



THE MAGAZINE OF CENTENARY UNIVERSITY

SUMMER 2022

CENTENARIAN

Beyond the Gold



Inside Equine National Champs

RUNWAY READY

Centenary University fashion majors strutted their stuff on the runway in the David and Carol Lackland Center during the University's annual Fashion Show. The event highlights the latest creations from seniors who are ready to make their mark in the fashion industry.

Photo: Bruce Murphy, Ed.D.



WELCOME



The Courage to Lead

Our world is undergoing tremendous change. Seismic shifts in the economy, the workplace, the delivery of goods and services, and much more demand well-trained professionals with the skills and fortitude to solve problems and lead change. That is the mark of a Centenary University graduate.

Overcoming challenges is nothing new to many of our students. Some are first generation college students, while others face financial difficulties, physical or learning differences, or unique family circumstances. At Centenary, they learn quickly that those challenges can often be precursors to tremendous professional and personal success. That message came through loud and clear in a yearlong Olympic-themed series of lectures. The cover story of this issue, "Beyond the Gold," discusses how champions, including Olympic and Paralympic gold

medalists, leveraged adversity to achieve excellence. The takeaway was clear: Character and resilience are the true marks of great leaders.

As a University community, Centenary leads by example. This issue also includes an article on the University's new Master of Arts in Happiness Studies—the first program of its kind in the world—which has garnered more than 200 applications from prospective students, as well as national and international media attention. Other stories highlight Gold Dome Award winner **Octavia J. Brown, Ed.M., D.H.L. '08 HA**, a trailblazer in the field of therapeutic riding who was honored at our annual scholarship reception, and Centenary's national rankings in leadership and public administration, as well as graduation rates.

Throughout this University's history, Centenarians have never backed down from a challenge. Each new generation has faced tumultuous world events with the confidence, courage, and resolve to bring about positive transformational change. Today's Cyclones are no different. The Class of 2022 is now poised to make a meaningful difference in their communities and the world. Their intelligence and determination give me great hope for the future.

Dr. Bruce Murphy
President

2. University News

6. Commencement 2022

8. Centenary Spotlight

10. Beyond the Gold

A yearlong Olympic-themed series of lectures aimed at unpacking the mindset of champions.

14. Advancement.

16. Athletics

National championship for Centenary's ANRC team.

18. Class News and Notes

ON THE COVER

Olympic gold medalist and commencement speaker **Heather O'Reilly '22 HA** with Cyclone goalkeeper **Chelsea Estacio '23**.

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A Degree to Smile About



President Bruce Murphy, Ed.D., left, and Tal Ben-Shahar, Ph.D., co-founder of the Happiness Studies Academy

Centenary University made history this semester with the introduction of the world's first Master of Arts in Happiness Studies, which is slated to launch this fall. University President **Bruce Murphy, Ed.D.**, announced the new advanced degree on March 18 at the World Happiness Summit in Miami, Fla., to mark the United Nations International Day of Happiness.

The 30-credit, fully virtual academic program is designed for mid-career business leaders, counselors, human resources professionals, and others who seek to improve the well-being of organizations and individuals. The interdisciplinary program, which has been approved by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, incorporates psychology, neuroscience, economics, literature, theology, music, and other disciplines.

"Centenary's Master of Arts in Happiness Studies is designed for leaders who are committed to personal, interpersonal, organizational, and societal happiness,"

explained Dr. Murphy. "Grounded in science and research, this new degree will study happiness and resilience to prepare graduates to make an impact in a wide range of fields."

Experts say there's never been a better time to advance the study of happiness in society. Recent world events have increased stress levels among people of all ages. In a February/March 2022 survey, the American Psychological Association concluded that the war in Ukraine and rising inflation have compounded the extreme stress, loss, and grief Americans are still experiencing as a result of the ongoing pandemic. In the national poll, 87 percent of respondents reported that they feel like there's been a constant stream of crises—with no break—over the past two years.

The program will be directed by internationally renowned expert and author **Tal Ben-Shahar, Ph.D.**, who is the co-founder of the Happiness Studies Academy. Dr. Ben-Shahar achieved national recognition two decades ago when he taught one of Harvard University's most popular classes, on happiness. Since then, he has also taught at Columbia University, written several best-selling books on the subject, and appeared as a happiness studies expert on major media including *The Daily Show* with **Jon Stewart**, CNN, the BBC, and *Today* on NBC.

Since the announcement, the new Master of Arts in Happiness Studies has garnered national and international media attention. At press time, more than 200 people had applied to begin studies this fall. That's not surprising to Dr. Murphy: "To be sure, we are in trying times—pandemic, depression, war—but these are not unique times. We have had such challenges throughout history, and we have sought to find ways to weather these storms. At Centenary, we have developed a curriculum to address this need and we've tapped the expertise of our own talented faculty, as well as one of the great minds on the subject of happiness studies."

SHINING MOMENTS

Each spring, Centenary University recognizes students for leadership, academic excellence, and independent research—and this year, there was plenty to celebrate. This spring, their accomplishments were showcased at the annual Academic Awards and Academic Symposium, both in April, and the annual Leadership Awards in May.



Leader Among Leaders

Centenary University's Master of Arts in Leadership and Public Administration (MLPA) was recently named among the nation's top online public administration programs by two independent rankings organizations.

Intelligent.com recognized Centenary as the fifth best overall program in the United States, as well as the program with the fastest completion time. In a similar listing, OnlineMastersDegrees.org ranked the University's program 33rd in a listing of leading public administration programs. Among programs cited, the organization noted that Centenary is first in the nation for students receiving institutional aid and third for institutional aid awarded per student.

"This is a testament to the quality of our program, the caliber of our students, and the support Centenary provides," said **Jeffrey Carter, Ph.D.**, graduate program director for leadership and public administration. "It's also not the first time this program has gained national recognition. Centenary alumni go on to make their mark in the public sector in New Jersey, and beyond."

Centenary's MLPA prepares professionals to advance into supervisory and management positions in a wide variety of career fields, from public and private sector employees to police, firefighters, military personnel, and healthcare workers. The University offers flexible scheduling for the 30-credit program, including traditional classes at its Hackettstown campus, as well as an accelerated online program. Sworn law enforcement officers, full-time fire service personnel, and government employees receive a 30 percent tuition discount.



ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

Centenary University hosted sixth graders from Blairstown Elementary School for an interactive Shakespeare-themed day on campus in April. The middle schoolers attended the original play, *Shake It Up Shakespeare*, written by Centenary University Associate Professor of Theatre Arts **Stephen Davis** and performed by alumni of the University's theatre program. Workshops in stage combat, theatrical makeup, dance in theatre, and acting followed the production. The program is part of a Shakespeare Intensive for middle school students developed by Davis.



Career Crusader

"The Boy Who Loved Batman" was the topic of Centenary University's Gates-Ferry Distinguished Visiting Lecture series on Feb. 24. **Michael E. Uslan** discussed his career journey from blue-collar New Jersey kid to co-executive producer of all the modern Batman movies.



HEAVY HITTERS

Centenary University's Sports and Entertainment Management Conference was back on campus April 8 after going virtual for two years due to the pandemic. **Kelly Higgins**, vice president of partnership marketing for the US Soccer Federation, delivered the keynote at the 11th annual event. Organized by Centenary students, the conference brings industry professionals together with high school and college students to build career knowledge and skills through workshops, panel discussions, roundtables, and interviews for internships and other employment opportunities.



When it comes to graduation rates, Centenary University is at the top of the class. In the latest U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard, the University was #1 in its peer group for graduation rate, scoring eight points above the national average. Plus, the survey reported that recent Centenary graduates earn more than the national median.



Graduation Rate

Median Alumni Earnings

CENTENARY UNIVERSITY

64%

\$51,404

NATIONAL AVERAGE*

56%

\$47,976

* 4-year schools



CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2022

Centenary University awarded degrees to 465 graduates at its 147th commencement, which was held as three separate in-person and live-streamed ceremonies on campus. Bachelor's and associate degree candidates received their diplomas during two ceremonies on May 7, while master's and doctoral degree recipients were celebrated on May 4.

Three-time Olympic gold medalist, former US Women's National Soccer Team (USWNT) member, and FIFA World Cup champion **Heather O'Reilly '22 HA** delivered the commencement address at the two undergraduate ceremonies. She was presented with a Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, by Centenary University President **Bruce Murphy, Ed.D.**, in recognition of her extraordinary contributions to international sport and her leadership in championing equal pay for the USWNT.

“Your quest for mastery of the human spirit will never end. The striving truly is the victory.”

Citing the Olympic motto, *Citius, Altius, Fortius*—which means Faster, Higher, Stronger—O'Reilly urged the Class of 2022 to be bold in striving for excellence, overcoming challenges, and fighting injustice. “There is no magic formula to being a world class athlete, nor is there one for reaching your own crazy ambitions,” she said. “The best anyone can come up with is: Dream, set goals, and crush them. Then do it again...I have learned this through my athletic pursuits. You can achieve goals, but you will never achieve mastery. Your quest for mastery of the human spirit will never end. The striving truly is the victory.”

Alissa Brianna Mor '22 of West Milford, NJ, who was awarded a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a minor in chemistry, was valedictorian of the Class of 2022. In her valedictory address, Mor lauded her classmates for persevering with their college education through the global pandemic. She told her classmates, “Winston Churchill stated, ‘Give us the tools, and we will finish the job.’ Centenary has given us all of the educational tools and now it is our job to apply those tools to our future plans.”



Meet the Valedictorian



Alissa Mor '22 has been interested in science since childhood, when her fifth-grade teacher had the class dissect owl pellets. “I was hooked,” the West Milford resident recalls. After spending two summers as a Centenary University Summer Scholar in high school, Mor initially thought she wanted to attend a large university. Then, she saw the 300-seat lecture halls and balked: “My mom suggested that I take a second look at Centenary. I had really liked it. Centenary’s labs only have 24

seats, so you can get to know your professors.”

Centenary’s smaller size proved fortuitous for Mor early in freshman year, when she realized that the pre-veterinary track she had chosen wasn’t for her. She consulted with her adviser, **Lauren Bergey, Ph.D.**, dean of the School of Natural, Health, Social, and Behavioral Sciences, who suggested that Mor check out careers in human medicine by shadowing a nearby orthopedist, and later, an ophthalmologist. Through those experiences, Mor got a behind-the-scenes look at the daily interactions between doctors and their patients, insurance companies, and medical technicians.

“I loved every minute,” says Mor, who earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a minor in chemistry. “I plan to work for two years as a medical assistant while applying to medical school. I know that I want to be a surgeon of some kind.”

For her Honors Program Capstone Project, Mor conducted independent research on spotted lantern fly microbiomes alongside **Amanda Tokash-Peters, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of biology. She also became a campus leader, serving as president of TriBeta, the biology honor society, and vice president of the Student Government Association and Evergreen, the University’s environmental club. She is also a First Year Leader and member of the Pre-professional Club and Leaders in Service. Interacting with other student leaders—many of whom have gone on to leading veterinary and medical schools—helped to shape Mor’s career goals: “Older students really mentored me. I’m so inspired by them.”



The Write Stuff



Strong writing is a top three skill for today's employers, according to a recent survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers. The reason: So-called "soft skills" like clear writing, critical thinking, and creativity became essential in navigating the uncertainties of doing business during the pandemic. This renewed emphasis on writing skills is no surprise

to **Erin Andersen, Ph.D.**, an assistant professor of English at Centenary University and director of the University's Writing Collaboratory, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

"There is growing recognition that effective writing is just as critical to success as the technical skills associated with specific careers, like those required in STEM fields," noted Dr. Andersen, who became director of The Writing Collaboratory in 2017.

"What we do supports the growth of essential writing skills in Centenary students for their professional future."

The Writing Collaboratory combines the top three skills named by employers in the survey—good writing, leadership, and teamwork—to strengthen student writing across all majors. Trained peer consultants provide free one-on-one tutoring in person and through video chats, as well as in group sessions

and workshops. Dr. Andersen recruits student tutors across the broad representation of majors offered at Centenary, and the staff is racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse.

"There is growing recognition that effective writing is just as critical to success as the technical skills associated with specific careers, like those required in STEM fields."

"Strong writing skills are important for tutors, but it's not enough to be a talented writer," she explained, noting that tutors can also participate in and present scholarly research on writing center pedagogy. "They also need to have compassion and a desire to do outreach. Serving as a peer tutor provides students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills in a structured, safe environment. Tutoring really helps both parties in the interaction."

As The Writing Collaboratory enters its second decade, Dr. Andersen has future plans to form partnerships with Hackettstown area middle and high schools for Centenary tutors to assist with English as a Second Language and other programs for multilingual students: "I've been studying some successful models of collaborations between writing centers and communities that are similar to Hackettstown. I think there's a lot of potential there for the future."

GROWTH MINDSET



David P. Dauwalder, Ph.D., knows a little something about growing academic programs. Throughout his career, he has held senior administrative roles at several universities, implementing and growing online and off-site academic programs. As the new interim vice president of academic affairs at Centenary University, he plans to leverage that experience as Centenary continues to introduce new, market-driven initiatives.

"Achieving the right mix of on-ground, hybrid, and online courses in this post-pandemic environment is a challenge faced by every college and university," said Dr. Dauwalder, who will begin his tenure July 1. He replaces **Amy D'Olivo, Ph.D.**, who is retiring June 30. "Addressing broad sets of challenges in a variety of institutions and situations has allowed me to draw from these experiences in working with and leading colleagues to move universities forward. At Centenary University, this experience will be useful in

identifying additional areas of opportunity in the long term."

Dr. Dauwalder most recently served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Central Connecticut State University. Throughout his career, he has held senior administrative roles at institutions including the University of the Pacific, Woodbury University, the University of New Haven, California State University—Stanislaus, Central Washington University, and California State University—Los Angeles.

TO SERVE AND PROTECT



Douglas Compton, Ed.D., left, and Col. Patrick J. Callahan



When it comes to receiving career advice, Centenary University criminal justice majors go right to the top: Col. **Patrick J. Callahan**, superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, recently visited a criminal justice course designed to encourage exploration of the job opportunities and issues facing law enforcement today. Called **Careers in Criminal Justice**, the course is taught by **Douglas Compton, Ed.D.**, assistant professor of criminal justice.

Col. Callahan said outreach is critical to his role, both to strengthen community relations and recruit the best trooper candidates: "This gives students a greater understanding of what our 100+ years of service look like and how we have evolved over time. It is important to let our citizens and students know what the State Police is all about—it's not just up and down the Turnpike. There are 120 specialized jobs, and hopefully, I've piqued the interest of some students."

Other guest speakers during the spring semester—including Morris Plains Police Chief **Michael Koroski '07** and Somerset County Sheriff's Officer **Sean Kumpf '10**—represent a broad range of careers in the field, including municipal police, sheriffs, the U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, county prosecutor, homeland security, state corrections, juvenile detention, court administrator, and judge. "My goal is to encourage students to explore as much as possible early in their college careers, so we can get them on the right track later with internships and job placement," Dr. Compton said. "This course teaches students about the different areas of the criminal justice system, from law enforcement to the court system, corrections, and well-known entities such as the New Jersey State Police."



Officer Sean Kumpf '10



Chief Michael Koroski '07

Beyond the

Gold



Olympic Women's Volleyball Coach Karch Kiraly



Three-time Olympic gold medalist Heather O'Reilly '22 HA

The recent Olympic Games provided a unique backdrop for a year-long intensive that connected world class athletes, coaches, and event organizers with Centenary University students to unpack the mindset of champions. The goal: Pinpoint the qualities it takes to succeed on the world stage. Guest speakers emphasized life skills like character, resilience, and visualization that transcend the glory of gold medals.

Students enrolled in Centenary's sports and entertainment management program have long benefited from one-on-one interactions with professionals in the field. Associate Professor of Sports and Entertainment Management David Perricone, Ph.D., '22 regularly invites speakers from professional sports franchises, including many Centenary alumni, into the classroom. This year's Olympic-themed speakers elevated that conversation.

"They have an important message for our students: If you think like an Olympian, you can succeed in whatever you do," explained Dr. Perricone, noting that the presentations were open to all Centenary students. "It doesn't matter whether you're an athlete or working behind the scenes to make the Games happen. We've had Centenary students and graduates work on some of the world's leading sporting events, including the Super Bowl and the US Open. Who knows, maybe the Olympics will be next?"

Dr. Perricone and a team of administrators, including Centenary First Lady Jeanne Murphy, Assistant Professor

of Chemistry Ahmet Kukrek, Ph.D., and members of the University's athletics and coaching staffs, recruited an impressive roster of athletes and sport professionals to share their stories with Centenary students. Presenters included Karch Kiraly, coach of the 2020 gold medal winning USA women's volleyball team; Nick Mayhugh, a Team USA triple gold medal sprinter at the 2020 Paralympic Games; Greg Harney, a former member of the US Olympic Committee and president of Global Sports Partners; Paula Welch, Ed.D., a former member of the US Olympic Committee and professor emerita at the

"They have an important message for our students: If you think like an Olympian, you can succeed in whatever you do."

University of Florida whose research focuses on the Olympics and sport history; and Marykate Halm, a graphic designer for the US Olympic & Paralympic Committee. In addition, three-time Olympic gold medalist and former US Women's National Soccer Team (USWNT) member Heather O'Reilly '22 HA delivered this year's commencement address on May 7.

The wife of University President Bruce Murphy, Ed.D., Jeanne Murphy is a retired US Army colonel who has served on the US Olympic and Paralympic Games Committee. She said, "Connecting with real Olympians—competitors,

From left, Heather O'Reilly '22 HA and Jeanne Murphy



Paralympic triple gold medalist Nick Mayhugh

coaches, and the great minds behind the Games—is a timely and meaningful way for students to learn important life lessons. The glory we see at the Games is the culmination of many years of training, both physically and mentally. Yet, it's the stuff you don't see that really shapes character."

"It's not about being—it's about becoming. Staying open to growth is incredibly important if you want to be successful."

As a member of the US Women's National Soccer Team (USWNT), O'Reilly certainly earned her share of accolades. Surprisingly, the New Jersey native doesn't consider her Olympic gold medals or FIFA Women's World Cup championship the pinnacle of her soccer career. Instead, she points to the adversity she's faced as critical to shaping her character. "In my life, I've checked off a lot of boxes in terms of winning medals and championships," said O'Reilly, who was coached as a youngster by Kevin Davies, head coach of the Cyclone women's soccer team. "But all of that can still leave you feeling unfulfilled, even though you achieve these wonderful things. Instead, I've found myself sitting in the space of accomplishing certain goals, but never achieving mastery. For me, it's more about the lessons you learn about resilience and overcoming adversity than about winning."

Many of the speakers pointed to two qualities—visualizing success and remaining open to growth—as characteristics of true champions. In an Olympic year marked by a worldwide pandemic, preparation was critical to brace for quick pivots necessitated by COVID-19. Harney, president of an internationally recognized sport consulting firm, shared that he has long subscribed to the practice of running through all possible scenarios when planning major events such as the Olympic Games.

Last summer at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, Team USA won its first ever women's volleyball gold medal. As the team's coach, Kiraly led his players and coaches through a "pre-mortem" before the most recent Games to prepare for the unexpected. The exercise became instrumental to the team's win after a member of the coaching staff tested positive for COVID-19. A three-time Olympic gold medalist in men's indoor volleyball and beach volleyball before the 2020 Summer Games, Kiraly told students that the key to the team's success was a strong growth mindset. "We don't just think about the tactical skills of volleyball, although they are very important," said Kiraly. "It's not about being—it's about becoming. Staying open to growth is incredibly important if you want to be successful."

Even the best laid plans can derail near-certain successes, as Paralympian Nick Mayhugh discovered at age 14. A standout soccer player as a youth, Mayhugh

had high hopes of playing for an NCAA Division I college and eventually going pro—until a grand mal seizure at age 14 led to a diagnosis of cerebral palsy. "I felt like I'd lost everything," the champion sprinter told Centenary students.

Mayhugh rallied quickly, with a fierce determination to achieve his dreams. First, he rebooted his soccer career, eventually playing for Division I Radford University in Virginia and the U.S. Paralympic 7-a-side national team. Then, after finding that soccer isn't part of the 2020 Paralympics program, Mayhugh accepted an invitation by USA Track & Field to train for the 2020 Tokyo Games. His new coach initially laughed when the inexperienced sprinter announced that he planned to win a gold in Tokyo. In preparing for the 2020 Paralympic Games, where he set two world records on his way to three gold medals and a silver, Mayhugh visualized himself setting a world record long before arriving in Tokyo. Now, before every race Mayhugh tells himself, "I'm the best" over and over on the starting line. "It resonates in your subconscious and you perform better," explained Mayhugh, who was invited to speak at Centenary by Josh Spivack, head coach of the Cyclone men's soccer team.



Heather O'Reilly '22 HA and Cyclone Women's Soccer Coach Kevin Davies

The defining lessons shared by Olympians through this year's lecture series have the power to shape a new generation of achievers on and off the playing field. Meghan Barone '22, a member of the Centenary women's basketball and cross-country teams, said, "It was truly inspiring and eye opening to learn about Nick's journey to the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games, as well as the challenges he has faced. What truly stuck with me is how he has had multiple challenges, but he always kept telling himself that he could succeed." Men's soccer player Mathias O'Neill '23 added: "While the mentality of a successful athlete can be easy to have during practice, it cannot begin and end on the field."

For Jeanne Murphy, Centenary's Olympic-themed year is all about viewing sport through a broader lens—the triumph of international cooperation and the years of training and perseverance of the athletes—as well as important life lessons for new generations about diversity and acceptance. "To me, sport, especially the Olympics, is global," said Murphy, who was tapped for commentary by Fox News prior to the recent Winter Games. "It's all about the beauty of human performance and nations coming together collegially. That's a message we can all embrace."



CU AT THE STABLES



Centenary University honored an icon in the field of therapeutic riding at its annual scholarship reception on June 2. **Octavia J. Brown, Ed.M., D.H.L. '08 HA** was presented with the Gold Dome Award—the University’s highest honor—during the event, more than \$100,000 was raised for unrestricted scholarships that provide tuition assistance to students with financial need.

“Octavia Brown has made a positive impact on the lives of so many through her tireless commitment to therapeutic riding. We are proud to honor Dr. Brown for the tremendous impact she has made, both at our University and around the world.”

Born in England, Dr. Brown is a founder of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH Intl.), an international organization that provides equine-assisted services to more than 53,300 people—including 6,000 veterans—with special needs. At Centenary University, where she is professor *emeritus* of equine studies, Dr. Brown also founded TRAC (Therapeutic Riding at Centenary), an accredited program that introduces riding and horsemanship to children and adults with disabilities. Through Operation Centaur, Centenary also provides equine-assisted education and therapy for veterans and their families.



Octavia J. Brown, Ed.M., D.H.L. '08 HA, left, with riding student and certified PATH instructor, Tracy Cole

At the event, Dr. Brown discussed the growth of the field of therapeutic riding over the past several decades: “Being a pioneer in the field of equine assisted services means that I have seen the profession grow from a grassroots group of well-meaning people to a worldwide profession serving thousands of people with disabilities and challenges of all sorts. One of my greatest joys is watching students whose careers I have influenced carry the work to new levels of excellence—as well as thinking of the many people I have known who have benefited from the amazing therapeutic partnership offered by our horses and ponies.”

Centenary President **Bruce Murphy, Ed.D.**, said of the honoree, “Octavia Brown has made a positive impact on the lives of so many through her tireless commitment to therapeutic riding. We are proud to honor Dr. Brown for the tremendous impact she has made, both at our University and around the world.”



From left, Wolfgang Gstattenbauer '84/13 HA, John Johnson, Maj. George W. Paffendorf '07 HA, Nancy Johns Paffendorf '79/81/06, and Mark Avondoglio



From left, Bruce Murphy, Ed.D., Jeanne Murphy, and Rochelle Makela-Goodman '97



Octavia J. Brown, Ed.M., D.H.L. '08 HA and Karen Brittle

Healing through Horses

The Centenary University Equestrian Center hosted the 2022 PATH International Region 2 Conference, which was held June 3-5. The three-day event featured workshops, opportunities for networking, and a luncheon with a keynote address from **Chris Irwin**, an internationally renowned horseman, behaviorist, and best-selling author. In addition, a special reception was held for Centenary alumni. PATH International leads the advancement of professional equine-assisted services to support more than 53,000 special needs individuals, including nearly 6,000 veterans, through a variety of equine-assisted services.



National Qualifier



Wrestler **Xavier Pena '24** made some noise this season, qualifying for the NCAA National Championship in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Competing in the 141-pound weight bracket, Pena made the Cyclones proud, decisively winning his first match. He later waged two tough battles, but ultimately dropped contests to the nation's first and sixth ranked seeds.

"I'm extremely proud of Xavier," said Head Wrestling Coach **John Garriques**. "He overcame a lot just to get here. There were a few times this year that he could have just packed it in due to injury, but he pushed through. In his first season, he got a win at nationals, gave the number one seed all he could handle, and lost on a controversial call that could have gone either way. I think the most important thing is that he got the experience. Next year, we come back and land on the podium."

Pena earned his spot to nationals with a third-place finish at Mideast Regionals, where Cyclones **Jacy Jones '22**, **Cameron Bruffy '22**, and **Keevon Berry '24** all placed in the top eight in their respective weight classes.

Record Career



Chris LaBelle '21 has certainly left his mark on the Centenary University basketball court. The graduate guard—who led the Cyclones to the 2020 Colonial States Athletic Conference final—finished his college basketball career with five school records. LaBelle now ranks first in the Centenary record books for career free throws made (545) and free throw attempts (715), and this season he was among the top four in the nation in both categories.

With the Cyclones now in the Atlantic East Conference, LaBelle finished his college career first at Centenary in assists (449), field goals

made (614), and field goal attempts (1,462), as well as second in points (1,963), steals (154), and points per game (19.6). In previous seasons, LaBelle broke the Cyclone record for single season and single game points, assists, free throws made, and free throws attempted.



Meghan Barone '22, left, and Megan O'Brien

DOUBLEHEADER HONORS

If you're a Cyclones fan, chances are you've seen the work of Centenary University's Sports Information Director **Megan O'Brien** and student-athlete **Meghan Barone '22**, an intern in the University's athletic communications office for the past two years. Together, they raise the profile of Cyclone athletics through press releases and photos chronicling the performance of Centenary student-athletes. Now, they're making news themselves.

Barone has produced social media content, edited videos, input statistics, and helped to plan events—all while attending classes and competing as a student-athlete for the women's cross country and basketball teams. This spring, another accomplishment came her way: She is the recipient of the 2022 Bill Esposito Memorial Award from the Eastern Athletic Communications Association (EAST-COMM) executive board. Presented annually, the honor recognizes a graduating senior who worked in athletic communications and plans to pursue a career in athletics. She was slated to receive her latest accolade at the 2022 EAST-COMM Awards Banquet in Maryland on June 16.

O'Brien, who has worked at the University since 2018, was also recently honored as the latest inductee in Centenary's Sports Management Hall of Fame. The accolade was presented by Barone at the annual Sports and Entertainment Management Conference on April 8. O'Brien is a graduate of York College of Pennsylvania and previously served as assistant director of athletic media relations at Towson University.



National Champs!

Centenary University's ANRC team brought home its third national title at the 43rd American National Riding Commission National Equitation Championships, which were held April 14-16. The University's **Benjamin Hoban '24**, **Morgan Munz '23**, and **Haylie Kerstetter '22** all placed in the top 10 in the individual standings, with Hoban and Munz in second and third. A week later, Centenary's Intercollegiate Dressage Association team placed fourth at the 2022 Theraplate Intercollegiate Dressage Association National Championship in Virginia, with **Sophie Wayner '25** named the individual champion and winner of the Trip Harting Memorial Trophy—First Level and **Jodie Miller '25** named individual champion and winner of the Marybeth McLain Memorial Trophy—Introductory.

Big Two at the Big Four



Kyle Benvenuto '21

Two recent Centenary University alumni have hit the ground running after graduation, scoring positions at one of the nation's most prestigious accounting firms. **Kyle Benvenuto '21** and **Darnel Burnette '22** are now working at Ernst & Young LLP, a Big Four firm. Both completed the University's challenging 150-credit Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Business Administration: Finance.

As an undergraduate, Benvenuto dreamed of working at one of the Big Four. During his junior year, he scored a competitive internship with CohnReznick LLP, as well as a \$6,500 scholarship from the New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants. That year, Centenary also recognized him with the Christopher Willis Scholarship in Accounting. Later, Benvenuto completed two internships with Madison Square Garden Entertainment Corp.



Darnel Burnette '22

"The business professors at Centenary really worked closely with me to reach my goal of working for the Big Four," said Benvenuto, who is an FSO assurance associate at Ernst & Young. "Before attending Centenary, I really didn't have the confidence to succeed. My professors immediately changed my mindset and boosted my confidence. I'm very grateful for all of their support."

Burnette joined Benvenuto at Ernst & Young right after graduation this spring. As a student, Burnette completed an internship in the auditing and tax departments at Nisivoccia LLP, juggling his job with intensive coursework and leadership activities. He said, "The education that Centenary offers is really broad. I've taken courses in marketing, accounting, finance, and more. Within accounting, I've studied real estate, taxation, and auditing. I feel like that will give me more versatility in the job market."

Let us know what's new!

Send us your news and keep up to date with classmates: alumni@centenaryuniversity.edu. Class News and Notes are edited to reflect Centenary's guidelines.

1949

Florence Austermuhl Larson
Alumni@centenaryuniversity.edu

Florence Austermuhl Larson writes: "I had a good visit with my sister in New Jersey in October, as she was recovering from back surgery. I loved to see the trees turning colors and I walked in the mornings with deer. At the end of April, I was in Yosemite with my two sons and daughters-in-law. Two of my best friends from Centenary passed away—**Audrey Henn Nawoschik** in New York on Feb. 3 and **Debby Ettinger Moss** in Arizona on March 28. We had wonderful times together at Centenary and had kept in touch all these years.

"I talked to **Carol Brown Robinson**, who lives in independent retirement and is less restricted now. She and her fellow residents can gather in groups and meet for meals. They had their first church service in the main building, which just opened up again. They have a TV station that shows movies on Saturday nights. Carol regularly sees her daughter, who shops for her. The husband of Carol's daughter had COVID-19, which was bad for a few days, but now he is recovering. Carol is looking forward to her July birthday. "I talked to **Nancy Morrell McClatchie** and she is doing OK; she has someone with her to help her do things.

"I talked to **Peggy Bolte Castle** and she loves living at Mercy Ridge, her retirement community. She enjoys doing things there with her friends.

"In a card thanking people for remembering her birthday, **Margaret Pfeiffer McCann** says: 'I keep having them (birthdays) and they do pile up.' Margaret received a card from a friend in Germany and they are coping with COVID-19. She is now a great-grandmother and wonders about the world her new grandson was born into. Things are changing in her retirement home, and one must have the correct attitude. She likes to remember the way things were in the late '40s and at Centenary. Those were halcyon days, and she is so glad Centenary is doing well."

Betty Poppele Barrett writes: "We ended 2021 with my granddaughter **Amy's** wedding on Thanksgiving weekend. I felt special to be escorted down the aisle by my son. After all the holiday festivities, I was glad to rest and enjoy some calm months.

I'm still living in my house and still driving and cooking my meals. I have not accomplished downsizing, but it is still on my list. My two children and grandchildren live close by and keep me busy. There is always someone checking up on me every day, so I count my blessings."

1960

Betsy Stanley Thomas '60
Alumni@centenaryuniversity.edu

Betsy Stanley Thomas writes: "My granddaughter, **Paige Leckie**, is a *summa cum laude* graduate of the University of Maryland and has relocated to Miami to write, edit, and produce content for Major League Baseball. My grandson, **Ethan**, is still working in the nursing field, while my grandson, **Carter**, will be a junior at the State University of New York—Cortland in the fall.

"**Paul** and I are slowing down a little bit, he more than I. His COPD saps his energy, so we go, but at a slower pace. He walks in our woods on good days, feeding fish, geese, and ducks. I am still crocheting, but spending more time cross stitching. I belong to two garden clubs, the highlights of which are touring gardens. We hope to resume those tours soon. I remain active at the same church I have attended since 1949 and where Paul and I were married 60 years ago. I walk the neighborhood when I'm not aching and enjoy catching up with the neighbors. I love being in contact with everyone from Centenary and wish I had more email addresses and that more of you responded, but I'm happy for those who do respond. All in all, life is good."

Nancy Baker Martin writes: "I loved Centenary, but two years there went almost too quickly. Since retiring, my husband, **Skip**, and I bought a home in Lost Tree Village in North Palm Beach, Fla. The community is on the ocean with a great golf course for avid golfers. Lost Tree Village offers everything I could ever want—lectures, culture, Bible study, and duplicate bridge. This year will mark the 27th year since we purchased our home.

"Sadly, I lost my Skip 2 1/2 years ago to a sudden heart attack. Almost a year later, I discovered that I had lung cancer and had successful surgery, followed by chemo in Jupiter, Fla. My scans have been clear. In May, I will return to the Manchester, Vt., area, near Stratton Mountain, where we have a home and

tons of friends. We found the area when we took our young sons skiing.

"I have kept in touch with **Anne Morris Futch** and **Susie Gerhardy Gebhardt**. Several years ago, I got together with some other Centenary friends in Florida—**Lyn Burke**, **Verna 'Birdie' Payer Buchs**, **Judy Calvert Yerkes**, and **Ann Dothard Walters**."

Suzanne Wyatt Maurer writes: "My two years at Centenary defined my life and I met my three best friends for life there. It was through **Jeanne Ball Maurer** that I met my husband of 60 years. In the '50s, I really wasn't interested in college. I just wanted to go to Hollywood. I promised my parents that I would give college a try and was happy when I was accepted at Centenary with its theater and radio courses and because of its beautiful location. My plan was to spend the summer after my freshman year in Hollywood, which I did. After living in one of the 'big six' rooms on first South freshman year, I returned for my second year and lived in a two-room suite on second North with three roommates. During my years at Centenary, I spent much time studying, painting scenery, shopping in town, and going to movies and the M&M factory. I fondly remember taking fencing lessons with **Grace Kelly's** fencing instructor, serving in the dining room, and going to New York City by bus. I had lots of fun at the mixers with boys from the surrounding colleges. I remember getting the day off from school when Alaska became the 49th state. Centenary provided me with an education, wonderful times, and lifelong friends.

"I have just written and published a book, *Hollywood, Elvis, and Me*, about the two summers I spent in Hollywood modeling and acting in TV shows and as an extra in a few films." Contact [Suzie](mailto:Suzie@maurerwj@aol.com) at maurerwj@aol.com for information about buying the book.

Barrie (Spicey) Allison writes: "It was a fun two years at Centenary, so many years ago. I am living in an active 55 and older community in Indio, Calif., near Palm Springs. I golf 18 holes a week, am an active pickleball player, swim, have fun playing card games, and travel locally. I've been retired for 24 years, so now I volunteer."

Dale House Gress writes: "I really enjoyed my two years at Centenary, where I was a member of Peith sorority. After Centenary, I continued my education at the University of North Carolina, where I joined Tri-Delta sorority and was a varsity cheerleader. Upon graduation in 1962, I moved to Washington, D.C., and worked for a California congressman. I met and married my husband, **Jay**, in 1975 and moved to the Philadelphia area, where we lived until he sold his business in

2014. Our daughter is married and owns a bookstore called Booked in Chestnut Hill, Penn. Her two children are students at Penn State. Our married son is a senior vice president of Sony Music in New York City and heads the Copyrights & Licenses Department. His daughter is at Syracuse University in the music division of the business school. His son is finishing eighth grade in Hoboken, N.J., and will attend Xavier High School in New York City next year. My husband and I moved into independent living at a continuing care retirement community, The Hill at Whitmarsh, in Lafayette, Penn., in 2020. We can easily escape to our winter home in a golf community, Harbour Ridge Yacht and Country Club, on the St. Lucie River in Palm City, Fla. We returned to Pennsylvania in April to enjoy playing golf and socializing with friends."

Gail Marie (Christiansen) Stewart writes: "I don't know how I would have gotten along these past years without the constant communication with my Centenary roommate, **Gerry Mace Murphy**, and the two gals across the hall, **Ann Dothard Walters** and **Janine Brothers Evans**. We have had times of shared grief and joy. I do have a 9-year-old grandson, **Wesley**. I loved **Suzi Wyatt Maurer's** book about Hollywood. My current address is 6 Green Acres Drive, Unit 22, Verona, N.J. 07044 and my email is abigailmariah77@gmail.com."

Anne Swicegood Schwanda writes: "No news here. I'm still living in Merritt Island, Fla. I'm active in numerous heritage organizations. I still love to travel, but I am slowing down."

Ann Dothard Walters writes: "We have been safe from COVID, but not from aging. My husband has had some physical challenges these past two years. A fall has restricted some of his moving around. He has also had three sarcomas removed from his scalp, requiring skin grafting. This takes its toll, but we are still thriving as best we can, grateful for each day. I still have my part-time job babysitting for a family with two girls who are now 9 and 6. They have been part of my life for the last nine years.



Ann Dothard Walters and her husband, George

"One of my grandsons, who is 26, was playing volleyball two years ago, but the season was cut short because of the pandemic. He got one of the last planes out of Germany. I have another

grandson, who is 24, in Wisconsin and a granddaughter, 23, who is Phi Beta Kappa in her last year of college. My other three grandchildren are scattered. A granddaughter, 26, in the Boston area, and a grandson, 24, in the Minneapolis area, are both working, and a 10-year-old grandson in Cos Cob, Conn., will be going into 10th grade.

"My two years at Centenary were wonderful and will always be in my heart. I am still in touch with my roommate, **Janine Brothers Evans**, and am close friends with **Gerry Mace Murphy** and her roommate, **Gail Christiansen Stewart**. It's hard to beat those lifelong friendships. Love to all in the Class of 1960."

Betsy Stanley Thomas continues, "Ann also shared news of other Centenary friends. **Judy Calvert Yerkes** and her husband sold their Florida home and have moved to New Hope, Penn., near her kids and grandchildren. **Gerry Mace Murphy's** husband passed away, as did her son.

"We are saddened by the passing of **Judy Waters Prochko** in January. She and **Bob**, now deceased, had moved to a continuing care retirement community several years ago.

"**Joy Murdock Winston** is in the

memory care unit of a Sunrise community in Basking Ridge, N.J. She has been there since her husband passed away in 2019.

"A fellow graduate, **Francie Warfield Parrack '63**, died suddenly on May 10, 2021, just five days after her birthday. She leaves her husband, **Ray**, daughters **Janice** and **Christie**, a grandson, and granddaughter. **Francie** and I worked together for five years before discovering that we had both gone to Centenary."

1961

Joyce Fierro Velzy
Alumni@centenaryuniversity.edu

Joyce Fierro Velzy writes: "The Velzys experienced many changes in the past year and, happy to say, happy ones. After being an 80-year resident of New York, I permanently moved to Florida after snow birding here for over 20 years. But as I've been told by my New York friends, 'once a New Yawka, always a New Yawka' and I believe that. **Bob** and I were happy not to have to make the trip back to New York during the winter months, travel these days being what it is, to say nothing about the weather. A real added bonus is that



Super Seniors

The Hackettstown Area Senior Hall of Fame inducted four noteworthy Centenarians during a gala luncheon on May 11. New members are **Octavia J. Brown, Ed.M., D.H.L., '08 HA**, professor emerita of equine studies; **George W. Paffendorf '07 HA**, former volunteer director of Operation Centaur; **Raymond Nisivoccia**, member of the University's Board of Trustees; and **Stephen M. Somers '19 HA**, a former Centenary trustee.

The Class of '22 of the Hackettstown Area Senior Hall of Fame. Back row, from left: Ernie Maso, Stephen M. Somers '19 HA, Barbara Morgan, George W. Paffendorf '07 HA, Bob Jones, and Raymond Nisivoccia. Front row, from left: Octavia J. Brown, Ed.M., D.H.L., '08 HA, Bob Moore, Annette Munley, Ethel Conry, Kelly Simonetti



Healing With Heart

Abigail Reilly '22 found herself living out her childhood dreams during her time at Centenary University. Her love for animals drove her passion for veterinary studies and she is now enrolled in Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. Her acceptance continued Centenary's near-perfect record of student acceptances into veterinary school in recent years. As a Dean's List student majoring in equine science on the pre-vet track, Reilly's accomplishments showed through as she participated in many extracurricular activities. On campus, she was president of the Pre-Professional Club and part of the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA).

As a sophomore, she began to conduct independent research in equine studies, working closely with **Jesslyn Bryk-Lucy, D.V.M.**, and bolstering her vet school application. Later, she instructed other students to perform blood draws, give IM injections, and scrub for joint infections. Reilly's love for Centenary is very evident in her enthusiasm when she describes her experience over the last four years: "I love Centenary. I don't think I could have really gotten that experience anywhere else."

one of our sons also relocated to Florida, only 20 minutes from us. We think he wants to keep an eye on the old folks!"

Sandy Holroyd Carboni writes: "Harry and I attended a wonderful 80th birthday celebration for **Lois Arvidson Sack** last June in Pennsylvania. **Carolee Clark Norton, Missy Keely Bell, and Mary Ellen Williams Fisher**, who sadly passed away in September, were at the party. (My memory isn't what it used to be, so hopefully I've remembered all the Centenary alumni in attendance!) Harry and I have seven grandchildren: Three graduated from college (actually four, but she now attends medical school in Maine), one is a college freshman, one graduated from the United States Merchant Marine Academy in June, and one will be a high school senior. I can't believe how quickly those once-little guys and gals grew up. In September, I will have enjoyed nine years of retirement."

Nancy Heimert Zabka writes: "My role is still caregiver to my 97-year-old husband, a World War II vet, who continues to do pretty well for his age. Aug. 2 will be our 58th wedding anniversary! We are blessed to be living with our daughter and son-in-law at this time in our lives. We're still able to travel occasionally. We spent Christmas and New Years in Nashville with our two sons and their families. There were 25 of us for Christmas dinner, which included extended family members traveling across the country for a full reunion.

"**Stan** and I have eight grandkids, ranging in age from 8 to 30. We added a second great-granddaughter to our family in January and will get to meet this little one in July, when our granddaughter and her Army lieutenant husband come for a visit from Ft. Benning, Ga. If all goes well, Stan and I will be flying back to Nashville in June to be with our sons and their families again. Our son, **Billy's, Cobra Kai** Netflix series was nominated by Critic Choice Plus Awards for Best Action Series. Billy and **Ralph Macchio** are nominated for Best Acting in a Series. It's been a long road for Billy since the *Karate Kid* movie in 1984. Winning or not, the nomination is welcomed...it's a tough business!

"I hope to have a chance to visit my younger sister in Florida later in the year. The opportunities to spend time with each other are becoming more precious. Living with my daughter allows me time to get away by myself which, as a caregiver, I'm encouraged to do. Our house has a revolving door as family and friends of my daughter's come and go also. But it's nice having our own living quarters so we can enjoy our own space when we need it. We've defied COVID for the most part. While getting vaccinated and being careful, we kept active with friends and family through it all. Some have had mild cases of it and survived just fine. My faith and knowing that God is in charge is how I find peace."

Sally Swan Schwabe writes that friends of theirs in their retirement community have a granddaughter and her horse at Centenary: "They have a number of shows at Centenary and are thrilled with the facilities and program. Our friend **Donald Helin**, who is the grandfather, is a published mystery writer. He spent a lot of time at the Pentagon and incorporates his experiences in his novels. I'm always catching up with **Jan Auer Scrabis**, my roommate at PSU, and **Sally Murphy Albano**...great memories and friendships. I haven't been back to Hilton Head since the pandemic to see those island girls. Hugs to all!"

Joyce Fierro Velzy adds: "Speaking of **Janice Auer Scrabis**, she writes that her life hasn't been very interesting these past two years, not due to COVID, but because of an E. coli infection in 2020. The doctors were puzzled as to how Janice caught the infection; she read that it's possible she contracted it from very fine dusty cat litter. Janice is an animal lover and, as many of us know, our animals are considered members of our family. Janice writes: 'I am fine now, but confined to taking care of my ex-husband, who has a few health issues. My sanity is talking to **June Adams Salaun**, sometimes twice a week, and we laugh and carry on...lots of memories and reminiscing. I am very much involved in caring for my youngest daughter's son, who is 5, and his sister, who will be 13. I take **Johnny** to Target after school and **Abby** to her sports events, and I love it! Easter this year was very special because we were all together. My oldest daughter, her husband, and two daughters were here from Bath, England. Other than Facebook, we have not been together for three years. I finally caught up to everyone becoming 80; yikes, I feel pretty good, but that number is a little scary. I spoke to **Sally Swan Schwabe** not too long ago and she sounded great.'

"As a response to my request for news for the *Centenarian*, I received the following email from **Bill Mangels**, husband of **Ann Watson Mangels**: 'I am writing to let you know that my wife has passed. Ann suffered cardiac arrest on Dec. 31, 2021, at Greater Baltimore Medical Center. She had a knee replacement last summer. She then had the second knee done and two days afterward suffered cardiac arrest. She looked forward to being pain free and able to travel once again. In June, we would have celebrated our 60th anniversary.' Bill added, 'Ann was on the board of the previous community where we lived for over 30 years and had been president at one time. She loved being on the board, as it gave her a strong sense of accomplishment. Lastly, she was pleased with Centenary's accomplishment in becoming a university.'

"Ann wrote extensively in our last *Centenarian* about moving into a new retirement community and about her and Bill's involvement over the years

The Sky's the Limit

Great things happen when Ebrahima "EB" Sarr '22 follows his heart. Several months ago, the Harlem resident made a quick decision to apply for A Day in the Life With Steve Madden, which invites college students to network in New York with executives of the fashion firm and learn more about business operations. The day included a surprise meeting with designer and entrepreneur **Steve Madden**—and proved to be a pivotal career move.

"It was probably one of the best experiences I've ever had," said Sarr, who was encouraged to apply for the program by Professor of Business **Cheryl Veronda**. During their visit, the students got an inside look at manufacturing, production, supply chain, account services, and sustainability. When Steve Madden entered the room, he spoke with the group before pulling Sarr, the only male, aside. Sarr recalled, "He was really down to earth. When he found out I was from Harlem, he was fascinated."

Several days later, a call came from human resources inviting Sarr to interview for a job. Now, Sarr is starting his career with Steve Madden, Ltd., in account services. The position combines Sarr's interest in business with his passion for creativity, including fashion and music. His first single, "The Party Never Ends," is now streaming on Apple Music, Spotify, and other platforms.

A member of the Cyclone men's basketball team, Sarr is also a standout student who was named to the National Association of Basketball Coaches Academic Honors Court. He's also enrolled in the University's selective 4+1 BS/MBA, with plans to complete his Centenary MBA while working. Reflecting on his Centenary experience, Sarr said, "Centenary is a place where I really found myself. I got to expand and figure out who I am as a person. Now, at Steve Madden, I think the sky's the limit."



Steve Madden and EB Sarr '22



EB Sarr '22

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† Deceased

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in the Mason-Dixon chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. Included in the chapter's last newsletter was a beautiful tribute to Ann and her many accomplishments in the society that referenced her 'tireless, thorough, and calm leadership during difficult times' and said she was 'one of the best-prepared presidents in the ARS history' who was 'always with a smile on her face.'"

1963

Ellen Fiencke Whitaker
Alumni@centenaryuniversity.edu
Patricia Hamilton Ervin writes: "After graduating from Centenary, I got a wonderful job right away in New York City, and after several promotions, became an assistant advertising director. Growing up near the city, I was very happy to continue enjoying all the cultural benefits that New York City had to offer—museums, plays, concerts, etc. "However, while on vacation to Florida with a friend, I met the man I was to marry in 1968, and we moved to Michigan. Living in Michigan was quite an adjustment after having experienced all the culture that New York City had to offer. However, with a new job and making new friends, I was able to adapt and have remained in Michigan ever since. "My first marriage did not last, but eventually I remarried, this time to the boss of a girlfriend. This marriage produced five children, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. They are truly a gift. One daughter and son and their families live nearby, so I get to be with them a lot, which is a blessing. "I began accompanying my husband

on business trips, which whetted both our appetites to travel more and more. Subsequently, we traveled all over the United States—California, Washington state, and Hawaii. Alaska was definitely my favorite. We visited many state parks, too—Yellowstone, the Tetons, and more. We were all over Europe, South and Central America, Australia, New Zealand, and Africa, too. "We were happily married for 36 years until my husband passed away as a result of unexpected complications from surgery. I have since moved into a smaller house, remain a member of our church, have taken up painting (in the naif art style), read a lot, and work on embroidery, crewel, quilting, and cross-stitching. I even taught these skills in adult education classes for a while. I have made lots of friends over the years, and we often get together for a game of canasta, dominoes, or rummy. "Although I was certainly careful during COVID, I was never worried. During my lifetime, I realize I have the strength to meet, head-on, whatever comes my way. I no longer stay in touch with any of my former Centenary classmates; however, I have fond memories of our class. We had a great class! I can remember the dances, the winter snow party we had one year, and Dad's Day weekends, where I missed catching a raw egg during a relay." **Pam Huffman Gerber** writes: "My first year at Centenary, I lived in a house at the edge of the campus called Smith House with roommates **Marty Wright LeGere, Sheila Barry Walker, Ellen Fiencke Whitaker, Trish Edwards Cassidy, Judy Windecker Rinaldi, Valerie Moreschi, Randy Coleman Taylor, and Judy Powell**. It had a magnificent view of the mountains surrounding Hackettstown. I hear the

house and land were later purchased by a next-door neighbor, and the house was razed to allow for a larger backyard.



"Swiss-born **Dr. Backenstoss**, my German and French professor at Centenary, encouraged me to take a semester at the University of Geneva to study French in the Ecole Pratique Francais, for which I am grateful. That Father's Day weekend at Centenary, my father met with Dr. Backenstoss and the deal was cemented. It was a life changing experience and also provided extensive travel throughout Europe, including a trip to East Berlin just after the wall was built. "Returning home to Birmingham, Mich., I finished a Bachelor of Arts in French and History from Oakland University in Rochester, Mich. While talking to fellow Centenarian **Ginger Ahlbrandt Warrick** in Pittsburgh, we decided on a whim to move to Chicago together. What a great time that was. I taught high school French for two years, then took a job with the American Red Cross Youth Program. I met **Paul Gerber** in Chicago. We married and started on a 10-year odyssey to six different cities. First was Denver, where our daughter was born, then to Toledo, Ohio; North Canton, Ohio; White Plains, N.Y., where our son was born; Milwaukee, Wis.; and finally, to Phoenix, Ariz., in 1978. "We had a business manufacturing sports sun visors, sports water bottles,

and other items for the branded merchandise industry. We raised our children, worked seven days a week, and after 20 years, sold our business to a British firm. We divorced shortly thereafter and went our separate ways. "For the next 15 years, I traveled the world. My mantra was, 'Just say yes!' to whatever presented itself, and what an adventure it has been. The most surprising and enriching is my love of South America, spending a great deal of time traveling from the northern shores to the southern point of Tiera del Fuego. To my great joy, I had a house built on the grounds of Hacienda Cusin in the rural highlands near Quito, Ecuador. The joyful memories and lifelong friendships formed from that magical casita enriched my life and all who visited. "I still live in Paradise Valley, Ariz., and find it humorous that I have had the same base after 42 years, given my wanderlust and sometimes wild adventures. My daughter lives here and is a joyful, beautiful woman. My son and his family live in Medway, Mass., with my 15-year-old granddaughter and 13-year-old grandson. I play golf as often as a game is available and also concentrate on a capital campaign to fund a sexual assault healing center, the first in Phoenix to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder with long-term support and counseling. My life has been blessed with loving family, magnificent friends, and adventures that are treasured beyond measure."

1979

Jennifer Brown MacKenzie
Alumni@centenaryuniversity.edu
Nancy Johns Paffendorf '79/81/06 writes: "I am very fortunate to live near

Centenary University. My husband, Maj. **George Paffendorf '07 HA**, and I have been able to attend many of the performances at the Centenary Stage Company and are always impressed. I was thrilled to be able to participate in the commencement ceremonies this year as the alumni trustee. George was inducted into the Hackettstown Area Senior Hall of Fame for his many contributions over the years. We are excited to be able to be more involved in person after all the pandemic restrictions over the last couple of years."

1986

Kimberly Pettinelli was named the iHeart Radio Teacher of the Month for May. She is a teacher at the Florence M. Burd School in Andover.



2007

Joseph Pascale is the Learning Center coordinator at Middlesex College, where he has worked for five years.

2008

Jennifer L. Russo '08/13 has been named director of clinical operations & staff development with Brookdale Premier Addiction Recovery, a leading drug and alcohol treatment provider in Scotrun, Pa. She is a licensed professional counselor, a licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselor, and has been recognized by the Center of Credentialing and Education Inc. as an approved clinical supervisor.



2009

Daniel Hemberger has been appointed principal of Bridgewater-Raritan High School. He earned a master's degree in educational leadership from Centenary University.

2017

Alexandria Holbrook is the founder of Something Royal Party Company, established in 2021. As head princess, the Centenary theatre major brings several years of experience in the party princess industry to bring joy to children in western Massachusetts through her portrayal of a variety of characters, including princesses, superheroes, mermaids, and elves.



2018

Ameer Cooper was recently presented with the iHustle Award by One X Studios, where he works as a production manager. He also served as a production coordinator for the 75th annual Tony Awards and *The Problem with Jon Stewart* on Apple TV+.

Brittany (Moyle) Crowley was selected as the Governor's Educator of the Year Award for Phillipsburg Elementary School. The school district lauded the fifth-grade teacher for initiatives including a schoolwide kindness campaign and the Reader Leader program to nurture leadership in her students.

2019

The Horse published an article, "What to Feed Senior Horses with Dental and Digestive Dysfunction," by **Lucile Vigouroux** in February.

2020

Derek Elliott '20/22 was recently featured in a viral video shot at a Baltimore Orioles home game. After a young Orioles fan threw a game ball gifted by Elliott onto the warning track, Yankee center fielder Aaron Hicks and the Orioles organization presented

the boy with two more. The youngster chose to share one with **Elliott**—a Yankee fan sitting nearby. A video of the poignant moment has gotten hundreds of thousands of views.



Samantha Leuci and her company, Leuci, LLC, sponsored a reception for alumni at this spring's ANRC National Equitation Championships, held at the Centenary University Equine Center April 14-16. The reception celebrated the 20th anniversary of ANRC competition.



Samantha Leuci

Pablo Vasquez was recently sworn in as a police officer in Allentown, Pa. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from Centenary University.

2022

Matthew Beck, Ed.D., is serving as the superintendent of the Sparta School District. He earned his Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Centenary, focusing his thesis on school consolidation.



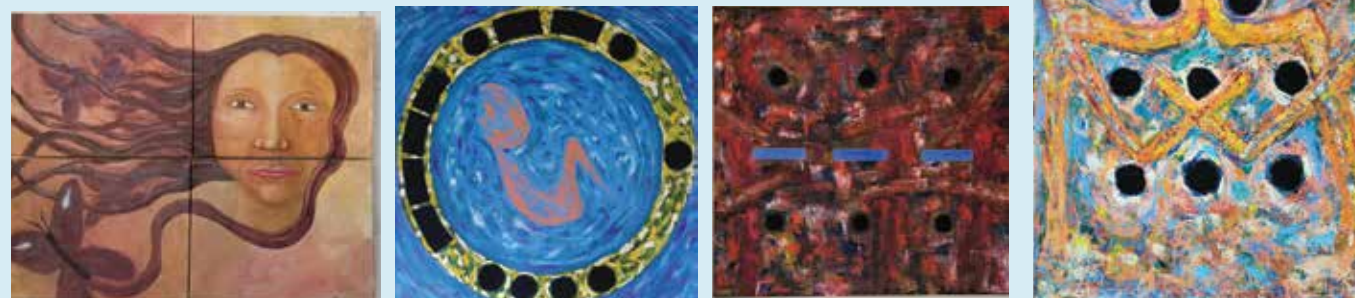
Best Wishes

Vice President of Academic Affairs **Amy D'Olivo, Ph.D.**, has touched the lives of thousands of students during her long tenure at Centenary University. As an associate professor of sociology, Dr. D'Olivo received high marks from her students for her dynamic and engaging teaching style. In her current administrative role, she has oversight of academic programs and curriculum, as well as faculty development. With Dr. D'Olivo's retirement approaching on June 30, Centenary President **Bruce Murphy, Ed.D.**, surprised her at commencement with a Presidential Challenge Coin honoring her years of service. Dr. D'Olivo also received a Formal Vote of Confidence by the faculty at their meeting last month. Reflecting on her Centenary career, Dr. D'Olivo said:

"My career at Centenary has been extraordinary. Centenary students challenged me to be a better teacher, mentor, and professional. To every student I have had the opportunity to teach, mentor, and advise, thank you for your role in helping me become my best self."

Finding Hope in Art

Hope and healing were the intertwining themes of a two-part thesis exhibition by artist **Karri Kanzenbach '22**. Presented in Centenary University's Ferry Building, the two installments entitled SAVE OUR SOULS and HOPE: Eternal Circle drew on her personal experiences with family illness over the past decade, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.



Steadfast Loyalty



Missouri native Elizabeth Goodson arrived at Centenary in the early 1960s, intending to earn an associate degree in early elementary education. She accomplished that—and much more. Marrying **Daniel Horn Van Winkle**, the brother of her Centenary roommate, she joined a philanthropic family that has generously supported the institution's transformation to a four-year, co-educational university with leading academic programs. **Elizabeth "Betsy" Goodson Van Winkle '62** passed away peacefully at her home on Mason's Island in Mystic, Conn., at age 80.

Mrs. Van Winkle lived in several states with her husband, who was going through Army Transportation School as a second lieutenant, before the couple settled in Rutherford, N.J., to raise their family. There, Mrs. Van Winkle was a founder and president of the Rutherford Cooperative Day Nursery at the Rutherford Presbyterian Church, and was a member of the Rutherford Women's Club and the Rutherford Fortnightly Club.

On Mason's Island, where the Van Winkles had a summer home and eventually retired, Mrs. Van Winkle was a member of the Mason's Island Yacht Club. She and her husband enjoyed tennis, swimming, sailing, and attending picnics. The couple also loved to sing and performed with many choirs through the years. At Centenary, the Van Winkle family have been steadfast supporters for more than a Centenary. Mrs. Van Winkle's Centenary roommate, **Linda Van Winkle Watkins '62**, has served on the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Watkins and her sister, **Joan Van Winkle Cunningham '59**, have been generous contributors to the University's annual Scholarship Gala, as well as many other Centenary initiatives. They are the stepdaughters of **Adelaide S. Van Winkle '08 HA**. In addition, at the dawn of the 20th century, **Charles A. Van Winkle '00**—grandfather to

Mrs. Watkins and Mrs. Cunningham—earned his Centenary degree. Later, both he and their father, **Arthur**, served on the Board of Trustees. The family's legacy also lives on at Centenary in Van Winkle Hall. Mrs. Van Winkle is survived by her husband of 60 years, **Dan**, daughter **Laura Van Winkle Seehaus '88** and her husband, **Evan Ian Seehaus**, daughter **Amy Van Winkle**, five grandchildren, sister **Mary G. McClelland** and husband **Geoffrey McClelland**, sisters-in-law Linda Van Winkle Watkins and her husband, **Thomas W. Watkins**, and Joan Van Winkle Cunningham, and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her son, **Wesley Goodson Van Winkle**.

Contributions in Mrs. Van Winkle's memory may be made to the Elizabeth Goodson Van Winkle Scholarship Fund, Centenary University, 400 Jefferson Ave., Hackettstown, NJ 07840.



l-r: Ed Kelly, Mason Kelly, Sonja Watkins Kelly, Adelaide Van Winkle '08 HA (deceased), Kristen Cunningham Kime, Linda Van Winkle Watkins '62, Skip Watkins, Joan Van Winkle Cunningham '59, Betsy Goodson Van Winkle '62, Dan Van Winkle.

Matthew Coons, Jr. '16



Amanda Coons '16 with twin brother, the late Matthew Coons, Jr. '16

Centenary University mourns the passing of **Matthew Coons, Jr. '16**, who passed away at his home on April 25. He was 28. A resident of Port Reading, N.J., Mr. Coons earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from Centenary, where he was a well-liked and respected student leader. During his undergraduate years, he served as vice president of the Student Government Association and president of the Philanthropy Club, and also participated in Midnight Run and intramurals. He had recently worked as an outside sales representative at Monarch Electric Co.

Mr. Coons is survived by his parents, **Matthew Sr.** and **Elizabeth Coons**; sister **Amy Weitz** and her husband, **Brian**; and twin sister **Amanda Coons '16** and her boyfriend, **Ryan**. Also surviving are his grandmother, **Jeanette Kohniak**; nephew **Gavin Weitz**; niece **Riley Weitz**, and many aunts, uncles, cousins, and close friends.

In Memoriam

- Cathleen Benedict '08** 4/16/2022
- Kyle Lewthwaite '16** 1/15/2022
- Norma Boom Marin '50** 2/22/2022
- Debora Ettinger Moss '49** 3/28/2022
- Audrey Henn Nawoschik '49** 2/3/2022
- Judith Waters Prochko '60** 12/31/2021
- Laura Cullen Stephan '40** 1/26/2022

REST IN PEACE

Seth William Newton '22



Tragedy struck Centenary University on March 8, when senior **Seth William Newton '22** was killed while working as a tow truck operator in Readington, NJ. Mr. Newton was fatally struck by an SUV as he worked to remove a disabled vehicle on Route 22. He was 26.

A business and equine studies major at Centenary, Mr. Newton was known as a hard-working and ambitious student who had been slated to graduate on May 7. The University posthumously presented Mr. Newton's degree to his family in a touching moment during the ceremony.

Fellow tow truck drivers, as well as fire trucks, ambulances, and police cars from all over Hunterdon, Warren, and Somerset counties lined up for approximately six miles to honor Mr. Newton at his funeral. He leaves his parents, **Kathleen and Glenn Newton**, sister **Sarah**, **Mary Mansey**—his Nan, girlfriend **Casey Smith**, and many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.



From left: Kristin Mansey, Debbie Ball, Mary Mansey, Kathleen Newton, Equine Studies Department Chair Kelly Munz, and Professor of Equine Science Lynn Taylor, Ph.D.

Cathleen M. Benedict, Ed.D. '06



Centenary University lost a beloved faculty member and alumna with the sudden passing of **Cathleen M. Benedict, Ed.D. '06** on April 16. The longtime educator was the University's director of graduate programs in special education.

Dr. Benedict earned a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary and Special Education from Saint Elizabeth University, a Master of Education from Centenary University, and a Doctor of Education from Rutgers

University. Before arriving at Centenary, she taught for more than 20 years at Riverview Elementary School in Denville, NJ.

Dr. Benedict is survived by her father, **James L. Benedict**; her sisters, **Anne Marie Jacisin (Michael)**, **Barbara Nedo (Thomas)**, and **Jane Barracato (Michael)**; as well as many cherished nieces and nephews. To honor her memory, the family established the Memorial Scholarship of Cathleen M. Benedict, Ed.D., to help a Centenary University graduate of the Department of Education purchase supplies to set up their first classroom.

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