

# Union Re-Union

WINTER 2014

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF UNION COUNTY COLLEGE

## Our First-Ever Winter Commencement

A winter night on the Cranford Campus was never before brighter, never this spectacular, never so boisterous with cheers and tears and applause, never decked out with so much pomp and splendor.

For the first time in its 80-year history, Union County College held a winter commencement. More than 300 students and 2,000 of their proud, giddy, hugging, camera-mugging family members and friends attended the Jan. 15 commencement in the shaking and rocking Richel Commons.

Having a winter commencement is consistent with the “Students Are Number One” ethos that has been the hallmark of the College since President Margaret McMenamín’s arrival in 2010. Along with President McMenamín, Chief Academic Officer Maris Lown has been a staunch proponent for having a second commencement to recognize the achievement of students graduating in August and December.

“Students who complete degree programs during a summer session or after a fall semester often do not return to receive degrees in a spring ceremony because they have entered programs at other schools or have entered the job market,” says Dr. Lown. “We’re celebrating a milestone in a student’s



life. By the time May comes for the Spring commencement, a lot of students will have moved on and miss out on this opportunity to celebrate this great occasion with their loved ones.”

As alumni know, getting to graduation is a big deal. By having a memorable commencement ceremony, students are able to pause to reap a reward for their hard work. For students who graduate in May, the College will continue to hold its traditional spring commencement. Once again this year, commencement will be at the Harwood Arena on Kean University (May 21).

Since her arrival at Union, President McMenamín has led a College-wide effort to improve students’ graduation rates. To that end, the College’s chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society has spearheaded Union’s “Community College Completion Corps” or C4 initiative. PTK students enlist other students to make a pledge to complete their degree at Union. Students affirm their “commitment to



complete” by signing large vinyl banners that hang in the Richel Commons and in the lobbies of the Plainfield and Elizabeth campuses. In the Fall, almost 1,000 students signed the C4 banners.

The Alumni Association is also an active participant in supporting student success. Beginning this year, the Association is launching a campaign to support the College’s “completion” initiative—thereby encouraging more students to achieve the pinnacle of graduation and become Alumni.

The Alumni are relying on the generosity of their fellow Alumni to build an endowed scholarship for students. Says

# Notes from the Graduating Class of...

## 1970

**Reinerio Fonseca** is a Marketing Representative at Wellcare and the Second Vice President of the Elizabeth Cubanos Lions.

## 1976

**Andrea (Andy) D'Amato** has been a Child Study Team Learning Disabilities teacher for Berkeley Heights Public Schools since 2002. Prior to that, Andy taught for Union Township and Newark public schools. He is certified as an Emergency Medical Technician and volunteers for the Berkeley Heights Rescue Squad. He has master's degrees in social work and teaching.

## 1977

**Morris Lenczicki** recently became L'Oréal's Vice President of Communications and Social Responsibility for Operations Americas. His new role includes designing and developing the company's social-responsibility programs.

### Please Tell Us About



Since Union's 1933 founding, more than a million students have attended Union. Our mission is to keep in touch with all of you, but we need your help. Send us an update about yourself at [nacco@ucc.edu](mailto:nacco@ucc.edu) or by snail mail to Rebecca May, Union College Life, 1033 Springfield Av., Cranford, NJ 07016. You'll appear in a future issue of *Union Reunion*.



Lady Owl's coaches and players from past championship teams had a Thanksgiving reunion. Alumni included Anne Matthews, Cheryl Bell Fortes, Donna Herran, Tracy Napoleon, Latice Gramby, Raqia Johnson, Heather Spence, Sharon Kukal, Erin Malkowski Lebers, Jennifer Martel, Shirlynn Shirley, and Kathleen Callahan.

## 1992

**Toniann Antonelli** became the Digital Managing Editor for Townsquare Media. Townsquare is a communities-focused media and entertainment company, operating 312 radio stations and companion websites in 66 markets, employing 2,700 professionals.



## 2009

**John Roman** recently became the Aide to Union County Board of Freeholders Chairman Chris Hudak. John recalls struggling

when he first came to Union and credits Professor Marc Postiglione for having "powered me through" to graduation.

## 2006

Anthony C. Davis received his bachelor's in Business from West Virginia State University in 2013. He is an employee of the YMCA of Scotch Plains and the athletic director and head varsity boys basketball coach at St. Bartholomew Academy in Scotch Plains. This past season, he coached St. Bart's to championships in the Suburban Catholic League and the Father Whelan Tournament basketball championship, finishing the year with an 18-1 record.

## 2008

**Theo Tamborlane's** 86 abstract oil paintings will be on display at Partners International (9 E. 37th St., NYC)

through Feb. 21. Since 2008, Theo's paintings have been in 87 solo and group exhibitions in New Jersey, New York, and Florida.

However, this unique solo show is the largest presentation of her work in one location at one time. The various series of paintings in this show are titled, Connections & Communications, Fleurs



Theo Tamborlane's 86 abstract oil paintings are on display at a gallery in NYC through Feb. 21.

### Union Re-Union

This is an official publication of Union County College: Dr. Margaret M. McMenamin, President; Dr. Maris Lown, Chief Academic Officer; Tammy Smith, Dean of College Life; and Rebecca May, Manager of College Life.

The newsletter is produced quarterly by the College Relations Department, Ellen Dotto, Executive Director; Sara Bontempo, Graphic Designer.

des Temps, Images of Nature, Seven Days and One More, Spanish Lives, The Circus, Spatial Dynamics, and Toys and Games. Each series has its hallmark of specially selected colors and multiple forms portraying emotions and dynamic expressions of life experiences.

## 2009

**Paulo Henriques**, who earned a bachelor's degree at Richard Stockton College after receiving his associate in Union's Criminal Justice program. Paulo is also a Certified Instructor in a nationally recognized program called "Refuse To Be A Victim." He educates participants on how to improve their personal safety, provides techniques needed to avoid dangerous situations and avoid becoming a victim of crime, and makes them aware of vulnerabilities in their daily lives.

## 2011

**Aline Avanzo** recently became the Customer Relations Specialist Assistant at UR Energy Inc.

## 2012

**Melena Sanchez** became a legal secretary for Craner, Satkin, Sheer, Schwartz & Hanna. She earned an associate in Liberal Studies at Union.



## Spotlight:

The Union County College Alumni Association presented the Off-Broadway play, *The Castle*, on Oct. 28 in the Roy Smith Theater. The play features four ex-convicts, who tell their stories about the obstacles criminal offenders confront upon their release. The play was written by the actors shown here: Angel Ramos, Vilma Ortiz Donovan, Kenneth Harrigan, and Casimiro Torres. They collaborated with David Rothenberg on the script when he brought them together for the production. The Castle is a halfway house located on the Upper West Side in New York City and is for people newly released from prison. Nearly 300 people—many of them alumni—attended the performance, which was sponsored by the Roy Smith Cultural Endowment Fund.



**Barry D. Jones**, '02, and **Linda McQuilla-Jones**, MA, Ed.S (Union class of '93) celebrated their 35th Wedding Anniversary on August 27, 2013, by going to Bermuda.



Alumna **Virginia Apelian** (right) offered President McMenemy a copy of her recently published—and delightfully funny—children's book titled, *Aliens Celebrating Christmas*. Yes, Virginia has published other works as well, including her landmark historical narrative, *Musa Dagh Girl: Daughter of Armenian Genocide Survivors*.



This QR Code or Quick Response Code will bring you directly to Union's Alumni page on the College's website. Simply use your smart phone to take a picture of this.

## Union Re-Union

### Alumni Board of Directors:

Jeff Chait, '94, President; Nancy Benz '73, Vice President; Suzanne Covine '58, Treasurer; Melinda Ayala, Secretary. Trustees: Bonnie Bendlin '68, Camille Cormier '81, Marion Curka '50, Donna Herran '85, Jean Kellogg '01, Linda Ives Kurdilla '89, Patrick LaQuaglia '76, Susan Lordi '13, Marlene Abitano '97, and Marion Menzer '47.



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Alumni President Jeff Chait, “To be eligible for what we’re calling the ‘Alumni Completion Scholarship,’ students need to be a semester away from graduating. These are students who are close but don’t have the funds to pay for that final semester. Nor would they be eligible for other forms of financial aid. So the scholarship is to help them get to the finish line and become one of us—proud Alumni of Union County College.”

*To contribute to the “Alumni Completion Scholarship” campaign, you may mail in your donation via the attached envelope. Or you may donate online by clicking the “Donate” button at <http://www.uccfoundation.org> and then typing in “Alumni Completion” in the blank box.*

For more information or to speak to a person about making a donation, call Stephen Nacco at (908) 709-7005.

We’ll keep you updated on the Alumni’s progress toward achieving the “Alumni Completion Scholarship” endowment in future editions of *Union Re-Union*.

## Get Young Again!

Join the Union County College Alumni Association. Any graduate or former student with 30 credits or more may join the Union County College Alumni Association. For dues of only \$15 for three years, or a Lifetime Membership for \$125, you will become a member of a dedicated group who value the education they received at Union.

*Use the attached membership to send in your dues and get your collegiate groove back!*



From the Nov. 22 ribbon-cutting ceremony to introduce the College’s expansion of the Plainfield Campus. Shown here, from left, are Larry Thul, Jim Thul, Lorraine Thul, President McMenam, Union County Freeholder Vernell Wright, and Union County College Board Chair Vic Richel.

## Union’s Historic Acquisition: The Thul Property in Plainfield

**Union County College now has an expanded presence in the City of Plainfield with its newly acquired property, the former Thul Auto Parts building.**

The College held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Nov. 22, with more than 40 students and staff members joining Union’s President Dr. Margaret M. McMenam, Board Chair Vic Richel, Freeholder Vernell Wright, and three members of the Thul family—brothers Jim and Larry and their mother Lorraine.

The two-story building and acre of land enable the College to offer the people of Plainfield expanded educational opportunities. President McMenam sees the acquisition of the Thul property as evidence of the College’s long-term commitment to Plainfield. She said, “Our increased presence in the City will be transformational for Plainfield and its residents.”

The Thul property is no ordinary plot of land. The 80-year-old College is moving into hallowed ground where a 100-year old business thrived for three generations. In its heyday, Thul fabricated steel tubes used for nuclear reactors. Thul also fabricated parts for the first MRI machine for human scanning.