

UB Knightlines

Top Chef

Claire Criscuolo '75 risked it all to open a cozy eatery in downtown New Haven. That was 35 years ago. Now she's just been named the state's top restaurateur. How she and other UB alums went to work for themselves, hit it big, and never looked back.



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BRIDGEPORT

Opening doors. Building futures.

ALSO INSIDE • The 100-mile man • Carl Burton's photos • UB helps Bridgeport win "Best City" award

President's Line

I am happy to present the Winter 2010 issue of Knightlines. Many of you have commented favorably on our updated format. We will continue to work on creating a magazine that will delight our alumni and friends — one that is attractive, readable, and filled with the kind of information about UB that will make you proud.

The past year has been marked by our continued growth in academic excellence and renewed opportunity. Despite a very challenging climate for college admissions due to economic uncertainty, UB's undergraduate enrollment actually has grown by 11 percent, bringing our total 2009-2010 enrollment to 5,103 students. This year's students come from 80 countries and 44 states, but UB also remains a popular choice for home-grown talent: 57 percent of the student body is from Connecticut.

UB's future continues to be so bright for several good reasons. First, students feel the excitement, vitality, and sense of purpose in the atmosphere when they visit our campus — something we encourage all prospective students to do. Second, UB's commitment to offering career-oriented programs on a solid grounding in the liberal arts is a strong selling point for today's generation of focused, goal-oriented students. In addition, the total learning experience at UB is characterized by remarkable diversity, both in our programs and in the composition of our staff and student body — UB mirrors the world our students are preparing to enter. Finally, UB is large enough to offer a wide variety of academic and social experiences but still small enough to allow students to feel they belong to a cohesive community. They receive individualized attention from faculty and staff, have access to internships and cooperatives in the region, and join a local community rich in culture, history, and opportunities for recreation.

Academic excellence is underwritten by the generosity of our loyal donors, including individual alumni, government agencies, corporations, and foundations. We are particularly grateful for those gifts which help to support student scholarships and the innovative work of our dedicated faculty.

This issue of Knightlines includes profiles of three outstanding alumni who have made their mark working for themselves. These are inspiring stories in and of themselves, and they demonstrate the foremost reason students come to UB — to create bright professional futures for themselves. For many of our students and graduates, 2009 has been a big step on the road toward fulfilling their dreams.



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President
Neil Albert Salonen

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Knightlines is published three times a year for University of Bridgeport alumni and friends by the Office of University Relations.

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This is what would happen if everybody did



Meems Ellenberg

Several weeks ago, the Office of University Relations joined with the Bridgeport Regional Business Council in a community-wide fitness challenge. Like many Americans, our jobs and daily routines involve a lot of sitting, whether it's at a desk, in the car, or at the table. The BRBC furnished volunteers with small pedometers, and encouraged us to start walking. The goal was simply to add 2,000 steps a day.

Like any new program, there have been surprises, some pleasant, some not. Many of us were surprised to find we are more active than we thought, while others were shocked to learn how inactive we have become. But never let it be said that the Office of University Relations folds in the face of a challenge: under the leadership of Vice President of University Relations Mary-Jane Foster, we got moving. By taking it one step at a time, we can all do something that ends up being pretty impressive. By parking at the far end of the grocery store parking lot, by taking the stairs instead of the elevator, we can add thousands of steps to our daily routines. So far, Team OUR has helped log 1.4 billion steps, enough to circle the planet three times!

As I thought about what on earth to write about annual giving in 2009, it occurred to me that there is an analogy here. By making a gift—any gift—to the Annual Fund at UB, we can all be a part of something bigger than ourselves. If every single one of UB's estimated 35,000 alumni donated just \$10, the University would receive a significant collective contribution to help fund scholarships, make essential capital improvements, upgrade technologies, and develop new programs. Rather than thinking about being unable to be as generous individually as we would like to be, we should all try to think of being part of a greater whole, a culture of giving.

So set a reminder on your computer to make a donation at the beginning of each financial quarter; arrange for automatic payroll deductions; increase your gift over last year's amount by 2 percent. All of these small steps can add up to a big increase for UB.

Please check out our Web site, and with just a few user-friendly clicks, you can make your gift online. Or call (203) 576-4542 to discuss your gift with me. Together, we can take the small steps that will move the University of Bridgeport to a healthier future!

Meems Ellenberg

Director of Planned Giving

Pipelines

The redesign of Knightlines prompted alumni and friends to send us letters and e-mails responding to the new look. Many suggested ways to continue improving the magazine. Others wrote of happy memories. We're delighted to share their thoughts in Pipelines, our new letters section, appearing in this issue for the first time, and look forward to hearing from more readers in the future. We've also put Knightlines online at www.bridgeport.edu/knightlines. – Ed.

Dear Editor,

The new *Knightlines* (Summer 2009) looks as sharp as a tack! I'm so glad the hoops schedules are in there because now I can plan accordingly to see a game.

I happily rely on *Knightlines* and the UB Web site, which I log onto daily to keep me abreast of all that's happening on that glorious campus by Seaside Park. I'm extremely pleased with the attractive progressions of both format and content, as I'm sure proud UB alumni everywhere are. It is thrilling to regularly hear about all the various events, conferences, activities, and academic and sports successes at UB that have made the University an even more attractive place to spend one's college years, whether for stateside students or those from abroad.

It also has become apparent that UB has become an increasingly important and recognizable force in the greater Bridgeport community, judging by the attention the University is drawing from city, state, and legislative officials and the business sector. My years at UB were the most exciting and enjoyable of my life, and I truly hope Purple Knights everywhere – past, present, and future – will feel the same way!

All the best and "Go UB!"

Tommy Valuckas '75
Waterbury, CT

Dear Editor,

I always look forward to receiving my *Knightlines* and compliment you all on how nice and professional this alumni magazine has become over the years. I attended an alumni function last year in Sarasota, and am so happy to hear about all that is going on at UB, its increase in enrollment, and its influences in the community.

Leonard Bennett '69
Madeira Beach, FL

Dear Editor,

I received *Knightlines* and enjoyed reading about your excellent work. It also brought back some fine memories.

I graduated from UB after three years of active duty in the Army Air Force from 1946 to 1949. The staff worked with veterans to assist us in adjusting to academic life. Professors were more than kind and often very understanding as we unwound. My major from the beginning was secondary education. During my work at UB I also expressed an interest in church work, and through my church was granted a Lay Preacher's Certification and assigned to a terrific country church. As I studied and combined church work, I came to understand that I really wanted to do both, and I have for the past 58 years.

As I look back, much of the foundation for my work was established at UB. It has been and is a tremendous path that my early academic experiences helped set. Thus, I extend appreciation beyond words written or spoken.

Rev. Dr. Bruce H. Wood '53
Bethany, CT

Dear Editor,

I like *Knightlines* migrating from a slick newsletter to a magazine format. It seems more dignified. But I'm not sure I like the new masthead. Maybe the UB logo instead of the giant "UB"?

I also miss the masthead photo of campus, Seaside Park, and Long Island Sound. I mentioned to my college sweetheart and wife, Mercedes (Aszody) Vlamis '72, that I was in the midst of writing this and she, too, liked seeing the picture in every issue. She was fond of showing off the buildings where we first met and attended classes to our children.

My suggestion is to place that picture on the address/back page. For many, the picture is a stunning first impression of UB.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of *Knightlines* through my commentary.

Tony Vlamis '72
Riverview, FL

Dear Editor,

It's been a while since I visited UB. I must admit that I was taken aback and chock full of envy when I realized I spent hours of my life in the Wahlstrom Library without a Seattle's Best coffee; its new cafe wasn't there when I was at UB. I recall students sneaking in their coffee from outside and risking spilling the hot contents on their hands and precious belongings (not to mention the library books). I'm happy to see that new students have been spared this arduous task.

Moondo Field '06
Boston, MA

Dear Editor,

I'm writing to express great pleasure regarding the University of Bridgeport graduate education students who taught at our Chinese language program at Columbus School this summer.

The UB students not only were outstanding teachers, they were wonderful role models for our students. Their lessons were creative, pertinent, and always fun. Our students learned valuable lessons that will hopefully last a lifetime and that go far beyond the Chinese phrases, numbers, and intonations that were described in the lesson plans.

They learned that it's not so difficult to form relationships with people from another culture on the other side of the world. They learned that humor and thoughtfulness can translate easily into any language. They learned that learning itself is highly valued in other countries. In short, they have taken some beginning steps toward becoming citizens of the world. Columbus School was indeed fortunate to have worked with this group. They will always have a place in our memory and in our hearts.

Manual Rocha
Principal, Columbus School
Bridgeport, CT

Knightlines welcomes your letters!

Please note that they may be edited for length, clarity, style, or accuracy. Send them to Letters to the Editor, Knightlines, Cortright Hall, 219 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604 or knightlines@bridgeport.edu. Please be sure to include your full name, contact information, and UB class year (if applicable).

claire's



FRISBY'S

SINCE 1876



Chapel St



For 35 years, UB nursing grad and award-winning restaurateur Claire Criscuolo '75 has used food to promote health and inspire social change. Finally, she's in good company.

By Leslie Geary

Top Chef

Claire's Corner Copia occupies the spot where UB alumnus Fred DeLuca '71 once ran a carmel corn shop.

It's just past noon on Sunday, and the line of hungry patrons waiting to eat at Claire's Corner Copia spills out the door, down Chapel Street, and back toward the Yale Center for British Art. Students, parents and children, older couples. It seems like everyone's come to the New Haven restaurant, but on this crisp October weekend, there's a festive air to the wait as strangers chat happily with one another.

Conversation quickly turns to the menu. A formidable challenge for the hungry and undecided, it brims with salads, home-made soups, fresh-from-the-oven bread, wraps, design-your-own smoothies, flat bread pizzas, burritos, savory curries, Lithuanian coffee cake, pumpkin muffins, and other fare that's been prepared from scratch for the past 35 years by owner and chef Claire Criscuolo '75.

A fresh-out-of-nursing-school graduate from UB, Criscuolo hadn't been working at the Connecticut Mental Health Center very long when she decided that opening a restaurant was a more appealing way to promote health. Specifically, she wanted to run a restaurant that served the bountiful, always-fresh meals she grew up with in her Italian home. "The motto of our house was, 'If you can't pronounce it, you don't eat it,'" says



Criscuolo, whose mother's sole piece of marital advice to her daughter was, "Don't buy chicken on sale."

"I knew if I missed my mother's and grandmother's cooking, then surely everyone else did, too," says Criscuolo. "And what better way to promote peace than having people sit together to share food? It was a good match for me."

She scouted New Haven and found the perfect spot, then occupied by a carmel corn shop, on the corner of Chapel and College Streets. It was run, ironically enough, by UB alumnus Fred DeLuca '71, founder of the Subway sandwich chain. DeLuca agreed to sell the rights to the lease for \$15,000. Short on cash, Criscuolo handed over her diamond engagement ring as collateral; she got it back three years later, when the debt was settled. "I figured I could go back into nursing if it didn't work out," she says. "I had a backup plan."

Luckily, she didn't need one. Named the state's Best Vegetarian Restaurant three times by *Connecticut Magazine*, Claire's Corner Copia has kept them coming back with mouthwatering meals that have earned praise from the state's top chefs. In November, Criscuolo was inducted into the Connecticut Restaurant Association Hall of Fame. And she's the first vegetarian chef to be

(continued on page 6)

named Connecticut Restaurateur of the Year.

“Claire’s always changing. Her menu is always interesting. She knows how to pick up the flavors, and her desserts are fantastic,” says chef David McCoart, owner of Sage American Grill, who nominated Criscuolo for the Connecticut Restaurant Association Hall of Fame. “She runs a fantastic establishment.”

McCoart opened his restaurant, then called Chart House, in New Haven back in 1974. From his across-town vantage point, he’s watched Claire’s flourish into something far more than a great eatery. “Claire’s a mentor for a number of people,” says McCoart.

“She’s been an early proponent and champion of vegetarian cooking, and more importantly, of sustainable farming. In her case, it’s supporting local, Connecticut-grown farmers. She’s incredibly active.”

Claire’s typically serves 300 meals a day, seven days a week, except for major holidays. There’s enough demand to grow, but while Criscuolo once doubled the restaurant to 1,600 square feet, she’s not interested in getting any bigger, or in any of the offers she gets from would-be investors urging her to franchise. “People try all the time to invest and get us to expand,” she says. “But I think you erase the landscape when you make a chain.”

By Criscuolo’s telling, Claire’s Corner Copia is a success thanks to equal measures of human kindness, dumb luck, and learned-along-the-way business savvy. The first year it was open, Claire’s didn’t make a dime. Criscuolo’s husband, Frank,

then co-chef, went into real estate to cover the bills. “He told me, ‘This is it. You have to figure it out or you need to leave the business.’”

Criscuolo confessed her troubles to her milk and dairy vendor. “He was the most amazing guy. He told me, ‘Don’t pay me until the spring. I believe in you,’” Criscuolo recalls. Sure enough, a few months later, lines were out the door, thanks to a student named Terry Hawkins, a Claire’s regular who came in for the smoothies and to chat up the pretty waitresses. In

an article he wrote for the *Yale Daily News*, Hawkins extolled Claire’s smoothies (“they’ll cure a hangover the size of Idaho”) and waitstaff (“my friend stands outside of Claire’s like a lovesick moose”).

Crowds followed.

That’s when Criscuolo began revising the menu, shaping it into something truly distinctive. She drew inspiration from the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and from her Italian mother and grandmother, who every dinner served up a holy trinity of carrots, spinach, and broccoli, plus a fresh garden salad. “People were eating too much meat, so I thought, ‘Why not have a restaurant without it?’”

Salt shakers were removed from tables soon after. In 2001, she eliminated all trans fats, including the shortening she formally used for her award-winning pie and quiche crusts. “I try to stay on top of things,” says Criscuolo, “because people trust us and know we’ll make the right decisions for their health.”

Criscuolo doesn’t make a fuss over the changes; she just uses fresh, high-quality ingredients, knowing that if her food tastes delicious, people will eat it. “For the first 17 years, I didn’t even have a sign on the restaurant that said vegetarian,” she says. It was only after the publication of *Claire’s Corner Copia Cookbook*, the first of her three cookbooks, that it occurred to her that it might be helpful to label herself as a vegetarian chef.

She’s also willing to make concessions, up to a point. The restaurant stocks soda and artificial sweetener. “Do I like selling Coca-Cola? No, but if I get rid of it people get really mad. I risk losing them.”

She won’t, however, scrimp on food. As anyone who’s tried to go organic knows, throwing a burger on the barbecue can be significantly cheaper than grilling organic veggies. When organic heirloom tomatoes hit \$5.50 a pound, Criscuolo started growing them herself. She’s got 43 EarthBoxes out behind her house and this summer harvested 500 pounds of the fruit. Due to the tomato blight, that’s down 66 percent from last year. Still, she’s saved money. Other produce comes from nearby farms.

Meanwhile, health insurance, which Criscuolo provides to her employees, is up 23 percent this year. The United Illuminating bill has jumped by double digits, and rent’s up, too. They’re the same inflationary pressures that doom many other small businesses, and they’ve forced Criscuolo to be as adept at fine-tuning her bottom line as she is at creating her latest recipe for flaxseed biscotti.





Claire's inspires customer loyalty with its delicious meals and a commitment to give back to the community.

“I hate the number crunching,” she admits.

Perhaps, but she's resourceful. When Claire's first opened, Criscuolo didn't have money for an oven, so she sold frozen pretzels for a time because the vendor included a warming oven with the deal. A heat table, legacy from DeLuca's caramel corn shop, was disconnected, filled with ice, and turned into a salad bar. She scrutinizes phone plans, switches when necessary, and exhorts staff to think of creative ways to pare costs.

“In 35 years, I've never had to lay off an employee, cut hours, or reduce pay. I have the ability to make a decent salary, and I try not to be greedy,” she says. “Do I need a new floor? Sure. Do I have \$30,000 to pay for one? No. But Claire's is a kooky place that feels good that I adore. It's a community.”

A community that extends well into greater New Haven. Thank-you letters from area schools, where she teaches an occasional cooking class, Alex's Lemonade Stand, and other organizations hang between bright paintings adorning the restaurant's sunflower-yellow walls. A plastic jug sits on the cash register filled with donations for the literacy program New Haven Reads, one of the many causes Criscuolo supports. In fact, on this particular Sunday, she's cutting out of work early to help promote *The Omnivore's Dilemma for Kids* by journalist Michael Pollan, who also happens to be

a personal friend. Pollan appears in the recent hit documentary *Food Inc.*, and has made eating locally grown organic meals a cause du jour for many Americans. Criscuolo is *waaay* ahead of him, of course. But she's pleased for the company.

“It's so wonderful,” she says, “that we're finally moving in this direction. But still too many people don't have access to this kind of food.”

But first she's got to get through the Sunday lunch crush. Sporting a cardinal red chef coat and a broad smile, Criscuolo seems completely unfazed by the happy chaos her restaurant inspires. Darting between tables, where she's just delivered a bowl of her legendary black bean soup, she's stopped by Venky Krishnaswamy. He discovered Claire's in 1983 while earning his PhD in computer science from Yale. Memories of Criscuolo's carrot cake have lured him back, and he's driven up from New Jersey with friends and family to visit his former haunt.

“I told them I'd take them to a restaurant that serves the best desserts anywhere,” Krishnaswamy says. “I expected two or three people to come, not 30.” Criscuolo beams. “Wonderful!” she says, before excusing herself and heading back into the kitchen. ■

Art Landi '74 has built a career by building product displays. As a longtime advocate for UB, he's encouraging a new generation of designers to do the same. *By Mike Patrick*



Art's Grand Design

You're headed to the CVS for a camera battery. Should be simple enough, right? But when you get there, you find there are no fewer than a gazillion different kinds of camera batteries, and they all look the same. Which is the right one for your camera?

Luckily, a company owned by alumnus Arthur E. Landi '74 designed and built the battery display with you in mind. It shows you exactly what you need. It's friendly and helpful, even inviting. You find the proper battery and glance over to the cosmetics section, wondering if they have that new nail polish you saw on TV. If it's there, you'll find it easily, because chances are, Landi's firm built that display, too.

Landi, 58, who majored in industrial design at UB, is president of the Bronx, N.Y.-based Display Producers, Inc., which designs and manufactures the

product display units you might have seen in CVS, Nordstrom, Bloomingdales, and a host of other retail chains. Bought Duracell batteries at Home Depot? You did so from one of Landi's displays. Seen those Oral B toothbrush displays at the dentist's office? Also Landi's.

Building a career

For 35 years, Landi has built a successful career in industrial design, and he's thanked UB with a devotion to the UB program that has helped many industrial design students achieve similar success. "There isn't a day that goes by that I don't apply something to my work that I learned at UB," Landi said. "I pretty much applied everything I learned in school to my job."

One of the oldest industrial design programs in the country, UB's four-year undergraduate program trains



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Art Landi's Bronx-based Display Products, Inc., makes product displays for nearly every department store and retail chain.

students to design and create just about every consumer and commercial product one can imagine. An engineer might create a vacuum cleaner, but it is the industrial designer who makes it pleasing to look at, easy to use, and efficient to produce. They'll even design its display in the appliance store.

It was a relatively unknown profession when the leader of Landi's Boy Scout troop heard that Landi had been accepted into UB and suggested he look at industrial design as a course of study.

Landi's former teacher at UB, Don McIntyre '57, remembers him as a conscientious student. "He was inquisitive; he was always interested in coming up with different kinds of answers, very creative," said McIntyre, who is now professor emeritus of industrial design.

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“He’s one of the types of students you could tell had ambition and drive. I think he had ideas of what he wanted to do once he got out of the school and that’s helpful.”

Landi and McIntyre remained friends over the decades. And in the 35 years since his graduation, Landi has remained loyal to his UB roots, hosting alumni gatherings, donating time and money, and eventually becoming a member of the Board of Trustees.

“He twice single-handedly supported our annual alumni event. He’s just a very generous man and a gracious host,” said Richard Yelle, director of UB design programs and chair of industrial design. “We’re lucky to have him, not only as a successful alum, but as a trustee. It’s incredible to have an industrial designer on the board.”

Landi, however, credits the department, and McIntyre in particular, for creating a collegial atmosphere among

students and alumni that encouraged him to stay connected over the years.

“He kept everybody together. He was an inspiration and mentor to me,” Landi said. “The Industrial Design Department is very close and small, and my industry is small. Unlike other majors like business where you may have tens of thousands of students and jobs, in our world it’s much closer. We are a community of professionals who should work together.”

Both Yelle and McIntyre said Landi serves as an inspiration to current industrial design students. “Everybody, all the faculty and students know who he is and his success, and we continue to teach classes in display and exhibit design, which is what his company does,” Yelle said.

But times have changed since Landi attended UB. What he designed with pens and graph paper, students now do with computers.

“The school has kept up with the needs of the industry,” Landi said. “I’ve hired many interns and full-time employees who have come from UB, some of whom now work for my colleagues in the field.”

In fact, UB industrial design students have found success in many different industries.

“We’ve had students work for General Motors, Chrysler, GE, Westinghouse, almost anything you can think of,” McIntyre said. “It’s a wide-open field. We had one graduate designing specialized vehicles for the Red Cross.”

Changes and the future

And as the program marks its 60th anniversary this year, it keeps up with the times, and as the industry changes, it does, too. “We’re an old, distinguished program, and over the years we’ve of course evolved with the U.S. economy,” Yelle said. “We’re very aware of and connected to the corporate and manufacturing world. For instance, we used to be a very big car design school. We’ve moved into other areas now where there’s more employment, like exhibit design.”

Yelle said the program, like Landi, has also not forgotten its roots.

“We still teach traditional hand skills; you have to know how to draw,” Yelle said. “We do a lot of computer work as well, but computers are not everything. The job of a designer is to communicate, and the fastest way to communicate is drawing.”

That’s often how students communicate with Landi. At design shows and other functions, UB students approach him with designs and drawings, eager for his professional critique, which he is always glad to provide. He encourages other alumni to be as supportive.

“The assumption is, when you left UB, UB gave you something,” he said. “Why not get involved, give back and help those students who need help, like you did?”

In fact, Landi said it’s an exciting time for alumni to reconnect with UB.

“The University is on a growing path again,” Landi said. “The core programs are still as strong as ever. For me, what it means is to be involved in an organization which is growing, and to make a difference. One of the most interesting things is the potential UB can offer to students and to the community. UB makes a difference to the city of Bridgeport and that’s important.”

McIntyre credits Landi for making a difference, too. “We’re very proud of Art,” he said. “It’s another success story coming from UB.” ■

UB helps Bridgeport win a “best city” award

Bridgeport is the second best small city for students to go to college, thanks to the University of Bridgeport’s multitude of cultural and academic offerings, according to a national college ranking released in September by the American Institute for Economic Research.

“College years are shaped by classes, professors, and the campus, but they’re also shaped by the location of the school,” said Kerry Lynch, senior economist at AIER, a nonprofit group founded 76 years ago at MIT.



The annual AIER “College Destinations Index” ranks 360 metropolitan areas and breaks them down into four groups based on population size. Bridgeport came in second among small cities after Boulder, Colorado, and it beat well-known college towns as Madison, Wisconsin; Durham, North Carolina; and New Haven, Connecticut.

Communities were judged on economic, cultural, and academic factors like student concentration, cost of living, unemployment rates, artistic and cultural opportunities, campus life, college degree attainment among area residents, social diversity, and research and development capacity.

With students from 79 countries around the world, the second-largest engineering school in New England, and an abundance of career-oriented graduate programs in fields from health sciences to business, UB propelled Bridgeport toward the top of the ranking, said Ryan Goodenough, director of communications for AIER.

Mary-Jane Foster, vice president of university relations, said UB was “delighted that its contributions to the city have been recognized by the AIER.

“Bridgeport, not unlike UB, has been underestimated and undervalued, but in the last ten years, there has been significant redevelopment throughout the city,” said Foster. “There are sports, entertainment, lots of new restaurants, cultural attractions, and also a terrific university. Obviously, campus and community resources directly impact the quality of life, not just for our students, but for Bridgeport’s residents and for its neighbors in surrounding Fairfield County.” ■ – L.G.

When population stats showed the tremendous need for a Hispanic telephone directory, Clodomiro Falcon '89 determined to publish one. First, he had to convince his wife.

By Leslie Geary

Clodomiro's Dream

After it hit 200,000 miles, it was all over for the Ford Taurus. It just died. Ka-put. But, really, what did he expect? It had kept the whole operation going, mile after mile: 40,000 in the one year alone as he made sales calls pitching his dream — a telephone directory for Fairfield County's Spanish-speaking population.

He would call it *La Guia Hispana*, and he was amazed there wasn't one already, not when state's Hispanic population was the fastest-growing in Connecticut. What an opportunity! Like low-hanging fruit. So off he drove in that old blue car to court clients and enlist their businesses.

"We *junked* that car!"

Clodomiro Falcon '89 tells the story with relish as he stands in the warehouse of Trumbull Printing. He's surrounded by boxes filled with 35,000 copies of the latest *La Guia Hispana*. They're fresh off the press, and soon to be loaded onto delivery trucks. There was a time, though, when he and Aida, his wife of 30 years and business partner, personally loaded the boxes into the Ford Taurus. With the children safely buckled up in the backseat — Alfonso, Melania, and little Jessica — they drove up and down nearly every road in Fairfield County to deliver the directories.



"We used to go to fairs and festivals and hand them out. Or stand outside of supermarkets," recalls Aida. "It was a real family affair. When Melania came back from college, she still delivered them. She drove the van just like a boy."

For a moment, the Falcons grow quiet, sharing a private memory of those early days. Clodomiro and Aida. Yes, this story about risking it all to build a business that, starting in April 1996, went from nothing to booking more than \$800,000 annually in sales today, it's really a love story.

A boy and a girl

Clodomiro Falcon was just 17 years old and Aida a year younger when they met at a party in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. She was petite, with a shy smile and steel-trap mind, and when he saw her, Falcon was a goner. They courted, married, and when Alfonso was born, Falcon set out to get a job that would provide for his new family. Freshly minted sociology degree in hand, Falcon thought he might try human resources, but after eight



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months, nothing. When publishing company Legislacion Economica offered him an entry-level spot selling its legal directories, he jumped at the chance.

“My first day of sales,” Falcon recalls, “I was so stressed out. My stomach and legs, you feel like you can’t do it. I wanted to quit.”

Wanted to, but Clodomiro Falcon isn’t a quitter. An active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, he put his faith where it’s always been, and concentrated on his clients’ needs. Within a year, he was the top salesman. Remembering it, Falcon says, “I love sales!” with such emotion you know it’s true. And no wonder. He had been hired by Corpodata, which published the phone book *Metroguia*, as a product manager. His was providing for the family. Life was good.

Then one day in 1986 Aida announced that she thought they needed to pack up the children and get their MBAs in the United States. He followed her to Bridgeport.

“I said yes,” says Falcon, “because I loved her.”

Off to UB

UB had everything they were looking for: intensive ESL classes and an MBA program that offered specialties in finance and accounting for Aida and advertising and marketing for Falcon. They’d polish their English, earn their business degrees, and return to Caracas.

But when the couple graduated in 1989, Falcon was offered a sales manager position at Radio Cumbre, the Spanish language station out of Bridgeport. He decided to take the job for a year, figuring it would provide valuable practical training. He wound up staying seven, and the station sponsored his residency in the United States. He became a citizen in 2002.

“My mission was to help businesses succeed, to connect them with consumers. I put that first,” says Falcon.

Somewhere along the way, Falcon realized the only Hispanic Yellow Pages was up in Hartford, leaving a huge untapped client based in his own backyard. “No one,” he says, “was paying attention to the growing Hispanic community. There was a real lack of awareness.” He’d be the one to publish a guide for Fairfield County.

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Clodomiro Falcon can wear a suit to the warehouse where his directory, *La Guía Hispana*, is ready to be loaded onto trucks. There was a time, though, when he and wife, Aida, did the heavy lifting themselves.

Adds Aida: “If you’re looking for a lawyer or a supermarket or a dry cleaner, you want one that’s around the corner. It needs to be local.”

The sell

The way she says it, it sounds like the most obvious thing in the world. But when Falcon presented the very same case to her? Well now, that was a different story.

“She didn’t want me to do it, to tell you the truth. I had a stable job at the radio station. I was making a secure income, and I could keep going to be a high-level senior executive,” says Falcon. “But once I got the idea to start a business in my mind, it consumed me. It was in my mind, my brain, my blood. I had to do it.”

Back and forth it went. So she made him present a business plan.

“That’s the beauty of my wife. She’s a very smart lady,” says Falcon. “I wrote a business plan for the first five and ten years. I researched the market to make sure there was the need.”

Was there ever: The state’s Hispanic and Latino populations had reached 6.5 percent in 1990 and would nearly double to 12 percent by 2000, census figures showed. And in Fairfield County, Falcon pointed out, the Hispanic population stood at 8.5 percent in 1990,

and would jump to 15.4 percent by 2000. Hispanic-owned businesses in Connecticut were booming, too. From 1997 to 2000, they would increase by 43 percent, generating \$1.2 billion annually. Across the U.S., he added, Hispanic purchasing power represented \$144 billion, a 70 percent increase from 1982.

She bought it.

Falcon quit Radio Cumbre while Aida supported the family by working as assistant to the treasurer at the Shoreline Star Greyhound Park in Bridgeport. When she got home, she went into the basement of the family’s Trumbull home, where Falcon had set up an office, and built the company’s database. “We’d work every night until 2 a.m. and 3 a.m., and then I’d get up a few hours later and go back to work,” Aida recalls. “I was so tired.”

Falcon worked 12, 13, 14 hours a day, unless he had a gig. An accomplished musician, he picked up extra cash playing the harp and mandolin in a mariachi band. He loved the music, but the hours? The worst was catching the last train out of Grand Central Station the nights the band went into New York City.

Meanwhile, banks refused to lend him start-up money because he lacked sufficient experience. So Falcon charged it: over \$30,000 on seven credit cards. Painfully aware of protecting his credit, his good name,

he carefully paid the minimums, plus a little extra. Other things couldn't be helped: there was no sales staff. No phone book, either.

"I had nothing to show advertisers! No book. Just an idea," said Falcon. "But people knew me from the radio station. They believed in me."

The day his first client signed an ad contract with *La Guia*, Falcon walked out of the man's office and cried. "I couldn't hold it," he says. "I said, 'Thank you, Lord. Give me strength.' I was 40 years old. I was prepared academically. I had the skills, and I knew had to try and fail than not try at all. But it was a struggle."

One client at a time

"He's the kind of guy who can walk in, and if he didn't have a book, he can make you believe he can do it. He's a guy you could trust and have faith in," says John LaCava, an attorney and partner at Barr & LaCava. "He was the first to realize that the number of growing Hispanics represented a sizable part of population. He knows the market. And he has a wonderful, engaging personality."

LaCava was among the first 100 clients who advertised in the first issue of *La Guia*, which was published on October 24, 1997, and the ad for his Stamford-based law firm has graced the directory's back cover ever since. He's not alone. Seventy-five percent of Falcon's clients renew their contracts with *La Guia*.

"It's not just a book, it's making a cultural link," says Falcon, opening one of the directories he's pulled from a warehouse packing box. When he flips through it, the connections become clear: It's not just the ads in Spanish. It's the possessive adjectives as in: Your Yellow Pages in Spanish, printed prominently on the front cover. And pages devoted to Spanish-speaking countries with maps and the kind of helpful information you'd find in an atlas: names of national capitals, population sizes.

A photograph of a smiling Falcon beams from *La Guia*, too, with a note to readers. There are the usual bits about his training and work history. His curriculum vitae, if you will. But there's a lot about his personal life, and reading it feels like being introduced to a new friend. "*Clodomiro residente de Trumbull desde 1994, se define como hombre de familia...A Clodomiro le gusta jugar futbol, tenis, golf, cantar, tocar la guitarra y otros instrumentos musicales.*"

That kind of personal touch is encoded on DNA, not on a MBA. You either connect with your clients or you don't. It's clear which camp the Falcons belong to. One, two, three, four years of work and losing money. One more, breaking even. And the sixth? They finally

turned a profit. Old-time customers stuck with them, new ones signed on.

Bright future

The rest, as they say, is history. *La Guia's* expanded with three new editions covering New Haven and Hartford Counties, and Westchester, New York. He's signed over 1,000 clients and has hired 14 employees. The credit cards are long paid off. The office has relocated from the home basement to a commercial condominium in Trumbull that the couple bought in 2006. They're building online versions of *La Guia* because that's the future, and yes, there are always five- and ten-year business plans. Beyond that? Maybe Melania will take over. An accomplished musician like her father, she inherited both of her parents' business smarts. "She can sell," Falcon boasts. "She's got it. Maybe it will be her."

As for Falcon and Aida? He'd like to retire, pamper nine grandchildren, and move to a condo in Orlando, not far from where he and Aida went for a much-overdue weekend break the sixth year of the business, when they realized *La Guia* had turned a corner.

That same year Falcon also gave Aida a diamond ring. Funnily enough, he didn't buy it with first profits. He'd been saving for it all along, making small payments from his mariachi earnings because while he had no idea how long it would take to see his dream through, and the credit card balances were in the stratosphere, and the Taurus was on its last legs, and he was running on adrenaline, faith in God, and belief in his abilities, he knew one thing for sure: his pretty wife deserved a diamond. ■

On the Road

University of Bridgeport students eager to hit the open road can now rent a car whenever they want with Connect by Hertz, a car-sharing club that arrived on campus in September.

To use the program, students sign up for a membership at the company's Web site. Once enrolled, they may go online or call to reserve one of four vehicles — three Toyota Priuses and a Ford Escape SUV — available for convenient pick up outside the Campus Security Office.

"It's a great service for our students," said Dean of Students Ken Holmes. "It's an opportunity for them to get out and do what they need to do, in addition to having the UB shuttle and free bus service. And for parents, it's really nice; they don't have to buy a car, so it's a less expensive, more environmentally friendly way to travel." ■ — L.G.

Helping to address a “silent epidemic” of oral health disease, Fones hygienists open new dental clinic at Tisdale Elementary School.

By Leslie Geary

Sparkling

When students returned to Tisdale Elementary School in Bridgeport this fall, they were greeted by a new program that experts say is as important as math and reading: a sparkling new dental clinic that’s being run by the University’s Fones School of Dental Hygiene, and, thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of Social Services, is providing free checkups to all of Tisdale’s students through June 2010.

Business has been brisk.

In the first six weeks of its opening, more than 100 students received care, putting Fones hygienists on track for treating all of Tisdale’s 650 students by the end of the school year. Children with severe dental issues receive additional checkups every two to three months, and also may be referred to local dentists for more extensive treatments.

“There’s been a lot of decay,” says Fones instructor Carmen Hufcut who oversees the third-year student hygienists at the clinic who inspect teeth, provide X-rays



and sealants, and educate students and their families about proper dental care.

Hufcut recently guided a visitor on a tour of the new facility. As she walked from treatment station to treatment station, she conferred with student hygienists before making her way to a file cabinet in the corner of the room. There, she pulled out a pages-long list of students who already have been flagged for intensive care. Hufcut has contacted all of their families to refer them to

area dentists. She’ll call again to make sure families have followed through. Patience, she admits, is necessary.

Eighty-seven percent of the students who’ve come to the clinic so far have qualified for HUSKY, Connecticut’s health insurance for low-income families. But few Fairfield County dentists accept it, says Hufcut. Those that do have long wait times before patients can get an appointment. In Bridgeport, only 40 percent of children insured under HUSKY go to a dentist for preventative care.



New

“Students know about flossing and brushing,” says Hufcut. “But many of them come from single-parent homes and their families are working two jobs. It’s tough.”

Tisdale students aren’t alone. American children miss more than 750,000 school days a year due to dental problems and related conditions, according to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Dental decay is one of the most common diseases for children, affecting 59 percent of kids between the ages of 5 and 17. And a U.S. Surgeon’s General Report has identified “a silent epidemic of dental and oral disease” affecting children and the poor.

The Tisdale clinic tears down barriers to care by operating during school hours, three days a week. Checkups and cleanings typically last 45 minutes, and students arrive at the clinic in clusters of six, eliminating potentially agonizing wait times. Any fears they may have are quickly allayed by cheerful posters promoting proper brushing and a healthy diet. A giant inflatable tube of Crest toothpaste hangs from the ceiling. The new X-ray machine, funded with the Department of Social Services grant, is used in a separate room.

The grant also funded a top-of-the-line air compression system that hygienists use to dry teeth before they fill deep dental crevices with sealants to prevent cavities.

Soothing conversation constantly fills the room. “Right now I’m just checking to see your gums,” student hygienist Sarah Bortolan tells a student.

A few feet away, Isaiah Campbell talks football with an eighth grader named Norman, who reclines on one of the treatment chairs. Wearing sunglasses to shield his eyes from a bright overhead light, he looks more poolside than patient. Campbell chats good-naturedly while methodically working his way from tooth to tooth with a stainless steel explorer.

“You’ve just got to talk with them,” he says after the checkup is finished. “Once you find common ground, you’re OK.”

Campbell speaks from experience. He received care from a Fones hygienist 18 years ago, when he was in the first grade at Lordship Elementary School in Stratford, Connecticut. “I was so amazed,” he recalls. “I wanted to do the same thing.” ■

Student hygienist Sarah Bortolan shows a Tisdale Elementary School student proper brushing techniques. Bortolan is one of several third-year students providing much-needed dental care to the school’s children.



Pursuing Su

Home (plus work) unites freshman living on UB's new First Year Achievement Floor

By Leslie Geary

It's just after dinner on a chilly fall weeknight when an empty lounge on the third floor of Barnum Hall begins to fill with students toting laptops and backpacks. They pile onto sofas and chairs, and when no more are available, they sit on the floor, leaning shoulder-to-shoulder against the walls and even each other. It's slightly frenetic, but within minutes the lounge is quiet again as the students look to a young woman standing at the front of the room.

"I get what it's like to be in a class and think 'I can't do this the rest of my life,'" she tells them. "But we can help you figure out your major and a career. We help with internships and resumes."

The speaker is Toni Colognesi, assistant director of Career Services. And on this particular evening, she's here to give a special presentation to the 60 freshmen who live at UB's brand-new First Year Achievement Floor.

For the next hour, Colognesi will walk students through a demo of a new resume-building tool they can find on the UB Web site. She'll toss questions into the room, engage, encourage. "We have mentors, people in all kinds of industries you can talk to."

This message of partnership and success is a familiar one. FYA, as the students call the floor, was designed specifically to ease the transition to college by providing incoming freshmen with a full range of academic and social support.

The floor opened this fall on a first-come, first-serve basis to all freshmen. Students who opted in had to agree

ccess

to academic requirements, including five hours of mandatory communal study time per week, plus an additional five hours of independent work. In return, they are supported by professors, financial aid administrators, tutors, health counselors, and others who personally visit the FYA lounge.

“I don’t know a lot of schools that would do this, but it definitely helps you prepare,” says Jamila Brown, 18, a mass communications major from Brooklyn, New York. Brown signed up for FYA because she liked the idea of living in a community within the larger UB community. “I do better in a smaller atmosphere,” she says. She also admits to procrastinating, and the mandatory study time helps her focus, too.

Justin Rich, from Montclair, New Jersey, agrees. Left to study on his own, he admits, “I’d probably be doing sports.”

Still, it’s not all homework, tutorials, and meetings with counselors. Creating a sense of home is equally important. Students live with resident director and UB alumna Lolita Jenkins ’08, a dervish of energy who is, by her own description, “friend, mom, counselor, tutor,” depending on what the situation calls for. Social outings, like an upcoming trip to the circus, foster community, too, and, hopefully, encourage students to stick to it.

“We want them to get excited about being at UB and graduating from UB,” explains Sam Johnson, director of residential life. “We want them to join clubs and be involved, and it’s working out phenomenally.



Two heads are better than one: Freshmen are encouraged to study together at the new Achievement Floor.

They’re very involved. They’re working hard. They know we really want all of them here for four years, and we want them to graduate. That’s how we talk to them, and we do everything to help them excel in an academic environment.”

Johnson backs his talk with a personal commitment that extends well past working hours. The night of Colognesi’s presentation, he’s brings his wife, Beverly, and children Isaiah, 7, Kaya, 5, and Hanna, 2, whom he introduces to the lounge as “my other family.”

“Midterms are coming up,” he reminds students. “If you need anything, speak up.” Someone asks for an accounting tutor. Another wants help in biology. Math. Johnson jots down their requests in a notebook then reminds students to help each other. “Is anyone good at math?” he says. Isaiah Johnson’s hand shoots into the air. The room fills with laughter. There may be bouts of homesickness and midterm jitters, but one thing is clear: at FYA, there’s family. ■

Back to School

While many of their peers enjoyed the final days of summer, more than 1,100 students from Fairfield County devoted one of their last summer days to a special youth summit cohosted by the University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport schools, and other sponsors.



The Back-to-School Youth Education Summit for students ages six to 24 had something for everyone: actors performing role-playing skits; presentations by Dr. Steve Perry, author of *Man Up! Nobody's Coming to Save Us*; and performances by Status Quo, the popular dance group from *America's Got Talent*.

"The purpose of this event is to inspire kids to make better choices for work, life, and health, and to understand the importance of education in their future, whether they're first graders or 24-year-olds," said Jo Shute, vice president of marketing, communications and planning at Workplace, Inc., which also sponsored the event with Community Health Network of Connecticut.

The day long summit was open to 300 Bridgeport public school students in first through eighth grades who last year had perfect attendance records, as well as 800 teenagers and college students who have been working through the Workplace, Inc., summer jobs program.

One of them, Keelian Thompson, 18, a junior at the University School in Bridgeport, said he thinks about his future "all of the time," and the presentation by Steve Perry was especially helpful.

"He spoke about making certain decisions at certain times in your life and how that can put you on the right path," said Thompson, whose own plans include studying psychology and acting when he goes to college. "Most people need a little guidance." ■ — L.G.

Guides were ready to escort new students through campus during New Student Orientation on August 25-29. Undergraduate enrollment surged by nearly 11 percent this year, and total enrollment at UB now stands at 5,103 students.

Exhibition sheds light on domestic violence

For victims of domestic violence, finding the courage to speak out may be as impossible as flying to the moon.

But art can provide a different way — through painting or poetry, even sewing — for individuals to tell their stories. Seek help. Heal.

That was the message at a special October exhibition cohosted by the University and the Center for Women and Families in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Featuring more than 50 pieces of art created by local children, women, and others affected by domestic violence, the show at the John J. Cox Student Center included poetry, drawings by children, large silhouettes painted with artists' personal stories written in Spanish, and masks created by residents of a safe house run by the Center for Women and Families for women and children escaping abuse.



"Masks can be used to hide the abuse they've endured when they haven't wanted to speak about it. Or it can be about taking off that mask, and regardless of what they've suffered, they are stronger," said Iris Padilla, an advocate at the women's center, which serves the towns of Bridgeport, Stratford, Fairfield, Trumbull, Monroe, and Easton.

One large yellow quilt sewn by the center's clients and staff reflected the theme of personal happiness and a healthy home. "You must," read one of the patches, "be willing to surrender what you are for what you could become." ■ — L.G.

Page-turner finish at UB's Big Read

Two hundred and ninety-six readers. Twenty-four hours. One great book.

Race to the finish:
UB student Shantell Kelly was among the 296 readers who took turns reading *The Maltese Falcon* in just 24 hours at UB's Big Read.

Those were the vital stats at the University's round-the-clock reading of *The Maltese Falcon* on Friday, October 16 to Saturday, October 17. But organizers of the event — part of the Bridgeport/Shelton Big Read — said Dashiell Hammett's iconic detective novel offered something immeasurably valuable, too: an all-too-rare opportunity to delight in the satisfaction of a good book shared.

"Our lives are so busy these days, so it's wonderful that so many people took the time to slow down, read aloud, or just listen to this classic," said Eric Lehman, a senior lecturer in the English department.

Referred to by some as a "book club on steroids," Big Read was originally started in 1996 by the National Endowment for the Arts in response to surveys showing that literacy in America is on the decline. The program encourages communities to read the same book together. Local organizers select titles, usually classics like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, and support community-minded events, such as the UB read-a-thon.

As one of several local sponsors of this year's Bridgeport/Shelton Big Read, which officially ran during the months of October and November, the University's participation included an exhibition of art created by graphic design students especially for the Big Read kickoff celebration at the Barnum Museum. Some 1,900 copies of the book were distributed. Readers also earned prizes if they successfully tracked down a 12-inch-high plaster falcon that had been hidden in downtown Bridgeport.

For some, like UB freshman Colin Fricke, 18, the read-a-thon was the highlight of Big Read. Fricke was the second reader to climb the stage at the Cox Student Center shortly after the event began, following President Neil Salonen, who started the live reading with a sonorous: "Samuel Spade's jaw was long and bony, his chin a jutting v under the more flexible v of his mouth."

"I love the idea of an event that supports live, active reading," said Fricke, a literature and civilization major from Wantage, New Jersey. "The language in the book is so enticing."

Fricke was followed by dozens of students, professors, administrators, and visitors who came to join in. They waited patiently for turns at the mic, or clustered around large round tables, listening to the story of Sam Spade and the gorgeous but deadly Brigid O'Shaughnessy. Tables piled with refreshments and hot coffee provided sustenance, especially as the Big Read continued past midnight and into the dawning hours of Saturday morning. ■ — L.G.





Carl Burton's very large photographs

The Gallery at the Arnold Bernhard Center kicked off its 2009-2010 visiting artist series with a special exhibition of large-format photographs by Carl Burton, which opened on October 29. The next show in the gallery series, quilts by Bridgeport artist Denyse Schmidt,

will be held in the spring 2010. To find out more, or to RSVP for the opening reception, please contact Mary-Jane Foster, vice president of university relations, at (203) 576-4626 or mjfoster@bridgeport.edu.



Faculty Lines

David M. Brady, vice provost of the Division of Health Services and director of the Human Nutrition Institute, was a featured speaker at the American College for Advancement in Medicine conference held in November. His presentation focused on innovative approaches to treating autoimmune diseases and was entitled “Using Cutting Edge Accurate Identification of the GI Microbiota in the Diagnosis and Management of Autoimmune Diseases.” Dr. Brady also contributed to *Integrative Gastroenterology* (Oxford University Press), the first medical textbook on integrative approaches to gastrointestinal disorders. It was edited by Drs. Andrew Weil and **Gerard Mullin** ’94, an alumnus of the Human Nutrition Institute.

Jennifer Brett, director of the UB Acupuncture Institute, has been appointed to chair of the Research Information Committee of the Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. She will be responsible for promoting research at acupuncture and oriental medicine (AOM) schools. In that role, she will seek to promote the use of electronic medical records for clinical research purposes. “It will enhance care giving and will help the public understand when it’s appropriate to go to an acupuncturist and when it’s not,” she said. “There is still a lot of education that has to be done with the public and a lot of modernization that needs to be done within the AOM community as a whole.”

Plants have long provided invaluable treatments for a wide range of illnesses. But now, **Scott Bussom**, an assistant professor at the College of Naturopathic Medicine and associate research scientist at Yale

Medical School’s Pharmacology department, is part of a team working with botanicals to treat cancer patients. By coupling complex gene data with information about a traditional Chinese botanical formula known as PHY906, Bussom is working to produce a highly complex formula that shows the potential to speed recovery of pancreatic and colon cancer patients receiving chemotherapy. He presented a poster of some of his findings at the 2009 American Association of Cancer Researchers Conference in Denver.

All living things, from polar bears to plants, must contend with temperature change. But what is it that enables some plants to more effectively deal with climate fluctuations than others? Answering that question is a passion for biology professor **Kathleen Englemann**, who is tracking down answers. Using hybrid strains of *Arabidopsis thaliana*, or Mouse ear cress, Englemann hopes to identify and isolate the genes that are responsible for the plant’s ability to tolerate temperature changes. “The ability for plants to tolerate fluctuations in temperature has a tremendous impact on agriculture, on medical plants, crop material, and wild plants and conservation issues,” says Englemann. “With climate change, knowing how plants adapt becomes more and more imperative.” Her research is being funded through a Seed-Money Research Grant for Faculty from the University.

Jim Fitzpatrick, clinic director of the Acupuncture Institute, in October was invited to speak with geriatric wellness program students at Sacred Heart University about how acupuncture can help elderly

patients. A few weeks later, Sacred Heart professor Dr. Salome Brooks lectured UB acupuncture majors about trends in geriatric care in the United States. “Our hope,” says Fitzpatrick, “is that this will lead to academic and research collaboration between the Acupuncture Institute and Sacred Heart’s physical therapy and geriatric wellness programs.”

Classical music fans around the world turn to **Jeffrey Johnson**’s reviews of live performances. Johnson, director of the Music Department and an accomplished composer in his own right, pens critiques of every major orchestra in Connecticut for the *Hartford Courant*, *Connecticut Post*, *Stamford Advocate*, and *Greenwich Time*. Thanks to the Internet, online versions of his reportage make their way around the globe. “I get comments from the weirdest places,” says Johnson, who receives e-mails from as far as Finland and Australia. “I really enjoy it. I see a pedagogical opportunity in it; I’m trying to create a new audience for live classical music. Everything is out on CDs and MP3 players, and I’m trying to reach the people who are asking, ‘Why go to a concert when I can download Beethoven’s *Ninth*?’ I say, ‘Download it, study it, then go hear it live and be completely blown away by how physical the process is.’” Johnson’s reviews can be found on his Facebook page.

Pride in American language is as old as the United States itself, says **Diane Krumrey**, an assistant professor of literature and civilization who will shed light on “a curious footnote” of American language at the Modern Language Association conference in December. Explains Krumrey: In the 1800s, when Americans

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Faculty Lines

were chafing to establish literary independence from the British, they argued that Native American languages trumped stultifying British English. To back their claim, they referenced research by Peter DuPonceau, a French linguist who had participated in the American Revolution, and John Heckewelder, a missionary to the Lenape Indians. “American writers and critics hoped that DuPonceau and Heckewelder’s work would qualify as scientific verification that Indian eloquence had been absorbed into American culture, making our language, like the Indians’, more vivid and inspiring,” says Krumrey, an expert in the field. “I will be offering this as an example of how American culture embraces and adopts both what is there and what it imagines to be there in the many ethnicities it contains.”

She may have arrived at UB this fall, but **Emily Larned**, assistant professor of graphic design, already is a familiar face on and off campus. *Commcreatives*, the leading Web site for Connecticut’s design professionals, selected Larned for an in-depth interview. Larned also has been invited to Florida State University in Tallahassee in the spring 2010 as a special visiting artist at its Small Craft Advisory Press (SCAP), which works to push the limits of traditional book arts. In selecting her, SCAP noted that Larned’s work “is an exciting fit for our mission.” Meanwhile, Larned and her UB students are busy collaborating with the Barnum Museum on projects and are producing an identity and promotional campaign for the Downtown Community Council, a grassroots arts group that puts on free outdoor music, movie, and performance events in Bridgeport. Next up: plans to

produce a historical walking tour map of the city’s South End.

English department senior lecturer **Eric Lehman** is becoming one of the leading scholars on author Henry Miller. His essay, “Acceptance and Compassion in Henry Miller’s *Book of Friends*,” will appear in the 2010 issue of *Nexus: The International Henry Miller Journal*. It is the third time the peer-reviewed publication has featured one of Lehman’s essays. Rarely critiqued, *Book of Friends* was Miller’s final complete work, and in it, writes Lehman, “Miller struggled to find meaning in an anarchic world, and found it in the bonds of friendship.”

English professor **Amy Nawrocki**’s chapbook, *Nomad’s End*, has been accepted for publication by Finishing Line Press and will be available in the summer 2010. In it, Nawrocki reflects on the power of travel to transform. The title of the book comes from her poem, “Abandonment” about a crab “creeping / in the oyster underworld / ...until nomading ends.”

Nan Kurz Nutt has been appointed to associate dean of the School of Education and Human Resources. An elementary and middle school teacher for many years, she joined the UB faculty in 2007. Her current research focuses on the influence of teachers’ beliefs on student performance. She also is the cofaculty adviser for the UB student chapter of ASCD (formally known as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), which develops teaching programs, products, and services. “In my short time at UB, it’s my students that motivate my leadership and my scholarship. I strive to be a

better educator because they are such an intrinsically dedicated group of professionals,” said Dr. Nutt, who is a native of New Fairfield, Connecticut.

Jani Macari Pallis has been appointed to chair of the Department of Technology Management in the School of Engineering. A former investigator with NASA, she brings to the job expertise in fluid dynamics, with an emphasis on air, space, and marine vehicles, sports equipment, and the relationship between athletic injuries and equipment. Dr. Pallis joined the University in the fall 2008 as an associate professor with a background in biomedical, industrial, mechanical, and aeronautical engineering. Her current research focuses on the management of biotechnology and sustainability practices in sports manufacturing and aircraft maintenance. She is the faculty adviser for the new proposed UB section of Society of Women Engineers.

Prabir Patra, director of the Biomedical Engineering Program, is among a team of researchers who recently received a \$600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to develop fiber-based nanotechnology to remove polluted ions and bacteria from water. This critical research may potentially address a growing shortage of safe drinking water supplies that is a main cause of disease, hunger, and poverty in much of the world. Additionally, Dr. Patra is pioneering research in the fast-developing field of biomedical engineering. His work includes developing nanostructured scaffolds from polymers to generate artificial skin cells for the treatment of burn victims. He also is collaborating with Rice University to create

medical gels that may one day detect tumors by reacting to minute changes in body pH and temperature before releasing drugs in precise, controlled dosages to infected organs.

Stephen M. Perle, professor of clinical sciences at the College of Chiropractic, was appointed in September to the Publications Board of the American Chiropractic Association. Board members are responsible for reviewing any reports for accuracy before they appear in ACA publications, including the monthly *ACA News*. Dr. Perle also recently completed research with Dr. Gregory Kawchuk at the University of Alberta that has important implications for the way chiropractors deliver care. The two found that the direction vertebrae move is dictated more by anatomy than by doctors’ efforts during spinal manipulation. Their paper, “The relation between the application angle of spinal manipulative therapy and resultant vertebral accelerations in an in situ porcine model,” appeared in the October 2009 issue of *Manual Therapy*. “Hopefully, these findings will make delivering care easier for doctors and cut down on fatigue on the job,” says Perle.

Tracey Ryan, chair of undergraduate psychology and human services programs at the School of Education and Human Resources, presented poster and a paper research at the 49th annual meeting of the New England Psychological Association. Her poster was entitled “Teaching Emotional Intelligence Using Humbling Stories.” Her presentation addressed the topic, “Assessing Your Psychology Program: Defining and Living the Mission.”

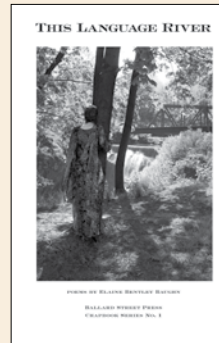
Book Lines

In authorizing commercial loans, banks use so-called loan covenants to assess borrowers' continuing credit worthiness. The covenants include an analysis of asset and liability data, known as financial ratios. Trouble is, says **James Sagner**, an associate professor at the School of Business, those ratios "don't give us any information about how well a business manages itself. Financial ratios based solely on balance sheet data have very limited value predicting defaults." Sagner reached his conclusion after examining covenants and default data. His findings, "Bank Loan Covenant Measures and Mis-measures" appeared in the August 2009 issue of *North American Journal of Finance and Banking Research*. A former vice president at First National Bank of Chicago who was responsible for financial advisory and commercial lending work, he suggests that banks instead use a combination of income statement and balance sheet data before signing the dotted lines on commercial loans. "Since we're still going through this credit crisis," he says, "it's possible this article has some relevance. Bankers need to ask, 'Does this data we're requiring tell us anything about a company's future prospects?'"

Gad Selig has been named associate dean for business development and outreach in the Graduate Studies and Research Division. He came to UB in 2002. An expert in IT, marketing, business strategy, outsourcing and new product development, he has consulted with AT&T, GE, Continental Group, JPMorgan Chase, Bristol Myers Squibb, and Verizon. He continues to teach graduate level courses at both the engineering and business schools.

Animal Planet viewers may have recognized **Jared Skorwon**, a lecturer at the College of Naturopathic Medicine, who appeared on the cable channel's popular series, *Dogs 101*, to share the remarkable story of how he and one very loyal Afghan hound cured a teenage girl suffering from mitochondrial disease. The dog, he says, "brought her food. The dog took her out. The dog slept with her, and was a very healing caring soul." In addition, Dr. Skorwon's book, *Fundamentals of Naturopathic Pediatrics*, was published in November and is the first book of evidence-based natural remedies for children's conditions. It will be used at all naturopathic medical schools across the country.

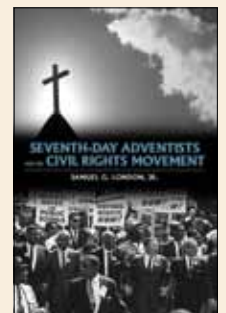
Should companies care if employees are happy? Absolutely, answers **Daniel Whitman**, an assistant professor of business administration whose recent study shows a direct link between workers' emotions and overall performance. Whitman's findings won the Best Paper Award at the Academy of Management's annual meeting in August. Entitled "Satisfaction, Citizenship and Performance Units: A Meta Analysis of Collective Constructs," the paper showed that happy groups of employees were more productive, had fewer absences, lower turnover, and in service industries, had more satisfied customers. The upshot: "Employers need to focus on things that make everyone happy, not just the one bad apple or the one superstar performer," Whitman says. "When times are lean, as they are now, some of the first things that go are initiatives that keep people happy, but the research shows it pays to consider workers' emotions." ■



Cycles in nature and personal relationships inform the poems of alumna **Elaine Bentley Baughn '92**, whose first chapbook, *This Language River*, was recently published by Ballard Street Press. A licensed therapist, Baughn's poetry transports readers on emotional journeys that frequently begin with grief, pass through hope, and arrive at perfect moments of grace experienced in nature. Her poems have previously appeared in *Coal: A Poetry Anthology*, *Chopper Journal*, and other anthologies. "I've always written to process my own emotions, and I recommend that for everyone, whether it be poetry or the letter you're not going to send or lists of things you'd like to create in your life so you can figure out what your priorities are," says Baughn, who received her master's degree in family and marriage therapy. She lives and works in Norwich, Connecticut.

Samuel G. London Jr., an assistant professor in the History Department, has published *Seventh-day Adventists and the Civil Rights Movement* (University Press of Mississippi). Hailed as the first in-depth study of its kind, the book focuses on a handful of black Adventist ministers who devoted themselves to the civil rights movement, even as the church hierarchy rejected the cause and banned participation into any political affairs. Yet for individuals like Warren S. Banfield Jr., Alfonso Greene, and Franklin Hill Jr., many of whom were interviewed by London for the book, liberationist interpretations of the Bible and theological underpinnings of the Adventist Church — such as a community-oriented consciousness — justified full participation in the civil rights movement.

— Leslie Geary



You Became

You became a myth
in the silence of the years.

I cast you pure
across clear waters
of hope undimmed.
I wrote you strong
behind broken poetry.

I lifted you heavenward
in flight beyond gravity.
Painted you grander
and brighter than the stars
in my closed eyes.

Made of you the measure
that no man or woman
could ever reach.

And hold you there yet,
through thick and thin,
gossamer, unyielding.

— Elaine Bentley Baughn

Focus on: Carol D. Birks '04

Background: Carol D. Birks earned her master's degree in education from the University's School of Engineering and Human Resources in 1994 and returned to UB to complete her six-year degree in educational leadership in 2004. She currently is principal of Warren Harding High School in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Most recent accomplishment: In October, Ms. Birks won a William Cieslukowski Outstanding First Year High School Principal Award from the Connecticut Association of Schools. The award recognizes elementary, middle, and high school principals who make an immediate and positive impact on their schools or districts and who demonstrate exemplary leadership, a willingness to take risks, and the ability to overcome adversity.

When did you know you wanted to go into education?

I had wanted to become an attorney and after I got my undergraduate degree, I worked as a paralegal. What I discovered was that I was most happy when I was volunteering with young people as an adviser with different youth groups. I quit my job and went to UB full time to get a teaching degree. Everyone thought I was crazy.

What was your first teaching job like?

I had an opportunity to student teach for a semester in Greenwich, Connecticut, and Dr. Richard Harper at the School of Education encouraged me to go Greenwich Academy. I was teaching fifth-grade students who were saying things like, 'My goodness! I'll never get into Harvard!' I couldn't believe it. The disparity was so sharp, it was sad. I realized there is a tale of two Connecticut that I was able to witness firsthand. It fueled my passion to teach in Bridgeport. I went to the Luis Munoz Marin School and taught sixth and seventh grade language arts. It was a good experience.

Your role model?

My mother instilled in me a strong work ethic. She was a domestic worker who had very little formal education. But she always told me that education is the vehicle to success. Studies show that a child's success



is determined by the educational attainment of their mother. However, what I share with my students at Harding is that my mother only went to eighth grade, she grew up in the rural South, but if I can get a doctorate from Columbia University, they can do anything, too.

What's it like to be back at Harding? How do students respond to you?

I share with them my experience growing up in Bridgeport. With some students, I know their extended families so once they realize that it's easier to make that connection. It's a benefit. They do see me as one of them, and I go in there and say, "No excuses. There are people who want to support you."

You've reached out to the community.

Yes, we plan community forums in which we are very transparent about our needs as a

school. I share our test scores, some of our challenges with our students' comportment. We've made a mass appeal to constituents to help, and we have people in the community like Dr. Allen Cook [dean of UB's School of Education] who serve as a board to the school. The University of Bridgeport cosponsors various summer programs with us, and we hold our antibullying forum at UB in which we invite students from suburban districts to spend the day with our students.

Any educational philosophy?

I believe all students can learn at high levels and should be afforded with rigorous academic opportunities. It's imperative to foster the whole child and design instruction that meets the needs of diverse learners. It's all of our responsibility to make sure students succeed.

– Interview by Leslie Geary

Alumni Lines

Would you like to share news of your own? We're interested in what you're doing, and so are your classmates! Contact: Knightlines, Cortright Hall 219 Park Avenue Bridgeport, CT 06604 or knightlines@bridgeport.edu. Be sure to include your full name, contact information, and class year.

1961

Cynthia Newcombe Beach has been living in Florida for the past 35 years and has two grown children and two grandsons, one of whom is going to college in September 2010. "Where did the time go?" she writes. "I have always been so proud to say that I graduated from Fones. It has been such an asset in my life." Beach hopes to hear from classmates, particularly from former roommate Ann Martin, and can be reached at cindyx4@comcast.net.

1965

Marc "Bill" Davis writes that "it's time" to reconnect with UB after a long hiatus. "I used to enjoy alumni get-togethers in Miami," he adds. Since 1984 he has been president of M. William Davis, a full-service accounting and tax firm. He and wife Susan live in Miami-Dade County, FL. They have three daughters: Susanna, an elementary school teacher like her mother; Melissa, a project development administrator; and Benaë, a human resources director. Grandsons Alexander and Paul, both age three, and one-year-old Brent, keep everyone busy. He would like to hear from former classmates and can be reached at billdavis@mwdaviscppa.com.

1967

David Larson was presented with the Distinguished Service Award by the American Association of School Administrators. The award is given annually to educators who demonstrate exemplary leadership, service, and commitment to public education. This is the latest of several awards for him. In 1998, he was named Connecticut Superintendent of the Year and recently served on Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell's Education Cost-Sharing Commission.

1969

Patrick M. Miniutti was appointed in September as the new CFO of League Assets Corporation, a real estate investment trust based in Victoria, British Columbia. He was previously employed as managing director at Sunset Realty Services, a real estate, financial, and management advisory firm. "I have been a CFO for three publicly traded REITs," he says. "Victoria is a great place to live," he adds. "I've gone from one coast to another."

1972

After teaching art in the public schools of Cambridge, MA, for three years, **Claudia Queen** went back to school herself to complete her MFA in animation and documentary films at University of California, Los Angeles. Currently, she is a senior vice president at Stewart Title in Los Angeles, where she has been involved in commercial real estate for more than 35 years. She lives in Hollywood with Sheryl, her partner of 21 years, and their five-year-old Havenese, Darla. "I'd love to hear from anyone from our class," writes Queen, who can be reached at cqueen@stewart.com.

1973

Don Perry and **Karen Rondina Perry '73** recently vacationed with longtime UB pals **Dan Suwak '73**, **Linda Marston Suwak '72**, and **Dan Zembek '72**. Don and the two Dans used to play football for UB, and the five alums posed for photos sporting UBAA T-shirts that they made especially for the reunion. "If you were on an athletic team, those were the shirts they'd give you to wear to work out in," recalls Don Perry. "They were prized shirts, so we made replicas of them." The group has fond memories of UB, particularly UB football games. "I haven't stayed in touch with many Bridgeport people because of geography, but if there was something like football that would be good," says Don Perry, who lives in Ashland, MA, where he works in human resources. Karen is a teacher.

1975

A recent cleaning led **Ed Giarusso** to a box of old photographs he took as while at UB from 1974 to 1975. He generously passed along three sheets of negatives to the Office of University Relations for UB archives and writes: "Looking at the slides and negatives brought back some wonderful memories of one of the very best years of my life. The experience of having served in the army prior to college and graduate school allowed me to truly appreciate each and every day spent at the University of Bridgeport." After graduation, Giarusso took a position at Fort Devens in Massachusetts and eventually became an intelligence operations specialist. In 2003, he received the Superior Civilian Service Medal given by the U.S. Army to civilian personnel. He also pursues his hobby

researching Rhode Island artists and has published an article about 19th-century art from Providence, RI. He and his wife, Denise, live in Arlington, VA, with their children, Matthew and Christina.

1976

John L. Carusone was inducted into the Southern Connecticut Diamond Club Baseball Hall of Fame in November, one of several honors he's received lately. In 2008, the town of Hamden, CT, where Carusone served as mayor from 1987 to 1991, named the John L. Carusone Field in his honor. Carusone also was awarded a Gold Bat Award from West Haven Twilight Baseball League, and in 2004 was inducted into the Connecticut SASA Slo-Pitch Softball Hall of Fame.

1983

Lynne Berman was recently appointed to program director of the new dental hygiene program at Apollo College in Mesa, AZ. "I'm very proud of this accomplishment, which I attribute to the excellent training and education I received at Bridgeport," writes Berman, who also serves as a Western Regional Board Examiner, and is responsible for the licensing of new dental hygienists. She lives in Scottsdale with her husband and daughter and hopes to hear from former Fones classmates at lberman@apollo.edu.

(continued on page 28)

Alumni Lines

1999

“Teaching high school science is always an adventure,” writes **Rosemarie Sanders**, who is starting her tenth year of teaching. “I have help from being involved in the science community by being a member of and a presenter at the Geologic Society of America, National Science Teachers of America, National Earth Science Teachers of America, and the Science Teachers Association of New York State.” As a member of Science Teachers Association of New York State, Sanders serves as the subject area representative for earth science for Westchester and Bronx, NY, Counties. She also is author of *Earth Science Investigations*, an earth studies laboratory manual aligned with New York State educational standards. Sanders, who at UB earned her master’s degree in education, works at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University where she “makes scientific data accessible to middle and high school students.” She can be reached at rose.sanders@me.com.

2000

Manish Chowdhary and **James McDougal '03** have been busy growing their Bridgeport-based company, Go ECart, a software service for the e-commerce industry. The two, who met at business school, founded the firm in 2000.

2001

Dika Durbuzovic has been busy composing award-winning film scores. Her passion for music and movies was ignited after she graduated from UB, where she has fond memories of studying with Jeffrey Johnson, and went on to earn her master’s degree at the University of Colorado at Boulder “I wrote my thesis about Ingmar

Bergman’s powerful use of music in film, and that was it. I finally found my calling in composing for film,” writes Durbuzovic, whose first score for the short film *Knife Point* won the Maurice Kanbar Institute for Film and TV Outstanding Score Award. She has a new CD titled *Wild Child Opus*.

2002

Daemon Jones has been busy putting her PhD in naturopathy to use writing about women’s health issues as a columnist for the Empowher.com. She also is author of *Daelicious Recipes for Vibrant Living* and founded Healthydae’s Naturopathic Medical Center in Washington, DC. When not dispensing health advice, Jones loves to cook, go bicycling and hiking with friends, and enjoys the great outdoors. She can be reached at www.healthydaes.com.

2006

Japan’s premier architecture magazine *Shotenkenchiku* recently featured the work of **Shotaro Sanada**, just some of the publicity the interior design alumnus has received of late. Plans for a store he designed received a Best Store of the Year award, too, he writes. He’s also been recently interviewed on Japanese television. Of his time at UB and his current career in interior design, he writes: “I think the best way to be a good designer is to try the best without being afraid of failure.”

2007

College of Chiropractic alumnus **Brian Nathanson** was recently featured in the *Hour* newspaper, for his work with breast cancer survivors. The front page business story detailed Nathanson’s success in restoring lost mobility in

traumatized muscles and ameliorating pain suffered by cancer patients through methods like advance muscle and tissue release therapy and Graston technique. Nathanson works from his office in Norwalk, CT. “This is possibly the most gratifying work I have ever done because it makes such a difference in people’s lives,” Nathanson says. He also is one of the founders of Row for the Cure Norwalk, which raises funds for the Susan G. Komen Foundation. He can be reached at www.nephysical.com.

2008

Michael Buswell was married on November 14 to Kory Layne Stanziale at St. Marks Church in Stratford, CT. The couple recently bought a home in Trumbull. Buswell is a sales and consulting representative at Pitney Bowes in Shelton, and Stanziale teaches elementary school. “A special thanks to Jay Moran and John and Dave Anquillare for taking me into UB, allowing me to finish my baseball career, and more importantly, for helping me to get my degree from the University of Bridgeport,” says Buswell, who still plays in the Bridgeport Senior City League.

2009

Cecilia Jacobsen is a freelance graphic designer at Ryan Partnership in Wilton, CT, working on campaigns for San Pellegrino and other Nestle products. In September, a board game Jacobsen designed, BioQuest, won third prize at the annual AIGA Design Conference held in Denver, CO.

Side Lines



Familiar Courts

Steve Ray '90 and his glory days at UB

By Justin Fong '06

As Steve Ray '90 steps on familiar courts, he remembers the best of times at a university by the sea.

As a member of the Purple Knights men's basketball team from 1986-1990, Ray's backcourt magic helped UB find a spot in the NCAA Division II National Tournament during his junior and senior years.

No doubt, those two were among the most glorious seasons for UB basketball. Ray made 785 assists in 65 games, which is an NCAA record average of 12.08 per game. With 400 assists, Ray holds the single season Division II record and the fifth best all-time in any division. His 24 assists against Sacred Heart University on January 25, 1989, and similar stats against the University of New Haven on February 8, 1989, are number four all-time in the NCAA.

In October, Steve Ray was one of eight Division II men's players inducted to the New England Basketball Hall of Fame at Mohegan Sun Casino. "It was," he says, "such an honor to be nominated and voted into the Hall of Game this year. I had such a tremendous feeling of appreciation at that event."

Ray was especially happy to see alumni like Greg Murphy '90, who flew in from California, and Ed Dechent '89, the team's former forward from New York. "We were such a close team. We always hung around together and still keep in contact," says Ray. The three fondly remember Bruce Webster, who spent over 30 years coaching UB basketball, developing 11 All-Americans with 549 Division II career victories. Webster has also been inducted into the New England Division II Basketball Hall of Fame.

During a recent visit to the campus, Ray recalls great memories of campus life. "I was drawn here because I loved being next to the water," he says. "Dr. Blake was my adviser, and I liked him because he was really easy to talk to. Dr. John Nicholas, aka "Doc Rock," came to all the games. That really left a good impression." But the highlight of his time at UB wasn't on the basketball court; it was meeting his wife Laura Jaffee '91 at a party in Seeley Hall.

Since then, Ray has been a dedicated sixth grade teacher at James J. Curiale Elementary School in Bridgeport for 15 years. He's also an assistant basketball coach at Notre Dame High School in Fairfield, and is coach to daughters Kayla and Tori in youth basketball and soccer. Some things, he notes, are too precious not to pass along to the next generation. ■

Side Lines

Going the Distance

At 270 pounds, student David James couldn't run a mile. Today he's setting records for 100-mile ultramarathons.

By Justin Fong '06

Twenty-four credits, prepping for MCATs, and captaining a NCAA division II cross country team are child's play in comparison to the distances ultramarathon runner David James moves in a day.

With tenacious drive and a penchant for pain, this newcomer to UB has crossed the finish line at more than 400 races, including 100 marathons and ultramarathons. Running has taken him from the tip of South America to the top of Central America to the middle of the Grand Canyon, and as James puts it, "to the most beautiful places a person can reach on two feet." He currently holds two of the fastest times in the country for the 100-mile distance. And his 13:06:52 100-mile time is currently being verified for a top ten of all-time world ranking.

Not bad for a guy who laced up his first pair of running shoes nine years ago, when he was 270 pounds and dangerously out of shape.

"My father had diabetes and heart attacks when he let his health go, and when my fiancée Jennifer asked me to get in shape I didn't want to lose her and end up like my father," said

James, 31, who grew up in Pennsylvania. He came to UB to earn a doctorate in chiropractic and has his eye on the longer-term goals of landing a spot at medical school and, more immediately, on the U.S. National Team. He hopes to represent the country at the ultramarathon level. His training at UB, both in the classroom and for the 8K and 10K races he runs as captain of the reinvigorated cross country team, supports both goals. Every race this semester has been a personal best, from the 5K to the 100-mile distance.

Becoming a doctor and shattering records as one of the country's top runners would have been inconceivable to James when he set out for his first run. Dizzy from the humidity and the effort, he became literally sick to his stomach and was forced to stop well before he reached a mile. Nor would he have anticipated how running would so profoundly change his life. It's a journey he's eager to share with others, and as a Road Running Club of America-certified coach and an avid promoter of the sport, James often speaks of motivating people to take the first few steps.

BACK ON TRACK

The injection of new talent to UB cross country this fall has transformed the struggling program into a respected competitor. The current roster includes 12 men and 13 women setting a quick pace to the top. Both the men's and women's teams took first place at a quad meet hosted by Post University in Waterbury, CT, in late September and at a meet hosted by Post University on October 14. Team members Brian Bor and Jennavie Orrell are consistent top finishers in the 5K and 8K distances. "The first thing I do in the morning is run. Before going to bed, I run," says Bor. But dedication and hard work have propelled the entire team, says coach Mike Ruane, noting that each of his runners have set personal records this season. "We have continued to make great strides with this group of young people," says Ruane. "I'm looking forward to strong showings with this group."

Setting the pace: David James's run for excellence has helped transform UB's cross country team into a respected competitor.



“I have been there and know how hard it is to take those first steps,” he says. “Running makes people feel good, both mentally and physically.”

Running, in fact, has saved James from unspeakable loss. In 1994, Jennifer was diagnosed with breast cancer and died from the disease within the year. Reeling, James found himself running longer and longer distances.

“At first it was a process for me to work through my grief, but recently running has given me motivation again to pursue other dreams and goals in my life,” he says. “When I started winning these ultra races, I realized I could do anything I put my mind to, and so can anyone.”

James decided to first attend UB’s Chiropractic College in preparation of becoming a doctor with a specialty in sports medicine. He’d like to attend the University of Pennsylvania. Both goals, it turns out, are strongly influenced by his family’s military legacy, its gift for running, and its connection to the Pennsylvania school. His grandfather, William James Tskaynekias, was a World War II veteran who was nominated for a Medal of Honor for his role the Battle of the Bulge, where he was shot in the face 19 times. While recuperating, Tskaynekias met a captain in the Army Nurse Corps, Lucille James. She later became James’s grandmother and he calls her “my inspiration to study medicine.” As for Penn: Tskaynekias and an uncle attended the university and were members of its track and cross country teams.

For now, James is focusing on his work at UB, both in and out of the classroom. He’s eligible to run with the Purple Knights through next fall and plans on making UB cross country a powerhouse while he’s around. The team, to his delight, is becoming an increasingly powerful Division II contender. James credits coach Mike Ruane. “He’s a great motivator. He’s mellow and calm and always reminds me that we are making great progress, that Rome wasn’t built in a day. Still, James can’t help himself. He’s got itchy feet. “As captain,” he laughs, “I’m more intense.” ■

Side Lines

Power Forward

Sofia Hoflin is changing UB women's soccer for the records.

By Chuck Sadokski

When Sofia Hoflin arrived on campus from Ostersund, Sweden, in the fall of 2006, the women's soccer team had never made a NCAA Division II Championship Tournament appearance, had never been ranked in the national top 25, and still played its matches in Seaside Park.

How things have changed during Hoflin's four years at UB.

Since her arrival, the Purple Knights have made two straight NCAA appearances and have their sights set on a third NCAA bid this season. They've been ranked as high as number 12 in the nation, and, as of last fall, their matches are now played at Knights Field, visible to fans cheering from a dazzling 950-seat grandstand.

Hoflin's blockbuster performance as forward has changed the landscape of UB soccer, too. Her name already is etched throughout the team's record book, and when she hangs up her UB jersey and cleats at the end of the 2009 season, it will be synonymous with excellence.

"She is the kind of player who has changed the face our program into one that expects to win year-in and year-out," says UB head women's soccer coach, Magnus Nilerud. "As a soccer player, she is so smart at what she does every time she's out on the field."

Her off-field performance is top-notch, too. A graphic design major with a 3.83 grade point average, Hoflin was named to the First Team Academic All-District One ESPN the Magazine Team selected by the members of the College Sports Information Directors Association of America. She's also a three-time member of the East Coast Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll, which recognizes academic excellence.

As a freshman, Hoflin netted 20 goals, was East Coast Conference Rookie of the Year and a First Team All-Conference selection, netted 20 goals, and had nine assists. In her sophomore season, she earned Second Team All-Conference and Second Team All-Region honors by scoring 17 goals and notching five assists. As a junior, she had 15 goals and six assists, and so far in her senior campaign, she leads the team with nine goals (as of this writing) and nine assists, for a total of 27 points.



Sofia Hoflin, UB's all-time no. 1 goal scorer

Heading into the final week of the 2009 season, Hoflin is the school's all-time leader in career goals scored with 61 and career points with 151. She became UB's all-time leading goal scorer on September 23, when she scored on a penalty kick at the 77:19 mark of a 3-0 home win over Georgian Court University. That goal raised her career total to 57, surpassing the previous record by Lilja Valthorsdottir, who wore Bridgeport colors from 2002 to 2005. In the team's next match against Stonehill on September 28, Hoflin assisted on an Emma Woolley goal at the 14:07 to break the Valthorsdottir's school career record of 137.

One of the signature moments of her UB career is scoring the game-winning tally with just over ten minutes to play in the second half in the Purple Knights' 1-0 win over C.W. Post. That victory on the Pioneers home field last year that sent the team into the NCAA Round of 16, and, says Nilerud, "is the memory that really stands out in the four years she's been here."

Hoflin savors the win, too. "Last year's NCAA Tournament is a great memory. We went farther than any other team in school history, and I certainly hope we can go even deeper in the playoffs this season with a strong finish to the season." ■

Tribute to Teamwork

Players from the '50s to the '90s honored at Athletic Hall of Fame gala

By Mike Patrick

They called him “The Quiet Man.” When his rivals and even his own teammates trash-talked each other on the court and in the press, Pat Morris '92 silently led four of the most successful men's basketball teams in University of Bridgeport history.

That was back in the early 1990s. These days, when “The Quiet Man” returns to UB, it's as a rival coach, hoping to lead the Molloy College Lions to victory against the Purple Knights.

But on November 7, Morris was given a hero's welcome. He was one of several former athletes inducted into UB's Athletic Hall of Fame at a gala dinner in the Henry B. duPont Tower Room at the Arnold Bernhard Arts and Humanities Center.

Also honored were Angela Varney, a member of the gymnastic teams from 1993-1997; Tracey “Tyler” Wells, a softball star from 1990-1993; and the entire 1959 men's soccer team, which made it to the very first NCAA championships 50 years ago.

A UB coach had nicknamed Morris “Iron Man” for never missing a game in his career, but Morris preferred the local newspaper's reference to him as “The Quiet Man.”

“Some players keep themselves going when they talk trash, it motivates them. Others do it to get ahead of the opponent,” Morris said recently. “I was never into that. I just wanted to go out and play my best with my team and help my team win. I told the reporters I just let my game speak for itself.”

And it did. Morris and his UB teams made it to back-to-back NCAA Division II Championship Games in 1991 and 1992 and earned number one national rankings during the regular season.

Today, Morris brings that same sense of quiet strength to the basketball team at Molloy College in New York.

“Last year was my first year going back to UB with a different team. It felt weird to be there coaching against Bridgeport,” he said. “To see some familiar faces who were there when I was there was just overwhelming. It



Top Row (l to r): Bob Dikranian, Hans Zucker, Paul Feeley, Jay Moran (director of athletics), Everett Merritt, Tasso Chirogianis, Lee Bogli

Bottom Row (l to r): Bill Brew, Pat Morris, Tracey “Tyler” Wells, Angela Varney, Bob McCullagh, Nich Wirth

brought back a lot of memories.”

Though she can't make it back to campus as often, Tracey Wells '93 has fond memories of her time on the softball team.

She was a freshman back in 1990 when she joined the Purple Knights.

“Eight of us came in together. That was a nice way to have instant friends and make going away to college an easier transition,” Wells said. “I had a great four years there and went on for my master's at UB.”

As a junior in 1992, Wells led the Purple Knights with a single-season school record 26 wins, an ERA of 0.65 and a single-season school record of 125 strikeouts and was named Conference Player of the Year, First Team All-Northeast Region and became the first UB softball player to be honored as an All-American.

But Wells said it was her attitude, not her gamesmanship, which helped her succeed on the field, and earned her the place in the school's Athletic Hall of Fame.

“I would always help out the younger kids and be a good leader or role model,” she said. “I never understood then what coaches meant by that. They cared about my attitude, not that I was a great athlete.”

As gymnastics captain, Angela Varney '97 led the team to the NCAA Gymnastics National Championships Meet all four

years of her career. She earned All-American eight times and was twice ECAC Gymnast of the Year. Some of her team records have yet to be broken.

In 1959, after a tense game which went into eight overtime periods, the men's soccer team reached the inaugural Men's NCAA National Championship Final (now known as the NCAA College Cup).

“It was a very strong program; they used to compete against some of the best teams in the country,” said Pete Doneit, assistant men's soccer coach. “Now, with the two teams, the men's and women's, it has really brought the whole tradition back. We're experiencing success on both ends and we're really putting soccer back on the map at the University of Bridgeport.”

When a number of the 1959 players returned to the campus 50 years later to be inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame, they had something to teach their younger contemporaries, Doneit said.

“I think they saw the lifelong friendships formed by these guys back in the day and what it means to have teammates and friends that stay together longer than at the University,” Doneit said. “The lifelong lessons learned from the sport and through teamwork is really what this is all about.” ■



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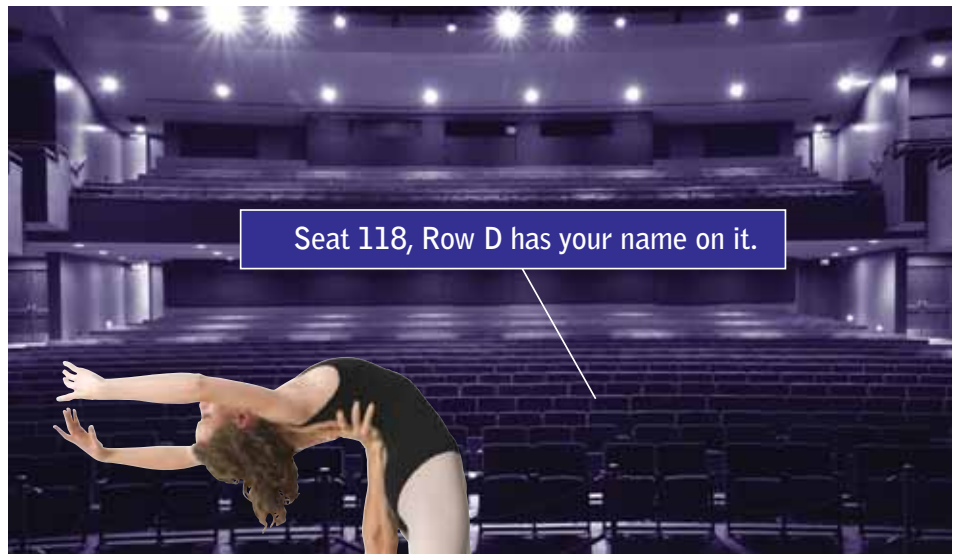
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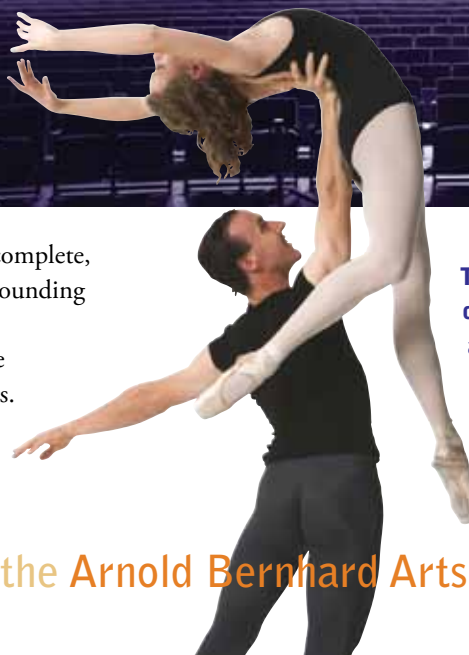
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