

# THE HAVEN

SUMMER 2024

MAGAZINE

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### Greetings Lock Haven Family,

Earlier this spring, the Commonwealth University family had the privilege of celebrating the achievements of our 2024 graduates. The class of 2024 represents a group of hard working, determined, creative students, many of whom began their college careers at the height of the pandemic. Their story is one of perseverance, grit, and the power of a positive mindset. My colleagues and I were immensely proud to watch them walk across the stage on commencement day.

I'm sure that many of you can relate to the feelings of excitement and uncertainty that arrive upon graduating. Change can be daunting. That is a lesson we have all learned these past four years. My hope for our graduates is that they will embrace the future with open minds and courageous hearts. Our graduates have proven that they are capable of rising to the occasion and overcoming any obstacle in their path.

This, I believe, is also true of our Commonwealth University family. Despite the difficulties inherent in the ever-evolving higher education landscape, our CU community remains focused on providing an affordable, high-quality education for students and families.

In our last issue, we shared the launch of our first-ever strategic plan. Since then, we have remained steadfast in our efforts to put our plan into action for the benefit of our students. Our mission and our vision are built on student success. Our top priority is helping students to achieve their goals and improve their lives through education.

Having experienced the transformative power of education myself, I believe it is crucial to support our students by providing them with the resources they need to succeed without the burden of financial stress. This is essential for the success of our students, and for our region's growth and prosperity.

To tackle these challenges, Commonwealth University introduced a merit scholarship program in 2022. The program aims to invest in local students and families, making college more affordable. Since its launch, we have seen a 75% increase in high-performing students attending our campuses. We have also reduced our students' unmet need by more than \$2,000 between 2022 and 2023.

Our efforts are making a real difference to Pennsylvania students and families, and it is encouraging to know that Commonwealth University has become a destination of choice for our region's students. They rely on us to prepare them for successful careers and fulfilling lives. We are keeping our promise to them through an updated academic curriculum that offers the latest programs that are relevant to the workforce and available at an affordable cost.

The pages that follow include stories of our alumni and students who have shown incredible generosity, overcome challenges, and chosen to lean into opportunities that would expand and grow their worldview. Their stories are at the heart of what we do and why we do it. I hope you will draw the same inspiration, encouragement, and motivation from them as I have.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bashar W. Hanna,  
*President*



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

# THE HAVEN MAGAZINE

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Susan McDowell



## Benefactor Elevates McDowell Institute's Reach Across Commonwealth U Campuses

**Commonwealth University has received a \$400,000 gift from longtime benefactor Susan McDowell for the McDowell Institute**, a CU-based organization supporting the facilitation of social, emotional, and behavioral wellness of children, youth, and young adults across school and community settings.

The donation, made through the Bloomsburg University Foundation, brings McDowell's contributions to the program to more than \$3 million. The funds are earmarked for additional staffing and consulting services, further bolstering the institute's ability to extend its reach beyond its Bloomsburg roots to CU's Lock Haven and Mansfield campuses and their surrounding communities.

"We are immensely grateful to Susan McDowell for her unwavering commitment to our university, especially the McDowell Institute and its mission," says President Bashar Hanna. "This significant contribution will fortify our existing programs and allow us to deliver McDowell Institute services to even more communities, amplifying our impact."

Under McDowell's continued patronage, the McDowell Institute has thrived, broadening its range of offerings and cementing its role as a vital hub for community service and educational enhancement, according to Ann Larson, dean of the CU College of Education and Human Studies.

"Susan's compassionate spirit and tremendous generosity are a true inspiration," Larson says. "Her philanthropic support addresses the pressing challenges confronting education today, and her passion is integral to our collective mission in fostering positive change within our student body and the broader community."

The McDowell Institute operates an extensive array of initiatives, exceeding 40 programs annually.

"Susan McDowell's generous support allows us to sustain and expand our efforts to all campuses and communities within the Commonwealth

University footprint," emphasizes Danielle Empson-Shultz, director of the McDowell Institute.

"The McDowell Institute has a long-standing commitment to supporting the social, emotional, and behavioral wellness of youth, and the need for training and education has continued to increase. Susan's gift couldn't have come at a more opportune time, enabling us to address these pressing needs

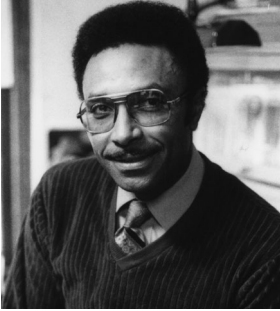
with even greater effectiveness and reach."

"I am honored to support Commonwealth University and their efforts to expand the McDowell Institute and its original mission of raising awareness and increasing access to solutions for youth facing mental health and wellness issues," McDowell says. "It has always been my goal to make sure these resources are available to teachers who often have to help students with struggles that extend beyond the classroom. Now, together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of individuals across the Commonwealth."

"Commonwealth University extends its profound appreciation to Susan McDowell for her enduring dedication to advancing education and wellness initiatives within our communities," says Erik Evans, CU vice president for university advancement.

“It has always been my goal to make sure these resources are available to teachers who often have to help students with struggles that extend beyond the classroom.”

## Three Faculty Members Honored with Keepers of the Flame Award



*Dr. Carroll J. Redfern*

PASSHE has named a faculty member at all three CU locations as a recipient of the second Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Keepers of the Flame Award.

Award recipients are Dr. Carroll J. Redfern, faculty emeritus at CU–Bloomsburg; Dr. Fredrick “Rick” Schulze, professor of health sciences at CU–Lock Haven; and Kim Shelton, faculty and director of TRIO Student Support Services at CU–Mansfield.

The award recognizes an individual for their contributions to creating and promoting diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments that cultivate a sense of belonging.

“Congratulations to each of the award recipients, who demonstrate the best of Commonwealth University through their commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion across our campuses,” says Bashar Hanna, president. “Through their example we will continue to champion initiatives that support and foster a welcoming and inclusive environment where every student has the ability to succeed and thrive. Thank you to the award recipients for all they have done in support of our students. Their efforts and tireless dedication are to be commended.”

Schulze is a dedicated leader in supporting LGBTQ rights. He began his career at Lock Haven in 2002 as an assistant professor of health science. Using diversity grants from PASSHE, Schulze conducted the first Safe Zone training at the university for faculty and staff and he launched an LGBTQ student conference, which was a precursor to the Mid-Atlantic LGBTQ Conference.

Through his distinguished leadership on campus, Schulze helped form the President’s Commission on LGBTQ Affairs in 2010 and the PASSHE LGBTQ Consortium.

“Each recipient of the Keepers of the Flame award embodies the best in humanity—demonstrating a commitment to raising awareness about important issues and advocating for ‘doing the right thing,’” says Dr. Denise Pearson, vice chancellor and chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer at the Office of the Chancellor.



*Dr. Frederick “Rick” Schulze*



*Kim Shelton*

## Chris Prescott Named Director and Chief of University Police



Chris R. Prescott has been named director and chief of University Police at Commonwealth University–Lock Haven

as of December 2023.

Prescott, a native of New Jersey, completed the New Jersey Police Training Commission’s Basic Course for Police Officers at the Essex County Police Academy in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, and began his law enforcement career with the Livingston, New Jersey, police department in 1987.

After relocating to Pennsylvania, he completed the Pennsylvania Municipal Police Officer Training and Education Certification waiver training.

For the majority of his 35-year career, he was the criminal investigator for the Mahoning Township Police Department in Montour County, retiring in 2015 at the rank of Sergeant. In addition, he was employed by Bucknell University as a public safety officer, as well as Bloomsburg University as a university police officer.

Following his retirement, he served as a Columbia County sheriff’s deputy, a school resource officer for the Millville Area School District in Columbia County, and most recently as chief of police for the Luzerne Borough Police Department.

Prescott holds a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and a master’s degree in public administration, both from Kutztown University.



# Commonwealth University Bands Perform in New Year's Day Parade in London



By invitation of The King of England, Commonwealth University bands were invited to perform in the London New Year's Day Parade and Celebrations from Dec. 28, 2023, to Jan. 4, 2024.

Students in CU–Mansfield's bands–The Spirit & The Pride of PA Marching Band and the Mansfield Concert Wind Ensemble, as well as members of the Lock Haven and Bloomsburg bands and color guard performed in the New Year's Day parade to ring in the new year. More than 600,000 people lined the parade route and the parade was broadcast on television to an audience of approximately 6 billion viewers.

A total of 69 performers traveled to London, along with four staff members. Ten students from Bloomsburg and six students from Lock Haven joined the 47 students from Mansfield who made up the core of the group. In addition, six Mansfield alumni rejoined their alma mater. Staff members included director of bands, Dr. Adam F. Brennan and his wife, Jonelle and Eric and Wendy Griffin, alumni staff assistants and former LNYDP participants.

# The Rise:

## Lock Haven Wrestling Launches Multi-million Dollar Campaign

Lock Haven wrestling is excited to announce the launch of *The Rise*, an ambitious campaign to raise more than \$3.5 million to elevate its nationally ranked men's and women's wrestling programs to new heights. On April 27, during the campaign launch gala attended by over 100 alumni and supporters in Lock Haven's Durrwachter Alumni Conference Center, it was revealed that over \$2.1 million in cash and pledges has already been secured.

*The Rise* campaign, rooted in its mission of "Honoring the Past, Securing Today's Success, and Endowing Tomorrow's Legacy," aims to continue the proud tradition of Lock Haven wrestling, known as Mat-Town USA. Since 1938, the men's wrestling program has produced 45 All-Americans, 34 National Champions, and over 750 team victories.

Under the leadership of head men's coach Scott Moore and head women's coach Matt Lackey, both programs have seen remarkable success. The men's team boasts four conference championships in the past six years, while the women's team completed its best season in its three-year history during the 2023–24 campaign, finishing No. 7 in the country crowning three All-Americans, including a national runner up.

*The Rise* campaign goals aim to increase men's immediate-use funding by \$1.5 million and growing the program's endowment by at least \$2 million by 2028. The women's program's goal is \$350k. Achieving each of these milestones will enable Moore and Lackey to continue their pursuit of the best Mat-Town caliber recruits without scholarship limitations.



“The success of the campaign hinges on the collective effort and commitment of the Mat-Town USA wrestling family. It will take all of us — alumni, former wrestlers, coaches, parents and passionate fans — to build upon the legacy that countless legends who came before us battled so hard to create.”

— DR. THANE TURNER '89, RISE WRESTLING CAMPAIGN STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON



President Bashar Hanna

At the April 27 gala, it was announced that an anonymous donor has provided a dollar-for-dollar matching gift of up to \$100k for women's wrestling scholarships. To date, a combined \$2,161,629 in support has been gifted as part of *The Rise*.

To support *The Rise*, and join our mission to continue the success and legacy of Lock Haven men's and women's wrestling, contact Ashley Koser, LHU Foundation executive director, at 570-484-2298 or [ashley.koser@lhufoundation.org](mailto:ashley.koser@lhufoundation.org).



Lock Haven Men's Wrestlers



Lock Haven Women's Wrestlers with Coach Lackey



Lily Sherer



Scott Moore



Matt Lackey

# A WEEKEND WORTH THE INVESTMENT:

By **Andrea O'Neill**

On a chilly Saturday in February, students milling about at an early morning breakfast at the Greenly Center seemed uncomfortable in their business attire; stiff and nervous as they made a cuff adjustment here, a collar adjustment there.

The group of juniors and seniors from all three Commonwealth University locations had signed up to spend a weekend honing the skills that will enable each of them to graduate as a confident professional. It was inspiring, demanding, and exhausting. And it was intense. It was, after all, “boot camp.”

The Career Intensive Boot Camp (CIBC) is exactly what the name implies—an immersive weekend designed to prepare students for everything the professional world can throw at a new grad. Students practice everything from how to dress and dine in a professional setting to surviving the first week on the job and paying back student loans.

Sessions began Friday with team building and dining etiquette. On Saturday, students dove into workplace diversity and personal finance workshops before moving into resume reviews, mock interviews, and a keynote lunch. They finished the



*Students participating in the Spring 2024 Career Intensive Boot Camp gather for a group photo with members of the Commonwealth University Department of Alumni and Professional Engagement. Students, staff, and alumni from all three Commonwealth University locations gathered at the Greenly Center in downtown Bloomsburg for an intense weekend of student professional development.*





*Marsha Kaiser '76 (right) speaks with a student at the Spring 2024 Career Intensive Boot Camp during a mock interview. Kaiser was one of ten Lock Haven alumni who volunteered for the Spring 2024 Career Intensive Boot Camp.*

weekend on Sunday with professional headshots, a networking lunch, and alumni panels.

“The bootcamp provided an important learning experience that extended beyond technical knowledge,” says Bloomsburg junior Aviel Kuhn. “It allowed me to forge meaningful connections within the industry. The workshops offered guidance on navigating the professional landscape.”

Lock Haven, Bloomsburg, and Mansfield alumni, together with community and employer partners, play a critical role in making CIBC a high-impact experience by volunteering their time and expertise. They serve as keynote speakers, mock interviewers, resume reviewers, panelists, and presenters. Some stay several hours, while others stay for several days. Some travel to campus while others participate virtually from across the U.S.

“The connection between current students and alumni help graduating seniors understand their skill sets, begin to build a strong network, and land the job they have worked so hard for,” says Wren Fritsky, director of career and professional development for CU-Bloomsburg.

“My first few years on the job would have been different had I had the prep of CIBC,” says Lock Haven alumna Marsha Kaiser '76. “You learned a lot in school but not the interpersonal relationships of a job. Putting those two together is what makes a successful student. If I was able to help one person, I am happy.”

While CIBC is a student-centered event, alumni also benefit from networking opportunities. Integration multiplied the connections

among alumni volunteers as new graduates and seasoned professionals from three locations now assemble for the same cause. The students they influenced in February will be among the newest Commonwealth University alumni— joining a 147,000 strong network of fellow Huskies, Mounties, and Bald Eagles that has the power to provide everything from camaraderie and encouragement to mentorship and their first professional position.

“Alumni I met that weekend are now connected with alumni from different locations,” says David Donlick '87 (Mansfield), director of alumni and employer engagement at CU-Mansfield, whose daughter, Nicole (Donlick) Brodt '18 attended Bloomsburg and one of the very first CIBC events in 2017. “The more we get involved and work together, the more we can offer students.”

“Lock Haven did a lot for me,” says Colleen Fitzpatrick '95. “So I’m giving back to the university that helped me get to where I am, and that’s always something worthwhile. Especially when it comes to helping students with their career.”

By the end of the weekend, the students were visibly less nervous, more talkative, and moved a bit more effortlessly than they had at first—physical signs of the professional ease that will provide an edge in the hiring process. Once the thank-you notes had been written and contact information shared, the students headed back to their respective campus confident, connected, and ready for their next chapter.

**The Career Intensive Boot Camp runs each spring and fall semester and returns on September 20-22. To volunteer, email [alum@commonwealthu.edu](mailto:alum@commonwealthu.edu).**



# SPRING COMMENCEMENT 2024



Sunshine peeked through the clouds during CU-Lock Haven's undergraduate commencement ceremony—making for a beautiful day to celebrate—brightening the spirits of the Class of 2024 and adding an extra layer of warmth to the fond memories of the day. More than 500 Bald Eagles received their degrees during two ceremonies this spring. Graduate students were celebrated on Thursday, May 9, at the Thomas Fieldhouse and undergraduate students were recognized on Saturday, May 11, at Hubert Jack Stadium.






 Austin Melius, a sport management major, was a member of the track and field and cross country teams, qualified for the PSAC championships, and was named a PSAC Scholar Athlete. He served as vice president of the Sport Management Club with which he attended several trips: Pittsburgh Pirates Networking Summit, College Football Championship, the Women's Final Four, and the IUP Sport Business Conference, where his case study took third place. He completed internships with Milesplit and Cooperstown Dreams Park, was a student worker in the Lock Haven athletic communications department, and was named 2023-24 Lock Haven Student Worker of the Year.



# A LEGACY HONORING EXCELLENCE

Bloomsburg Alumnus **Stephen J. Jones** Elevates The Honors Experience At Commonwealth University With Transformative Gift

By **Amanda Alexander '09** (Lock Haven)

A transformational gift from Stephen J. Jones '83, and his wife, Melanie Sanchez-Jones, will enrich the Honors College experience for Commonwealth University (CU) students by expanding scholarships, experiential learning opportunities, and faculty support. The \$5.6 million endowment is the largest gift to date benefiting students across all CU locations, Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield. Combined with a previous \$1.5 million gift supporting the renovation of the Honors College residence hall on the CU-Bloomsburg campus, the new gift brings the couple's investment in the CU honors experience to more than \$7 million, enabling the integrated university to attract and retain bright students from diverse backgrounds into the CU Honors College community.

In recognition of the couple's generosity, the CU Honors College will be named the Eileen G. Jones Honors College, in honor of Jones' late mother.

"I wanted to name the Honors College after my mother because of the positive influence she had on my life and my siblings' lives," explains Jones, a first-generation college graduate. "She really pushed education. When we started going to school, my mother was a big influence on making sure we aspired to do better and did our homework and all those things. She was a big support throughout my life."

Eileen Jones unfortunately passed away at the young age of 52, but her legacy of support and encouragement for education will continue through the CU Honors College named in her honor. CU's Honors College welcomes high-achieving students and prepares them for leadership through high-impact, immersive experiences and academically rigorous coursework.

"I can say with confidence that a substantial portion of the gift will be used for scholarships and grants for our students. Increasing affordable faculty-led study abroad opportunities for

honors students is also a high priority,” says John G. Hintz, interim dean of honors and interdisciplinary studies at CU–Bloomsburg.

### Enhancing the Honors experience

Although Bloomsburg University, the CU legacy institution Jones attended, did not yet have an Honors College in the early 1980s—in fact it was founded in 1985, just two years after his graduation—Jones was able to create community as a student through his closely-knit fraternity, Sigma Iota Omega, where he forged friendships that continue today.

“That was an important part of my time at Bloomsburg,” says Jones of the fraternity of which he served as vice president and then president.

CU’s Honors College provides a similar sense of belonging for like-minded students who have big dreams for the future and also want to contribute to their communities in the present—volunteer service is a key component of the Honors College experience.

As a student, Jones also had the opportunity to study abroad, and is delighted to support professional experience grants (PEGS) for similar opportunities through this gift.

“What really impacted me was going abroad. I went to Liverpool, England, and it was eye-opening. I realized there was a whole other world out there,” Jones says. He knows there are many college students like him who may not have been outside of the United States or even Pennsylvania, and the Honors College gives students the chance to expand their cultural and personal boundaries through just this type of experience. Since his time in Liverpool, Jones has earned an MBA from Temple University and a law degree from University of Pennsylvania, lived in China, and done plenty of international traveling for business.

“That’s also part of experiential learning that the Honors College wants to provide to students,” he adds. “There’s a big world out there, and there are lots of opportunities.”

He hopes the financial support will lead more students to capitalize on the chance to dive into high-impact experiences without worrying about funding; from studying abroad to taking an internship or assisting with faculty research,

he said, “Those types of activities for students help them realize what their potential is.”

Jones is also pleased his gift will increase scholarship funding for Honors students across CU, easing the financial toll on gifted students and making CU an attractive choice for their educational journey. Hintz noted the increased support for Honors students, and for scholarships in particular, helps to bring CU closer to achieving its ambitious recruitment and retention goals, including an increase in honors students across campus populations, set out by CU President Bashar W. Hanna.

“President Hanna would like us to increase enrollment in Honors to the point where we sustain an enrollment equivalent to ten percent of the undergraduate student population.

This aligns with the scholarly literature on proven best practices within large Honors Colleges,” Hintz says. “The Jones gift will help in this regard immensely, and in so many other ways.”

Strengthening the value of a CU degree is important to Jones, who understands affordability is a significant consideration for prospective students, just as it was for him.

He adds, “There’s still a large percentage of first-generation college students going to those campuses, which I find amazing.”

“To grow the Honors College and continue to offer small classes, student support, engaging opportunities and grants and scholarships, honors relies on donor support.”

— JOHN D. HINTZ, INTERIM DEAN OF HONORS & INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES



Ariana Newlen made the most of the many opportunities available through the Honors College.



From left: Stephen J. Jones; his wife, Melanie Sanchez-Jones; and their two sons, Alex (left) and Zachary (right).

As a first-generation college student himself, Jones says affordability was one of his main concerns as he navigated the college application process.

“Commonwealth University is a great value for the money,” he says, adding that he hopes the infusion of funding into the program will “entice different types of students to come to CU. Because you get the opportunities through the Honors College and now there’s the money there to take advantage of those opportunities.”

Hintz elaborates, “Every component of the Honors student experience costs the University money. Honors classes, for example, cap at 20 students. This is substantially lower than the typical general education class. Honors students receive extra mentoring ‘in-house’ in the form of peer mentors (upper-level Honors students) their first year and faculty mentoring (Honors faculty directors) for their entire four years. We offer students many opportunities for participation in events throughout the year, including presenting at Honors conferences, overnight service trips, outdoor recreation events, and social events.”

### **Paving a bright future**

A loyal Husky donor for nearly 40 years, Jones joined the BU Foundation Board of Directors nearly 10 years ago and was named chair on July 1, 2023. “There are challenges associated with merging three organizations and there are also opportunities,” he acknowledges.

These new opportunities stem from The Power of Three, which gives students access to more than 80 academic programs as well as more minors, courses, and faculty experts by pooling the resources of Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield. The integrated university makes it possible for philanthropic support to reach more students, too, through programs such as the Honors College that offer vibrant, closely-knit communities on each campus. Jones says the objective for his philanthropy is to impact the greatest number of students possible—and with CU’s ambitious strategic goal to increase its number of Honors students, the Honors program was a natural fit for his support.

“To grow the Honors College to ten percent of the student body, and continue to offer small classes, student support, engaging opportunities, and grants and scholarships, honors relies on donor support,” Hintz says. “Without generous gifts like this one from the Jones family, the honors student experience would not be close to what it is.”

## **Ariana Newlen: Hometown Student Excels in Haven Honors Program**



Ariana Newlen '24, a health science major from Lock Haven, says that she chose to stay in her hometown because of the strength of the health science program. “Lock Haven is my hometown, so

it holds a very special place in my heart,” she says. “As a high school student, I took dual enrollment classes at Lock Haven. During this experience, I quickly learned that The Haven had a very strong health science program with faculty who were truly committed to the students. I knew that Lock Haven would provide me with a close-knit family of peers, faculty, staff, and connections that would overall enhance my educational experience and help me transform into a successful medical professional.”

An exceptional student, Newlen is involved in multiple activities on and off campus. A member of the Honors College, she is also part of the Christian Student Fellowship Club, Outreach for Humanity Club, and took dance at the local Twinkle Toes Dance Studio. During her undergraduate years she served as student associate director of the Honors College and admissions ambassador for the Admissions Office. She also serves as an assistant teacher at the Crossroads Child Learning Center in Jersey Shore.

Of her time in the Honors College Newlen shares, “Joining the Honors College truly shaped my college experience. From my first day on campus, I was surrounded with a community of peers and staff who were committed to my success. The Honors College provided me with distinct and unique opportunities to come out of my shell and become a leader on campus by mentoring underclassmen. The opportunities, both academically and socially within the Honors College, helped me grow individually, as a student, and as a professional. The Honors College created a ‘home’ for me on campus with a family of amazing students and faculty.”

This fall, Newlen will continue her education by beginning her Master’s in Athletic Training as part of Lock Haven’s 3+2 athletic training program. After completing her master’s, she plans to obtain a job working as an athletic trainer in a clinical orthopedic setting.

BEYOND THE *classroom*:

## CU PART OF INITIATIVE TO EXPAND WORK-BASED LEARNING

By integrating real-work experiences into the academic curriculum and expanding a regional network of employers, Commonwealth University will provide invaluable opportunities for students to bridge theory and practice beginning in the fall semester.

CU is one of five State System universities participating in a pilot initiative with major employers to significantly increase work-based learning that provides real-world experiences like internships and apprenticeships for students.

Highmark Health is the initial partner employer and Strada Education Foundation awarded Commonwealth University \$100,000 of a \$750,000 grant to support the pilot project.

“Strong partnerships between universities and employers provide students with incredible experience through applying learning to doing and gives them the competitive edge they need to achieve social mobility,” says Hope Lineman, executive director of workforce development for CU.

The three-year pilot will reach a minimum of 370 CU students, beginning in fall 2024. The initiative will embed real-work experiences into the academic curriculum to broaden access and configure a shared online platform, Handshake, to help students identify opportunities that align with their career interests. CU will also expand the regional network of participating employers and integrate work-based learning into on-campus work study—an additional benefit for students who are using the paid jobs to help fund their education.

Employers will be able to partner with CU to create internships throughout the year that accommodate students’ class schedules, develop additional job-relevant instruction for interns and, when possible, link paid internships to potential jobs after graduation.



*Austin Melius, Lock Haven sport management major, at the 2023 National Wrestling Coaches' Association (NWCA) All-Star Classic to take pictures of Anthony Noto on Nov. 21, 2023, at Penn State.*



*Austin Melius, broadcasting the cross-country NCAA Division I Atlantic Region Championships on Nov. 4, 2023 in Lock Haven.*

“The partnership with Strada validates and strengthens the work we’ve done to intentionally integrate career and professional development in the student experience through Professional U,” says Lynda Fedor Michaels, associate vice president for alumni and professional engagement.

Work-based learning, which can include internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing, allows students to connect their classroom education with technical and workplace skills and to develop professional connections and networks as part of their overall education. University students with high-quality, work-based learning, especially paid internships, have more confidence in their skills, are more likely to get higher-paying jobs after graduation, and are more satisfied with their education and career choices, according to findings by the Strada Education Foundation.

Low-income, first-generation, Black and Latino students, and women are less likely to have paid internships, which can reduce their employability and income after graduation. To address the access gap, the pilot has a goal of 60 percent of students in the initiatives being low-income, first-generation, or under-represented minorities.

“To impact social mobility, CU is piloting two initiatives that focus attention on moving students entering college from low-income backgrounds into the upper half of wage earners after graduation through Professional U On-Campus Apprenticeships and work-based learning within academic courses and programs,” Lineman says. “Through these two avenues Commonwealth University intends to level the playing field by giving all students the experiences they need to succeed.”

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

## EMMA SCHIEMER Takes Advantage of All CU Has to Offer

By Doug Spatafore



More than just a standout student-athlete, Lock Haven women's lacrosse player Emma Schiemer is taking full advantage of all that the CU college experience has to offer.

Described as a "delight to coach" by head coach Lindsay Reese '07, who also emphasizes her importance to the team, the Prince Frederick, Maryland, native scored 14 goals for the Bald Eagles during the 2023 season.

The marketing major recently completed an internship through Professional U, a career center on campus that leverages an extensive community of faculty, staff, alumni volunteers, and employer partners to provide students with career experiences, professional connections, and financial support for the opportunities that move them from college student to confident career professional.

Schiemer's internship was with a bagel shop in Wilmington, North Carolina, with owner and Bloomsburg alumnus Mike Boguski '18. The connection for the internship was made

through Boguski's father, Michael M. Boguski '85. The internship was also made possible through the support of CU-Lock Haven professor William Lloyd and Todd Shawver, dean of the Zeigler College of Business.

Schiemer traveled to Wilmington where Empire Deli and Bagel is located. During the internship, she assisted with the competitive analysis of the business' local competitors. She has also continued to work remotely for the business helping with digital marketing and social media management.

Schiemer's story does not end there. She's been a part of Lock Haven's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and the Lock Haven Athletic Department's Social Justice Task Force.

With the SAAC, Schiemer was able to represent the women's lacrosse team, acting as a liaison between student-athletes and athletic department leadership. SAAC also organizes various fundraising and community

outreach activities and initiatives for The Haven's athletes like the Haven Fuel program and the annual Talons Award Ceremony.

She's also active with Lock Haven's Student Veterans Alliance (SVA), where she serves as the treasurer and social media manager. The SVA provides fellowship and assistance to Lock Haven's student-veterans. The group also engages in community service, fundraisers, and outreach with military appreciation events at select athletic contests.

"I've invested in myself in different ways," says Schiemer. "I have become more responsible, better with time management, and I have gained accountability.

"I'm more ambitious and always thinking of ways to build my resume," she adds.

No doubt, she is well on her way to a successful career, thanks in large part to the CU experience.



# A GIFT FOR GRAPPLERS

By John Vitale

Dr. Ed Shifflett, Ph.D., 1996 alumnus of Lock Haven University, and his wife, Dr. Gretchen Fanconi-Shifflett, DVM, recently provided a transformative endowment to the men's wrestling program at Commonwealth University-Lock Haven. Their major gift aims to provide increased scholarship funding to further propel The Rise of the Bald Eagles' nationally renowned wrestling program.

For the Shiffletts, "the why" behind their gift is incredibly important. Reflecting on his own life's journey, Ed passionately champions the value of perseverance, and the role that influential mentors and peers—including Gretchen—have contributed to his own success.

He draws parallels between his own life and the grit-fueled, underdog culture of Lock Haven wrestling and the resilience required to overcome life's challenges—lauding wrestlers' commitment to self, team, and community.

For Ed and Gretchen, the significance of Lock Haven wrestling—proudly known as Mat-Town USA—goes far beyond mere wins, losses, and stats.

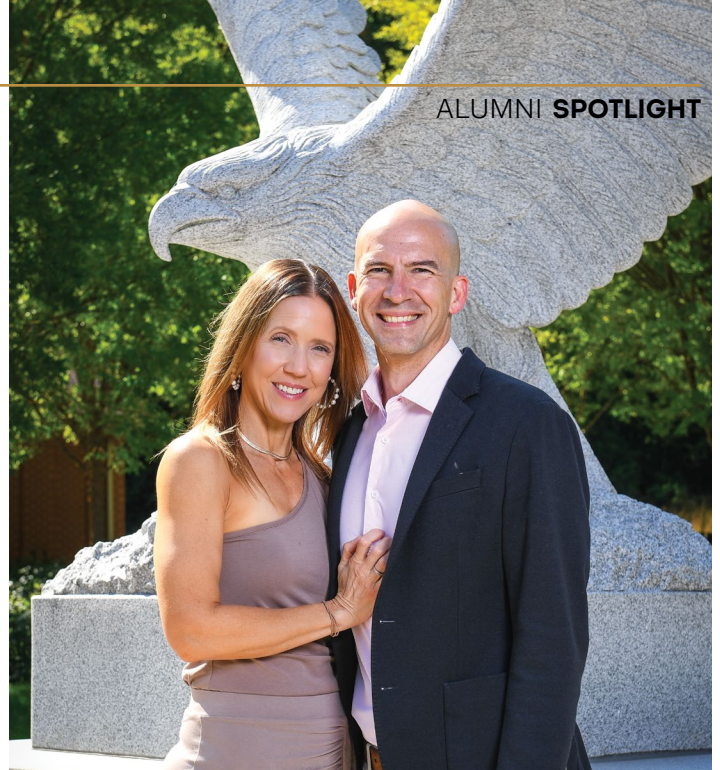
Along with the program's impact on the city of Lock Haven, they believe the inspirational work-ethic displayed by Bald Eagle wrestlers is a microcosm for life, illustrating that even in the aftermath of individual defeat or adversity, every point earned—whether on the mat or morally—is a contribution to something greater than oneself. It's a core value Shifflett witnessed firsthand as a Lock Haven student, and one he believes played a major role in his own personal and professional achievements.

"Wrestlers train like animals when no one's watching. Come match time, they may get tilted, but the only thing they know is to keep on fighting like a dog," says Shifflett. "They might not win every match, but they know that every point makes a difference. They know that there's always something bigger that they're fighting for."

"People see my successes, personally and professionally, from the outside. What they don't see is that a whole lot went wrong before it went right," he adds. "We all get kicked in the teeth in life, but success is often the result of surrounding yourself with the right people; people who make you better and inspire you to persevere."

Growing up in Lewistown, where economic struggles and personal hardships were prevalent, Shifflett endured domestic turmoil and childhood trauma that he courageously overcame. Upon arriving at The Haven, influential professors, and figures like former Lock Haven head wrestling coaches Carl Poff and Neil Turner had a profound impact on him.

Although he did not wrestle for Lock Haven—stating that he simply just wasn't good enough—Shifflett fondly recalls his loyal fandom as a



student. He graduated just one year prior to Lock Haven's best finish in school history during the 1996-97 season in which the Bald Eagles ended the year No. 5 in the country, and crowned five All-Americans, including National Champion, Cary Kolat.

Nearly three decades later, Shifflett is still an avid supporter of the program, and its current leader, head coach Scott Moore, who Shifflett believes outstandingly upholds Mat-Town USA's legacy of turning great wrestlers into even greater men, just as Turner, Poff and other Lock Haven wrestling coaches have done since the Bald Eagles' inaugural season in 1938.

Beyond fandom and financial support, Shifflett focuses on positively impacting Lock Haven wrestling in as many ways as he can. From interacting with student-athletes to actively engaging alumni, Shifflett is an essential part of the Mat-Town USA family, and a steadfast advocate for the continued success of the program.

Ed and Gretchen's endowed gift exemplifies more than just a monetary contribution; it's a testament to their unwavering belief in the transformative power of Mat-Town USA, and the life-changing impact of a Lock Haven education. They hope their generosity enables student-athletes to flourish not only on the mat, but also personally and academically under the tutelage of Moore, assistant coach (2018 National Runner-Up) Ronnie Perry '18, and other members of The Haven Family.

The Shiffletts also hope their testimony serves as a rallying cry for fellow alumni, fans, and supporters to join their efforts to preserve the 86-year legacy of Lock Haven wrestling, whether through financial contributions or through volunteerism, increased match attendance, and other forms of support.

"The Lock Haven men's wrestling program develops outstanding wrestlers, but it's even better at developing great men," says Shifflett. "Most of these kids aren't going to become professional athletes, but because of coach Moore and coach Perry, I know that they will surely be successful in their personal and professional lives."

## NEWCOMER '84, WAY '78, WEAVER '94 ELECTED TO LHU ALUMNI LEADERSHIP TEAM



*U.S. Army Col. John Newcomer '84*



*George O. Way '78*



*Dirk Weaver '94*

## The Lock Haven University Alumni Association (LHUAA) is excited to announce new volunteer board leadership in support of Commonwealth University–Lock Haven effective July 1, the start of the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Retired U.S. Army Col. John Newcomer '84, an Alumni Association volunteer since 2020, and vice president since 2022, is the newly elected president. He is joined in executive leadership by incoming vice president, George Way '78.

Newcomer, a graduate of the Akeley School and Lock Haven Junior and Senior High Schools is the son of emeritus Dr. Charles Newcomer, Ed.D. He takes over for Ameer Lewis Vance '75, whose two-year presidential term concluded on June 30. Newcomer holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from LHU, as well as a Master of Public Administration degree from Georgia State University and master's degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College.

A proven military leader, Newcomer has overseen transformative initiatives across various roles. As Director of the Army Reserve Aviation, he orchestrated the overhaul and re-stationing of the organization's 203 aircraft and 3,700 personnel while managing budgets exceeding \$80 million.

As Airfield Commander for Coalition Forces, he led operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Newcomer's military service has earned him multiple prestigious awards, including the Legion of Merit Medal and the Bronze Star Medal, testaments to his exemplary leadership.

"It's an honor to continue my service in support of a university that I love, one that has been part of my life for more than 50 years," said Newcomer. "I have been involved with organizational change at the highest level with the pentagon and other organizations. I am excited to draw from those experiences to continue advancing the mission of the Alumni Association and CU–Lock Haven."

Way, a member of the board since 2022, is a retired principal and former scholastic director for the National Wrestling Coaches Association.

At the conclusion of his three-decade career as a teacher, coach, and administrator, Doe Run Elementary School renamed its gym The George O. Way Gymnasium in his honor. Way is also a member of the Lock Haven University Wrestling Hall of Fame and was honored with a Lifetime Service to Wrestling Award from the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2024.

Along with his volunteerism, Way is also one of eight alumni providing thought leadership to Lock Haven's Wrestling Campaign Steering Committee in support of The Rise, a major fundraising campaign for Lock Haven Wrestling.

Further cementing his commitment to The Haven and its wrestling program, Way, and his wife, Pamela, recently established the George and Pam Way Wrestling Scholarship through the Lock Haven University Foundation.

Effective July 1, the Alumni Association also welcomed its three newest board members: Dirk Weaver '94, Georgina Bennett '19 and Angelo Hronis '17, who were each unanimously elected to the board in April.

The LHUAA board of directors consists of 20 alumni from the 1970s to 2010s. The board is divided into three committees: Legacy, Relationships & Campus Events, and Professional Engagement. Each committee works closely with Ashley Conrad, director of alumni and employer engagement, and LHU Foundation staff to enhance alumni relations, student engagement, and fundraising initiatives in support of CU–Lock Haven.

**We encourage you to get involved with the LHUAA by visiting [commonwealthu.edu/lock-haven-alumni](https://commonwealthu.edu/lock-haven-alumni)**



*Anthony Noto celebrates his All-American victory.*

## ALL-AMERICAN ANTHONY NOTO REPEATS AS MAC WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

Once again, Lock Haven men's wrestling Anthony Noto put on a show in March. It's becoming quite the tradition in Mat-Town USA.

For the second consecutive year, The Haven standout was named the Mid-American Conference Wrestler of the Year and earned All-American status.

"Anthony represented our program well and continues to put Lock Haven on the map," says head coach Scott Moore. "His accomplishments reflect his hard work and commitment to growth. He competes with a lot of passion and knows how to win at the highest level. No doubt, he will go down as one of the best wrestlers to ever wear a Lock Haven singlet."

Noto closed the season on the biggest stage as he finished third at the NCAA Division I Men's Wrestling Championship, held March 21-23. In doing so, he became Lock Haven's 11th wrestler in school history to earn multiple DI All-American honors, and the first two-time All-American since Chance Marsteller in 2018 and 2019.

Noto finished his run at the national championship with a 5-1 record, his only loss coming in the semifinals to the eventual national champion. He was Lock Haven's first national semifinalist since 2018 and he advanced to the quarterfinal round at the NCAA tournament for the second straight season.

For Noto, his All-American finish marks the 45th Division I All-American honor in school history. Noto finished the 2023-24 season with a remarkable 22-3 record. With 87 career wins in hand, he will enter next season eyeing the prestigious 100-win mark.

"My success at Lock Haven means a lot to me because it's a reflection of my hard work and dedication," says Noto. "I want to thank my coaches for their unwavering support, coaching and guidance, and my teammates for always having my back and helping me reach this level of success. It is awesome to be part of the rise."

The three-time Mid-American Conference champion is also a three-time NCAA qualifier, who is now 11-5 in three national championship appearances. Noto finished fourth at the 2023 NCAA championships. The two-time MAC Wrestler of the Year was also the 2021-22 Mid-American Conference Freshman of the Year.

## National Runner-Up Kaelani Shufeldt Competes at Olympic Trials

Lock Haven women's wrestling standout Kaelani Shufeldt capped a brilliant run of success this season at the United States Olympic Team Trials in April. Shufeldt qualified for the Olympic Trials in December after she finished fourth at a Senior National Event.

The 2023-24 season proved to be another special one for the women's wrestling program and it was certainly highlighted by Shufeldt's success. The sophomore finished as national runner-up for Lock Haven at the 2024 NCWWC National Championship event, and the run highlighted a trio of All-American performances. The Bald Eagle pinned her way to the finals, becoming Lock Haven's first ever national finalist. She is now a two-time All-American.

"Kaelani has been a joy to coach the past two seasons," says Lock Haven head women's wrestling coach Matt Lackey. "Her work ethic and love for the sport are unmatched. She has worked hard for everything she has earned and I can't wait to see what's next for her. Qualifying for the Olympic trials and finishing second in the country is something that most dream about, but for her, I know there is still work to be done."

"This past season was a huge step in the right direction toward my goals," says Shufeldt.

"I am eternally grateful for my coaches, teammates, and family who have helped me evolve and improve over the years. Still, I fell short of my expectations and will continue to work tirelessly to be at the top of the podium next year. I look forward to the journey ahead."

Shufeldt was one of six national qualifiers this season. Her second-place finish pushed Lock Haven to a seventh-place team finish at nationals, the highest finish in school history.



# SEASON OF DESTINY

A year ago, the Lock Haven women's basketball team finished the 2022-23 regular season with an 11-17 record.

The Haven earned the No. 6 seed in the conference tournament and fell, 68-63, to Kutztown in the first round of the PSAC Tournament.

The finish from last season, slated the Bald Eagles as the No. 6 ranked team in the PSAC East Preseason Coaches' Poll.

Expectations from the outside were not high entering this year.

Opening the 2023-24 season, the Bald Eagles dropped a one-sided affair, 79-66, against Fairmont State in early November.

With a fairly young roster, the team could go one of two ways, either enter panic mode or come back with a vengeance. Lock Haven chose the latter, and what ensued made history.

Lock Haven rattled off a program-record 19 straight victories, pushing the program into the national rankings for the first time in three decades.

Lock Haven finished with a program-record 29 victories, a PSAC East regular season title, a 21-1 conference mark and the first trip to the NCAA Tournament since 1991. Lock Haven's run of 19 consecutive victories from earlier this season was also a program record. Lock Haven's four losses all came at the hands of NCAA Tournament teams.

The Bald Eagles also finished the regular season with a perfect 13-0 record in front of a home crowd.

Individual accolades also began to role in, as head coach Jennifer Smith set the all-time coaching wins record, while Alana Robinson set the career blocks mark in just her second season of action.



“I am beyond proud of what this group has done this year,” says Smith. “We did things the right way—played basketball the right way, and they’re just really good humans. I keep telling them when they are my age and they’ll look back and remember this amazing season. I wanted this group to play for a Conference Championship and experience what it is like to play in the NCAA Championship Tournament. They achieved beyond that and picking up the win was special.”

On Jan. 31, Smith became the all-time winningest head coach in Lock Haven Bald Eagle women’s basketball history with 162 career victories. She surpassed Frank Scarfo’s (1986-97) previous record of 161 and will enter next season with 172 Lock Haven coaching wins. She’s known as a champion for student success with a heart for serving others.

The Bald Eagles’ record-breaking season finished with the program’s first NCAA Tournament Atlantic Region Semifinal appearance in over three decades.

On April 1, the women’s basketball program locked up a spot in the final Women’s Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) Top-25, coming in at No. 25 in the final poll of the NCAA DII postseason.

On March 21, 17-year head coach Jennifer Smith was named a finalist for the WBCA NCAA DII Coach of the Year Award, the highest honor in collegiate coaching.

Smith was also named the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) East Coach of the Year for the first time in her career.

Following the regular season, Alana Robinson was named PSAC East Defensive Player of the Year and Rhlyn Rouse was named Rookie of the Year. Robinson, Rouse, and Jenadia Jordan were named to the PSAC All-Conference Team.



*Left: Eight former Lock Haven men’s soccer players and coaches attended the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association (EPYSA) banquet to support Gary Ross ’12, who received the prestigious Mike Barr Excellence in Coaching Award. Right: Gary Ross ’12 accepting the Mike Barr Excellence in Coaching Award at the EPYSA banquet.*

## GARY ROSS HONORED WITH EXCELLENCE IN COACHING AWARD

Former Lock Haven men’s soccer standout Gary “Rossi” Ross was awarded the prestigious Mike Barr Excellence in Coaching award at the Eastern PA Youth Soccer Association (EPYSA) awards banquet in February.

The Mike Barr Excellence in Coaching Award is presented annually at the EPYSA awards banquet to an individual who has demonstrated a lifetime of dedication to coaching and educating within the youth soccer community. Recipients have served with integrity, honor, humor, and humility.

Eight of Rossi’s former Bald Eagle teammates and coaches attended the ceremony: Coaches Lenny Long ’75 and Mike Corney ’83 and teammates Carl Rudolph, Chris Kelly, Glenn Davis, Patrick Long ’08, Grant Myers, and Chad Houck.

Ross, who was a two-time All-American at Lock Haven, was a standout on the Bald Eagles’ soccer team from 1987-91. Ross remains in the program’s top-10 for career records in goals and assists. Ross helped the Bald Eagles finish second in the PSAC in 1989.

## LHU Foundation Celebrates Donors, Students at 10th Reeser Scholarship Brunch

More than 100 donors and scholarship recipients attended the Lock Haven University Foundation's (LHUF) 10th James C. Reeser Scholarship Brunch on April 14. The annual event is a celebration of donor generosity and student success at The Haven—giving donors a firsthand glimpse into the impact their support has on students, while allowing students to thank donors face-to-face for helping them achieve academic and athletic success.

Each year, two awards are presented to donors in recognition of their support: The LHUF Wagner Alumni Achievement Award and the LHUF Philanthropy Award. This year's recipient of the Wagner Award is Lock Haven University Alumni Association past president Dan Cruttenden '73. The Philanthropy Award winner is Jim Amigh '64, benefactor of the "Lee" Todd Amigh '64 Environmental Education Scholarship.

As of April 14, the LHUF awarded more than \$665,000 in scholarships to 368 students during the 2023-24 academic year. For more information on the Lock Haven University Foundation or to make a gift in support of Lock Haven students, visit [www.givetolhu.com](http://www.givetolhu.com).

*President Hanna and Director of Alumni and Employer Engagement Ashley Conrad present the Wagner Award to Dan Cruttenden '73 (left). President Hanna and LHU Foundation Executive Director, Ashley Koser present the Philanthropy Award to Jim Amigh '64 (right).*



## Smith '98 Serves as Presenter During Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training Series and Women's Empowerment Dinner



*LaToya Smith gathers with Lock Haven DEI staff Kenny Hall, Albert Jones, and Mia Swales*

Lock Haven University alumna LaToya Smith '98, was recently welcomed back to campus as part of CU's third annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training series.

Smith, the founder of LCS Counseling and Consulting Agency, delivered a presentation to more than 60 faculty and staff titled, "Treating Deep Wounds: Confronting Race-Based Trauma and Its Impact on The Mental Health of College Students."

Drawing from her personal journey from a 17-year-old Lock Haven freshman to successful entrepreneur and advocate, Smith captivated the audience with her insights and experiences.

Emphasizing the importance of authenticity, finding the confidence to use her voice, recognizing predecessors, and giving back to her communities, Smith outlined the pivotal elements that contributed to her self-actualization and professional success.

During her presentation, Smith shed light on the profound effects of race-based trauma on college students' mental health, addressing its manifestations, stressors, and symptoms. She advocated for education, awareness, and collective action as a means to nurture healing and create emotionally safe spaces for students of color on campus.



## ALL IN DAY OF GIVING

GENERATES RECORD-BREAKING **\$253,000** IN STUDENT SUPPORT

Commonwealth University-Lock Haven raised more than \$253,000 in crucial student support during its 10th annual All In Day of Giving. The money raised during the 24-hour fundraiser held from 10 a.m. April 18 to 10 a.m. April 19 supports academic and athletic scholarships for students at The Haven.

Throughout the 24-hour fundraiser various challenges were announced with donors having an opportunity to unlock additional money for the academic or athletic programs of their choosing.

Some challenges included the LHU Foundation First-Time Donor Challenge, the LHU Alumni Association "HAVEN PROUD" Challenge, and the PSECU Athletics Alumni Participation Challenge.

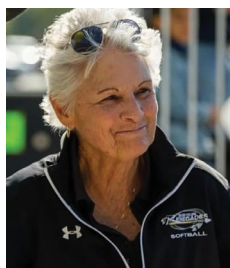
**Additional gifts in support of The Haven can be made at [www.givetolhu.com](http://www.givetolhu.com).**

## 1960s



**Ron Bowes '66** was joined by 14 LHSC alumni from 1965 to 1968 for an alumni reunion at Bakers Diner in Dillsburg on April 9. Alumni in attendance included (Front Row) **Robert Klar '67, Gene Bailey '68, Ron Brehm '67, Myrl Brut '67, Bob Herncane '66, Bowes '66, Ken Van Dermark,** (Back Row) **Bob Kievet '65, Don Charlton '65, Lew Magent '66, Don Swartz '67, Ed Davidheiser, Dr. Francis "Skip" Fennell '66, Woody Selgrath '66, and Tom Elling '66.**

## 1970s



**Donna Runyon '72**, in recognition of her 29 years of passion and dedication to the softball program, had the softball field at Ohlone College (Ohlone, California) renamed in her honor on Oct. 28, 2023.



**Ron '75** and LHU Alumni Association President **Amee (Lewis) Vance '75** hosted more than two dozen alumni at their residence in North Naples, Florida, on Feb. 25 for a memory-making evening of fun and reminiscing.

**Michael Hanna Sr. '77** was inducted as a 2024 Class of the Keystone Central Hall of Fame by the Keystone Central Foundation Alumni & Friends Association on April 30, 2024.

## 1980s



**Alan Dawson '84** retired as the winningest men's soccer coach in the history of Old Dominion University. Dawson led the Monarchs to 12 NCAA Tournament appearances, the 1999 and 2001 Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) regular-season titles, a CAA tournament championship in 2007 and Conference USA titles in 2014 and 2017.



**Julie Sheck '86** was named director of development and communications for Via of the Lehigh Valley. Sheck has more than 30 years of experience in development, communications, marketing, and community relations.

## 1990s



**Chawn (Gehr) Frontera '95** along with alumni friends **Nicholas Fusco '96** and **James Maxson '96** summited Baxter Peak, also known as Kathadin, the tallest peak, and official northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail.



**Jennifer Riter '96**, chair of the LHU Foundation board of directors, was named vice president of analytical services for Kindeva Drug Delivery following a 27-year stint at West Pharmaceutical.

**Cory McGary '96** was promoted to area laboratory manager for Halliburton Energy Service Inc.'s Northeast Area, which includes Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio.



**Jason Wildenstein '96** was named vice president and general manager of WHP-TV in Harrisburg, where he began his media career. Wildenstein, the 2018 recipient of Lock Haven's Rebecca Gross Alumni Award, was most recently the VP and GM at WJAC in Johnstown-Altoona-State College.



**Erin Lukoss '97** received the 2024 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Award for Humanitarianism from Bucks

County Community College. Lukoss is the executive director/CEO for Bucks County Opportunity Council in Doylestown.



**Doug Oliver '98** was named 2024 Alumnus of the Year by the Milton Hershey School in recognition of his accomplish-

ments in communications, business, and advocacy.

## 2000s

**Jacob Merrill '04** was promoted to director of ecommerce at Unique Snacks in Reading. He was previously an ecommerce manager at the company.

## 2020s



**Sydney Miller '20** was named a rising political star in City & State Pennsylvania's, The Pennsylvania Forty Under 40.



**Melanie Holt '20 (ASN) and '22 (BSN)** was named practical nursing director with the Clearfield County Career and

Technology Center in January 2024.

## IN MEMORIAM

### DONALD F. FUHRER '56 & JOYCE (HANAWALT) FUHRER '54

Donald F. Fuhrer '56 died on Feb. 5, 2024. He was preceded in death by his wife of over 70 years, Joyce (Hanawalt) Fuhrer '54, who died just 19 hours prior. Longtime supporters of the Lock Haven University Foundation, Don and Joyce established the Donald F. Fuhrer and Joyce Hanawalt Fuhrer Women's Athletic Scholarship and Donald F. Fuhrer and Joyce Hanawalt Fuhrer Baseball Scholarship in 2023. Don was an undefeated pitcher for Lock Haven during its championship baseball seasons in the State Teachers' College Conference in 1952 and 1953. While serving in the Army, he played for the Fort Belvoir Engineers with teammates, and future Major Leaguers, Bob Uecker, Dick Groat, and Russ Kemmerer.

### FREDERICK D. ZUGAY '83

Frederick D. Zugay '83 died Oct. 31, 2023. At Lock Haven State College, Fred was a proud member of the Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity before graduating with a B.S. in computer science in 1983. He would go on to spend more than 38 years as a contractor, providing intelligence support with the federal government. He was also a past Commander, JN of the Northern Virginia Sail and Power Squadron. He is survived by his wife, Cindy (Mifflin) Zugay '81.

## IN MEMORIAM

Elizabeth Bagshaw '67

John Bahel '65

John Bowes '40

Maj. Keith Dixon '82

John George Douglas, Jr. '56

Regis Endler '58

Kenneth Flanigan '73

Donald F. Fuhrer '56

Joyce H. Fuhrer '54

Deborah Gallagher '94

Timothy Hinkle '65

Donald Irely '63

Thomasine Meyer '85

Steven Miller '71

Charles Newcomer,  
*professor emeritus*

Shirley Probst '78

Laura Spangenberg '91

Frank Starr '66

Donald Thomas '76

Bruce Victoriano '72

Frederick D. Zugay '83

Have a class note to share? We'd love to hear from you.

Visit [www.lockhaven.edu/alumni](http://www.lockhaven.edu/alumni)



## PIONEER TEACHER

# MERIAM BROWNE, CLASS OF 1924

By **Joby Topper**, *Library Director*

One hundred years ago at the Central State Normal School Commencement of June 3, 1924, Meriam Browne became the first African American to graduate from what is now CU–Lock Haven.

News of Browne’s historic graduation spread quickly across the state and beyond, thanks mainly to Robert Lee Vann, the famous publisher and editor of *The Pittsburgh Courier*, one of the most widely circulated black-owned-and-operated newspapers in the nation: “The Central State Normal School at Lock Haven, Pa., graduated its first Negro student this month! She is Miss Meriam Browne. She won her entrance to the Normal School by a scholarship awarded for excellence in high school, being the first colored graduate of the latter” (*Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 June 1924).

Browne was born in Lock Haven on May 1, 1904, one of two children of Charles Sumner Browne and Ida Mae Jodun. Her grandfather was Benjamin Franklin Browne, who moved to Lock Haven from Richmond, Virginia, in the early 1870s. Meriam’s father lived and worked in Altoona, so it was her grandfather who looked after her, her brother, and her mother. Franklin spent most of his working life laying asphalt roads. In his later years, he worked as a janitor in the old Garden Theater at the corner of Main and Jay streets. He was a founding member and a lay minister at the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Meriam and her brother Charles were raised in this church, which still stands at 643 East Church Street.

Meriam graduated from Lock Haven High School with the Class of 1922, the largest class (70 graduates) in the school’s history up to that time. Her dream was to be an elementary school teacher. She was granted a scholarship to the local Normal School and graduated with the Class of 1924.

Shortly after graduation, Meriam moved to Coatesville in Chester County where she taught elementary students for 30 years at the all-black James Adams School on Merchant Street. Around 1960, she was hired by the previously all-white Edwin Terry Elementary School as part of the racial integration of public schools following the famous *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision of 1954. She retired in 1973 after 45 years of teaching.

In 1974 Meriam returned to Lock Haven to attend her 50th class reunion. She caught up with old classmates and friends like Helen Lloyd Matthews, one of the last local surviving members of the old Bethel AME Church. On campus, she connected with Bob Lynch, director of social equity, who made sure that she was formally recognized as the first African American graduate of our school. Thanks mainly to his efforts, the Black Student Union was named in her honor in 1977.

Meriam and her husband, Newton Harris, moved from Coatesville to his former home in Middlesex County, Virginia, in 1977. She died on Feb. 16, 1990, at age 85. She is buried at the Union Shiloh Baptist Church Cemetery in Jamaica, Virginia. She was survived by her husband (who died in 1999) and several nieces and nephews.

Meriam Browne Harris, 1904-1990—a true pioneer.





## Dr. Amy Downes

*Associate Vice President for  
Student Success and Campus Life*

Interview by **Sara Karnish**

Dr. Amy Downes oversees several areas on the Commonwealth University campuses. The student success centers, student orientation, exploratory advising, first-year experience, which includes a first-year seminar course, learning communities, and early start programs all fall under her direction.

She also oversees the learning/tutoring centers, counseling services, Act 101, TRIO Student Support Services, TRIO Upward Bound, and the Haven Cupboard on the Lock Haven campus. She has been an integral part of the Lock Haven community for many years.



## **Q | How do you define student success?**

**A |** I think student success is such an individualized experience, and if I'm being honest, it's always led by the student. For one student, success might be "I came in as a psych major and graduated as a psych major," for another, it's "I came in as a psych major and graduated as a business major." It is defined by the student, and I see our role in the areas that report to me to guide students on their path and meet their goals of what it means to be successful. Sometimes that means having to interfere when there are bumps on the road for them. They come in, achieve, graduate, but it's so much more nuanced than that. The student is at the center of how they define "success" and it's our job to respond to that.

## **Q | Can you talk about your career progression at Lock Haven?**

**A |** I've probably worn as many hats as years I've been here. I was an instructor in the social work department for three years—that's how I started. I worked in residence life, I worked in the Center for Excellence and Inclusion, was director of student success, then associate director of student support and retention, and am now associate vice president. I feel I have a holistic picture of the student experience as a result of the variety of roles I've held. My background and degrees are all in social work. My lens and how I view things come from this background. I see people before I see anything else.

## **Q | What is the Haven Cupboard and how has it impacted Lock Haven's students?**

**A |** I was working as a director in the Center for Excellence and Inclusion with an extremely passionate group of students. We started brainstorming about what was missing on the campus. What do we need that we could create or try to create? After many iterations, we landed on this—a food cupboard to address student hunger. I did some research about what other colleges had put in place to combat food insecurity on campus. Then we met with the president and were fortunate to get a lot of support from the administration for this project. When we started, we only provided shelf-stable items. We had a refrigerator and freezer donated that greatly increased our ability to offer fresh and frozen foods. It's always been a shopping experience for students. The only criteria is students have to be enrolled in at least one credit in the semester they're coming in. Our first year we served 328 individuals; in fall 2023 we served 406 individual students for over 1,600 visits.

## **Q | Why is Lock Haven such a great place to be?**

**A |** First and foremost, it's our students. I cannot count the number of students I've had the honor of working with throughout my career. It's also great because of our faculty, staff, and leadership. Our faculty and staff are so committed to helping students find success.

## **Q | What do you do in your spare time?**

**A |** I do enjoy going to Benazette where the wild elk herd is located. That's probably the most unique thing I do.



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