

**NEUMANN
UNIVERSITY**

SUMMER 2022
Vol. 50, No. 2

NEUMANN

COMMENCEMENT 2022

Dr. Chris Domes Congratulates Ariana Peña

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is coming to
a city near you!



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A magazine for
NEUMANN UNIVERSITY
alumni, family and friends

SUMMER 2022 Vol. 50, No. 2

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ON THE COVER:

*Dr. Chris Domes at graduation with Ariana Peña,
who played volleyball for four years, was the
president of the university's Student-Athlete
Advisory Committee and served on the
NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.*

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GO GREEN ►

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A photograph of a middle-aged couple smiling and embracing outdoors. The man is on the left, wearing a yellow shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a denim jacket over a patterned top. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a building.

Gifts

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“What can stop you if
a global pandemic could not?”

FROM THE PRESIDENT

To our alumni and friends,

“What can stop you if a global pandemic could not?” commencement speaker John R. McConnell asked the Neumann University class of 2022. McConnell, founder and president emeritus of Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School, was asking a rhetorical question and did not expect an answer. But he got one.

“Nothing!” shouted one of the graduates, a response that elicited thunderous applause from the 2,000 people in the audience.

The exchange captured the resilience of our students, who persevered and succeeded despite the challenges of a historic health crisis. The moment was one highlight of an exciting day as Neumann University awarded doctoral, master’s, and bachelor’s degrees to 364 students at two ceremonies in the Mirenda Center on Saturday, May 14.

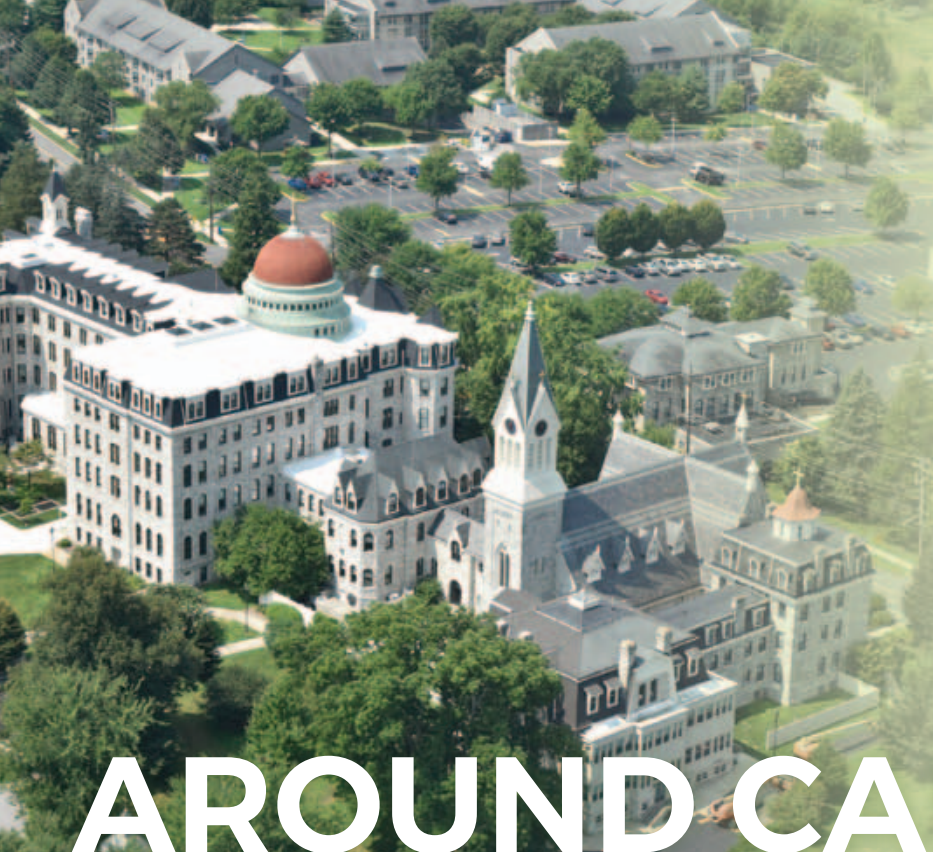
This issue of *Accent* chronicles those Commencement Exercises as well as other university achievements during the spring semester. Our men’s basketball team won the Atlantic East Conference championship. Players Jalen Vaughns and Tony James took home Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year honors, and Jim Rullo was named AEC Coach of the Year.

A related story about the benefits of Division III athletics recognizes the legacy of Coach Len Schuler, who worked on campus for 38 years and passed away in February. Coach Schuler influenced thousands of students, and his compassionate approach will be missed.

This edition also explains a creative and critically important collaboration between Athletics and our Counseling Center for Wellness. The partnership includes Wellness Wednesdays, when members of the university’s counseling staff mix and mingle with team members to make students aware that counseling is available on campus and give students a point of contact with the Counseling Center.

Friends and alumni can learn more about these events and university plans for the future by joining me for friendly conversation as I travel up and down the East Coast this summer and fall. Dates and locations for this initiative, called On the Road with NU, are available at www.neumann.edu/ontheroad. Events will be added throughout the summer, so visit often to find a location near you.

Dr. Chris Everett Domes
President



37 Students to Live in Convent this Fall

Thirty-seven students will move into Our Lady of Angels Convent this fall and become the first contingent of undergraduates to call the historic building their campus home. The students will live on the second and third floors of the former Franciscan Spiritual Center, recently named Glen Riddle Hall, in double occupancy rooms, each with its own bath. Male and female students will live on each floor in separate suites.

First-year honors program students will live on the third floor while the second floor is designated for a health and wellness intentional living and learning community. The latter group will have access to outcomes-based extracurricular activities, focused on physical, mental, and financial health. The basement and first floor of the new residential wing will be used for activities and programs in 2022-23. The fourth floor will remain unoccupied for the coming year.

AROUND CAMPUS

MS in Cybersecurity Launches this Fall

Neumann will introduce a master's degree in Cybersecurity this fall. The program is guided by Dr. Thomas Dodds, who used to work at Microsoft as an architectural consultant, the highest-level advisor position at the corporation. Dodds says Neumann's program will help students "obtain the advanced, hands-on expertise required to succeed in today's Security Operations Centers."

The Cybersecurity program requires 30 credits and can be completed in two years or less, offered via online, in-class, and hybrid formats to accommodate working professionals. Students will master skills by using real-world hacking lab scenarios and simulations in NU's state-of-the-art data center, which provides access to the latest server and infrastructure technologies.

CEO of *Ebony* and *Jet* Delivers Keynote ►

Michele Thornton Ghee, CEO of *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines and digital platforms, delivered the keynote address during an April 2 conference that was sponsored by Neumann's Center for Leadership. The event was designed to assist professionals in building a personal brand and improving the skills necessary for career success.

Ghee has generated more than one billion dollars in revenue while working for some of the most powerful media companies in the world, including The Weather Channel, CNN, A&E, The History Channel, and BET Networks.



Alumna Wins Best Celebrity Interview Award

Amanda Cunningham, who graduated in December of 2021, won the 2022 Intercollegiate Broadcasting Systems Award for Best Celebrity Interview. IBS announced the results of the national competition in March. Paired with a student from Montclair State University, Cunningham interviewed "Weird Al" Yankovic, a comedian best known for his song parodies, during College Radio Day last October.

A communications and digital media major, Cunningham landed a job in her field before graduating. She works for the Beasley Media Group as a general engineer at Philadelphia radio stations like WMMR 93.3 and The Fanatic 97.5.

U.S. News Ranks Online Bachelor's Degree

In its latest rankings, *U.S. News* leaves no doubt about Neumann's online bachelor's degree program, which it ranks among the top 100 in the country, regardless of college size or classification. The magazine's analysis, released on January 25, named Neumann's program as #74 nationwide and #4 in Pennsylvania.

According to the magazine, to assess online degree programs, "*U.S. News* chose factors that weigh how these programs are being delivered and their effectiveness at awarding affordable degrees in a reasonable amount of time." Neumann offers two online bachelor's degree programs: the BS in Business and Organizational Studies and the BS in Public Safety Administration.

Nursing Major Organizes Bone Marrow Drive

When she was a 16-year-old student at Chichester High School, Angela Coleman discovered that she had a rare disease and needed a bone marrow transplant. Unable to find a matching donor, she turned to immunosuppressant therapy, an alternative treatment that was successful for her; however, she never forgot the anguish of not finding a matching bone marrow donor.

On March 9, Coleman, a senior nursing major, organized an on-campus bone marrow donor drive (requiring just a quick cheek swab) and recruited 38 students to register for the national donor database sponsored by the Be The Match organization.



White House Rep Discusses Nuclear Threats

Regina Galer, the National Security Council Director for Weapons of Mass Destruction and Counterterrorism, visited campus on February 18 to speak to students about "Today's nuclear threats: what they are, how we got here, and what can be done."

Rina Keller, professor of Social Work and chair of the campus Civic Engagement Committee, believes that students deserve the opportunity to learn about this critical topic from an expert. "Nuclear proliferation remains a threat to the nation's security," she explains, "and the committee determined a need to engage and equip students with information to facilitate critical thinking about this issue."



Going Green with New Trash Contractor

In March, Neumann hired a new waste management contractor, J.P. Mascaro and Sons, which uses technologies, practices, and facilities that better align with the university's efforts on sustainability. Benefits include eliminating the burning of trash and increasing the rate and tonnage of recyclable materials while decreasing the overall amount of waste and the campus carbon footprint.

"We did an RFP months ago to find options to deliver Neumann's trash away from the Covanta incinerator in Chester," said Gene McWilliams, vice president for finance and administration. "We have decided as a university that we are not in favor of having our trash burned in Chester, PA."



McDermott's Best-Selling Novel

Adjunct professor Sara McDermott, an accomplished screenwriter, is now a best-selling author. Her debut novel, *Wolves at Night*, hit the Amazon best-seller lists in the United States and Canada. The book is a thrilling tale of survival, mistrust, and self-growth.

"It's a thriller set in the Alaskan wilderness. The book deals quite a bit with abusive relationships, and one of the goals is to really empower people who've had this experience," McDermott explains. She has taught English and scriptwriting at Neumann since 2006 and has had two screenplays optioned (purchased).



Neumann Hosts First College Fair

Neumann's Admission staff regularly attends a slew of college fairs in many states, but this spring, they hosted the university's first college fair on campus. On March 31, NU showcased more than 60 colleges and universities for hundreds of students and their families.

The fair had two sessions: 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. More than 700 students from 15 high schools attended during the day. Between the day and evening sessions, more than 1,000 students and families from across the region attended the event.

AROUND CAMPUS



Joining the Pope's Synod

In July 2021, Pope Francis invited the entire church to participate in a process entitled "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission." This synod is a global effort, and the Pope has specifically recognized the role of colleges and universities in this two-year process. It encourages Catholics to encounter and listen to one another.

In the spring of 2022, along with other colleges in the area, Neumann held "listening meetings" to help include college students in the synodal process. The goal of these sessions was to gather student input, which will be incorporated into reports that will be presented to the synod in the fall of 2023.

Unique Courses in Home Health Care

The demand for at-home health care has ramped up during the pandemic. To address this need, Neumann now offers the only nursing courses in the nation that focus specifically on home health care.

In January, Neumann launched two innovative nursing initiatives. The first was a pilot three-credit online home health care course titled "Vistas in Home Health Nursing Practice" for NU students, registered Bayada Home Health Care nurses, and nurses from New Jersey's Visiting Nurse Association. The second is the Vistas in Home Care Continuing Education Series, an online program for licensed nurses, who can earn up to 15 continuing education credits by completing five course modules.

Mare of Easttown's Ingelsby to Address Film Festival

Neumann Inspires, the university's inaugural film festival, has some real celebrity buzz going for it. Brad Ingelsby, the creator of HBO's hit series, *Mare of Easttown*, will deliver the keynote address. Scheduled for March 31 and April 1, 2023, *Neumann Inspires* is a two-day event that will feature screenings of the best films submitted by current students, alumni, and filmmakers from the community.

Ingelsby, already an accomplished screenwriter, rose to national prominence in 2021 with *Mare*, a seven-part crime drama that won four Emmy awards. Set in Delaware County with tons of local landmarks and references, the series also shone the spotlight on the quirky Delco accent, even earning a satirical jab on *Saturday Night Live*.

Entries may be submitted through January 31, 2023, to www.neumann.edu/filmfest and must run 10 minutes or less.





New Dean of Nursing

Neumann has named Dr. Theresa Pietsch as the new dean of its School of Nursing and Health Sciences. Pietsch succeeds Dr. Kathleen Hoover, who served as the school's dean for the last 17 years.

Pietsch came to Neumann in 2008 as an assistant professor of nursing and has risen through the ranks, serving as the associate dean

of nursing since 2016. In her new role, which began on January 10, Pietsch also supervises the physical therapy and athletic training programs. At Neumann, she has taught mental health nursing and research courses in undergraduate and graduate programs. She is also certified in rehabilitation nursing.

Inducted into the MLK Spirit Hall of Fame

In January, Dr. Sam Lemon was inducted into the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Spirit Hall of Fame by the Media Fellowship House and the Media Area NAACP. Lemon, the director of the MS in Business and Organizational Leadership, was selected because of his involvement in causes that reflect the spirit of Dr. King and the mission of the sponsoring organizations.

He is a published author who wrote two books that explore the African American experience: *Go Stand Upon the Rock* (2014), a fact-based novel about the lives of Lemon's enslaved ancestors; and *The Case That Shocked the Country: The unquiet deaths of Vida Robare and Alexander McClay Williams* (2017), which details the case of a 16-year-old African American boy who was wrongly convicted of murder.



Professor Helps Delco Analyze Recidivism Data ►

The Delaware County Adult Probation and Parole Office has retained Dr. Leanne Havis, professor of Criminal Justice, as a consultant to help analyze local recidivism data and identify trends that might lower the county's repeat-offender rate.

"My hope is that the Adult Probation and Parole unit will look at the results for actionable data that will have a practical effect on the real world. I want to help them make decisions that are grounded in data," says Havis. For example, if the data show that most people who are rearrested do not have a high school education, the county might allocate more resources to GED programs. If most reoffenders have no job, then more vocational training programs might be a solution.



“I want to help them make decisions that are grounded in data.”

SGA Endows Knights' Pantry

The Knights' Pantry will continue to serve Neumann students for many years to come, thanks to a generous donation of \$25,000 from the Student Government Association. According to SGA President David Shertel, the SGA board supported the donation wholeheartedly.

"There was not a single person who voted against it. They were all so happy that we were able to do this because they know how beneficial the pantry is to our students," he said. The pandemic halted many programs sponsored by the SGA, and as a result, the group had a surplus of funds.



Climate Change Expert Offers Solutions

"Human-caused climate change is a global emergency, which disproportionately affects the people who are least responsible for the problem," writes David Blockstein, PhD, the co-director of *Solve Climate by 2030*. On April 20, he presented evidence of climate change and offered solutions that can make a difference in a free program titled "Teaching the World about Climate Solutions and Justice."

"Although a certain amount of climate change is unstoppable," Blockstein says, "the actions that governments, businesses, universities, and individuals take or do not take this decade will have great impact on how bad climate change will become." His suggestions: get off fossil fuels (buy electric cars), switch to renewable energy (solar, wind and geothermal), be more efficient in energy use (reduce your carbon footprint), protect wetlands and forests (plant more trees), and vote.



New Graduate Degree in Forensic Psychology

Neumann will offer a master's degree in Forensic Psychology starting in the fall of 2022. The program is designed for people currently working in law enforcement, corrections, social services, or psychology who want to develop skills in psychological and intelligence analysis in the criminal and civil justice systems.

The degree focuses on understanding, evaluating, and treating offenders and victims. The 36-credit program can be completed in two years and can lead to employment in homeland security, correctional systems, and social services. Some courses will introduce students to basic criminal profiling concepts.



Exclusive Partnership with United Sports ▲

Neumann University has signed an exclusive, three-year partnership with United Sports Training Center in Downingtown. The agreement, announced in a March 2 ribbon cutting at United Sports, includes marketing and branding opportunities, college planning seminars, and student internships at the sports complex.

United Sports operates a 127,000-square-foot building and outdoor athletic fields on its 72-acre facility. It is home to numerous youth sports teams and competition in soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, softball, volleyball, flag football, basketball, rugby, and pickleball. The facility also hosts various adult team tournaments.



Using Surplus to Address Hunger

Evan Ehlers, founder and director of Sharing Excess, spoke to students on March 16 about "Using Surplus as a Solution to Scarcity." Launched at Drexel University in 2018, Sharing Excess addresses the crucial need for food by delivering regular surplus from grocery stores, restaurants, wholesalers, and farmers to communities in need.

Ehlers created Sharing Excess after realizing he had fifty meals left in his college dining account with only two days left to use them. Rather than letting the meals go to waste, he decided to swipe them all out, pack them in his car, and drive around Center City Philadelphia, giving them to anyone who needed food. Today, Sharing Excess delivers an average of 100,000 pounds of food each week.



Social Work Professor Practices What She Teaches

Rina Keller came to Neumann in 2015 to help launch the Social Work major, and she brought with her a genuine desire to uplift the entire campus community. Like her colleagues, Keller has watched her students leave Neumann's Holy Hill and transform lives, which is no surprise based on the example she sets for them.

The idea of starting a new major at NU was appealing to Keller, a woman always up for a challenge. Prior to joining the faculty at Neumann, Keller worked at Rosemont College for nine years as a Sociology professor. She was also a clinical associate at Walden Counseling and Therapy Center in Bryn Mawr. Currently, she is an assistant professor and director of field placement for the Social Work major.

When not helping her students, Keller is the chair of the Civic Engagement Commitment, co-chair of the Knights' Pantry, and newly appointed president of the Faculty Senate.

Keller graduated from Rosemont College with a degree in Sociology. She has a master's in Social Work from Bryn Mawr College and a master's in Public Administration from Villanova University. She is also a licensed social worker in the state of Pennsylvania.

Keller credits her degree in Sociology as the impetus for all that she has done professionally.

"I was always interested in psychology and therapy. The Sociology program was a blend of all the things I was interested in, and it had really dynamic professors. So that's what I ended up studying, and it has been an amazing foundation for everything else I have done," she explained.

When Keller came to NU, the Social Work degree program was in the planning stages. She worked closely with Barbara Hanes, the former Education dean, to build the program and later developed the Social Work minor.



Rina Keller with husband C.J., son Justin, and puppy Emma.

“ One of the reasons I really love working with Neumann students is that they are eager and excited. ”

A critical component of the Social Work major is the students' field placement or internship that Keller oversees. Her students complete 400 hours over the course of their senior year.

"It's an intense experience. It's like a job, and I place and supervise them, which is actually one of my favorite things because I have the opportunity of guidance and mentorship. We've had an excellent success rate with grad school and jobs," Keller said.

Students who major in Social Work tend to form tight bonds with their classmates and professors. Spending time with her students in and out of the classroom has enabled Keller to better understand and appreciate what drives them to succeed.

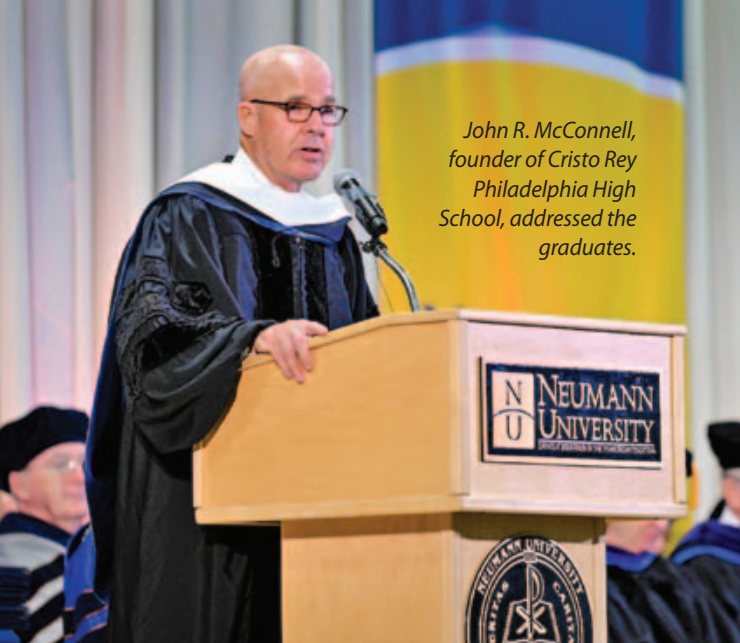
"One of the reasons I really love working with Neumann students is that they are eager and excited. Their education and careers are important to them, and they're willing to learn and do hard things. The best part is seeing their growth," Keller said.

From these close relationships, Keller came to understand the struggles that many students face. Her social worker instinct kicked in, and the result was establishing the Knights' Pantry with Mary Beth Davis, counselor at Neumann's Counseling Center for Wellness.

"Some of our students may be struggling and needing help. They have a lot on their plates. They're working. They might be parents, or they might be caregivers. If you're hungry, you can't do anything," she said.

Being involved with so many activities outside of teaching has allowed Keller to meet other NU staff and professors and expand her network.

"I love the work, and I love who I work with," she said. "I've really appreciated the opportunity to try new things and collaborate with other people."



John R. McConnell, founder of Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School, addressed the graduates.



Sr. Marguerite O'Beirne, OSF, one of the most beloved figures on campus for the past 25 years, received an honorary degree.

GRADUATION CELEBRATION:



On Saturday, May 14, Neumann University welcomed 364 new students to its alumni family. Two hundred forty-two undergraduate degrees and 122 graduate and adult and continuing education degrees were conferred in two ceremonies held inside the Mirenda Center for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development.

Valedictorian Jake Loburak, a Communication and Digital Media major, told the graduating class, "We've been blessed with the opportunity to learn and grow at an incredible institution that has shaped our academic and professional careers, while offering important values to live by. While each student has about 10 seconds walking across the stage to receive their diploma, have no regrets on the 11th second. As today marks the start of the next chapter for us, continue to live out the Franciscan values that Neumann has instilled in each of us."

Sr. Marguerite O'Beirne and John R. McConnell received honorary degrees during the graduation exercises.



Jake Loburak delivered the valedictory address for the class of 2022.



Professor Tammy Feil took a selfie with two of her graduating seniors.



Neumann recognized student-athletes with a special stole they wore during the ceremony.



A nursing student's mortarboard message explains why she chose the profession.

364 Join the Alumni Family

Sr. Marguerite served the Roman Catholic Church in a variety of educational roles for nearly 60 years before she retired on July 1, 2021. Most recently, she was vice president for mission and ministry at Neumann University from 1997 to 2021. Her pervasive presence there — chatting with students in hallways and attending hundreds of athletic events and student activities — established her as one of the most beloved figures on campus.

In typical Sr. Marguerite fashion, she tipped her hat to others during her acceptance. "I have been blessed with a long career of service in Catholic education from elementary school through University — and if I have had any success, it is because I've had such remarkable colleagues, who made me and my work look good."

"There is a great line in a poem by the Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, that says: 'think of where one's glory most begins and ends, I say my glory is I had such friends.' So, I share this honor with all those who have blessed me as companions on the journey — beginning with my family — my sister Eileen is here today, my niece Kathleen and her husband Dom, the Sisters of Saint Francis who have supported me, my work colleagues down through the years, and friends whom I've made along the way."

McConnell is the founder and president emeritus of Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School. He retired from Deloitte Consulting in 2008, after 27 years with the firm, to launch the innovative college-prep school that was formed from a unique partnership of local educators, businesses, and universities.

McConnell noted that there were 31 Cristo Rey graduates currently enrolled at Neumann

University and acknowledged three Cristo Rey alumni who graduated that day: Jaide Harrison, Tequan Sadler, and Jonaye Wallace.

He told them, "We celebrated together when you graduated from Cristo Rey, but we all knew that the real goal, our dream for you, was a college degree."

McConnell encouraged the rest of the graduating class to "Use your privilege to change the world. The rest of us need you to."

Both O'Beirne and McConnell received the honorary doctor of humane letters.

Families gathered outside the Mirenda Center for photos after the ceremony.



After two years of a global pandemic, graduates shared their excitement as they marched into the Mirenda Center.

SPORTS RECAP:

Winter and Spring 2022



Forward Dexton Mozell
eager to receive the puck.



Sprinter Josiah Melendez
focuses on the finish line.



Attack Lindsey Fagan cradles
the ball down the field.



Guard Allyson
Wills looks for
the open pass.

Women's Basketball

The women's basketball program continued to show progress this season. The young team was made up of 10 underclassmen who gained valuable experience. The team finished with a 9-17 record and fifth place in the Atlantic East Conference. The team lost to Gwynedd Mercy by a score of 74-73 in a very exciting playoff game. The scoring leaders for the season were Terea Hunt, followed by Madison Stewart and Tierra Harris. Harris was named All Tournament in the Drew Tournament, and Hunt was named All Tournament in the Montclair State Tournament.

Men's Ice Hockey

The men's ice hockey team was a young squad this season. Their season ended with a record of 8-16-1 after a loss to Wilkes University in the United Collegiate Hockey Conference (UCHC) first round by a score of 7-4.

Freshman phenom, Nick Martino, was named the UCHC Rookie of the Year and earned second-team all-conference honors. Martino was a force to be reckoned with all season long for the Knights. His 15 goals, 24 assists and 39 points all led the team and placed him tied for fifth among UCHC scoring leaders.

The young Knights will look to build on a strong end to their season as they try to go even further into the playoffs next season while returning all but six players.

Women's Ice Hockey

In their first full season back from the pandemic, the team battled incredibly hard throughout a season with a depleted roster due to COVID protocols and injuries. The team finished the season with a record of 2-20-2.

Katelyn Brown was a senior forward on the team this season. She ended the season and her career as the overall leader in games played in program history and second in total points in program history.

Men's Volleyball

The program started in 2018 and they are very proud to have the first two, four-year players complete their college careers here. Senior Eric Van Horn, who played all four years, led the team this year in service aces and holds all-time career records in kills (5th), aces (3rd), and blocks (3rd). Teammate senior Jules Maiorano is also a four-year player who spent his time on the court setting for the Knights. Jules owns the #1 spot in career assists at 1,262 and the career #1 spot in digs at 422. Both players contributed greatly to the success and stability of the growing program. The team finished the season with a 7-14 record.

Baseball

The baseball team finished the season with a 13-22 record, including two wins over rival Cabrini University. This extremely competitive squad was led by a hardworking, good group of seniors. Stand-out players on the team included pitchers William Hart and Brennen Hatala, and position players Shawn Vega, Ryan Lopez, Marcus White, Zach Ray, and Anthony Basciano.

Women's Lacrosse

The women's lacrosse team finished the season with a 9-8 record, winning the AEC first round playoff game but unfortunately losing the AEC semi-final game to Marymount University.

Senior attack superstar, Brylin Adams, scored her 100th career goal this season in a win over Immaculata University.

Men's Lacrosse

The men's lacrosse team finished the season 11-8, tying the all-time win record. Drew Conlon broke the all-time points record held by Don Seeger (218) which has been standing for 23 years. Drew totaled 223 points. Seniors Drew Conlon and Brett McLaughlin earned Atlantic East All-Conference First Team honors. Senior Kyle Daly and grad student John Giovinazzo earned Atlantic East All-Conference Second Team honors.

Softball

The softball team finished the season at 13-27, but with a new head coach and a very young squad, there is a lot of promise for the program in the future. A season highlight was winning both games against Cabrini University in the last regular season conference games that landed the team in a fourth seed for playoffs.

Sophomore Elizabeth Shire had a great season at third base, batting .389 on the year with 3 homeruns, 19 RBIs, and a slugging percentage of .600. Senior Emily Reid was a standout at second base, batting .362 with 42 hits on the year, and senior Vanessa Bowen contributed at first base, batting .310.

Men's Tennis

The Neumann University men's tennis team advanced to the Atlantic East Conference Championship game this season but unfortunately fell short to top-seeded Marymount University. The team finished with an impressive 7-3 record.

Daniel Bonowski was named First Team All-Conference in singles action. Vince Landis received Second Team All-Conference honors, also for singles play. Neumann garnered Coaching Staff of the Year award, led by Head Coach Sam Miles.

Women's Tennis

The women's tennis team had a trying season, finishing with a 1-7 record. Three members of the team were named to the 2022 Atlantic East Women's Tennis All-Conference team.

Hannah Asaka was named First Team All-Conference in singles action. Kylie Seeger and Kaitlyn Smith were each named second team in singles play.

Track & Field

Three Neumann students from the Outdoor Track and Field team received conference honors.

Courtney Humphreys and Sophia Parrish made Second Team All-Conference. Humphreys was outstanding in the 1500m (5:21.59) run to finish second in the race. Parrish finished second in the javelin throw (29.63 m), narrowly missing a first-place performance by just 0.35 meters.

Drew Konieczny received two First Team All-Conference honors. The first year phenom continued to dominate the track with two first place performances in the 800-meter run (1:59.53) and the 1500-meter run (4:06.44). His time in 800-meter race was a new Atlantic East Conference Championship meet record.

The top finishers in each event are named First Team All-Conference, while the runner-up received Second Team All-Conference honors.

Men's Basketball Wins Third Conference Championship



Players celebrate the Atlantic East Conference championship.

For the third time in program history, the men's basketball team clinched its conference championship, a first since joining the Atlantic East Conference, against Marymount University.

The game came down to the final minutes, as the Knights tied the game at 53 on a jumper by Guard TJ Lewis with 4:21 on the clock. Forward KJ Speller hit a layup with 2:46 remaining to give Neumann its first lead of the game, 55-53. The teams then traded baskets and were knotted at 59 with 33 seconds left in regulation.

A jumper by Forward/Guard Jalen Vaughns with 3.8 seconds on the clock put the Knights up 61-59. On the inbound pass, Ryan Starr stole the ball, and the clock ran out, making Neumann the 2022 Atlantic East Champions.

"We were trailing the entire game and the players battled through the adversity to make plays to win on a last second shot to secure the program's third conference championship and third trip to the NCAA tournament," head coach Jim Rullo said.

Rullo was named Atlantic East Coach of the Year and Forward Tony James was named Atlantic East Defensive Player of the Year.

Sophomore Vaughns was named Atlantic East Player of the Year, National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) District 5 First Team and D3hoops.com 2022 Men's All-Region 5 team.

The team's 21-8 successful season came to an end with a loss to Willams College in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.



Pitcher Brennan Hatala warms up before a game.

Campus Shows Support for

In the weeks after Russia's February 24th invasion of Ukraine, the campus community rallied to support

Food for Refugees

On March 9, more than a hundred student and faculty volunteers packaged and heat-sealed 15,072 meals for Ukrainian refugees who have fled to Poland to escape Russian bombing. Coordinated by Megan Camp, director of service-learning and community engagement, the daylong effort prepared the meals at the Bruder Life Center, part of Neumann's activities during Charter Week.

Volunteers in an assembly line mixed measured amounts of rice, soy, beans, and spices into packages that filled scores of boxes with highly nutritious meals.

Neumann partnered with Kids Against Hunger to ship the meals overseas. The nonprofit humanitarian organization provides nutritious food to impoverished and food-insecure children and families in the region and around the world. Besides helping Ukrainian refugees, the group has helped countries like Haiti with disaster relief and local communities in need.

"We included this activity in our Charter Week celebration because a critical component of our mission is to serve people in need," said Dr. Chris Domes, who worked a shift at the packaging operation. "The world is rallying around the people of Ukraine, and we want to do our part."

Punk Rock Professor Launches Benefit Album

One of the most unusual initiatives to help Ukraine is the brainchild of Janis Chakars, a communications professor who has played in punk rock bands for 30 years. Chakars is doing what he does best to raise money for Ukraine. On March 23, he launched Band Together, a compilation of songs by nine American and seven Ukrainian bands to support the besieged country.

As a member of Citizens Arrest, a band that has toured Eastern Europe, Chakars used his music industry connections and research skills to collect the songs in a matter of weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine.

"It was important to me that Ukrainian bands be included because I think their voices need to be heard right now," Chakars says.

"Solidarity with the oppressed is a core principle of Catholic social teaching," he explains. "Ukrainians are under attack and being deprived of life, limb, and livelihood. The Franciscan tradition calls us to walk with the suffering, and while we may not be able to do that literally in Ukraine, we can try to do that in other ways."



Volunteers packaged 15,072 meals for Ukrainian refugees.

Ukraine

the war-torn country and its refugees in a variety of ways.

American contributions to the album include songs by punk icon Ted Leo, Erin Incoherent and the bands Unsane, Citizens Arrest, and Under Attack. The requested donation for the compilation, available on Band Camp, is \$10. Proceeds go to Razom, a Ukrainian-American 501c3 that has already delivered tons of medical supplies to people in Ukraine.

The album cover was designed by Chakars' teenage son, using a photo that Chakars took in 2019 when he visited Latvia and Ukraine. "There was a war in the east then (in Donbos)," he explains, "but life in Kyiv was normal. Now, all of those people I saw walking through the main square are hiding in a basement, fleeing to another country, or fighting with Ukrainian forces."

Former CIA Spy Chief Speaks about Russia

Finally, Neumann asked an already-scheduled guest speaker to focus on Ukraine. Jack Devine, a seasoned CIA professional who served for more than 30 years at the highest levels of the agency, addressed Russian aggression in Ukraine during a March 25 lecture.

Earlier that month, in a *Wall Street Journal* editorial entitled *Putin Has Ensured His Own Downfall*, Devine wrote, "He [Putin] sees the West's contention over key policy issues as

weakness and harbors contempt for the democratic process. He fails to understand that these inefficiencies are the result of a real strength — a political system responsive to the will of the people."

During his presentation, Devine called on his decades of experience — including a stint as the head of all CIA spying operations — to outline America's intelligence battle with Russia from the Cold War through the invasion of Ukraine.



Band Together is available on Band Camp for \$10.



Punk rock professor Janis Chakars discusses Ukraine on WNUW.



Jack Devine is a former spy chief for the CIA.

NEUMANN ATHLETICS:

College athletics at the Division III level are commonly considered the home for student-athletes who simply love the game that they play. There are few professional sports contracts and limited "name, image and likeness" opportunities that emerge from Division III.

The real benefit of a DIII sports environment, however, is not the pressures that they avoid but the opportunities for life lessons that they provide. At Neumann, these lessons come through extraordinary role models, institutional care for the well-being of each student, and team-generated service projects.



Len Schuler
LEN SCHULER COURT

Len Schuler's family gathers on the court named in his honor in March.

More than the Box Score

ONE ROLE MODEL: Coach Len Schuler

He worked on campus at Neumann University for 38 years, coached more than 1,000 games, and earned the admiration of thousands of students. On February 5, 2022, Coach Len Schuler passed away, and news of his death triggered tears across campus.

Ironically, February 5 was the very day when the university had planned to name its basketball court in his honor, unveiling Schuler's newly inscribed name on the Mirenda Center hardwood.

"Coach Schuler is a legendary figure on campus, a mentor who is revered by hundreds of student-athletes and alumni in Delaware County and beyond," said Dr. Chris Domes, university president. "His impact on our community is deep and will continue through the many coaches for whom he was a role model. He was a father figure to many, and his love for the students embraced the spirit of St. Francis in every way."

Coach made an incredible impact on the lives of countless young men and women. Chuck Sack, university director of athletics and recreation, remembers him fondly: "Always approachable, he connected with students through his servant-leadership style, each day working to support another member of the Neumann community through his knowledge, kindness, and positive attitude."

In an age of college athletics too often driven by ego and money, Schuler was a breath of fresh air. He loved sports and, more importantly, the life lessons that competition could teach the players under his charge.

A 2020 alumni survey asked graduates to "name one person who had a special impact on your experience as a student" and provide a brief explanation. Many named Schuler.

One former player wrote: "Coach Schuler had an incredible impact on my experience at Neumann ... He was always someone I could talk to, and I felt like he constantly looked out for my well-being. He represented a father figure and ensured my success."

A softball player remembered Coach Schuler, when he was the baseball coach, going out of his way to help her. "Coach Schuler became my mentor and guided me in ways to make the team successful," she wrote. "He greeted everyone he met with a warm smile, and you knew he genuinely cared about you as an athlete and a person."

A third alum summed up his recollection of Schuler simply: "Coach was the best. The love he had for us was superb. I still, to this day, talk about him!"

To honor his legacy, the university is establishing an endowed scholarship in his name (alumni.neumann.edu/schuler) and dedicated the basketball court to him in a rescheduled ceremony on March 26.

Coach Schuler first set foot on campus in 1982 when he was named the head women's basketball coach. He remained at the helm of that program for 18 seasons.

He was also the baseball coach from 1991-2005, the softball coach in 1989 and from 2016-2019, and the cross country coach for two seasons (1989 and 1992). Away from the field of play, Len served as Neumann's athletic director from 1988 to 2000.

On April 11, 2019, at Haverford College, Coach Schuler managed his 1,000th career game, and finished with a grand total of 1,014. He was inducted into the Neumann University Hall of Fame in 2011 for his contributions to and achievements at the university. Before he retired in 2020, he completed his tenure at Neumann as the associate athletic director for facilities.

His greatest contribution to Neumann University, however, was his selfless and compassionate dedication to the development of his students as kind and caring people. His presence on one campus for nearly four decades is the kind of legacy that makes Neumann the embodiment of the best in Division III sports.

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Coach Len Schuler congratulates his softball team after they won the 2019 Atlantic East Conference championship.



INSTITUTIONAL CARE: A Focus on Mental Health

In a period of just two months this spring, five college athletes across the country committed suicide. The students, who ranged in age from 19 to 23, studied at Binghamton, James Madison, Northern Michigan, Stanford, and Wisconsin. They played lacrosse, softball, cross country, soccer, and track.

Recent articles in publications ranging from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* to *The New York Times* have focused on the high levels of anxiety, depression, and stress that college students are experiencing. Experts indicate that the mental health crisis was exacerbated by COVID-19.

"Mental health challenges came on our radar even before the pandemic," recalls Sack,

who has been Neumann's athletic director for 19 years. "In 2019, we collaborated with the Counseling Center for Wellness and instituted Wellness Wednesdays."

On Wellness Wednesdays, members of the university's counseling staff were invited to mix and mingle with student-athletes, usually in the Bayada Atrium of the Mirenda Center. Occasionally the counselors would arrange to bring therapy dogs to attract more team members to the event. The real purpose of the low-key gatherings, of course, was to make students aware that counseling is available on campus and give students a point of contact with the Counseling Center.

"The process came to a halt during the pandemic," Sack admits, "but Christy Fleagle, associate athletic director, and Mary Beth Davis, a campus counselor, kept it going online and started some in-person meetings again in the fall of 2021."

Davis agrees that returning to sports following COVID-19 has increased the pressure on student-athletes. "So much of an athlete's identity is centered on their sport," she explains. "When they are injured, do not play well, or in the case of COVID-19, are not able to play, they lose their sense of self and purpose. When they return to sport, their own expectations, coupled with coaches' or family expectations may create an environment that is harmful to the well-being of the athlete."

In addition, wins and losses, individual performance, playing time, and academic pressure threaten the already emotionally overwhelmed student-athlete, she says. "Counseling helps student-athletes acknowledge and explore other parts of their identities, creating a more holistic perspective, improving wellbeing and ultimately performance."

Chelsea Minsky, a colleague of Davis in the Counseling Center, recalls a student who was ambivalent about trying counseling and spoke, at length, about the athlete's mentality to "always do better." The comment revealed the student's perception that engaging in counseling would be tantamount to admitting that he was not doing well and perhaps unable to deal with the issues himself.

The epiphany came when the student realized that "in some ways, mental health counseling is like working with a coach — an emotional/mental health coach." He now feels that there is strength in seeking support.



Counselors Mary Beth Davis and Chelsea Minsky have collaborated with the Athletic Department to make student-athletes aware of the counseling services on campus.

Sack also worked with the Counseling Center to train many staff members (including team chaplains and athletic trainers) in QPR, a suicide prevention program. "This training will be more intentional in the years ahead," he says. His goal is to have every coach trained in QPR because "the wear and tear on young people is real and evolving."

Athletics has also added Erik Enters to its staff in the role of wellness coordinator. Enters brings more than 30 years of experience as a high school guidance counselor to the department. Sack credits Dr. Chris Domes, university president "for giving us the support we need to make the student-athlete experience much more effective."

Of course, the Counseling Center for Wellness serves (and is open to) the entire student body. Its collaboration with Athletics includes many services available to all: one-to-one counseling for any student; support and consultation for staff on how to offer emotional and mental health support; mental health connections to community resources such as trauma centers, and outpatient/inpatient services; and programming to reduce stigma, increase awareness of counseling services, and provide psychoeducation.

Sack firmly believes that the emphasis on mental health is making a difference. "There is definitely a stronger awareness within the student-athlete population and staff that we

have resources available. I've seen more coaches walking students across the parking lot to the health and wellness center or emailing the counselors. That's a sign that we're growing and learning how to care for students psychologically and emotionally."

SERVICE PROJECT: Inspiring Youngsters

Beyond providing role models like Coach Schuler and a university commitment to mental health, Neumann also engages student-athletes to participate in its Franciscan tradition of service, one of the university's core values. Each NCAA team on campus is asked to adopt a cause and support it every year.

In 2021-22, one of the best examples of service was embodied by the women's ice hockey team, which marked its 20th anniversary season this year. Before a Senior Day celebration and home match against Manhattanville College in February, players met students from Drexel Neumann Academy to encourage them to attend college and earn a degree.

Along with Coach Gina McLaughlin, players Jasmine Martinez and Vicky Maloney answered questions from more than a dozen DNA students and their parents about the life of a college athlete, including how to balance the demands of academics and sports.

After the meeting, as part of Neumann's partnership with the Ed Snider Youth Hockey Foundation, the youngsters were treated to lunch and good seats at the game.

Drexel Neumann Academy is an independent Catholic elementary school located in Chester, Pennsylvania. The school is co-sponsored by Neumann University, Saint Katharine Drexel Parish, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and the Sisters of Saint Francis of Philadelphia.

Service to others teaches life lessons and perfectly embodies a piece of advice attributed to St. Francis: "Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words."

Ice hockey coach Gina McLaughlin and player Jasmine Martinez talk to students from Drexel Neumann Academy about the life of a college athlete.



Alumni Association Honors 13 at Awards Ceremony

Neumann's Alumni Association presented awards to 10 alumni, two students, and one retired professor at its annual awards ceremony on March 8.



Nancy Gorevin Costello '03
*Alumni Association
Recognition Award*

Nancy Costello currently serves as the director of communications for the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In 2010, she and her husband Tom co-founded The Joy of Sox, a 501c3 nonprofit that provides socks for the homeless. The Joy of Sox has since distributed more than 611,000 pairs of new socks in 35 states, D.C., Uganda, Canada, Afghanistan, Ghana, Mexico, and the UK. Costello also co-founded the Philadelphia-area Catholic Collegiate Mission Consortium.



Nicole Draper '14 '16
*School of Education and
Human Services Distinguished
Alumni Award*

Nicole Draper, who holds two degrees in Education from Neumann, is a literacy instructional specialist for the Professional Development Center for Educators at the University of Delaware, where she coaches classroom teachers throughout the nation in English Language Arts (ELA). She also writes ELA curriculum and teaches early literacy courses for the Delaware Department of Education. Draper and her husband are also award-winning African American voiceover artists.



Kiriakoula Gregor '14
*School of Arts and Sciences
Distinguished Alumni Award*

Since she landed a part-time job with ABC in New York shortly after graduation, Kiriakoula Gregor has skyrocketed through the media field. Soon full-time, she was promoted to acquisitions and ingest manager and then asked to relocate to California to help with West Coast operations. She is now a program operations manager for Disney/ABC, part of a team that supervises the airing and production of primetime shows like the Oscars and American Music Awards.



Annette Hargadon '87 '09
John Neumann Award

After graduating with a BS in Nursing, Annette Hargadon earned a post-master's certificate and became a family nurse practitioner. Now holding two Neumann nursing degrees, she currently works at Lankenau Medical Center, caring for patients with benign and malignant diseases of the breast, and is finishing a Doctor of Nursing Practice program. She has served as president of Neumann's Alumni Executive Board and the Nursing Alumni Chapter.



Dr. Madeline E. Lambrecht '77
School of Nursing and Health Sciences Distinguished Alumni Award

Dr. Madeline E. Lambrecht is professor emeritus at the University of Delaware. She was most recently director of the Division of Special Programs in the College of Health Sciences, responsible for coordinating distance education and continuing education certificate programs. She was also a professor in UD's School of Nursing. Throughout her career, Lambrecht's focus was on providing compassionate care to the dying and bereaved, and she has received many awards and commendations for her work.



Michael Kaczinski '89
President's Distinguished Alumni Award

Michael Kaczinski started working at Sun East Federal Credit Union while still a student at Neumann. He worked his way up the ranks from intern to teller to marketing manager to vice president. In 2001 he was appointed CEO at the age of 34, and he holds the position to this day. Under his leadership, Sun East has grown in assets, members, and number of services offered. He has remained involved with Neumann, participating in mentoring programs and supporting fundraising events.



Dr. James Patrick Lynch '09
School of Business Distinguished Alumni Award

An athletic administrator and coach for more than 15 years, Dr. James Lynch serves youth in the City of Philadelphia as the district athletic director for Philadelphia public schools. He earned his master's degree in sport management from Neumann and recently completed his doctorate in Educational Leadership and Athletic Administration. Lynch regularly presents and publishes papers on urban youth sports and improving athletics in urban schools at local, state, and national conferences.



Helen Kain '87
The Spirit of Francis and Clare of Assisi Award

Helen Kain is a Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner at ACTS Lima Estates, providing primary care services for independent living and assisted living clients, as well as skilled and long-term care for geriatric populations. She has worked in a variety of environments, from homecare and hospitals to nursing homes and long-term care facilities. Kain is deeply involved in GAPNA, a regional association of geriatric nurse practitioners, and organizes the group's annual Alzheimer's Walk.

Kwaku Owusu-Agyemang '09
Young Alumni Achievement Award

Kwaku Owusu-Agyemang was recognized because of his stewardship of and care for the environment. Currently based in Accra, Ghana, he founded and leads Stineri Medical Waste Solutions. The company's mission is to promote responsible, cost efficient, and eco-friendly medical waste management solutions and services and to raise awareness of the importance of effective medical waste disposal in safeguarding the environment.



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Ariana Peña, Class of 2022 *Outstanding Senior Award*

Ariana Peña is a pre-Physical Therapy major, a member of the women's volleyball team, and a campus leader. As a freshman, she joined Neumann's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) to better the student-athlete experience. In early 2021, she was selected to sit on the NCAA Division III National SAAC, representing the Atlantic East Conference. On the national committee, Peña advocates for social and racial justice, inclusion, and mental health. She is also a peer tutor and Special Olympics volunteer.



David Shertel, Class of 2022 *Outstanding Senior Award*

David Shertel is Political Science major, president of the Student Government Association (SGA), and president of the National Political Honor Society. Deeply committed to volunteerism and student leadership, Shertel has helped students through his work at the helm of the SGA, ensuring that the campus buys Fair Trade products and advocating for a \$25,000 donation to the Knights' Pantry that will address food insecurity issues on campus for years to come.



Lauren Christine Shipman '15 *Volunteer of the Year Award*

Lauren Shipman, wheelchair bound because of cerebral palsy, walked across the stage to accept her degree in 2015. She is currently the group supervisor for the supplemental kindergarten program at the Haverford Branch of the Greater Philadelphia YMCA. Since graduating, she has often returned to campus as a motivational speaker for students and as a standardized patient/patient actor for the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program.



Dr. Sandra M. Weiss *Honorary Alumni Award*

Sandra Weiss taught at Neumann for 45 years. For 36 of those years, she was director of the clinical laboratory science program, which often prepared students so well that they received job offers before graduation. During her decades at Neumann, she taught biology, immunology, human anatomy and physiology, medical science, and hematology. In recognition of the significant and lasting impact Weiss has had, the university dedicated a laboratory in her name in October 2021.

NOMINATE AN ALUM

**The Alumni Association
is seeking
nominations for the
2023 Alumni
Awards.**

**Nominate a worthy
alum by sending a
brief statement
about the person's
accomplishments to
alumni@neumann.edu
or by calling
610-558-5544.**



*John C. Ford and
Sandra Sollod Poster (center)
with Dr. Chris and Mary Domes and
Board Chair Anthony Latini, Jr.*

CHARTER DAY Grows into Charter Week

Charter Day activities filled almost an entire week this year. One day after the Alumni Awards ceremony, Neumann held a very successful Day of Giving, raising more than \$100,000 from 342 donors in just 24 hours. A series of celebratory events culminated on March 11, with ceremonies to honor two iconic university trustees: Thomas A. Bruder, Jr. and John C. Ford.

A Mass in memory of Mr. Bruder was held in Our Lady of Angels Chapel. A long-time benefactor of Neumann University, Bruder served on the University Board of Trustees since 1971 and was appointed a Lifetime Trustee in 2008.

Thomas Bruder and his family have generously donated more than \$1.7 million to Neumann University. The Thomas A. Bruder, Jr. Life Center (1985) and the Bruder Athletic Fields (2012) bear his name. Mr. Bruder owned M.A. Bruder & Sons, Inc. (M.A.B. Paints) and retired as president in 2007.

On the same day, the university dedicated the John C. Ford Student Success Center to honor a generous donor and trustee for more than 25 years. Mr. Ford is currently the president of John C. Ford Associates, consultants specializing in organizational development and communication.

Neumann's collection of academic support services was renamed in May 2021 to honor Ford for his years of support and to accurately describe the services, which now include academic coaching, academic advising, the writing center, disability services, SSS/TRIO, and career and personal development.

Entrepreneur's Advice: *Unprecedented Growth is Ahead*



Leonard Brody sees patterns in history, and he thinks that awareness of those patterns can help entrepreneurs.

"The Achilles heel of entrepreneurs is not understanding historical context and cycles," he told an audience of approximately 100 at his April presentation of the sixth annual Rocco F. '79 and Mary A. Abessinio Lecture in Entrepreneurship and Management.

"We are living in the largest institutional and human shift in the history of our species," he says. "It is a complete resetting of the operating system of our planet."

These resets are significant events that change the way people behave. He identifies the first modern reset as the British Industrial Revolution in the 17th century. "Resets are usually caused by financial crisis, war, technology, or health events," he explains. "The next will be caused by climate change."

What businesses, governments, and nonprofits don't realize is that, according to Brody, "resets are definable, repetitive, and predictable."

“ We are living in the largest institutional and human shift in the history of our species. ”

His research shows that resets are usually followed by a 9-to-18-month period of devaluation and then by a 3-to-12-year span of intense growth. As an example, he cites the 1918 Spanish Flu before a subsequent decade of economic expansion and hedonism, the Roaring '20s.

Signs of a post-COVID boom, he believes, are already visible in the skyrocketing adoption of e-commerce and the complete redefinition of "the office" as both employees and companies recognize the benefits of working remotely.

"There is the infrastructure for entrepreneurship right now that has never been seen before," Brody told students and faculty. "Have a theory of the world and drag others with you."

He closed his address with a final challenge to budding entrepreneurs in the audience. "We're approaching an unprecedented period of growth. What's your move going to be?"

Leonard Brody is a Canadian entrepreneur, venture capitalist, best-selling business author, and a two-time Emmy nominee. He has helped raise millions of dollars for start-up companies, has been through one of the largest Internet IPOs in history, and has been involved in the building, financing, and/or sale of five companies to date.

In 2016, Brody partnered with *Forbes* to create *The Rewrite*, an award-winning series on the future of our world and the way that organizations can stay relevant and thrive. He counsels businesses and institutions to embrace the disruption caused by technology.

Brody is currently the co-founder and executive chairman of Caravan, a joint venture with CAA (Creative Artists Agency in Los Angeles), the largest sports and entertainment agency in the world.

Neumann's inaugural Abessinio Lecture in Management and Entrepreneurship was delivered by Rocco Abessinio himself on October 4, 2016. He and his wife Mary funded the Abessinio Lecture through their family foundation with the intention of bringing to campus each year a recognized professional with expertise in management and entrepreneurship.

“Grit, **GRIND** & Gratitude”

Spell Success for Alumna

She is a leader, mother, friend, thinker, shaker, doer, and writer — working to make the world a better place with grit, grind, and a whole lot of gratitude.

Denada Ramnishta '04 is the general manager and head of corporate strategy at Lendio. Lendio is the leading fintech solutions provider for small businesses. In addition, they are paving the way for small business lenders to use intelligent automation to enable a positive customer experience during the capital delivery process.

Her journey to NU and Lendio began in Albania, where she was born. An exchange student program brought her to Aston, where she attended Sun Valley High School. She was introduced to NU via an open house for the Honors Program. She was immediately drawn to NU and subsequently received a scholarship that changed the trajectory of her educational journey.

Ramnishta vividly remembers telling her mother, who was in Albania, that she wanted to continue her education in the United States at Neumann University. “My mother’s response after what felt like a very long silence was, ‘What you should know is that we love you a heck of a lot more than we will miss you.’ This sweet moment became the blessing to pursue my dream,” she said, “and a lesson as a parent on how one supports and empowers a young mind.”

Ramnishta majored in International Business and International Studies at Neumann University. She graduated with honors in 2004. In 2011, Ramnishta completed her MBA through a joint program between Columbia Business School and London Business School. “The Neumann environment was small enough to provide support yet big enough for my horizons to expand; it was this perfect size of an environment. It was

an ideal space for someone experiencing a bit of a cultural shock. I got the sense of community, and it was a safe platform for me to launch from,” Ramnishta said. “Neumann University was pivotal in establishing my journey in the United States. I’m very grateful for that community and how it embraced me coming from a very different culture,” she explained.

After graduating from Neumann, Ramnishta began working for Pfizer, a leader in the biopharmaceutical industry, and rose through the ranks to senior product manager. After seven years, she left Pfizer to embark on an entrepreneurial journey and then worked for American Express, where she got her first exposure to the fintech world and hasn’t looked back. Next, she joined Lendio as vice president of strategic partnerships, and now in her third role there, she has grown to lead one of its most innovative business units.

At Lendio, she has found a path to advocate for small businesses and be committed to democratizing capital. In her journey at Lendio, Ramnishta has been part of the team that has enabled \$12 billion in SMB funding. “What drew me to Lendio was its mission to fuel the Entrepreneurial Dream.” As the general manager of Lendio’s new B2B technology business, AXIS, her mission and that of AXIS are to enable financial institutions to distribute capital in an efficient and streamlined way. The new platform will provide financial institutions with the technology needed to better serve their customers and create growth.

Furthermore, she is an advocate of strong leadership philosophies. She believes that *Grit, Grind, and Gratitude* are the principles

for success and that leadership is not a position but rather a disposition of how one behaves that makes them a leader and not their title.

She’s an expert contributor for *Forbes* and a speaker at leading industry conferences. In May 2021, Ramnishta presented a lecture called *The Three Gs of Professional Success: Grit, Grind and Gratitude* at Neumann University’s Center for Leadership. “I have so much love for the mission and work that I do that, even though it can be stressful at times, I’m also practicing my mission of making the world better,” said Ramnishta. She connects that mission-driven approach and mindset to that of Neumann.

Ramnishta lives in New York City with her two young children. “They inspire and motivate me to continue to push myself and others to make a difference. It is a parent’s dream to make the world better for their children” she said.

“The Neumann environment was small enough to allow me to prudently take it on, and yet big enough for my horizons to expand.”





Troilo Trio Could Become a *Quintet*

Four years ago, Riabene Troilo's campus visit was based on a series of flimsy circumstances. A neighborhood elementary school teacher offhandedly mentioned enjoying her graduate classes at Neumann. Then the family drove past a Neumann billboard on I-95. "Maybe we should take a look at Neumann," Ria's mother mused. "It's close."

Today, Ria is a brand-new graduate, two of her siblings are enrolled, and there are two more family members in the pipeline, all because of that serendipitous campus visit.

It was raining on the day of her scheduled trip, and she and her father arrived late. "Sean McDonald (director of Neumann Media) and Sean Spence (then a student) greeted me, gave me a private tour, and treated me like I was supposed to be here," Ria recalls.

"I toured other beautiful campuses, but nothing felt like it was a fit for me. I got the feeling that this was a community, and I had a sense of belonging."

Her on-campus siblings agree. Dariana, a senior next year, is an exercise physiology major, and Joe, entering his sophomore year, is a business finance major. "I love it here. Neumann has become my happy place," admits Dariana. "Honestly, it's hard for me to go home on weekends because I've just grown so attached to this university. I have great relationships with friends, teammates, and professors."

"People are willing to help here," Joe adds. "Professors really care about their students, and there are no big lecture halls with 100 students. Classes have 15 to 25 students."

“ I love it here.
Neumann has become
my happy place. ”

Joseph, Riabene,
and Dariana Troilo

Regarding the expected sequence of five siblings to Neumann, Dariana jokes that "Ria was always the guinea pig." She liked Neumann-Goretti High School, so all five went there. Next in line are Alura, who just graduated from high school and has already committed to Neumann, and Luca, a rising junior at Neumann-Goretti.

Mrs. Maria Troilo (TROY lo), mother of all five and an educator herself, is a self-described discerning critic of her children's educational choices. She believes that Neumann is small enough to customize its students' education in a caring way, yet ready them for a competitive global market.

"When your child is preparing to begin his/her college journey," she writes, "you anxiously pack the bag with everything they may need, fretting that perhaps you may have forgotten something. You soon come to realize that there is no need to worry — Neumann University has already packed that bag for you!"

For Ria, that bag included preparation for a career in broadcasting. She is currently working two part-time jobs: production assistant at NBC10 (the 4:30 a.m. weekend shift) and a member of the Phillies promotion team. She has also held a job as a cheerleader for the Flyers during the last three seasons and completed several internships before her senior year.

"I was a shy, timid little thing walking in here," she recalls, "and this environment has shaped me." She points to extensive on-camera experience from her sophomore year and a television production class with Emmy Award-winning Leigh Pullekines, who directs NBC10's 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. newscasts, as pivotal moments in her academic and professional development.

"Neumann is a catalyst for the success I've had. My goal is to be on camera and share my personality and sports mind with others."

She is staying open-minded because the industry is so competitive but would love to land a job in her home market (she's from South Philly) because of the connections she has already made.

CLASS Notes

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS



◀ **Christine Davis '12** and husband Jim welcomed their first child, a daughter, into the world amidst the pandemic. She was a beacon of joy and hope

in an uncertain time. Margaret Rose Davis (aka Maggie) was born on December 3, 2020.

Jailis Caraballo '19 welcomed a beautiful baby girl in December of 2021. ▶



CAREERS

Tahirah Austin-Muhammad '09 is one of three co-founders of the Crescent Foundation, a Philadelphia-based organization that provides psychosocial and case management support to individuals with Sickle Cell Disease.

William Cassidy '18 has been named head coach of the Monsignor Bonner & Archbishop Prendergast Catholic High School boys' basketball team.

Elizabeth Conner '17 joined Sabre Systems as a Human Resources generalist.

Rebecca Dieurisme '16 launched a health and wellness business called Rebecca Rae Wellness Studio, offering health coaching services, wellness programs, and more.

Harriet Fry '95 ▶ published the novel, *Rum Raisin Rendezvous* on March 24, 2022, with Blossom Spring Publishing, Manchester, England, UK.



Patrick Graham '17 is an associate attorney at Capehart Scatchard, one of the oldest law firms in New Jersey.



◀ **Dr. Hannah Hawthorne '03** received her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Holy Family University in 2021, FNP-BC 2021. She is now an assistant professor of Nursing at Gwynedd Mercy University.



▲ **Clarissa Hayes '15** graduated from Rowan School of Medicine. She is currently an internal medicine and primary care doctor at Lehigh Valley Hospital.

Jenn Henkel '12 serves as the administrative assistant to the CEO and office manager at Children's Choice.

Karen Hurst '98 was recently hired by Polaris Healthcare & Rehabilitation Center as an administrator.

Dr. Jason James '09 has ▶ been hired to lead Neumann's Doctor of Education program, succeeding Dr. Cynthia Speace. As a graduate of NU's Organizational and Strategic Leadership master's program, Dr. James is eager to reconnect with his Neumann roots.



Dara Law '18 recently accepted the position of advancement database specialist at Episcopal Academy.

Gerard Malamisura '02 is celebrating twenty years with the State of New Jersey Division of Taxation.

Joseph Marano '11 was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and assigned to the Patrol Division at the University of Pennsylvania Police Department in Philadelphia.



Christopher Nelson '08 '11 is celebrating five years as a paralegal supervisor at Voce.

Kathleen O'Chuilin '06 '17 is celebrating five years as a teacher at Saint Andrew School in Drexel Hill.



◀ **Claudia Peters '95** serves as the Colonial School District school nurse.

Frances Sundberg '96 is a Critical Care RN at Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command in San Diego.

Wendy Warner '80 ▶ retired from the Air Force after 20 years of service. Recently, she started her own business, educating special needs caregivers on how to give medication and use equipment to take care of their clients. Wendy also thoroughly enjoys being parish nurse with her church. "God has opened doors for me to show me what is best for my life."



Jessica Zappasodi '13 '20 is a second grade Special Education teacher at the Swedesboro Woolwich School District.

WHERE are you and **WHAT** are you doing?

Let us know of any changes in your life that you would like to share at

www.alumni.neumann.edu/classnotes

ENGAGEMENTS & MARRIAGES

Thomas Prendergast '15 '16 and **Colleen Graf '15 '20** were married on December 30, 2021.



◀ **Kyle Rotan '14** and **Teresa Smith '15** were married on October 2, 2021.



Madison Welsh ▶ '20 and Eric Conlon were engaged on April 15, 2022. They met through Neumann University in 2017 and have been in love ever since.

IN THE NEWS

▼ **Donna DeFilippis '90** is a lead case manager, who built a comprehensive case management program in the Nemours Cardiac Center. She is the newly elected chair-elect for Nursing Shared Governance at Nemours and was awarded the 2021 Nursing Excellence for



Exemplary Professional Practice. She published *Creating a New Model of Care by Integrating Case Management Nurses in a Childrens Hospital* in the Professional Case Management Journal, Vol. 26, No.5, Sept/Oct 2021. She is the 2019 recipient of *Delaware Today's* Top Nurse-Case Management.

Lewis Johnson ▶ '12 was selected as the 2021 Pennsylvania Counseling Association (PCA) Outstanding Graduate Student. Lewis received



his award in November 2021 during the annual PCA Conference.

ALUMNI UPDATES



Patricia Evans '85

Growing up in the shadow of campus, Pattie Evans knew she wanted a career in medicine and found her passion in Neumann's new medical technology major. After graduation, Evans worked in the clinical lab at Crozer-Chester Medical Center for several years and later received her master's degree in microbiology from Thomas Jefferson University. Eventually, Evans found her way to the field of infection prevention and control.

Today, Evans is the assistant director of infection prevention control (IPC) at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center in Philadelphia. IPC is a practical, evidence-based approach, the goal of which is to prevent patients and health care workers from being harmed by avoidable infections.

Dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak, of course, has been a whirlwind, and her department quickly became a focal point during the pandemic. Evans and her colleagues look for patterns of infections and advise hospital leaders and other medical professionals on a daily basis.

Jillian DeFina Tutak '15

When Jill Tutak was a student, she could often be found at Campus Ministry events. It was her happy place, where she grew as a person and deepened her faith. Today, she has the opportunity to share this experience with current students in her new role as assistant director of Campus Ministry.



Some of Tutak's most memorable experiences as a student include the service immersion trip to Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming, the pilgrimage to Assisi, Italy, and the SEARCH retreat, where she met classmates who would become her best friends.

"My faith drives me to serve. Campus Ministry helped me see the importance of service," she said. She hopes to bring experiences like those she had to current students through Campus Ministry programs.

Tutak graduated with a degree in Psychology and a minor in Theology. She went from Neumann to the St. Francis of Assisi Kitchen in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where she was the food pantry coordinator, and then to Boston College, where she earned a master's degree in Theology and Ministry. For the past four years, she has been campus minister at Archmere Academy in Claymont, Delaware.



KUDOS

Faculty Publications, Conferences and Awards

Jenelle Abnett, PhD, assistant professor of education and **Megan Scranton, EdD**, associate professor of education, presented “Engaging & Effective Strategies for Teaching Literacy to Multilingual Learners (MLs)” at The Teaching Professor Conference, Atlanta, GA, in June 2022.

Kathryn Callahan, MEd, director of academic coaching, along with **Lewis Johnson, MS**, coordinator of academic services, presented “Once We Resisted, Then We Persisted: The Benefits of Virtual Access to Academic Support” at the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Region 2 Conference in Norfolk, VA, in March 2022.

Janis Chakars, PhD, associate professor of communications and digital media, organized and promoted the album *Band Together: A Benefit for Ukraine*. He was interviewed by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, KYW News Radio, WHYY, *Decibel* magazine, *The Daily Times*, Fox 29, *Ir* (the most prestigious news magazine in Latvia), Latvians Online, and *The Hawk* (the Saint Joseph’s University student newspaper). The album has been covered by over 50 outlets, mostly in the US, but also Ukraine, Brazil, and Latvia. The story that went out on the CNN news wire mentioned Neumann, reached all the way to California, and set a new publicity record for Neumann. Chakars was also a panel moderator/organizer for “Information Wars in the Baltic States: Russia’s Long Shadow” at the Association

for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual conference in August 2021, a panel discussant/organizer for “The Information Battlespace in the Baltic States” and the panel “Understanding disinformation” at the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, May 28, 2022. He created three radio shows with students on WNUW: “African-American Oral History,” “How They See It,” and “Surprise Party.” He also performed concerts in Philadelphia, New York City, Wallingford, Connecticut, and Asbury Park, New Jersey.

David DiMarco, PhD, professor of mathematics, along with **Ryan Savitz, PhD**, professor of mathematics, published *A simple introduction to partial differential equations* in the Journal of Multidisciplinary Research. They presented “On the Sexual Assault of Men” virtually at The Global Conference on Women and Gender on March 18, 2022, and co-organized a series of mathematics colloquia. **Dr. Savitz**, along with **Robert McMonagle, PhD**, professor of political science, presented virtually “Active Learning in Political Science: Measuring Learning Outcomes” at the 79th Annual Midwest Political Science Conference in April 2022.

Dr. DiMarco has also served as the liaison between Neumann University and the EPaDeI (Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware) section of the Mathematical Association of America since October 2016.

Christine Gible, MS, assistant director of undergraduate admission, was awarded a professional internship position with the Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling’s (PACAC) Summer Institute.

Chris Haug, EdD, vice president for student affairs, served as chairperson for the Senior Student Affairs Officer Conference of the Association of Catholic College and Universities (ACCU) hosted in Washington, DC in February 2022, was elected to a three-year term in March 2022 as Board Member for the Association for Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities (ASACCU), and presented a session titled “How to Handle Unexpected Assessment Results” at the Annual Conference for NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education in Baltimore, MD, in March 2022.

Timothy S. Hanna, PhD, associate professor of clinical mental health counseling, presented “Case conference and webinar: Three ways of understanding and integrating religion and spirituality in counseling” virtually at the Pennsylvania Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling in April 2022.



Julie Lanzillo, EdD, program director and associate professor of sport management/sport business, presented “Athletic Conference Considerations for Adding New Sports Post-COVID” at the College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) Annual Conference in Columbia, SC. She also presented along with **Sean McDonald, MS**, director of Neumann Media, “When Worlds Collide: The Stories and Lessons from Intern TV” at the 15th Summit on Communication and Sport, International Association for Communication and Sport (IACS) in Philadelphia, PA. Lanzillo also gave the lecture, “Personal Branding” to Social Work 450 at Neumann University on January 27, 2022. She serves on the Executive Council as the Sport Management Liaison for the Pennsylvania State Athletic Directors Association and sits on the Board of Directors for the Philadelphia Union Foundation.

Rina Keller, LSW, assistant professor of social work, gave the presentation “BSW Practice Events: Incorporating Virtual Learning in Social Work Professional Development” virtually at the Experiential Learning Leadership Institute at The University of Tennessee-Martin on April 12, 2022.

Laura McLaughlin, EdD, professor of education, published the following pieces: *Engaging Virtual Environments: Creative Ideas and Online Tools to Promote Student Interaction, Participation, and Active Learning*; *Faculty must bend to students’ needs in virtual learning environments*; *Six Tips for a Zoom Fatigue Fix*; and *Five Strategies to support in person, virtual, and dual engagement learning*.

Alfred Mueller, PhD, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, delivered a presentation entitled, “The Ongoing Genocide: Why a 20th Century Event Matters to a 21st Century Audience” in commemoration of International Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day at St. Joseph’s University, Philadelphia, PA, April 26, 2022.

Becky Mueller, PhD, professor of nursing, gave a podium presentation, “Critical Appraisal of Transgender Health in Nursing Education” at the Sigma Theta Tau International, Delta Tau Chapter at-Large Research Conference on April 20, 2022, was awarded a research award grant for the research titled, *Evaluation of the impact of a multimodal educational intensive on nurse practitioner students’ knowledge, skills and attitudes towards care of transgender people*, and is mentee in the FAANP Mentorship Program, American Association of Nurse Practitioners.

Sophia Park, ThD, associate professor of clinical mental health counseling, gave the presentation “Model Minority or China Virus: Effects of Stereotypes on Asian-American Families” virtually at Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (Spiritually Integrated Practitioner Group) in October 2021 and the presentation “Character Development in a Multi-cultural World” at the Handong University in Pohang, Korea, on March 16, 2021. She also presented with **Sr. Suzanne Mayer, PhD**, professor emeritus of clinical

mental health counseling, “Crossing Thresholds: Integration of Liminality into Clinical Experiences of Graduate Counseling Students” and “A Franciscan Call to the Underside of Grace: Use of Theological Reflection in the Face of Life’s Realities” at the Tenth Annual Chi Sigma Iota Pennsylvania Statewide Conference at Villanova University on April 23, 2022.

Marissa Rauscher, PhD, professor of educational psychology, led the roundtable discussion, “Sacred and safe space: Inclusive and invitational ways to promote learning gatherings” at the annual ATE meeting in Chicago, IL.

Francesca Reed, MS, vice president for enrollment management and marketing, gave three presentations at the Leader in Graduate Enrollment Management (NAGAP) annual conference in Chicago in April 2022. She was also selected to be the Education Chair for the NAGAP board.

Maria Traub, DML, associate professor of French and Italian, published three publications: *George Sand comique* in December 2021, *Chambre 2806: l’affaire DSK* in December 2021, and *Paris Calligrammes* in March 2022.

In Memoriam

Mr. Thomas A. Bruder, Jr.

Mr. Anthony P. Chiusano '05 '07

Mr. Joseph J. Garrity '16

Dr. Nathan B. Hardy

Sr. Margaret Mary Lewis, OSF

Ms. Melinda B. Luce '00

Ms. Joan Mary Lynch

Mr. Leonard J. Schuler



Sr. Margaret Mary Lewis, OSF

Sister Margaret Mary Lewis (formerly Sister John Therese), 92, died in Assisi House on December 31, 2021. She had been a professed member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for 72 years. Sister Margaret was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, entered the congregation in 1946, and professed her first vows in 1949. She earned a BS in science from Villanova, an MA in education from Trenton State College, and a PhD in medical technology from the Catholic University. She ministered primarily in health care and administration.

Sister Margaret ministered for 24 years in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, serving for 13 of those years at Neumann University as a professor and program director of Clinical Laboratory Sciences.

Sister Margaret also served for 21 years in the Diocese of Wilmington as the vice president of St. Francis Hospital in Wilmington and for 16 years in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, where she worked at St. Joseph Hospital, Shrine of the Little Flower School, and the Catholic High School of Baltimore. Additional ministry work included nine years in the Diocese of Trenton and two years in the Washington, D.C., Diocese.

In 2019, she moved to Assisi House in Aston, Pennsylvania, where she served in prayer and hospitality until her death.



“Being part of our service experience at Neumann has changed my life. When you start serving others, you gain so much. **It makes you feel whole inside.**”

VINNIE TADDEI, SOPHOMORE

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“Service is a big part of life at Neumann, and it’s very important to me.

Growing up, my family got help from others.

If I see a way to give back now, I always make the time.”

JASMINE MARTINEZ, SENIOR





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