College
Foundation in 2023–2024.

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Foundation of Herkimer
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Curtis Francisco '72

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Babe's at Harbor Point
Jenni Brennan
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Donald '90
and Nicole **Dutcher**
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\$500–\$999

Anthony Annunziata '91
Jim Brennan
John Campagna '82
Stephen Carcaterra
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Richard Dowe
Julie Fortran
Robert Fowler
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Susan Laterra
Thomas Markel '80
William McDonald
James McLeod '69
North Point Builders, LLC
Edward Staroba
Thomas Stock
Utica Bread
Volo's Auto Supply
Rich Zajac

\$250–\$499

Daniel Denton
Frank Kapusta '83
Christopher Lotito
Marjorie Moore
Pacific Gas & Electric Co.
Joanne Rentz
Rebecca Ruffing
Rebecca Smith '89
Brian Stevens
Stephen Sydoriv
Henry Testa
Paul Wehrum
The Women's Fund of
Herkimer & Oneida County
Scott Zambelli

\$100–\$249

Mark Ainsworth
William Ashby
Alison Bennett
Nadean Blais
Stephen Bolen
Tara Burns
Rosemary Camilleri
Robert Campo
Mark Cantwell
Caleb Capria
Tracy Carroll '89
Susan Clayton
Tiffany Cooper
Yosmeiry Cordero

Megan Dangelico
Anthony DeAngelis
Lee DeAngelis
Bernadette Dwyer
Cody Emerick
Olivia Eppich
Sandra Freer
Amy Getman
Brian Haak '88
Paul Harding
Julio Heredia
Matthew Hickey '99
Justin Hummel '01
Kenneth Hutton
Candice Jang-Berry
Kenneth Kelleher
Jeanne Kozlowski
Richard Lara
Lynne Layman-Wallace
Robert Leary '85
Mark Leffler
Julie Lewis '81
Michelle Lida
Christine Lindquist '91
Donna Linton '84
Ava Lotito
Betty Lotito
Gabriel Lozada
Yaryzahamar Lozada
Wendy Marchese
Tracy Margott
Lorraine Martin
Lorrie Maynard
Jim McAllilster
Joseph McGraw
Meliora Direct Health
Jennifer Mendolia
Judith Mieses
Lewis Newell
Peter Nylin
Dennis Olds
Martin Olivieri
William Pelz
Cynthia Portes
Joan Prymas
Erin Pytell
Kevin Ranagan
Daniel Reardon '75
Amanda Reichardt
Alphonso Robinson
Tim Rogers '84
Rebecca Rosario
Rosalie Sadallah
Robert Salamone
Darcy W. Soi
Sabrina Spalding
Michael Stalteri
Tracy Staroba
Paul Stefanik

John Stock
Adeline Vedder
Mark Vivacqua '79
Jennifer Votruba
Darlene Welch
Robin Woodhead
Jackie Woudenberg
Anthony Yamin

Up to \$99

Aaron Alford '93
Karen Ayouch
Colleen Bentley-Ciccone
Dewey Boyer
Cindy Brewer '03
Michael Brown
Mary Ann Carroll '80
Jody Edick
Paula Fallon '95
Alan Groves
Jennifer Hauer '86
Shari Hunt
Mark Kaucher '75
Barbara Kinney '78
John Kolodziej III
Linda Lamb
Ed Lynch
Matthew Marrotta '12
Steven Newvine '77
Raymond Osborne
Suzanne Paddock '90
Blake Pitcher '99
Katherine Pollard
Lynne Porter
Tracey Pounds
Theresa Ricci '78
Andrea Rosenblatt-
Lazarus '95
Patrick Russell
Maureen Seaman
Wendy Seifried
Michael Sidoran
Barbara Smith
George Smith
Debra Sutliff
Temple Beth Joseph
Richard Ubeda

If you made a donation
from September 1, 2023
to August 31, 2024 and
were inadvertently omitted
from this list, please accept
our sincere apologies and
notify the Herkimer County
College Foundation Office
at 315-866-0300, ext.
8268 to ensure records
are updated.

NOTABLE AWARDS



55 Years of Service

SHARON GREGORY

of Ilion, NY, is the longest-serving employee in the history of Herkimer County Community College, with 56 years of service as of January 15, 2025. She began as a stenographer for the dean of administration and is currently the administrative assistant to the senior vice president for administration and finance. Gregory has supported five different senior administrators throughout her tenure. Gregory possesses a wealth of institutional and community knowledge and serves as an unofficial historian for the College, recalling valuable important details regarding people, programs, policies, issues, and events. She is a trustworthy confidante and sounding board for her supervisor and colleagues, always willing to lend a hand and offer support.



NJCAA Athletic Trainer of the Year

KYLE ROEPNACK

was named 2023–24 NJCAA Athletic Trainer of the Year at the NJCAA Convention, recognizing his ability to create the optimal student-athlete experience on our campus while performing duties beyond the institutional level. Roepnack is the Region III Health and Safety Committee chair, NJCAA Student-Athlete Safety and Welfare Council member, and the NJCAA representative on the National Athletic Trainer's Association Intercollegiate Council for Sports Medicine.



YWCA Outstanding Woman in Education

DR. JENNIFER ADJODHA-EVANS

was honored as an Outstanding Woman in the category of Education at the YWCA Mohawk Valley's 2024 Salute to Outstanding Women celebration. Since joining the faculty in 2017, Adjodha-Evans has prepared hundreds of students for careers and advanced study in the STEM field through classroom and laboratory instruction, advisement, and extracurricular activities. In her work with the DEI Committee, and more recently as the chief diversity officer, Adjodha-Evans has helped enhance inclusivity and equity through various programs and initiatives that bolster historically marginalized individuals. Adjodha-Evans played a critical role in securing a National Science Foundation grant for the Central New York Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) Alliance, creating pathways for under-represented minority students to continue their education and succeed in the STEM field more easily. She also organized a 2023 trip to the Dominican Republic for Herkimer College students where they worked in various healthcare settings.

Employees Recognized for Service

Congratulations to the following employees for reaching milestones of service in 2023–2024!

10 YEARS

Alfred Berowski
Marilyn Downs
Robert Fowler
April Harris

20 YEARS

Cindy Brewer '03
Jason Brown
Katherine Scanlon '01

30 YEARS

Kathleen Netti

55 YEARS

Sharon Gregory

CONGRATULATIONS!

Faculty Promotions

Rabab Hassan: from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor of Electrical Technology
Jennifer Herzog: from Associate Professor to Professor of Biology
John McLean, Ph.D.: from Associate Professor to Professor of Social Science
Lindsey Taube: from Associate Professor to Professor of Mathematics

Appointments & Promotions

Matthew Lee '01, Assistant Director of Athletics
Christine Lindquist, Financial Aid Assistant
Sean Lynch '21, Coordinator of Athletics & Physical Education
Isabella Fasolo '19, '20, Administrative Assistant to the Dean of Students/Director of Athletics
Edward Cummings, Building Maintenance Mechanic
Jennifer Mann '12, Technical Assistant
Sharon Powell '10, Advisement Center Specialist
Matthew Kehoe, Groundskeeper
Michael Talarico, Electrician
Alesha Bowman, Director of Advancing Success in Associate Pathways (ASAP)
Aileen Judd, Librarian for Technical Services
Brenda Carney '01, Senior Advisement Center Specialist, ASAP
Rosemarie Etienne, Coordinator of Refresh & Restart Program
Melissa Peek, Coordinator of Transfer Pathways (part-time)

Christopher Young, Building Maintenance Helper
Benjamin E. Glindmyer, Research & Assessment Specialist
Frank Drapalski, Research & Assessment Specialist
Brian Harper, Groundskeeper
Shayla A. Staves, Technical Assistant – Advisement Center/College Now
Lynn Dodge, Assistant Bursar
Mary Brewer, Assistant Director of Human Resources
Angelo Fatta, Technology Support Technician
Laura Simonelli '11, Assistant Director of Marketing & Communications
Jenna Faulkner '23, Admissions Assistant
Steve Luby, Admissions Assistant
Jennifer Jones, Staff Accountant
Mike Harrington '15, Admissions Assistant

Retirements

Aaron Alford '93, Bursar, April 20, 2024 – 24 years of service
John Lojba, HVAC Mechanic, April 29, 2024 – 26 years of service
Julie Todd, Assistant Director of Human Resources, August 26, 2024 – 24 years of service
Sandra Mowers, Staff Accountant, August 30, 2024 – 25 years of service
René Roth, Senior Account Clerk, June 14, 2024 – 15 years of service

2024 SUNY CHANCELLOR'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

SUNY's Excellence awards are designed for faculty and staff who personify professional excellence and serve as role models not only for the State University of New York, but for the College as well. They publicly acknowledge superior professional achievement while encouraging the pursuit of excellence.



Aaron Alford '93, Bursar, Excellence in Professional Service

Alford joined the Financial Aid staff in 2000 and retired from the position of bursar in April 2024. He brought a positive attitude to work daily, and he added to a strong morale within the office and excellent working relationships with other departments. Alford always gave his fullest and best effort to streamline processes, increase efficiencies, and provide clear information to students.



Robert "Bob" Gassmann, Professor, Communication and Media, Excellence in Teaching

Gassmann joined the faculty in 1990 and taught in the Radio and Television Broadcasting program for 27 years, and most recently in the Communication and Media program. He is an engaged instructor who strives to grow professionally and pedagogically. Students rely on him for his expertise and for forging professional connections. Gassmann is always accessible and sees real possibilities for intellectual growth in every one of his students, ready to help them discover new things.



Shea Manley '01, Campus Peace Officer, Excellence in Classified Service

Manley has been employed in the Campus Safety department since 2003. In addition to his role as campus peace officer, he is a field training officer and R.A.D. (Rape Aggression Defense) officer. Manley is known for putting students first and remaining calm in all situations. He continually strives to ensure the safety of our campus community and has received several commendations throughout his years at Herkimer College, including a lifesaving award.

With the addition of these three employees, a total of 83 Herkimer College faculty and staff have been honored with the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence. Scan the code to see the complete list of award recipients.



FACTS & FIGURES

Enrollment (Fall 2023):

Total Headcount	2,219
Full-Time	42%
Part-Time	58%

Campus:

Herkimer Campus	36%
Internet Academy (100% online)	19%
College Now (Concurrent Enrollment)	41%
P-TECH (Early College High School)	1%
College In Prison	4%

Gender:

Female	56%
Male	44%

Age:

24 and under	82%
25 and above	18%

Residency:

In-State	95%
Out-of-State	3%
International	2%

Race/Ethnicity:

American Indian or Alaska Native	1.3%
Asian	1.9%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%
Black or African American	10.2%
Hispanic/Latino	6.4%
Non-Resident Alien	1.9%
Two or More Races	1.7%
Unreported	6.1%
White (and other)	70.3%

Faculty & Staff (Fall 2023):

Full-Time	144
Part-Time (excluding College Now)	109

Student-to-Faculty Ratio: 16:1

2023–24 Graduates:

Degrees	263
Certificates	23

89% of first-time, full-time students (2022–23) received some form of **financial aid**
(Source: IPEDS)

To view Herkimer College's financial report for 2023–2024, visit herkimer.edu/financial.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Art

Art Studio A.S.

Business

Accounting A.A.S. *
Business Administration A.A.S. *
Business Administration A.S. *
Competitive Analytics A.A.S.
Esports Management A.A.S.
Fashion Buying & Merchandising A.A.S.
Human Resource Management A.A.S. *
Logistics Management Essentials Microcredential **
Marketing A.A.S. *
Quality Assurance-Business A.S. *
Small Business Management A.A.S. *
Small Business Management Certificate *
Sports & Recreation Management A.A.S.
Supply Chain Management A.A.S. **

Communication Arts

Communication and Media A.S.
Music Industry A.S.

Criminal Justice & Law

Crime & Intelligence Analysis A.A.S. *
Criminal Justice A.A.S. *
Criminal Justice A.S. *
Cybersecurity & Digital Forensics A.S. *
Emergency Management Certificate **
Forensic Investigations A.A.S.
Legal Studies A.A.S. *
Paralegal Studies Certificate *
Pre-Employment Police Basic Training Certificate

Education

Childhood Education A.S.
Early Childhood A.A.S.
Physical Education A.S.

Healthcare & Service

Health Professions A.S.
Health Services Management Technology A.A.S. **
Human Services A.A.S. *
Medical Coding - Transcriptionist Certificate **
Physical Therapist Assistant A.A.S.

Liberal Arts & Sciences

General Studies A.A. *
Humanities A.A. *
Psychology A.A. *
Science A.S.
Social Science A.A. *

STEM

Computer and Network Security A.A.S.
Computer Science A.S.
Electrical Technology A.A.S.
Engineering Science A.S.
Quality Assurance - Science A.S. *
Science A.S.

*also offered online and on campus **online only



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Men's Soccer Alumni Weekend

The 1994 and 1999 men's soccer teams returned to campus on September 14, 2024 to celebrate their 30- and 25-year anniversaries of their national championships. Events included attending the Herkimer vs. FMCC home game, a golf outing, and dinner at Babe's in Utica.

Kneeling (L to R): Keith Tucci '91, Jimmy Vanderbeek '91, Tim Smith, Jeff Heeder '04, Kevin Lake '91, Mike Capes '02, Randolph Butler '19, Pepe Aragon Jr., Standing (L to R): Kevin Mellon '01, Ryan Brooks-Newton '09, Casey Bartlett '07, Donnie Dutcher '90, Todd Stoller '90, Jason Horton '92, Rick Mussi '95, Mark Tucci '91, Pepe Aragon '91, Jason Doi '06, Ian Cassidy '00, Anton Mullen '19, Jason Palkovic '05, Dylan Pederson