

SUMMER 2015

# Invention

THE MAGAZINE OF THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

## KEEPING IT PERSONAL

KIRK LEW '14

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## *Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,*

The legendary basketball coach John Wooden said, "Success comes from knowing that you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming."

The graduates featured in this issue of *Invention* bring this quote to life.

We are honored to tell you the story of Kirk Lew '14, the first graduate of our Master of Public Service Leadership degree program. Lew, a former Rutgers lacrosse player, is a policy analyst with the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission, where he works to improve the workforce of underserved populations in the state. He discusses the benefits of collaborating with the Watson Institute as a student in our public service program and how he was able to apply that experience to his career.

Also in this issue, we meet Oscar Gutierrez '12, a noncommissioned officer in the U.S. Army Reserve, whose record includes eight years of active duty service. Gutierrez talks about the role the College played in helping him achieve his primary goal of giving back to his country and his community, and building a successful career in public service.

We are also pleased to introduce you to Lameka Augustin '14, assistant school business administrator for the Branchburg Township School District in New Jersey. Augustin shares how our Master of Business Administration program helped her achieve her professional goals as a busy mother and wife.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Invention*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George A. Pruitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "P".

Dr. George A. Pruitt  
President

## National Veterans Program Joins College

Operation College Promise, a national policy, research and education program that supports the transition and postsecondary advancement of U.S. veterans, is now part of Thomas Edison State College, the largest provider of collegiate programs for active duty service members and veterans in New Jersey.

Operation College Promise, established by the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU) in 2008, is now part of the College's Office of Military and Veteran Education and will complement the institution's efforts serving veterans, active duty service members and their families. The transition took place on May 15.

"Moving Operation College Promise into our institution helps ensure that we can continue its excellent work in support of our nation's veterans," said Louis Martini, associate vice president of Military and Veteran Education at Thomas Edison State College. "This goes beyond the enrollment of veterans. It is about making a larger impact on the lives of those who have served. It positions us to provide career assessment support and help students connect with ancillary services, including housing, childcare and health services."

The College played a pivotal role in Operation College Promise when the program was selected in 2009 as one of 20 recipients of the American Council on Education/Walmart "Success for Veterans" grants. Operation College Promise created the Certificate for Veterans' Service Providers program, the nation's first and most widely



(from left) *The Operation College Promise team: Frank Foy, Wendy Lang and William Keyes*

disseminated training program for professionals working with veterans, and *The OCP Field Guide*, the first national resource publication specifically designed for veterans' service providers. The program has trained more than 500 professionals from approximately 30 states.

"Thomas Edison State College is the perfect setting for the next stage of Operation College Promise," said Dr. Michael Klein, executive director and chief executive officer of NJASCU. "The association is proud of Wendy Lang, who originally envisioned the program and who continues to be its heart and soul. At Thomas Edison State College, Wendy will continue Operation College Promise's groundbreaking work to support military and veteran students in achieving a college degree."

## College Hosts New Careers in Nursing Northeastern Regional Meeting

The W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College recently hosted the 2015 New Careers in Nursing (NCIN) Northeastern Scholars Network Leadership Conference, which brought more than 100 nursing students and educators from across New England and the Middle Atlantic states to Trenton, N.J.

"These conferences provide important opportunities to students currently enrolled in accelerated second degree programs who have earned NCIN scholarships to interact with nursing leaders in the field today," said Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing. "We are honored to bring this regional meeting to the College for the first time and provide a professional learning experience to students from throughout the Northeast."

The conference, which was held on April 25 at the College, enables NCIN scholars to explore common challenges when transitioning to the nursing profession, identify opportunities for continued professional growth and development, and network with fellow students and nursing leaders in discussion groups focused on topics related to their nursing careers.

In 2014, the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing was one of 52 schools from across the country to receive a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for the NCIN scholarship program.

Four NCIN scholars enrolled at Thomas Edison State College attended this year's regional leadership conference, including Chayna Hardy-Taylor, Charles Thompson, Suzanne Szary and Victoria Burch.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing launched the NCIN program in 2008 to help alleviate the nursing shortage, expand the capacity of nursing programs, increase the number of nursing faculty in the pipeline and build a more diverse nursing workforce in an effort to meet the needs of a changing patient population.

NCIN scholars have already earned a bachelor's degree in another field and are making a transition to nursing through an accelerated nursing degree program.



(from left) Accelerated BSN students Chayna Hardy-Taylor, Suzanne Szary, Victoria Burch and Charles Thompson attended the 2015 NCIN Northeastern Scholars Network Leadership Conference at the College.

## W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing Hosts Health Policy Event

The W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College recently hosted a health policy event presented by the Institute for Nursing and the New Jersey State Nurses Association.

The event, *Health Policy: Nurse Advocacy in Action*, was held on June 18 at the College and provided nurses with information about health policy legislation, the legislative and advocacy process and current state and federal issues related to nursing.

"Nurses make up the largest employee group in the healthcare sector," said Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing. "This event provided an opportunity for nurses and nursing students to network with key leaders, learn more about the health policy process, and understand the impact that nurse advocacy can have to effect change in the healthcare system."



Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing

# *In Memoriam:*

## College Mourns the Loss of Dr. Arnold Fletcher

Thomas Edison State College mourns the loss of Dr. Arnold Fletcher, the institution's first vice president, who passed away at his home in Newtown Square, Pa., on June 12. He was 97.

Fletcher devoted his life to family, music and higher education. He grew up in Upper Darby, Pa., and was a teenage piano prodigy who earned music degrees from Temple University and a doctorate in education from the University of Pennsylvania.

He was a World War II Army veteran who served with the 11th Armored Division under Gen. George Patton. He received a Bronze Star for his duty during the Battle of the Bulge and took part in the liberation of the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp near Linz, Austria.

In 1946, Fletcher joined the music faculty of West Chester State Teachers College, where he served as professor of music and dean of Academic Affairs. Following his tenure at West Chester State, Fletcher served briefly as president of the American College of Monaco before joining Thomas

Edison State College in 1973, where he played an instrumental role developing and leading the institution's academic enterprise.

Under his leadership, the College developed its first degree programs, appointed its first Academic Council, created both the Thomas Edison College Exam Program (TECEP®) and the school's first independent study course and became a pioneer in prior learning assessment.

"That was the beginning of the period to start serving the adult learner. We were starting something at that point, and I think we were fairly successful at it," he said in a 2013 interview with the College. "I was willing to jump into something that was new, and it would give us a chance to try out new things. Some would work. Some wouldn't. Many of them did. Some became permanent. And by setting a beginning for it, we achieved a background basis for it to continue in the future."

Fletcher also played a key role in helping the College earn its first full accreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and served as acting president of the College on two separate occasions in 1978 and 1982 when the institution was transitioning between presidents. He stepped down from his role as vice president at the College in 1983.

"We owe much to Arnold Fletcher because he provided leadership at a critical time in our history and had a vision for the institution," said William J. Seaton, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs at Thomas Edison



State College. "His work helped create the foundation of our College's academic program, opening doors for adult learners and helping to reshape the entire higher education landscape. Arnold was a Renaissance man whose legacy is firmly rooted in the foundations of the College."

In his honor, the College established the Arnold Fletcher Award to recognize Thomas Edison State College baccalaureate degree graduates who earned at least 90 credits using one of the innovative, nontraditional learning methods recognized by the institution.

Fletcher was preceded in death by his first wife, Toni; and is survived by his second wife, Mary Girling Fletcher, of Newtown Square, Pa.; his daughter, Patrice Fletcher, of Chicago; his son, Kenneth Fletcher, of Independence, Ore.; and a niece, Dee Krauss, of Huntington Beach, Calif.



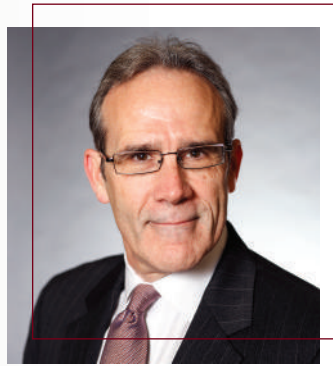
*Dr. Arnold Fletcher attended several Thomas Edison State College Commencement ceremonies after his retirement. He performed "Prelude Excerpts" by George Gershwin at the 2011 Fall Commencement in Trenton, N.J.*

## College Launches Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies

The School of Business and Management at Thomas Edison State College has recently launched a Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies degree program that is ideal for working professionals interested in finishing their business or management degree and leveraging most of their transfer credits.

"This degree is designed for students who are already professionals working in their fields but who want to complete a business degree," said Alicia Malone, assistant dean of the School of Business and Management. "It is less prescriptive than our Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program and offers a little more flexibility while still enabling students to demonstrate competency in business theories."

The 120-credit program is offered completely online and allows students to transfer and apply most of their



*Dr. Michael Williams, dean of the School of Business and Management*

previously earned credits completed at regionally accredited institutions and finish their business degree without sacrificing their professional and personal obligations. Course work provides a solid grounding in relevant academic theory, applied practice and policymaking.

"As the demand for workplace skills continues to evolve, one thing remains constant—many people without a bachelor's degree are likely to experience a roadblock to achieving their career goals," said Dr. Michael Williams, dean of the School of Business and Management.

"Our new program allows students to benefit from a concentration in interdisciplinary knowledge that prepares them for success in any vocation."

To learn more about the program, visit [www.tesc.edu/business](http://www.tesc.edu/business).

## Topping Off Ceremony Held for Nursing Education Center

Thomas Edison State College recently held a topping off ceremony for the Nursing Education Center, which celebrates the final steel girder being put into place to create the frame of the newest landmark building coming to downtown Trenton, N.J.

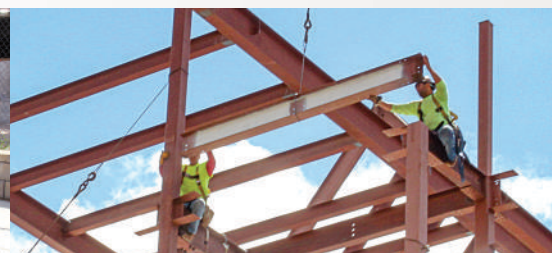
The ceremony took place at the building's construction site at West State and Calhoun streets in Trenton on May 13. College officials and members of the design and

construction teams for the building signed a steel beam, which was then hoisted into the air and put into place near the top of the three-story structure.

"We have always taken our role as a resident and a steward of this city very seriously," said Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College. "We felt a great responsibility to build not just another building but something that will be a significant and

permanent landmark to our city. We think this building makes a statement about the quality of our city, our College and the students that we serve."

The \$26.2 million building is scheduled to open in 2016 and will include nursing simulation labs and classrooms, a testing center, meeting space, conference rooms and a two-level parking garage, which features a green roof that will create an outdoor space for students.



## Watson Institute Hosts Auxiliary Police Forum

The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State College recently hosted a forum that focused on how the auxiliary police model has improved community-police relations in Perth Amboy, N.J., and how it can be implemented in other cities and municipalities in the state.



The event, which was held on May 7 at the College, brought together officials from cities and towns across New Jersey and featured a keynote address by New Jersey Acting Attorney General John Jay Hoffman.

Hoffman told participants that auxiliary police programs should be based on the needs of the police department and community, but models like the one in Perth Amboy can help bring communities and law enforcement officials closer together to build trust.

"It's important for police departments to learn where citizen assistance can help build a program," he said. "It formalizes a sense of accountability and responsibility in the community."

Auxiliary police are volunteers from the community who complete background checks and basic police training. They assist law enforcement in a variety of settings, including patrol, crowd control, helping in missing persons searches and serving as community-police liaisons.

The forum also included a public safety panel that discussed how the auxiliary model in Perth Amboy has improved community-police relations in the city, and a roundtable discussion on auxiliary police.



(from left) N.J. Acting Attorney General John Jay Hoffman; Harry S. Pozycki, chairman, The Citizens Campaign; and Perth Amboy Deputy Police Chief Lawrence Cattano '12.



(from left) Trenton Mayor Eric Jackson; Harry S. Pozycki, chairman, The Citizens Campaign; Perth Amboy Deputy Police Chief Lawrence Cattano '12; and Barbara George Johnson, executive director, The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy.

*"It is important to give volunteers the tools and opportunity to succeed."*

> Lawrence Cattano '12  
Perth Amboy Deputy Police Chief

Lawrence Cattano '12, deputy police chief in Perth Amboy, participated in both the panel discussion and a roundtable discussion and said increased training for auxiliary police helped make the program in Perth Amboy successful.

"It is important to give volunteers the tools and opportunity to succeed," he added. "Training helps professionalize the effort and helps the program to establish its own credibility with the community and the police department."

Cattano said municipalities considering an auxiliary police program should try to identify people in their communities interested in partnering and who would embrace the idea.

"It is very important to find somebody to have a sense of ownership," he said. "It could be someone from the Office of Emergency Management, a retired law enforcement professional or a long-time resident that knows the neighborhood and the community well."

The event was presented by The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy, The Citizens Campaign and the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association.



## Workshop Focuses on Reclaiming Vacant and Abandoned Properties

The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State College recently coordinated a workshop designed to help municipal officials deal with vacant and problem properties that can destabilize neighborhoods and impede economic development.

The workshop, which was held on May 12 at the War Memorial in Trenton, N.J., brought together practitioners from around the U.S. who shared best practices about reclaiming vacant and abandoned properties, dealing with problem properties through code enforcement and how New Jersey

municipalities are creatively tackling issues related to vacant and problem properties.

“Many cities and towns in New Jersey are still reeling from the foreclosure crisis and economic downturn,” said Barbara George Johnson, executive director of The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy. “Our goal is to help municipal leaders develop a strategy to revitalize their communities and take advantage of tools and resources such as the Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act and other legal avenues, to improve troubled properties even when resources are limited.”

The Watson Institute presented the workshop with the Center for Community Progress; New Jersey Urban Mayors Association; Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey; and New Jersey Community Capital.



*Practitioners from around the country shared best practices about reclaiming vacant and abandoned properties at the War Memorial in Trenton, N.J.*

## 2015 National Institute Explores Future of PLA and Role of Assessment in College

Thomas Edison State College recently presented the 27th annual National Institute on the Assessment of Adult Learning, which focused on how prior learning assessment (PLA) can help advance national college completion goals in the U.S. and the role technology will play in the assessment and education of adult learners.

The theme of this year’s event—held June 2–4 at the Hilton Philadelphia at Penn’s Landing in Philadelphia, Pa.—was “PLA 20/20: Goals and Visions.”

“Our theme was meant to get people thinking about the near future and how education might be evolving as we incorporate new technology and work to achieve President Obama’s college completion goals, one of which is to increase the percentage of Americans with a college degree to 60 percent by the year 2020,” said Marc Singer, vice provost of Thomas Edison State College’s Center for the Assessment of Learning and director of the National Institute. “This year was about exploring the ways we can help make that happen through our work with adult and nontraditional students. Prior learning assessment continues to play a major role in helping to achieve this college degree completion goal.”

Nearly 120 educators and practitioners from around the world attended the 2015 National Institute to share ideas about PLA, hear about best practices, discuss strategies for resolving potential roadblocks and learn how adult learning relates to the rest of the educational arena.

Keynote presentations were made by Meg Benke, PhD, professor and mentor, School of Graduate Studies, SUNY Empire State College; and Rich Roberts, PhD, vice president and chief scientist, Center for Innovative Assessments, Professional Examination Service.

Thomas Edison State College established the National Institute in 1988 to provide an intensive learning experience for educators and professionals involved in the assessment of adult and experiential learning and to help ensure that PLA is appropriately practiced. The event also helps educators learn the best practices related to the field and understand the importance of quality assurance and accreditation issues related to PLA.

To learn more about the 2015 event, visit [www.tesc.edu/nationalinstitute](http://www.tesc.edu/nationalinstitute).



# KEEPING IT PERSONAL



## *Kirk Lew '14 – First Graduate of the Master of Public Service Leadership Program.*

For Kirk Lew, it's personal.

A public service professional who has dedicated his career to assisting those who need it most, Lew discovered early on that by working directly with people with special needs and their families, he could make the biggest impact in their lives.

A standout lacrosse player at Hillsborough High School in New Jersey, Lew went on to play lacrosse at Rutgers, where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1996. He was a teacher for about a year before changing careers to work closely with at-risk youths and kids with developmental and physical disabilities, giving each child the attention they needed.

"This allowed me to teach one-on-one and apply a personal touch to each individual I worked with," Lew recalled. "Each child has their own wants, needs and expectations so we are able to bridge that gap and tailor their plan for success in a way that benefits them the most."



*"I was able to apply what I was doing in my position directly to my course work. I made connections between the material and everything began to come full circle."*

*> Kirk Lew, MPSSL '14*



*A standout lacrosse player at Hillsborough High School in New Jersey, Lew (center) played Division I lacrosse at Rutgers University. Today, he coaches youth lacrosse.*

Employed as a lead residential advisor for ResCare, Lew worked mostly with at-risk youths; and as a senior manager for the nonprofit organization Bridges to Employment, he worked primarily with people with disabilities. During this time, Lew said he learned patience, effective communication and empathy—skills critical to anyone working in public service.

Today, Lew works as a policy analyst for the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), where he partners with businesses, job seekers, organized labor and state and county agencies to improve the workforce system for three of the most underserved populations in New Jersey.

"I work to foster effective communication and interaction between public, private and community organizations to assure that no duplication of services exists," said Lew.

"Promoting synergy between these groups helps to affirm that needs are being met and systems are connected and working seamlessly."

He also examines how laws and policies directly impact the state's youth and disabled communities as well as adult literacy in New Jersey and champions the notion of how community support and access to education directly correlate to practical employment.

"By encouraging both public and private groups to leverage their resources and work together, these organizations are allowing access to education and proper training for the hardest served populations, which helps to not only increase their wage opportunities, but assist in advancing their career options," he said.

When Lew joined the commission in 2012, he realized that he needed a graduate degree in order to advance his career.

"Everyone I worked with had a master's degree; it just made sense for me at this juncture," he said. "To make it even sweeter, my daughter was just beginning her first year of grade school, so to be able to go to school 'together' was special."

Lew also drew motivation for completing his master's degree from his parents.

"My father immigrated to the United States from China at a young age, and always reinforced the importance of earning advanced credentials," he said. "My parents met and lived in New York City housing projects for some time before they found their way out. It was through pursuing education that they were successful and able to provide for our family. Watching our parent's triumph firsthand, my sister and I knew that following a strong educational path was a clear choice we each wanted to make."

It was the need for a master's degree that fit his passion for community development and capacity-building that led Lew to Thomas Edison State College. In 2014, he became the first graduate of the College's Master of Public Service Leadership degree program, which enables students to apply what they learn in their courses to their actual work environments.



"I was able to apply what I was doing in my position directly to my course work. I made connections between the material and everything began to come full circle," said Lew. "Much of my work focuses on looking at the bigger picture and analyzing how systems move and change. The course work I completed while earning my degree allowed me to further refine my ability to strategize and theorize."

As a student, Lew collaborated with The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy to help implement strategic investments for community economic development in 19 municipalities across the state—part of the Institute's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for North-Central New Jersey.

"Working with the Watson Institute as a member of the Work Investment Task Force has directly aligned with my work at the SETC," he said. "We've been able to help stimulate the economy and allow workforce systems to become more fluid through employer training programs."

Lew has served as a youth lacrosse coach for the past 12 years and frequently speaks at job fairs and community-based organizations for youths on topics such as social media safety and effective employment tactics.

"Much of what I have experienced through my own educational journey I now pass on to the populations I work closely with," he said. "I take every opportunity to reiterate how crucial it is to begin an educational path that will lead to starting a career."

Lew resides in Hillsborough, N.J., with his daughter.





*“Having my bachelor’s degree brings the experience full circle and opens a wide range of opportunities.”*

Oscar Gutierrez, BA '12

## Model Citizen

Even though Oscar Gutierrez was only 11 years old when he came to the United States, he brought something very special with him: a desire to serve his new country.

“As an immigrant to the United States, I have an overwhelming sense of duty to this country that has allowed me to serve in the military,” said Gutierrez, who emigrated to the U.S. from Mexico in 1991. “I feel the need to give back, and that sense of duty leads me to serve my community at all levels—local, state, federal and not-for-profit.”

Gutierrez’ service at the local level includes his current position as controller for the city of Fishers, Ind. At the state level, he serves as the commissioner of the 5th Congressional Indiana War Memorial, an appointment made by Gov. Mike Pence. Gutierrez assists at the federal level as a noncommissioned officer in the Army Reserve with eight years of active duty and 12 years of continued service.

“My time will never truly repay this great nation for all the opportunities it has afforded me, but it plays a small part ensuring that we continue moving forward,” Gutierrez explained.

One of those opportunities, Gutierrez is quick to note, was earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in liberal studies from Thomas Edison State College in 2012.

“The military gave me the tools and resources to receive the education that Thomas Edison State College has provided,” said Gutierrez, who is currently pursuing a Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Indiana Wesleyan University. “As a service member, I had an eclectic group of schools I had previously attended and was pleased to find that TESC accepted a large number of military training credits, and all of my testing and college credits from other institutions. To complete my degree requirements at Thomas Edison State College, I used online, guided independent study and prior learning assessment courses.”

Prior to attending Thomas Edison State College, Gutierrez completed several federal and military courses and gained years of experience in subjects such as appropriation law, accounting, financial statements and U.S. general ledger.

“Having my bachelor’s degree brings the experience full circle and opens a wide range of opportunities,” he said.

Since earning his BA degree, Gutierrez has garnered a number of prestigious appointments.

Before he was named the city controller in Fishers, Gutierrez served as the controller for the City of Lawrence, Ind., and with the U.S. Department of Defense, where he was awarded the Joint Service Commendation Medal and the Joint Service Achievement Medal for his contributions in financial management.

Additionally, he serves as a trustee of the Indianapolis Public Library and a member of the Hispanic Business Council Board of Directors. He is also a member of the Rotary Club of Indianapolis, The American Legion, United Service Organization of Indiana, the Folds of Honor Foundation and the Columbia Club Veterans Association.

Today, Gutierrez is eager to spread the word about the dedication and integrity of his alma mater.

“I continue to serve as finance instructor for the Army Reserve and often recommend TESC to colleagues for its military friendliness, but, more importantly, for having a regional accreditation and the credibility of not being a for-profit institution,” he said.

Gutierrez, who resides in Geist, Ind., with his wife, Meghan, and their 4-year-old son, Darwin, said he likes to spend as much time as he can with his family.

“We frequent the Indianapolis Zoo, the Indianapolis Children’s museum and Fort Harrison State Park,” he said.

## Oscar Gutierrez, BA ’12



# Commitment to Succeed



## *Lameka Augustin had three letters on her personal 'to do' list: **MBA.***

Augustin said earning a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from Thomas Edison State College brought her closer to her professional objectives.

"My goal was to become a school business administrator," said Augustin, who was recently named assistant school business administrator/assistant board secretary for the Branchburg Township School District in New Jersey. "In order to be an eligible candidate for this position, I needed a master's degree from an accredited college. I selected Thomas Edison State College's MBA program because it seemed like the best fit for me."

Augustin, who completed her MBA while working full time as a school accountant for the Hawthorne Board of Education in Hawthorne, N.J., said she was attracted to the program's accelerated timeframe and competitive tuition.

"I was looking for a program that was autonomous and attainable within two years," she said. "The affordability factor was a major attraction because the cost of obtaining a master's level education can be prohibitive. I compared Thomas Edison State College to other online MBA programs, and read reviews from students about how the staff and mentors played a big role in helping them succeed. I value the ability to work independently, but I also wanted to make sure that I was applying to an institution that would be there for me if I needed it."

As a student, Augustin pointed out that one of the program's strong suits was the relevancy of her course work to her job.

"The mentors are seasoned professionals with an extensive amount of knowledge in real world concepts. This is an enormous benefit to students who are then able to immediately apply what they are learning to enhance their position in the workforce," she said.

Perhaps her biggest motivation was her family. The 'family first' mentality that Augustin embraces kept her powering through busy days on the job, household demands and challenging course work.

"My children watched as I embraced the educational journey and were very supportive," she recalled. "They were clearly impressed with me sticking it out. I know this passage made a lasting impression on them and underscores how important education is to their own future."

Augustin, who graduated in 2014, stressed that students must be committed to be successful and complete the MBA program.

"You have to put in the work and make the commitment to complete your assignments," she said. "I am a wife, mother of three and an active church member. What worked for me was doing my reading at night and numerous times on sports fields while my children were at practice. I incorporated my current lifestyle with the commitment of completing my degree. TESC made it as seamless as possible to access my assignments through any method and on any device, which is a major plus. My lifestyle was no longer an obstacle for completing my MBA."

Augustin describes her household as the archetypical 'modern family'. She and husband Hans live in Haledon, N.J., and have three children, Katrina, Justin and Jalen.



(from left) Lameka Augustin, MBA '14 and Felicia Meyers, MSN '14 at the College's 42nd Annual Commencement on Sept. 20.

## Lameka Augustin, MBA '14

## Michael Barnes AA '05, BA '09

Michael Barnes graduated with a MA in modern languages from Kansas State University in December 2013. Barnes recently retired from the U.S. Army after 27 years, and has been hired by Kansas State University as the Fort Riley student services coordinator.

## James Battavio BA '10

James Battavio was recently promoted to police captain within the Bridgeton Police Department in Bridgeton, N.J. Battavio joined the department in 1999 and was promoted to sergeant in 2004 and lieutenant in 2007. He also currently serves as an adjunct professor in justice studies at Cumberland County College in Vineland, N.J.

## Jinphil Cho BSBA '12

Jinphil Cho graduated with an MBA in finance and accounting from Indiana University in May 2015.

## Nicholas Dean BA '05

Nicholas Dean was recently featured on National Public Radio (NPR). Crescent Leadership Academy in New Orleans, La., where Dean serves as principal, was highlighted in a news feature by NPR noting the school's success with programs to assist students who have not been successful in other academic settings. Dean is also a veteran of the U.S. Air Force.

## Sue Gibson BA '93

Sue Gibson has been a pastoral counselor for women at Covenant Hills Treatment Center in Boerne, Texas, for the past eight years. Gibson is an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church where she served five churches as a preacher for 20 years. Her memoir, *Fun and Faith: A Journey in Courage*, has recently been published. This memoir delves into the daring and brave venture of pastoring churches after a call from God at midlife.

## Mike Havlik BSBA '08

Mike Havlik, following his graduation from Thomas Edison State College, spent four years working in the financial services industry. He credits much of his success in law school to the skillset he acquired through the College, allowing him the ability to learn how to learn. Havlik anticipates graduating from law school at the University of Colorado this year. Following his law school graduation, Havlik looks forward to working for Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP in Denver, Colo.



## Susan Moore Jordan BA '86

Susan Moore Jordan has published a third novel, *You Are My Song*, to go with two previous titles in her "musical trilogy," *Eli's Heart* and *How I Grew Up*. All three books are set in the '50s and '60s, and are drawn from her personal experience in music and theater. Jordan's novels are inspired by real people she has encountered and feature performers whose dedication to music helps them overcome life-and-death crises. She is a longtime voice teacher and stage director. A native of Oak Ridge, Tenn., Jordan earned a certificate in vocal music and church music at The Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she was a vocal performance major. While based in Cincinnati, she also served on the administrative staff of the Edgecliff Academy of Fine Arts and the Cincinnati Shakespeare Festival. Jordan's novels are available through Amazon and are featured on [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com) and [www.selfpublishersshowcase.com](http://www.selfpublishersshowcase.com).



Photo Credit: Amy Rau

## Dr. Terry Drew Karanen BA '08

Dr. Terry Drew Karanen's newest book, *How to Find Your Vision and Get a Life! Using a vision and mission to create a life worth living* was released in June. The book takes the reader step-by-step through the process of creating personal vision and mission statements – the foundation necessary to accomplish goals. It is now available through bookstores as well as online in soft cover or eBook format.

Thomas Edison State College alumni, students, mentors and supporters are invited to keep up-to-date and informed on the College's latest news and events. Read our blog at [www.tesc.edu/blog](http://www.tesc.edu/blog) and visit our social network sites to follow, friend or become a fan. [www.tesc.edu/getconnected](http://www.tesc.edu/getconnected)

**Delicia Dawn Kouzeva (Lewis) BA '01**

Delicia Dawn Kouzeva will release a new book in September 2015, titled *American Woman is Silent No More*. The release of Kouzeva's book is appropriately timed for the beginning of Domestic Violence Awareness month in October. Lewis is an American Christian author and activist for women's and children's rights, and the awareness of domestic violence and sex based crimes against humanity in Bulgaria.

**Janice Kovach BSBA '01**

Janice Kovach spoke at TEDxJerseyCity in the fall of 2014 exposing the political correctness that prevents many from understanding and addressing certain human rights issues, particularly those related to violence against women and girls. Kovach also spoke in July 2015, at the Day of Memory Conference, in London, remembering and honoring the victims and survivors of honor killings across the globe.



**Byron McKenzie AAS '04**

Byron McKenzie is a retired Navy chief petty officer who currently works as a medical credentialing specialist at Naval Health Clinic New England. In January, McKenzie completed a Master of Science in Leadership degree and a Graduate Certificate in Project Management from Boston University.

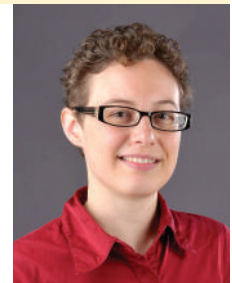


**Maria Pereira BSBA '07**

Maria Elizabeth Frazao Pereira has been brought on by *Luso-Americano* newspaper as a writer, concentrating on the Palm Coast region of Florida. Pereira is also a regular contributor to the *Portuguese Times* and *The Palm Coast Observer*.

**Heather Stauffer BA '05**

Heather Stauffer won five honors in the category of weekly publications with circulation of 5,000 to 9,999 at the Keystone Press Awards in a Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation competition. For her work at the *Central Penn Business Journal*, Stauffer won a first place award in the special project category for "Faith in your business," second place in investigative reporting for "What do our public company leaders make?," second place in the business or consumer story category for "How Martin's got to Dubai," an honorable mention in the personality profile category for "Different spheres, same team" and an honorable mention in the news beat reporting category for healthcare coverage.



**Joshua Strickler BA '05**

Joshua Strickler was chosen as one of 15 students to receive a 2015 Steinman Fellowship. Awarded by The John Frederick Steinman Foundation, these fellowships are offered to those students who are currently pursuing advanced degrees in mental health fields including psychiatry, psychology and social work. Strickler is working toward a Doctor of Psychology degree in clinical psychology at Immaculata University.



**Matthew Quirk BA '04**

Matthew Quirk published his mobile app Philly Sports This Week, which provides the schedules for the six major professional Philadelphia sports teams. It is available on the Apple App Store, Android's Google Play and Windows Phone Store. Quirk is a software engineer and, since 2002, has held various computer-programming positions for companies in the Philadelphia, Pa., area.

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# ALUMNI AND STUDENT NETWORKING EVENTS

*tesc.edu/alumni*events

## SEPTEMBER

16 > Wine, Beer and Cheese Pairing  
Princeton, NJ

26 > 43rd Commencement and  
Commencement Alumni Dinner  
Trenton, NJ

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## OCTOBER

7 > New York, NY

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## NOVEMBER

5 > New Jersey Education Association  
Atlantic City, NJ

18 > New Jersey League of Municipalities  
Atlantic City, NJ

## SAVE THE DATE

Thomas Edison State College Foundation's  
2015 Grande Ball

> Saturday, Oct. 24  
Greenacres Country Club, Lawrenceville, NJ



CONNECT WITH US!



For more information about these events or having an event near you,  
contact the Office of Alumni Affairs at (609) 633-8592 or [alumni@tesc.edu](mailto:alumni@tesc.edu).