

FALL 2008

Invention

THE MAGAZINE OF THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

You Can Hear Her Now!

Christine Baron '07



- ▶ College Receives Federal Grant to Continue Minority Nurse Educator Program
- ▶ Alumni Profile: Lt. Kenneth E. Wuerker '07
- ▶ Continuing Studies: Kathy Matthews and Joan O'Donnell



3



4



6



IO

Contents

FALL 2008



1 Message from the President

College News:

- 2 ▶ Paralegal Studies Programs Join *New York Times* Knowledge Network
- ▶ College Launches Workforce Career Coach Certificate
- 3 ▶ College Joins Statewide Advocacy Effort
- ▶ New Jersey State Librarian Receives National Honor

4 Alumni Profile:

- ▶ Utility Man: Lt. Kenneth E. Wuerker '07

6 Cover Story:

- ▶ Christine Baron '07: You Can Hear Her Now!

10 Continuing Studies:

- ▶ Their Personal Best: Kathy Matthews and Joan O'Donnell

12 College News:

- ▶ College Receives \$700,000 to Continue Minority Nurse Educator Effort

Inside Back Cover

Applause, Applause:

- ▶ Alumni News

Back Cover

College News:

- ▶ Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation Establishes Scholarship Fund



Cover Story: **6**
Christine Baron '07

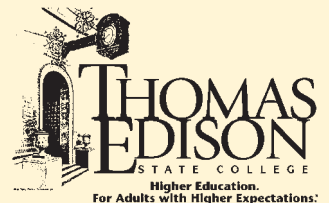
Invention is published by
Thomas Edison State College

DR. GEORGE A. PRUITT
President

JOE GUZZARDO
Editor

CHRIS MILLER
Art Director

Contributors:
KELLY SACCOMANNO
LINDA SOLTIS





Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,

The great dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov said, "I do not try to dance better than anyone else. I only try to dance better than myself."

This issue of *Invention* honors people whose accomplishments reflect that idea of self-improvement, which is an aspiration that many of our students and alumni share.

Christine Baron '07, is president of the Philadelphia Tri-State Region for Verizon Wireless, where she is responsible for a \$2 billion-a-year operation in one of the country's most competitive markets. In this issue, Baron describes how Thomas Edison State College helped her achieve a personal goal she had long wanted to reach.

Another alumna featured in this edition of *Invention* is Lt. Kenneth Wuerker '07, who completed his degree while serving with the New Jersey National Guard in Iraq. Lt. Wuerker tells us how the College enabled him to make good use of his military benefits and prepare for professional advancement back in the states.

We also meet Kathy Matthews and Joan O'Donnell, teachers at Union Catholic High School, who recently completed the College's professional certificate in Personal Fitness Training. These veteran educators explain that they were inspired to complete the certificate in order to become better teachers.

We are honored to serve individuals like these, who constantly seek to improve themselves, regardless of the success they have achieved in their chosen fields.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Invention*.

Sincerely,

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

Dr. George A. Pruitt
President

Paralegal Studies Programs Join *New York Times* Knowledge Network

Thomas Edison State College's professional certificate in Paralegal Studies and Nurse Paralegal Studies are now being offered through the *New York Times* Knowledge Network, a new initiative sponsored by the *New York Times* designed to bring engaging online learning programs to a wider audience.

"We are thrilled that our cutting edge, technologically driven courses will

now be enriched with print and media content from the pages and archives of the *New York Times*, including participation by some of the *Times*' leading writers and reporters," said William J. Mulkeen, the College's director of Paralegal Studies.

Thomas Edison State College joins several prestigious institutions from around the country that have been selected to participate in the network,

including Stanford University, New York University, Towson University, Mount Holyoke College and Arizona State University.

For more information, visit www.nytimesknownow.com.

The *New York Times*
**Knowledge
Network**



College Launches Workforce Career Coach Facilitator Certificate

The School of Professional and Continuing Studies at Thomas Edison State College has launched its latest certificate program, which focuses on workforce career coaching and satisfies the training requirement for a prestigious international career development credential.

The College's new Workforce Career Coach Facilitator professional certificate is a 26-week online program intended for workforce, career, human resources, out-placement and education professionals who want to enhance their opportunities for personal career advancement by improving the skills needed to help others find jobs and careers. The certificate is approved by the Center

for Credentialing & Education to satisfy the training requirement for earning the international Global Career Development Facilitator credential.

"Our new Workforce Career Coach Facilitator certificate is designed to help professionals in a wide range of industries gain the skills needed to work with diverse populations who need assistance in making career decisions," said Dr. David M. Grossman, vice provost and dean of the School of Professional and Continuing Studies.

To register or for more information, visit www.tesc.edu/spcs, or contact the College at spcs@tesc.edu.

College Joins Statewide Advocacy Effort

Thomas Edison State College has joined its eight sister public institutions of higher learning in New Jersey to launch a major statewide campaign, "Nine Strong for a Stronger New Jersey," to underscore the collective value and critical role of the state colleges and universities.

As part of this effort, the college and university presidents signed a pledge expanding their commitment to educating the next generation of the state's students. The institutions, including Thomas Edison State College, The College of New Jersey, Kean University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Richard Stockton College, Rowan University and William Paterson University, represent nearly half of all students who attend a four-year college or university in New Jersey.

The expanded commitment is complemented by the New Jersey College Promise, a statewide advocacy campaign to build public support for higher education that is

being coordinated by the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities.

"Over the past several years, the state of New Jersey has deeply cut its support for public higher education to the level that was provided 10 years ago, at a time when the College had only half as many students enrolled as it does today," said Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College. "Despite these cuts, Thomas Edison State College continues to be one of the best institutions of its kind in the country. However, this ongoing lack of state support for public higher education threatens the future economy of New Jersey and the quality of life of our citizens."

The College is inviting its alumni and supporters to reach out to their elected representatives to express their views on the issue of supporting public higher education. To learn more about becoming an advocate, please visit the College Web site at www.tesc.edu/alumni or visit www.njcollegepromise.com.



New Jersey State Librarian Receives National Honor

New Jersey State Librarian Norma E. Blake has been named 2008 Librarian of the Year by the national publication, *Library Journal*.

"We are all incredibly proud of what Norma has accomplished, and are honored that she has been recognized nationally for her excellent work," said Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College.

Blake was selected due to her leadership in developing new programs that build collaborations among various communities to extend and expand library services in New Jersey and beyond. The New Jersey State Library is an affiliate of Thomas Edison State College and provides many services to the College's students.

"This award is all about role models, and Norma Blake is a model for state librarians and librarians everywhere. She has energized librarians throughout the state, empowering them to develop and deliver better library services and marketing those services to New Jersey residents," said *Library Journal* Editor-in-Chief Francine Fialkoff.



Dr. George A. Pruitt (center), president of Thomas Edison State College, is flanked by college presidents from New Jersey's senior public colleges and universities as he signs the Nine Strong for a Stronger New Jersey pledge.

Utility Man

*Completing a Bachelor's Degree
During a Tour of Duty*



Photo courtesy of Lt. Hugh Dixon and Lt. Kenneth Wuerker.

Lt. Kenneth Wuerker (left) with Troop Commander Capt. Kevin Welsh, at Camp Anaconda, Balad, Iraq, shortly after Wuerker completed his degree.

Lt. Kenneth E. Wuerker

Alumni Profile

Earning a college degree is demanding enough, but doing it while stationed in a combat zone is even more challenging. Just ask New Jersey Army National Guard Lt. Kenneth E. Wuerker.

Wuerker, who was deployed with the 1/34th BCT from Minnesota since October 2005, completed his Thomas Edison State College degree while serving in Iraq. He was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in March 2007.

Wuerker said Thomas Edison State College's advisors were helpful every step of the way — including guiding him through transferring credits from Atlantic Cape Community College, documenting military credits and selecting a course of study that was made easier through correspondence.

"I selected TECEP® courses, which allowed me to read and study and read some more," said Wuerker, who came home from Iraq with C Troop 5-117 CAV from Woodstown, N.J., in July 2007. "That allowed me the freedom to complete each course at my own pace and, being overseas, my time was never so structured that I could dedicate a specific time to be online and meet a mandatory deadline. The TECEP® courses require commitment and discipline and, of all the things I have gained from the military, those are two."

Wuerker, who lives in Burleigh, N.J., has been a utility worker at Cape May County Municipal Utilities Authority (CMCMUA) since 2002. He also owned a vineyard and winery with his brother, Todd, in Rio Grande, N.J., before deploying to Iraq.

"My family has been in agriculture for more than 70 years," Wuerker explained. "I have two brothers. My younger brother says he is the third generation of agricultural engineers (it's not farming anymore) and my older brother is a helicopter pilot."

Wuerker, who resumed his position at CMCMUA upon returning from deployment, said he was pleased to find that his degree will help him further his career.

"One of my supervisors informed me that my degree made me eligible to take the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Waste Water Operators S-1 Exam without having to take a six month operators course, which is usually

mandatory for personnel seeking the license," he said. "However, I needed to study for the test, which I did, just like preparing for the TECEP®s. I studied for one month, reading the same manuals used in the Waste Water Operators' class and passed with an 86 percent when some said it could not be done. I am now looking to make advancements here within the MUA."

Like many military students, Wuerker learned about Thomas Edison State College through the military education advisor. He enrolled in the College's Military Degree Completion Program, which accommodates the special needs of military personnel, whose location, relocation and time constraints make traditional college attendance difficult — if not impossible.

"I had spoken to many peers who completed their degrees through other distance learning schools, but with Thomas Edison State College being a state institution, I qualified for the National Guard's free tuition program," he said. "There were many factors that helped lead me to pursue my BA degree: career advancement in the military, civilian marketability, and being the first in my family to receive a degree."

Wuerker, who left active duty with the Army after he returned from Operation Desert Storm in 1991, entered directly into the New Jersey Army National Guard. August marked his 20th year of military service, and he assumed Company Command of his new unit, HHC 119th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB) in March 2008 and will be getting promoted to Captain within a few months.

During those 20 years of service, Wuerker has been awarded a distinguished list of medals, ribbons, badges and certificates to include the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in Iraq, two Army Commendation Medals, seven Army Achievement Medals and the Army's Excellence in Competition Badge. Now he adds another notable prize to that list — his Thomas Edison State College degree.

"Earning my BA degree was an exciting moment and completing it in Iraq makes it that much more memorable," said Wuerker. "It is a milestone that I will cherish, and having been able to complete it through a state institution was very rewarding."

“Earning my BA degree was an exciting moment and completing it in Iraq makes it that much more memorable. It is a milestone that I will cherish, and having been able to complete it through a state institution was very rewarding.”

Working to Serve and Connect

CHRISTINE BARON '07

Christine Baron does not live with loose ends. She cannot afford to. Baron '07, is charged with overseeing a \$2 billion-a-year operation and more than 2,000 employees for one of the nation's leading wireless providers in one of the country's most competitive markets.

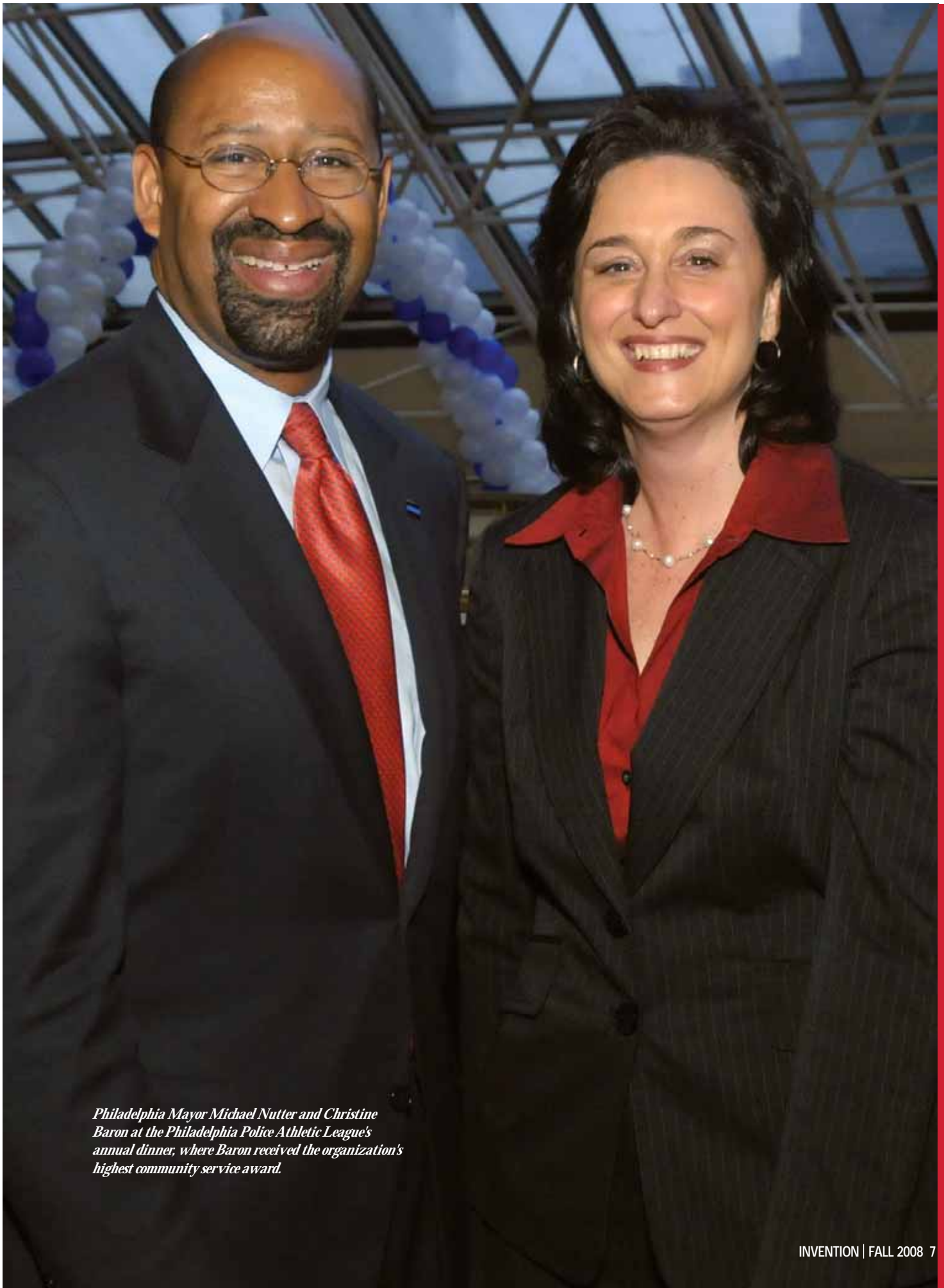
"I pride myself on finishing everything I've started and I don't accept mediocrity when it comes to my personal goals," said Baron, president of the Philadelphia Tri-State Region for Verizon Wireless. Under her leadership, more than \$1.5 billion has been infused into the company's Philadelphia Tri-State regional network.

"I recognized, in spite of my success, not completing my college degree was still an open door that I wanted to close," said Baron, who was just eight courses shy of the necessary college credits. With many of the positions in her company requiring a baccalaureate degree, Baron felt that the sterling example she set for her staff should include crossing the academic finish line herself.

She enlisted the help of Verizon Wireless' human resources department in selecting the right institution. "The human resources director provided me with a list of potential institutions where I could pursue my degree. Ultimately, Thomas Edison State College was the best fit among the options," said Baron, who completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in 2007.

Due to an impressive amount of college-level knowledge acquired through her work, the College's Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program was a good match. "PLA attracted me most because I was able to clearly demonstrate that my career experience translated to academic credits," Baron said.

Baron is responsible for business sales of the company's corporate and government accounts, consumer sales, customer service, 133 company-owned retail stores and kiosks, the indirect and national retail distribution in the region as well as continuous expansion of the company's wireless communications throughout central and eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware and southern New Jersey.



Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and Christine Baron at the Philadelphia Police Athletic League's annual dinner, where Baron received the organization's highest community service award.

"We've aggressively brought services like wireless broadband, GPS turn-by-turn navigation and television-over-cell-phone to our customers," she said. "Our V CAST service, which gives our customers tons of multimedia content like video clips, the ability to download music over-the-air right to their cell phones, and even 3-D games, is a very cool product that we've also delivered to our market."

In addition to her personal and professional accomplishments, Baron ardently supports community relations endeavors in the region and has spearheaded the Verizon Wireless



Christine Baron promoting the Verizon Wireless Hopeline® program, which assists domestic violence survivors.

earned her praise from the company.

"Chris' commitment to our business, her commitment to community service, and to always doing the right thing for the right reason — no matter what the challenges — is what defines her leadership," said Jack Plating, executive vice president and chief operating officer for Verizon Wireless.

Baron credits her parents for setting the stage. "My mom and dad, Dianne and Skip Whelan, taught us to help others before ourselves — and that will come back to you in the long run," she said.



Christine Baron with her parents, Dianne and Skip Whelan, who taught her the importance of giving back to the community.



Christine Baron with former Philadelphia Eagle Vince Papale, whose story was told in the 2006 Walt Disney motion picture "Invincible."



Vice President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr., with Christine Baron at a YWCA of Delaware event promoting domestic violence prevention.

Hopeline® program, which assists domestic violence survivors — providing them with free wireless phones and airtime, and its Packs for Pride program, an annual initiative organized by Verizon Wireless' Philadelphia region employees that has provided more than 2,600 backpacks filled with toys, clothes and personal care items to children living in domestic violence shelters in the area.

Baron is also a passionate supporter of the Philadelphia Police Athletic League (PAL), and has served as a board member since 2005 and a PAL

Commissioner's Club member since 2003. The organization provides free educational, athletic and cultural after-school and summer programs in a nurturing and safe environment.

"I am a major supporter of PAL initiatives because they are making a significant and positive difference in the lives of 26,000 young people across the city of Philadelphia," said Baron, who recently received the organization's highest community service award for her commitment and longstanding contributions to PAL.

Baron's efforts on behalf of Verizon Wireless and the community have

When asked what advice she'd like to impart to adult learners considering a return to college, Baron said working adults should have confidence in their ability to achieve their goals.

"Great leaders are consistently focused on the fundamentals — the basics — and on flawless execution and continuous improvement," she said. "Leadership is the art of setting goals and when you achieve them, raising the bar even higher. Most importantly, leaders never compromise their integrity."

“ Great leaders are consistently focused on the fundamentals – the basics – and on flawless execution and continuous improvement. ”





(from left) Joan O'Donnell and Kathy Matthews

Continuing Studies

THEIR

Personal

BEST

TWO HIGH SCHOOL COACHES TEAM UP FOR A DIFFERENT KIND OF VICTORY

Most high school coaches can claim that collaboration yields positive results, but one coach who just celebrated a 600th career victory can substantiate it.

Kathy Matthews, a physical education teacher and girls' basketball coach at Union Catholic High School in Scotch Plains, N.J., recently became one of only five coaches in New Jersey high school girls' basketball history to earn such a distinction.

But her skill as a team player goes beyond the court.

Matthews, and Joan O'Donnell, a fellow physical education teacher at Union Catholic, decided to take their expertise to the next level – together – by enrolling in Thomas Edison State College's professional certificate in Professional Fitness Training, offered through the School of Professional and Continuing Studies.

"We may be seasoned educators but learning is an ongoing process," said Matthews, who has been teaching since 1977. "The courses in the program refreshed my knowledge of anatomy, kinesiology and exercise physiology and familiarized me with current research and developments in the field. There was constant brainstorming between Joan and me, especially when dealing with discussion questions, reading assignments and projects."

O'Donnell, herself with 24 years of teaching experience, said that she and her colleagues are often persuaded by senior school administrators to continue their education beyond the baccalaureate level.

"I may pursue my master's degree at some point, but because I teach full time, run group exercise classes at the YMCA four days a week, and am busy raising two teenagers – taking the Professional Certificate Program made more sense from an efficiency standpoint," noted O'Donnell. "The program was rigorous but incorporated the aspects that I love – exercise,

nutrition and strength training – with a medically-based fitness model that I could apply immediately to our curriculum."

The two credit their principal, Sister Percylee Hart, who offered the school's moral and financial support throughout their endeavor. She recognized a need for a program that would benefit not only Union Catholic's students, but the teaching staff as well.

"Our personal fitness training courses enabled us to effectively work with students and colleagues toward physical fitness and weight loss goals," said O'Donnell. "This past February we got the entire school involved with a health and wellness week. Staff and students were given pedometers to track their activity. We also instituted a healthy eating program and held exercise classes after school for students. We concluded the week with teachers from an array of curriculum teaching different aspects of health. It was a huge success and we are planning an even bigger week for this school year."

Both plan to continue to utilize their knowledge to meet the needs of Union Catholic's students by offering them an expanding variety of activities that they will enjoy and will benefit them both physically and emotionally.

"I am the Health and Physical Education curriculum specialist at the school and will utilize the knowledge I've gained to incorporate customized fitness regimens into our curriculum," said Matthews. "The trend in physical education is toward personal fitness. Emerging health issues such as obesity and diabetes in young children are also reasons why we are focusing on ways to educate our students on how to live healthier lives."

For more information on Professional Fitness Training and other professional certificates offered at Thomas Edison State College, visit www.tesc.edu/spcs.

College Receives \$700,000 to Continue Minority Nurse Educator Effort

A pioneering initiative at Thomas Edison State College to recruit and prepare minority nurse educators in online education and develop a collaborative network of diverse nurse faculty members to enhance nursing programs nationwide has recently been re-funded by the federal government.



The School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College has received a three-year \$711,046 grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that funds expansion of the minority nurse education pilot program the school developed in 2005. Since 2005, the school has recruited and prepared more than 50 minority nurse educators with online pedagogical skills, who have introduced and expanded online education programs at their local institutions.

"We are honored that HRSA sees value in the Minority Nurse Educator program we started in 2005," said Susan O'Brien, EdD, RN, dean of the School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College. "We anticipate that the number of nursing students and nursing schools impacted by this program will continue to increase exponentially as the minority nurse educators recruited and educated through this grant utilize and share their online skills at institutions around the country."

Compounding the national nursing shortage crisis is a national shortage of nurse educators. This shortage is the leading reason that thousands of qualified candidates are turned away from nursing schools every year.

The grant was awarded by HRSA's Nurse Education Practice and Retention Program, Division of Nursing, Bureau of Health Professions. Eligible nurse educators interested in the program at Thomas Edison State College may contact Jovita Solomon-Duarte, RN, MSN, CCRN, diversity coordinator for the School of Nursing, at nursing@tesc.edu, or visit www.tesc.edu/nursingdiversity.

Brian Bovyn BSBS '08

Brian Bovyn, the emergency services supervisor of the Manchester, N.H., Police Department 911 Communications Center, was recently assigned to an Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) assessor team, which was sent to review the state of Ohio's emergency management program. A voluntary accrediting organization, EMAP assesses the effectiveness of emergency management and homeland security programs across the nation. Bovyn belongs to the International Association of Emergency Managers and is a subject matter expert for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Higher Education Project.

Beth Briegel BSBA '00

Beth Briegel has formed her own professional organizing firm, Align Organizing, LLC, working in the Mercer County, N.J., and Bucks County, Pa. areas. The company provides services to allow individuals and small businesses to simplify their lives and become more productive as well as offering daily money management services. Briegel remarked, "My experience at Thomas Edison State College taught me perseverance and to follow my dreams."

Kerry K.H. Johanson BA '01

Kerry K.H. Johanson has been named chair of the Department of Fine & Performing Arts at Westfield High School in Chantilly, Va. Within the 25-year gap between her junior year at The University of Michigan and her senior year at Thomas Edison State College, Johanson raised her family of five children, and has since earned a master's degree in art from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2007. In addition to her leadership role at Westfield High School, Johnson also teaches Advanced Placement Art History, Advanced Computer Graphics and Animation. Her husband, Walker, noted, "Needless to say, it was meeting me back in 1974 that caused her to drop out of school with only about 20 credits left to graduate. When our youngest got into high school, we investigated options for her to go back and finish her undergraduate degree... and we were thrilled to have found Thomas Edison State College, which permitted her to do so... in a timely and student-friendly manner, and at a relatively low cost. We both thank you!"

G. Paul Johnson BA '04

G. Paul Johnson recently finished his MBA from Georgia College & State University. Johnson worked full time at Macon State College while completing his master's degree. He remarked, "I am proud to be a Thomas Edison State College grad. My BA degree enabled me to get my job at Macon State College in 2004. Now I look forward to applying what I learned through my MBA program."



Wendy (Dondo) Lanski MSM '08

Wendy Dondo was married to Jerry Lanski on Sept. 28, 2008, in Totowa, N.J.

Diana MacIntosh BSAST '03

Diana MacIntosh, a licensed professional counselor, recently opened a second office for her private practice in Freehold, N.J. MacIntosh earned a master's degree in counseling psychology from Georgian Court University in 2000 and began a private practice specializing in counseling women in 2005.

Timothy J. McManus BSAST '03

Timothy J. McManus recently graduated with a Master of Arts in Pastoral Liturgy and Music from St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind.

Barbara McPherson BA '02

Barbara McPherson founded Granny Basketball, a gentle game for women over 50, in Iowa in 2005 after collaborating on the book *Courting Girls: Reflections of a girls' high school basketball coach*. The grannies follow 1920s women's basketball rules including no running, jumping or physical contact. Teams wear vintage costumes consisting of bloomers, middie blouses and long stockings. In addition to league games, the grannies play for various charities. The first National Granny Basketball Tournament was held in Minneapolis on June 21, 2008. Granny Basketball has been featured on NBC News, CBS News and in *The New York Times* as well as in many other local and regional media.



Kristalynn M. Roehrig BA '04

Kristalynn M. Roehrig recently completed her PhD in Education from Capella University in Minneapolis with a specialization in instructional design for online-learning. Roehrig, who also completed her Master of Divinity degree from Evangelical Theological Seminary in Myerstown, Pa., is an ordained minister with the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference since 2003. She is currently pursuing her goal of becoming an online adjunct.

James J. Talerico BSBA '95

James J. Talerico Jr., the owner of Greater Prairie Business Consulting located in Dallas, Texas, recently appeared as a panel guest on MSNBC's "Your Business" segment entitled "When to Sell Your Business." Over the last 12 months his client success stories have been reported in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Chicago Daily Herald* and *Dallas Business Journal*.



Please tell us about your...

- ▶ New Job
- ▶ Promotion
- ▶ Award
- ▶ Marriage
- ▶ Baby
- ▶ Career Switch

If it's news to you, it's news to us!

We invite you as a member of our family of Thomas Edison State College alumni to tell us about the exciting things happening in your life. Let us know what's new with you since you graduated from the College or how your experience at the College changed your life, and we may include your updates in a future issue of *Invention*.

To contact us, please fill out the form below and mail it to: Thomas Edison State College, *Invention* Editor, 101 W. State St., Trenton, NJ 08608-1176; fax it to (609) 777-1894; or e-mail your good news to invention@tesc.edu. You may include photos to accompany your news. Items will be published as space permits.

Name _____

Former/Maiden Name _____

Company _____ Title _____

Home Address _____

Check here if this is a new address.

City, State, Zip _____

Day Phone () _____

Evening Phone () _____

E-mail Address _____

Check here if this is a new e-mail address.

Class Year _____ Degree _____

Information for *Invention*: _____

Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation Establishes New Scholarship at Thomas Edison State College for Students with Spinal Cord Injuries

COLLEGE'S UNIQUE FORMAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH SPINAL CORD INJURIES.

The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation has established a new scholarship fund at Thomas Edison State College that enables students with spinal cord injuries to take advantage of the College's unique ability to deliver courses wherever a student needs them.

The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation, which is dedicated to helping individuals overcome spinal cord injuries and other neurological disorders, established the scholarship with a \$10,000 gift to the Thomas Edison State College Foundation, leveraging the College's course delivery format, which meets the needs of people who are paralyzed.

"While many institutions are accessible, maneuvering a campus can be problematic for a person using a wheelchair during inclement weather or simply trying to get from the parking lot to a class on the third floor," said Ida Cahill, president and CEO of the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation. "It is much easier for paralyzed students to participate in online classes or to earn credits through testing or prior learning assessment."

Cahill said the foundation selected Thomas Edison State College for the scholarship due to its reputation as a national leader in providing distance education for adults and because its programs are completely accessible to individuals who are paralyzed.

"We are honored to partner with the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation to help individuals with spinal cord injuries build better lives," said Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas



Ida Cahill, president and CEO of the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation, with Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College. The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation has donated \$10,000 to fund a scholarship at Thomas Edison State College for students with spinal cord injuries.

Edison State College. "By leveraging our core competencies in distance education, we hope to empower those affected by paralysis by providing them with educational opportunities."



Cahill said spinal cord injuries have an impact both on an individual and his or her family, and often the biggest challenge is financial because the person injured cannot return to work. Helping people with spinal cord injuries prepare for a new career through education helps families facing spinal cord injuries meet this challenge, she said.

"We feel it is important to provide real tools that people with spinal cord injuries can use to help them lead productive and satisfying lives," Cahill said. "Our goal is not just to have people complete their education, which we certainly hope they do, but more importantly have them take control of their lives knowing they have a future."

For more information about scholarships available for students at Thomas Edison State College, visit www.tesc.edu/scholarships.