Synergy of Pen and Pupil Enlivens This Writer’s Life

Donna Steiner encountered the mantra, “Show, don’t tell” when, as a freshman, she shared a “terrible” poem she’d written with her Syracuse University roommate, poet JoEllen Kwiatek. It was the first time Steiner had, with trepidation, shown her writing to another.

Steiner kept writing, but she didn’t envision it as a career. Nor did she consider an academic future. Yet, she has found success in both fields.

Since 2003, Steiner has been part of the Oswego Creative Writing faculty, teaching poetry and nonfiction, her current focus. She’s published more than 50 essays and poems and earned dozens of awards. Her students revere her, and she reciprocates with respect for their work.

“I love teaching at Oswego,” she says, “and I love the practice of writing—research, drafting, revision.”

The efficacy of Steiner’s practice is evident in Elements, her 2013 Sweet Publications chapbook. It is comprised of five essays, beginning with “Sleeping With Alcohol” and including “Elements of the Wind,” which provides the title. Steiner won first prize in the 2013 Enizagam poetry contest, and “Studying The Trees” has been nominated for Best American Essays 2014 and a Pushcart Prize. In 2011, she was named an NYSFA Nonfiction Fellow, a competitive designation that comes with a cash grant for the artist to use at her discretion.

Steiner coordinates Oswego’s Living Writers Series, in which visiting authors read and lecture on campus. That cross-genre course familiarizes students with realistic aspects of careers in writing.

The symbiosis of teaching and writing inspires Steiner. Like all successful artists, she discovers by creating. Like all effective teachers, she learns from students.

“I love seeing my students’ skills develop,” she says. “I watch them, pens in hands, thinking, working. I am always delighted by what they write.”

—Linda Loomis ’90 M’97

Composer Nick Gianopoulos and His Life ‘Con Variazioni’

Enrolling without specifying a major, George Nicholas Gianopoulos ’07 expected his SUNY Oswego journey to proceed “con variazioni,” with changes. He was leaning toward computer science, when—as one of 126 students enrolled in MUS 101, a general education music appreciation course—he discovered his passion.

He played no instrument. He did not read music. He insists no one would care to hear him sing. Still, he was about to become a musician.

“The class met in Langan Hall,” Gianopoulos recalls. “Often, Dr. Juan LaManna played passages on the piano. It was incredible music. Music I hadn’t known existed.” Captivated, Gianopoulos registered for Introduction to Music Theory. He enrolled in piano lessons, having never played a piano, and quickly moved to private instruction with professor Robert Auler, D.M.A.

Gianopoulos now works in marketing for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. He is composer-in-residence for the Symbiosis Chamber Orchestra and has a commission to create brief cello pieces for Music@Mimoda, an L.A. arts club.

As he immerses himself in music, Gianopoulos is astonished by his career path. “I owe so much to the Oswego faculty,” he says. “Oswego was the platform from which I could discover my passion for music and pursue it without being judged prematurely.”

To hear a sample of his music, visit Gianopoulos’ website at: www.georgengianopoulos.com.

—Linda Loomis ’90 M’97

Declaring a music major and arts management minor, Gianopoulos became what former department chair Dr. Julie Merchant calls “a very fine student.” She helped him set up an internship with the Syracuse Youth Orchestra, where he marked parts and learned behind-the-scenes skills.

“Nick is one of our success stories,” Merchant says. “Hard work on his part and close mentorship on the part of faculty helped him reach his dreams.”

Dr. Auler, who performed Gianopoulos’ “Theme and Variations,” Op. 15, No. 5, on campus last fall, says, “Certain students make your teaching career truly awesome. Nick is one of those. He had so much desire to learn.” He says Gianopoulos progressed quickly, taking on students of his own and working as a church musician.

For his senior recital, he performed challenging compositions by Mozart, Schumann, Rachmaninoff and Chopin.

—Linda Loomis ’90 M’97

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—Linda Loomis ’90 M’97
Professor Finds Film Crucial

While more movie studios, like Paramount, are transitioning to entirely digital picture releases, Professor Jake Dodd maintains that working with film isn’t a thing of the past. In fact, he says quite the opposite. “Film isn’t going away any time soon.”

Dodd, an award-winning independent filmmaker, instructs film and cinema courses in Oswego’s budding Cinema Screen Studies program. “If the students are only working with video, then you are limiting their voice,” he says. “Each film a person makes has unique characteristics to the film—like a signature.

“With film, students are forced to conceptualize how the finished product will look in their heads,” Dodd says. “When everything is planned out, you only shoot what you need. People who say that film is too expensive are just using that as an excuse.”

Professor Opens Ears and Minds to Classical Music

Juan Francisco La Manna tells the story as it has been told to him. He’s at a family gathering. He’s 4. He jumps atop a table and sings a rousing aria from Rigoletto. The amused adults are unified in their response: piano lessons.

As a teenager in Venezuela, La Manna was simultaneously attending high school and, through a highly competitive system, the conservatory. He intended to follow his father into medicine until he and his conservatory friends attended a performance of Rachmaninoff’s third piano concerto.

“It was the most powerful sound I had ever heard,” La Manna says. “Tears came to my eyes. I might not have been conscious of it, but that was the moment I chose music as my profession.” His parents were delighted.

After earning a baccalaureate and a master’s degree in piano at Indiana University, La Manna completed doctoral studies in conducting at the Conservatory of the University of Missouri. He was conducting two orchestras and teaching at two colleges when he applied to Oswego.

He accepted Oswego’s offer in 1997 and has, he says, fallen in love with the community and the college, where “most students exhibit enthusiasm and desire to learn.”

La Manna does some acting with Oswego Players, maintains a piano studio, conducts the college-community orchestra and has been guest conductor for the Naples Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Syracuse’s Symphoria and Teatro Lirico d’Europa. He teaches piano, conducting and orchestration courses as well as a music appreciation course that fulfills the fine arts general education requirement.

“I really enjoy that large group course,” La Manna says. “I’ve had positive contact with students who appreciate the opportunity it gave them to learn about classical music. It does open the ears and the minds of many.”

—Linda Loomis ’90 M’97

Cinema and Screen

Dr. Juan La Manna conducts a rehearsal of the Oswego College-Community Orchestra.

OSWEGO • Spring 2014
Texas Poet Credits Oswego With Changing her Life

Viktoria Valenzuela ‘10 dispels every stereotype of the isolated writer. No garret room, no solitary pursuits for this San Antonio author. It’s as if, having found her voice at SUNY Oswego, she can’t stop using it.

Valenzuela’s calendar is as packed with commitments as her poetry is rich with images—a writing workshop at Gemini Ink, a book release party for her teen students’ work, an arts event. She helped organize 100 Thousand Poets for Change San Antonio, Texas, a response to the BP oil spill, and she constantly writes for performance and publication. For her, being a writer and being an activist are the same.

Valenzuela arrived at SUNY Oswego with a community college background and two young children. It was a dismal period, and she was ready for change.

“At Oswego, I became my most power-filled self,” Valenzuela says. “My professors pushed me in directions I never knew I could travel. And, becoming a McNair scholar changed my life.”

The Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program prepares students from underserved populations to succeed in graduate school. With program mentors Dr. Patricia Clark, now English department chair, and former Oswego professor Ira Sukrungruang, Valenzuela wrote her thesis on “The Absent Cultural and Literary Voice of Young Chicana Mothers.”

“Dr. Clark called it ‘ambitious,’” Valenzuela says. “She was right. But I worked hard because I never wanted to let her down.” A move to San Antonio, precipitated by her father’s failing health, kept her from accepting a graduate school scholarship but enabled her to form friendships with some of the authors she studied: Sandra Cisneros, Josie Mendez Negrete, Lorna Dee Cervantes and Norma E. Cantú.

“Gloria Anzaldúa’s work informed my thesis,” Valenzuela says, “and her best friend will be my doula this winter.”

Valenzuela will use the respite following her third child’s birth to write. She’ll begin a biography of her grandfather, whose music the Westside Horns played as she performed a dramatic reading at the citywide arts festival Luminaria San Antonio. She’ll complete a chapbook that reminds her of her studies with Professor Donna Steiner.

“She shaped my writing,” Valenzuela says. “I channel her every time I create. I have traveled far from Oswego, but I still carry all the good things that happened to me there.”

—By Linda Loomis ’90 M’97

The earth as a mother
A blue planet seeks to rock us to bliss in every echo and vibration under the ground.

We tread here, but she is the one who magnetizes our steps to her heart.

—Viktoria Valenzuela ‘10

Film emotes an aesthetic that cannot be recreated digitally. In addition, he says the film industry has been established long enough for all components to be reusable, even the light sensitive silver halide on film stock is collected and recycled. Inversely, “with digital you need to buy a new camera every five years when yours becomes out of date.

“There are some merits to digital filmmaking,” Dodd admits, “but the skills you learn working with film, like careful planning and attention to light, translate to digital and will ultimately make you a better filmmaker.”

He was first exposed to working with film while earning a B.F.A. in film, photography and visual arts at Ithaca College, though he grew up enjoying movies from directors like Steven Spielberg. He taught his first film course while working as a graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

He joined Oswego in 2011. He credits Dr. Amy Shore and Dr. Bennet Shaber for seeking out someone with experience in 16 mm and experimental film.

Dodd says throughout college, he worked in an oil refinery to fund his films. His advice to aspiring filmmakers?

“If your dream is to make films, start now, and don’t ever stop making films.”

—Tyler Edic ’13

The earth as a mother
A blue planet seeks to rock us to bliss in every echo and vibration under the ground.

We tread here, but she is the one who magnetizes our steps to her heart.

—Viktoria Valenzuela ‘10
Developing Dichotomies into Balance

Black and white. Animalistic and humanistic. Public and private. Technique and passion. Professor Juan Perdiguero has manipulated opposing elements into a harmonious and satisfying life as an artist and a teacher.

Using only paper towels, cotton swabs and his hands, he draws large-scale, lifelike images of mostly dogs and monkeys by wiping away black etching ink from non-absorbent, luminescent photographic paper—a technique he spent 20 years perfecting.

"I wanted to bring together painting, drawing and photography," says Madrid native Perdiguero. "I wanted to create a process and an image that was very hybrid—a combination of different approaches. I am fascinated by how the combination of dark and light works to generate form. I wanted to create an image that was very photo-realistic from a distance, but generated completely by hand."

The result is a 12-hour process that generates intense images meant to spur the viewer into thinking about their conflicting human and animalistic nature. "A mind game," he says.

He describes his passion for teaching and creating art as showcasing two distinctly different sides of his own nature. "Making art is a very intimate and personal thing," he says. "It nurtures the relationship I have with myself."

When he teaches, he says he has to dissect his private art-making moments into teachable lessons that help students develop their own ideas that connect to technical art processes.

"I'm very shy, but when I'm in front of the classroom, suddenly something happens and I just open up, all my energy flows, I start talking a lot and engaging with my students," he says."It's very satisfying when you see that the students synthesize all the information and create art that is personal and unique to them."

"I have great balance in my life," he says.

—Margaret Spillett
Curtain Up on Professor’s Plays and Pedagogy

Brad Korbesmeyer teaches advanced playwriting in Lee Hall dance space because, he says, “Plays are not for the page; they’re for the stage.”

In his 22nd year at Oswego, Korbesmeyer is associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. But, this recipient of the President’s Advisor of the Year Award and Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching is drawn to interactions with students. That’s why he teaches one playwriting course a semester.

Korbesmeyer says Oswego creative writing students are prepared for the vicissitudes of arts careers, and he credits Leigh Allison Wilson, program director, and the faculty with ensuring that graduates have marketable skills.

“Still,” he says, “it takes a leap of faith. Writers don’t have that transitional internship or student teaching experience to ease them forward. But they have a sophisticated understanding of what’s important. They know a big pay-

check alone will not give their lives meaning.”

Korbesmeyer says the program provides depth, through a progression of three genre-specific courses; breadth, through classes across all genres—recently including screenwriting—and community, through small classes and workshops. “We are one of a handful of undergraduate programs to bring all these strengths together,” he says.

Like other professors, Korbesmeyer models the writing life. Twain’s Last Chapter had a staged reading at the Mark Twain House in Hartford, Conn., last year, and a play is “percolating” from his recent trip to Botswana.

“All successful artists integrate their work into the pattern of their lives,” Korbesmeyer says. “Art demands a tempo and a template. When I show up at this time and in this place, I am reminded: I am a writer.”

— Linda Loomis ’90 M’97

Professional Playwright Credits Oswego for Success

Ryan Sprague ’06 has had a one-act play, Some Just Do It Naturally, selected for the Outworks GLBTQ Play Festival in Baton Rouge, La. It is a revision of his first student work at Oswego.

Sprague’s thriller, East in Red, was produced at Kraine Theatre in New York City in February, and several other plays have had staged readings and workshops. His student-written play Reach, nominated for a Syracuse Area Live Theater award in 2012, has been made into a feature-length film, Reverie Lane, for which he did the screenwriting.

“I give credit for my playwriting career to Professor Brad Korbesmeyer,” Sprague says, and he thanks “staunch supporter” Dr. Patrick Murphy for teaching him to read between the lines of dialogue to get the true meaning of a play.

In the Oswego theatre department, Sprague was mentored by Mark Cole ’73. “He taught me to step out of the box and to never be afraid to try something different.”

Inspired to be courageous for art, Sprague moved to Queens, where he spends daytime researching outlets and submitting his work. Freelancing for magazines helps pay bills.

“My creativity is sparked at night,” Sprague says. “That’s when I work on plays, doing whatever I can to translate my feelings into my characters.”

— Linda Loomis ’90 M’97

Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Brad Korbesmeyer

Ryan Sprague ’06
Long Run in Theatre Department Closing for Professor, Actor, Playwright

In 1979, Mark Cole ’73 debuted as an instructor in Oswego’s department of speech and theatre. He agreed to a one-year commitment. Thirty-five years later, the curtain falls on his final exit from a remarkable performance. He says he doesn’t know exactly how retirement will play, but he will continue to write and perform.

Teaching and acting come naturally to Cole, whose family is replete with musicians and educators. He earned an M.F.A. in performance at New York University in 1978, finding it “tremendously energizing” to study in the heart of American theatre.

Cole brought that energy to Central New York, where, in addition to his Oswego contributions, he has enriched the arts as a playwright, actor and director. He played Fool in Syracuse Shakespeare Festival’s February production of King Lear, Rev Sheldur in the 2013 independent film Impossible Choice, and many other critically acclaimed roles. His Poe/Play, a biographical piece, has been produced at high schools, festivals and professional venues in New York City and London.

Oswego alumni remember participating in or attending productions of Twelfth Night, Antigone, Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure and other Mark Cole-directed hits. Integrating his interest in local history, writing and performing, he created The Glass Coffin: a Ghost Story, On the Terrace of the Pontiac Hotel, and Speaking of Sheldon, for the 2011 sesquicentennial of SUNY Oswego, when Robin Curtis ’78 joined the Chamber Readers to bring to life the words of founder Edward Austin Sheldon.

Cole, who served as chair from 1995 to 2009, developed and updated theatre department courses and upheld the practice of participatory learning. He worked collaboratively to produce an annual Renaissance Madrigal Banquet, a dramatic portrayal of campus life for incoming freshmen and the summer theatre institute.

Assessing his career, Cole says he’s glad the one-year commitment stretched to a satisfying 35 years of helping students learn and love theatre by taking chances and embracing process.

“For me, a course, a production, a workshop is never about what I’m going to teach,” Cole says. “It’s about what I’m going to learn.”

—Linda Loomis ’90 M’97

... look on every exit as being an entrance somewhere else.

—TOM STOPPARD
Keeper of the Torch

The Oswego Alumni Association ensures the bonds among 78,000 alumni remain strong.

BY MARGARET SPILLET

On Commencement Eve for nearly 90 years, SUNY Oswego alumni have ceremoniously passed the torch of learning from one generation to the next, with the charge—penned in 1936 by then Chair of the English Department Dr. Lida S. Penfield ’19—to carry the “light transferred from our school, through us, to others.” As light passes from one candle to the next during the Commencement Eve Torchlight Ceremony, the newly minted Oswego graduates one by one add their strength to the hearth of their alma mater so that “its glory may never be dimmed.”

In many ways, the Oswego Alumni Association serves as the keeper of the torch for our nearly 78,000 alumni today. Through regional events, Greek and campus reunions, posts to social media or distribution of the OSWEGO Alumni Magazine, the OAA rekindles alumni’s passion for their alma mater, helps them maintain their connections to each other and keeps the light on for them in King Alumni Hall—their home on campus.

“Our alumni association plays a vital role on this campus,” says College President Deborah F. Stanley. “We see it as an integral partner in connecting our powerful alumni network to the college community and the activities unfolding on campus. One of my favorite Dr. Edward Austin Sheldon quotes is, ‘We have one interest continued on page 32
and one aim—to raise this school to its highest degree of usefulness.” The Oswego Alumni Association is the embodiment of Dr. Sheldon’s wish. The Oswego Alumni Association helps collect the expertise and passion of our alumni as they give their time, talent and treasure to support our students and carry forward our academic mission."

Six priorities have fueled the OAA’s success throughout its history: record-keeping, communication, fundraising, alumni services, reunions and alumni recognition (See Programs Snapshot), says Kay Benedict Sgarlata ’65, an author and a retired teacher from Syracuse who served on the board of directors for years, including as president from 1990 to 1995.

“I really don’t think the mission or goals of the alumni association have changed much throughout its history,” Sgarlata says. “Every man and woman who came to Oswego and graduated are members of this club. Our educational experience and love for Oswego unite us.”

Glowing Embers

Edith Maloney Knight ’50, a retired elementary teacher and a long-time former board member from Oswego, has witnessed the dramatic growth the alumni association has had in her lifetime. She recalls a small group of Oswego-area alumni gathering for socials, organizing alumni trips to wineries and tourist attractions and occasionally pairing up with admissions staff to recruit high school students to Oswego.

Volunteers have always been a vital part of the OAA, and Knight coordinated fellow alumni and students to work the phones for the annual telefund, remembering to write down any address change or professional and personal updates that alumni shared with them.

“This was before computers,” Knight says. “We had stacks of paper and files that we made sure got passed on to try to keep the files up to date. But people move, women get married and people change jobs. Record-keeping is never done.”

Nor is there any pause in changes on a college campus.

During Knight’s years on the alumni board, the OAA created gift club designations to recognize alumni who contribute to The Fund for Oswego at specific levels. The association also hired employees to enhance what the alumni volunteers had accomplished.

SUNY Oswego, founded as a normal school, remained a college exclusively for teacher education until 1962, evolving after that point to its present configuration as an institution of higher learning with four primary colleges: the School of Business, the School of Education, the School of Communication, Media and the Arts, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Growth and diversification of programming resulted in alumni from a broad range of academic disciplines working in equally diverse careers throughout the world.
**SNAPSHOT:**

**Programs**
- Affinity Group Reunions
- Alumni Awards Program
- Alumni-In- Residence
- Alumni Records Management
- Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK)
- Athletic Hall of Fame
- Backpack to Briefcase
- Future Alumni Network (FANs)
- Graduates of the Last Decade (GOLD)
- Legacy Student and Parent Reception
- Lunch and Learn webinars
- NYC Career Connections
- Regional Events Program
- Reunion Weekend
- Senior Class Program
- Torchlight Ceremonies

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Adding A Fresh Spark

A lumnis association staff and board members consciously started to recruit a more diverse board.

“We reached out to those alumni who were in communication with the alumni office on a regular basis or who were donors to serve on the board,” Sgarlata says. “Our board took on a new dimension of a greater worldview. We had people in public relations, administration, banking, law and other fields. We made major leaps to become a very professional board, with members who attended meetings consistently, shared their expertise generously and supported the college financially.”

For the past 30 years, Betsy Oberst has worked for the association, and she currently serves as its executive director and as associate vice president of alumni relations and stewardship.

“The board is the face of our 78,000 alumni and advises us on how best to serve those graduates,” Oberst says. “The members represent a variety of majors, occupations, regional locations, class years and backgrounds. We have a terrific group of volunteers who have worked hard to develop a thoughtful strategic plan to guide our work.”

**Jennifer Shropshire ’86,** a management science graduate and a partner at Edward F. Swenson & Associates Inc. in Philadelphia, said she joined the board in 1997 during the initial period of diversification and has been part of creating three strategic plans for the association.

“Every strategic plan has gotten better both in terms of focus, and also in terms of the association’s ability to achieve the objectives called for in the plan,” says Shropshire, who served as

continued on page 34

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1986 OAA centennial celebrated with college’s 125th anniversary
1987 Alumni Mentor program introduced (now Alumni Sharing Knowledge ASK)
1990 Welcoming Torchlight Ceremony initiated
1991 OAA moved to King Alumni Hall
1994 Division of Alumni & University Development established
1994 Alumni-In-Residence (AIR) program initiated
1995 Betsy Oberst named association director
1996 First Return to Oz Alumni of Color reunion held
1997 Golden Alumni Society established
2001 NYC Career Connections launched
2001 Athletic Hall of Fame established
2006 Future Alumni Network (FANs) program initiated
2008 Graduates Of the Last Decade (GOLD) program launched
2008 First capital campaign Inspiring Horizons reaches $23.85 million, thanks to more than 22,000 donors
2008 GOLD Welcome to the City series launched
2008 Reunion Weekend crowds reached record heights, totaling near 1,400 people
president from 2004 to 2008 and remains active as a board member and as the national chair of The Fund for Oswego with the College Foundation. "We now have a board that I have always wanted. We talk about measurable outcomes as a matter of course."

Current Board President Keith Chamberlain ’87, a communications graduate and the director of business development at EDUCAUSE in Boulder, Colo., said before he got involved with the association, he thought it simply produced the magazine and organized reunion.

“Now, I realize that association board and staff do so much more—GOLD events, Alumni-In-Residence, NYC Career Connections, Athletic Hall of Fame luncheon, communication studies dinner and on and on,” Chamberlain says. “We’re always looking to develop professional and meaningful interactions with a broad group of alumni so that Oswego remains an important part of the post-college experience.”

He outlines the OAA’s current goals to:

- build and sustain a strong infrastructure, including the staff and the board of directors
- Help build a culture of alumni supporting the college by sharing their personal, professional and financial gifts
- Position the association as a value-added component on campus and within the broad alumni network
- Engage alumni and friends in activities and programs

Oberst says she and the staff have been working with Chamberlain and the other board members to embrace change and be ready to adapt to the current and future needs of their alumni members.

“We are continuously looking to create opportunities that are meaningful to our alumni,” Oberst says. “For example, during the downturn in the economy, we tried to connect alumni to career services support and to other alumni working in their fields.”

Burning Ever Brighter

As higher education evolves with more online program offerings and technologies that enable remote learning and connection, the association will revise and update its services and events for alumni who may never have stepped foot on the physical campus.

“The type of programs, services and other ‘traditional’ activities will certainly have to adapt to the new norms, whatever they may be,” Chamberlain says. “Our staff will need to accommodate the new reality, especially as consumers continue to adapt to the ‘marketplace of me’—a world filled with custom, person-specific experiences.”

However, past and present OAA leaders agree that nothing will take the place of meaningful personal and professional relationships.

“Social media keeps recent alumni far more united than we ever were from the Class of 1965,” Sgarlata says. “But there is nothing that replaces sitting down next to somebody, sharing stories and spending quality time with them. That goes way beyond the sound bites available on social media.”

Chamberlain concludes: "No matter what the future looks like, the Oswego Alumni Association will always be about ensuring connections with our growing numbers of alumni are made, kept and nurtured.”

And, alumni can take comfort knowing that the OAA will be keeping the torch to ensure its flame never wanes.

Reporting about the history of the association was pulled from Dorothy Rogers’ book SUNY College at Oswego: Its Second Century Unfolds (1988, The College).
Alumna Applies Legal Skills to Help Nonprofits

Any attorney worth her salt could make a case that the results retired attorney M. Catherine Richardson '63 H'05 has achieved in her exceptional legal career are balanced equally by the impact she has made through her volunteer work.

For nearly 40 years, Richardson has donated her time and talents to a wide range of civic and community organizations locally and more recently on national boards as well. Her latest accomplishment is being elected chair of the Board of Trustees of SRC Inc., a not-for-profit research and development company in North Syracuse, N.Y.

"I am proud to help this major employer and innovator accomplish its goals," says Richardson, who has served on SRC's board for more than 15 years. "I also felt it was an honor and my responsibility to show that a woman can lead a board of a STEM-focused company."

The position allows Richardson to revisit her roots in the sciences and mathematics, passions which she said the great Oswego faculty encouraged her to pursue. Before earning a J.D. from Syracuse University, she was a high school math teacher and continues to advocate for young people, especially young women in the STEM fields.

During her stellar legal career at Bond, Schoeneck and King in Syracuse, she represented large nonprofits focused on health care, school districts and a variety of businesses. In 1996, she became only the second woman elected president of the New York State Bar Association, and earned recognition at the county and state level for her pro bono work on women's issues.

Since retiring 10 years ago, she has put the skills she developed as a lawyer—listening and creative problem-solving, in particular—to use serving on dozens of boards. She served her alma mater as a member of the College Council, a speaker at Honors Convocation, and the chair of the Oswego College Foundation board of directors. Richardson, who attended law school with President Deborah F. Stanley, says she has been impressed with the college's evolution under her colleague's leadership.

"My mantra is to give back," she says. "I'm proud to support my alma mater. It's been fun watching Oswego grow and become a more prominent educational institution."

—Margaret Spillett

William Kean '56 works in commercial fishing with Kean Fishing Charters. He was an army paratrooper who met his wife, the late Harriet Giordano Kean '55, at Oswego.

Otto Thomas '63 was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame at the 19th Annual Sloan Consortium International Conference on Online Learning. He was recognized for his significant contributions across the education spectrum, including establishing opportunities for members of the U.S. Armed Services to gain access to higher education.

Jerry Passer '59 moved to his new home in Fuquay-Varina, N.C., in November. He plays tennis and golf and enjoys arranging neighborhood parties.

Bernard E. Farrow '61 and his wife, Arlene Mendelson Farrow '61, have four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Bernard is employed with the Craggy Correctional Center as a substance abuse counselor and Arlene works full time, taking care of the home, Bernard and their pet, Lucy. The couple resides in North Carolina.
Global Experiences Inform Alumns’ Approach to Life

During his work overseas, Rick Zinter ’74 has procured much more than supplies for his employers. He acquired a unique worldview that has shaped his life philosophy.

“The travel I’ve done for work helped me realize we need to enjoy the journey, not just the destination,” he says. “Whether the destination is to reach retirement, go on vacation or visit with my two sons, I remind myself and my sons not to focus so much on the goal that you don’t enjoy the path you take to get there.”

His job as a global procurement manager for companies like Xerox, Tyco and his current employer, Jedson Engineering, has taken him to jobs in Japan, Hong Kong, California and Florida, in addition to shorter visits to several other countries and U.S. states.

He enjoys the work’s diversity as he handles the logistics, financial, legal and social aspects of purchasing materials from global suppliers, arranging for their transportation to manufacturers and seeing them incorporated into final products for sale.

During a recent two-year assignment in Saudi Arabia, Zinter says he spent most of his time working 12-hour shifts, six days a week, and then enjoying fishing, snorkeling and scuba diving in the Red Sea on his day off. He also made a list of things to do when he returned stateside, like spending more time with his family and catching a Laker men’s hockey game in the Campus Center Arena, which didn’t exist when his roommate, Don Padgett ’74, played on the team.

He remembers fondly the many afternoon trips with his senior-year roommate, Michael “Mook” Moroukian ’74, to Kelly’s for a drink and to shoot some pool, and trudging through the snow from Waterbury to Onondaga to visit a friend. Although he says he has lost touch with many of his classmates, he believes that he “could call any of them and just start talking, and it would be fine.”

His global experience, he says, affirmed a similar truth. “No matter where you go, most people are truly good.” —Margaret Spillett

Louis De Carolis ’64 lives in Colorado with his wife, Carolyn Sue. He spends his days RVing, motorcycling and woodturning.

Angelo Marinelli ’64 is a retired guidance counselor with the Auburn (N.Y.) School District. He was a part of the national council for social studies and intramural sports at Oswego. Angelo resides in Auburn with his wife, Marlene. The couple has three grandchildren.

Carol Smith Doogan Walters ’64 is a retired teacher, residing in Centerport, N.Y. She enjoys spending time with her grandchildren, traveling and visiting her son in Australia.

Elizabeth Turbyfill Wilmsen ’64 resides in St. Louis, Mo. She was a member of Alpha Sigma Chi at Oswego.

Susan Wimberly Higgins ’65 is enjoying retirement, filling her days with swimming, fishing, motorcycles and dancing. She resides in Florida.

Jonathan C. Christie ’68 of Anthem, Ariz., has fond memories of Nunzi’s and Rudy’s in Oswego.

Peter Clement ’71, deputy director for intelligence for analytic programs at the CIA, is a professor at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs during a two-year hiatus through the CIA’s Officer in Residence program.

Erin Griffin Dinneen ’71 of Hamilton, N.Y., is a retired school librarian. She majored in secondary English education at Oswego.

E. Ric Frataccia ’71, superintendent of the Portage (Ind.) Township Schools, since 2012, was named the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents 2014 District 1 Superintendent of the Year. He formerly served as the district’s assistant superintendent, the superintendent in Union Township (Ind.) Schools and an administrator at Valparaiso (Ind.) Community Schools. He is a member of the Association of Supervision of Curriculum Development and of the Indiana School Boards Association.

Benjamin Beauchamp ’72 is a research assistant at Harvard Medical School. He was a member of Sigma Gamma Fraternity at Oswego.

Bruce Coville ’73, children’s author from Syracuse, N.Y., received the Friends of the Central Library’s Muriel Koretz Award, for his impact on children’s literacy in Central New York. A former elementary teacher, he was one of 121 children’s authors who sent a letter to President Obama opposing excessive testing in school.

Robert W. Parow ’73 of Belleville, N.Y., founded My 3rd Leg Inc. in 2009, a company that produces whimsical walking canes designed to look like a human leg bone. A U.S. Navy veteran, he taught technology for 30 years at Sauquoit Valley Central Schools in Oneida County before retiring 2005.

Jack Carr ’74 is an instructor at SUNY Cortland. He was a member of Alpha Psi Omega at Oswego.

Doug Hutson ’74 has retired as the principal of Westhill (N.Y.) Central School District’s middle school after 38 years in public education. He is enjoying retirement by boating in the Thousand Islands and gardening.
Joseph Michael Midura ’74 is a retired English teacher, residing in Chesapeake, Va., with his wife, Susan. He belonged to the symphonic choir, swim and ski team at Oswego.

Patrick Murphy ’74 placed second in the 2013 New England Swim Championships and placed fifth, sixth and eighth in three events at the 2013 National Swim Championships in Indianapolis. He resides in Simsbury, Conn., with his wife, Yvonne.

Kenneth Lachman ’75 is retired from the Boeing Company and resides in Lakewood, Wash.

Douglas L. Lohnas ’75, Ed.D., rejoined the workforce as the interim dean of the Division of Business, Criminal Justice and Law at Schenectady County Community College after retiring from the Niskayuna (N.Y.) School District five years ago. His wife, Susan Pierce Lohnas ’74, continues to excel as a program manager at General Electric.

Teresa McHugh ’75 and Antonette Jordan ’11 are company members of Soul Steps, a stepping dance team based in New York City. The company modeled Rick Owens’ collection while delivering a performance in his fashion show in September.

Joseph Bussa ’77 is planning a 45th anniversary reunion for Zeta Chi Zeta fraternity. His favorite memory of Oswego was the Greek life. Joseph resides in Albany, N.Y., with his wife, Shelly.

Cathy VanDerbilt Oxley ’77 is the new library media specialist at Benton Elementary School in Maine. She was a member of Phi Lambda Phi sorority at Oswego.

Richard Yacobush ’77 was promoted from general sales manager to market manager at Clear Channel in Syracuse, N.Y., in January. With 40 years of experience in the Syracuse radio market, he started out on-air as “Rick Charles for 1490 WOLF” before transitioning into sales.

Maj. Donald M. Faughnan ’78 was named New York State Police Troop C commander headquartered at the Sidney station in Unadilla. The unit covers seven counties including Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga and Tompkins. He started his career at Troop C, and was promoted to sergeant in 1988, lieutenant in 1995 and captain in 2004.

Wendy Graham ’80 works for BAE Systems in Endicott, N.Y. She resides in Binghamton, N.Y.

Donald Lane ’80 lives in New Jersey with his wife, Barbara, and has three grandchildren. He enjoys line dancing and is a Boy Scout leader.

Diane Cohen Morgan ’80 operates her own business, Sunny Di Pet Care, and volunteers her communications/PR skills to worthy causes or individuals. She is also on the board of Tribes Hill, a Lower Hudson Valley musician community. Diane resides in Hartsdale, N.Y., with her husband, Tom, and three pets.

Robert J. Natoli ’80 is launching a fitness center at the former Breeze Chevrolet dealership in Salina, N.Y. He resides in Oswego with his wife, Peggy.

Daniel Riordan ’81 was elected president of the London-based Berne Union. His election marks the first time in nearly 30 years that a representative of the private market is president of the trade credit insurer organization.

David G. Herring ’82 of Baldwinsville, N.Y., recently became a certified divorce financial analyst and is a member of Bowers & Co. Tax Department in Syracuse. Herring has also recently completed interdisciplinary collaborative divorce training and is a member of the CNY Collaborative Family Law Professionals Inc. He is also a member of the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals.

Wanda Szymanski Padula ’82 is a physics teacher at Liverpool (N.Y.) High School.

Gregory Frank ’83 is the chief operating officer for Human Technologies Corporation in Utica, N.Y. He resides in Horseheads, N.Y.

Laura Balukas Pfister ’83 remembers the mud fights on campus that she had with friends. She enjoyed participating in cross country skiing and the dance marathon at Oswego. Laura feels her greatest honor to date is raising her two children and stays busy by keeping everyone in her life happy.

Hope Rosenhaus Schissel ’83 is an instructional assistant with Manalapan-Englishtown (N.J.) Regional School District and a music educator at the Triangle Arts Academy in Red Bank, N.J.

Mr. Hoffman is Teacher of the Year—‘He Totally Deserves It’

Among those announcing the news that Jay Hoffman ’81 was 2013 Vermont Teacher of the Year were his media students at F. H. Tuttle Middle School.

They grasped the magnitude of his honor, declaring, “He totally deserves it.” Hoffman came late to teaching. “I’m a hands-on guy,” he explains. “I studied industrial arts education at Oswego to learn building skills.” He ran his own construction company until 1992, when the Wappinger Falls school superintendent stopped by the Hoffman’s garage sale and, after brief conversation, encouraged the carpenter to become a teacher. Hoffman took his advice.

“I walked into that middle school classroom, and I knew it was where I was meant to be,” he says.

Hoffman’s entry into teaching coincided with the shift from a tool-based to a technology-rich classroom. Grasping the potential of teaching skills for the future, he secured a $20,000 grant—the first of many totaling more than $500,000—that launched a network to give students remote access to homework assignments.

“I’m never comfortable with the status quo,” Hoffman says. “I’m a visionary.”

In addition to technical skills, he also teaches civic responsibility and community awareness. His students create informational videos for nonprofits and promotional videos for local agencies.

As a teacher of the year, Hoffman met President Barack Obama, had his profile in American Teachers: Heroes in the Classroom, was appointed to the Vermont State Education Policy Board and saw positive outcomes for his students. He says he appreciates it all.

Hoffman credits Oswego for molding the precepts he implements every day. His philosophy, displayed with his photo on a Teacher of the Year poster, helps explain why he’s a top educator. “Be a student of your students,” it says.

—Linda Loomis ’90 M’97
Joseph Coughlin ’82, right, director of MIT’s AgeLab, was one of three keynote speakers at the 2013 CEO Forum in Napa Valley, Calif., in November. His talk on the impact of demographic change and aging on global business followed former U.S. Secretary of Defense and CIA Director Robert Gates and preceded former U.S. President Bill Clinton, pictured above with Coughlin. The three keynote speakers addressed more than 100 CEOs of the nation’s leading corporations at the event.

Allan Shaw ’86 of East Hampton, N.Y., was named to the board of directors of Celsus Therapeutics. He also served as a member of the board of directors for the Central New York Biotech Accelerator.

Pamela Ackerman Garcia ‘87 of Fanwood, N.J., celebrates her 20th year in education. She was recently appointed as the language arts supervisor in Westfield Public Schools in New Jersey and is an adjunct professor of graduate courses in secondary education and educational administration at the College of New Jersey.

Richard Sloma ’87 of Niskayuna, N.Y., retired after 31 years of military service in the Active Army, the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard. A veteran of the War in Afghanistan, Col. Sloma was most recently the commander of the New York Counterdrug Task Force, headquartered at Stratton Air National Guard Base.

Tricia Ullrich O’Connor ’88 of Manlius, N.Y., joined McClurg Remodeling & Construction Services as a project consultant. O’Connor has worked in the construction trade industry for 16 years and previously held positions as an AutoCAD designer and junior architect.

Scott Stanford ’88 is joining WPIX, Tribune Broadcasting’s CW affiliate in New York City. He is a four-time New York Emmy Award winner for On-Camera Achievement and is an in-studio host for World Wrestling Entertainment.

Kevin Bryans ’89, chief financial officer and shareholder of Polaris Library Systems in Liverpool, N.Y., was appointed to the Loretto Management Corporation Board of Directors. He is a certified public accountant and chartered global management accountant licensed in New York State.

Elizabeth Kempson Stewart ’89 M’10 is the new director for Sunny Days Nursery School in Central Square, N.Y.

Michael J. Lombardo ’90 is director of business development at ISSI Technology Professionals in East Syracuse, N.Y. Previously, he worked at Automatic Data Processing as the regional sales director for Syracuse and Albany, and more recently at HR One Consulting as the director of sales and marketing.

Daniel D. Tompkins ’92 is director of sales at Alliance Worldwide Investigative Group Inc. in Clifton Park, N.Y. He is the previous owner of property/casualty adjusting firm, acquired by Alliance.

Peter Giacobbi Jr. ’93 is an associate professor at West Virginia University, College of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences.

Renee Abstender Marchak ’94 was elected president of the Oswego Greek Alumni Council. She was a member of Delta Phi Epsilon. Renee is a personal coordinator for Maxim Healthcare Services in Syracuse. She resides in Brewerton, N.Y., with her husband, James Marchak ’94, and three children.

Raymond Warner ’94 is a fiber network technician for Verizon in Pittsburgh. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth ’17, is attending Oswego making her a third generation student, following her father, late mother Meredith Luke Warner ’94 and grandparents.

Roberto (Bobby) Ascenzi ’95 earned a master’s degree in counseling and is a member of the Chi Sigma Iota Honor Society. He works at Novelia Corp. in Oswego.

Robert Fahey ’95 is the assistant vice president of group business development and support for Guardian Life Insurance in Bethlehem, Pa. He was a member of Delta Sigma Fraternity at Oswego.

Christopher Brandolino ’96 was voted Best TV personality in the Syracuse New Times’ Best of Syracuse reader poll. He was the storm team meteorologist for News Channel 9 and Bridge Street co-host until he became a meteorologist and...
Alumni Bookshelf

We celebrate and share the success of Oswego alumni authors, illustrators and recording artists, who may ask their publisher/distributor to send a copy of the work to the Oswego alumni office to be considered for this column and our website, where cover photos of all works in this column will be displayed.

Heraldo Muñoz ‘72


Jo Ann Butler ’76


Carrying the reader back to the landscape and sensibilities of Colonial America, Butler reveals the prevailing prejudice against women who fail to meet the Puritans’ standards of fidelity and chastity. In this second installment featuring defiant Herodias Long, the protagonist challenges injustice, defies conventions and stands for religious freedom.

Mark Condon ’93 and Julie Phillips ’89


This tale about inclusion is told in rhyming couplets through the voice of Dutchess, a blind therapy dog. Rich illustrations by Sammy Schreiber depict persons and animals with physical and developmental challenges, and the text addresses a variety of insecurities and fears that Dutchess helps her friends overcome.

Diane Staehr Fenner ’91


A guideline for advocacy in the school system for the rapidly growing K–12 population of English learners and their families, this book provides practical tools for teachers, administrators and guidance counselors. Dr. Staehr Fenner’s research helps all educators understand the challenges of English learners and take appropriate actions to give them voice in their schools as well as preparation for their post-high-school lives.

Carolyn Hirst-Loucks ’77 M’02 and Kim P. Loucks ’02


In the final chapter of this must-have book for teachers, the authors refer to W. B. Yeats’ tenet that education should not be the filling of buckets but, rather, the lighting of fires. Adhering to that idea, the authors put forth ways to create an exciting learning environment in every discipline and class level through active engagement. Grounded in research about the value of play, the book is a resource that helps promote higher-level thinking and creativity.

David J. Parrett ’80


A step-by-step guide to creating a marriage that conquers the challenges of modern life, this book reveals the author’s ongoing research into marriage and pre-marital assessment. Parrot asks couples to base their unions not on love alone, but also on such core issues as values, expectations, career and home responsibilities, children, dealing with adversity and more. An easy-to-use workbook accompanies the guide.

John W. Parsons ’54


Renowned for her expertise in astronomy and unfettered space travel, Dr. Kaitlin Graham, professor, is on the radar of the unstable and illusionary. She receives a letter with photographs showing the writer with alien creatures that pulls her and two friends further and further into the unknown as they try to evade the evil side of a government that seeks world domination through unlimited space travel.

Jeff Sawyer ’87 – CD


Thirteen original songs for solo piano and various instruments make up this, the seventh of Sawyer’s CDs. Country/bluegrass fiddler Kate Lee Gurnow plays violin on “Glimpse of Heaven.”

Alan Scott ’55


Eleven short stories based on authentic situations seen through the author’s critical eye reveal the human side of public education as it comes into conflict with the political regulatory side. Although the book is a work of fiction, the issues raised are real and can initiate discussions about educational reform.

Eric Congdon ’92


In his fourth CD, Congdon presents a collection of 13 instrumental songs featuring the sounds of guitar, dobro, mandocello and more. Half of the proceeds go to the Autism Science Foundation.
forecaster at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research in Auckland, New Zealand in January.

Jenise Ciola ’96 is executive vice president of human resources at ITV Studios U.S. Group in New York City. With 10 years of experience in the music industry, she held a similar position at Universal Music Group, previously called EMI Music.

Sean Doyle ’98, senior property manager at McGuire Development Company in Buffalo, N.Y., earned the designation of real property administrator from the Building Owners and Managers Institute. He is responsible for maximizing asset potential for McGuire’s owned and managed properties.

Regina Evans Geroux ’99 M’01 and Timothy Geroux ’00 of Sherrill, N.Y., welcomed a daughter, Lindsay Alexandra, in August. Lindsay joins brother, Nathan, 5, and sister, Madelyn, 3. Regina is a first-grade teacher with the Vernon-Verona-Sherrill Central School District, while Timothy works as a senior claims examiner with the Utica First Insurance Company.

Laura S. Denny Prattico ’99 is marketing director at Danlee Medical Products Inc. in Syracuse, N.Y. She has more than 14 years of experience in marketing.

Deborah Fiorini ’01 was appointed director of educational services for Crouse Hospital in Syracuse, N.Y., having served in the department since 2009.

Nicole Ritchie Bartoszewski ’02, a physician assistant, joined the medical team at Carthage Area Hospital, and is working at the Adams (N.Y.) Community Health Center and in the emergency room of Carthage (N.Y.) Area Hospital. She previously worked at River Hospital in Alexandria Bay, N.Y.

Michael Kite ’02 of Liverpool, N.Y., was named director of corporate support for WCNY, Central New York’s public broadcasting company. He was involved with WNYO while at Oswego.

Kevin P. Relf ’02, a certified public accountant, was named to the F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse Inc. Board of Directors. He is a tax supervisor at Fust Charles Chambers LLP in Syracuse, N.Y., and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants.

Randall Rosenthal ’03 and wife, Rochelle, of Attleboro, Mass., welcomed a daughter, Sadie Mia Rosenthal, in September.

Jane Spyropoulos ’03 of Batavia, N.Y., is a senior business analyst at JPMorgan Chase.

Craig Wiseman ’03 is a producer with Al Jazeera America in New York City.

Matthew Kleehammer ’04 has been a technology teacher for the past 10 years. He earned a master’s degree from RIT but said at the end of the day, Oswego is where he got his start.

Victor Parker ’04 was hired by Sun Life Financial as its stop-loss specialist for Upstate New York. He was a part of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.

Rochester Alumnus Rules Real Estate

When he’s not accepting awards, buying real estate or breaking land speed records in one of his vintage vehicles, Lylha Wilton ’99 is probably spending time with his five children, singing and playing guitar.

The 36-year-old real estate mogul started buying properties almost immediately after earning a bachelor’s in communication studies at SUNY Oswego. After moving to Rochester, N.Y., for a job he didn’t enjoy, Wilton quickly realized that he wanted to be his own boss.

“I was ready to go out and get it. I didn’t know what ‘it’ was at the time,” he says. “Yet, I was aggressively working toward it.” He bought his first home, a foreclosure, in 2001. After purchasing another property shortly after, he was “addicted to the hunt” of finding and closing deals.

“I was young. I made as many deals over the phone as I could, so people would take me seriously,” he says. Over the last decade he purchased more than 50 properties, sometimes as many as 15 in a year, targeting foreclosures and run-down homes in poor neighborhoods.

Most of the properties Wilton owns are in the Alexander Street area, in the southeast quadrant of the city, long considered an area of redevelopment.

“I wanted to buy and bring exposure to the up-and-coming neighborhood, so people would stop calling it ‘the up-and-coming neighborhood,’” he says.

This development included the establishment of Boulder Coffee Co. boutique in four locations, La Casa Mexican restaurant, more than 150 rental units and a warehouse in which Wilton stores his collectibles of “all things vintage”—namely, cars and motorcycles, which he fixes and races in his free time.

—Tyler Edic ’13
Social Worker’s Goal: ‘I Did My Job Today’

When Joseph A. Twumasi-Ankrah ’06 has elicited a smile from a heartbroken child or brought insight to a confused teen, then he can say, “I did my job today.”

Twumasi-Ankrah, a licensed social worker, is site director for Partnership With Children, which works with 12 underserved New York City public schools to provide support for students’ social, emotional and academic development.

A graduate of St. Raymond’s Parochial High School for boys in the Bronx, Twumasi-Ankrah applied to SUNY colleges after he realized his interest in helping people. He learned to respect language after Dr. Maureen Curtin, a mental health counselor at the Child Advocacy Center of Oswego County, previously, worked at the Community Recovery Center in Rome and at the Salvation Army in Syracuse, providing in-home therapy to families who had adopted or were living in a foster home. She is also a part-time therapist working with couples and individuals at the CNY Marriage and Family Therapy Place.

Krístin Hall ’09 is the director of special events at Niagara (N.Y.) Catholic Jr./Sr. High School. She plans all the fundraising, marketing and media for the school while making an effort to broaden the students’ outreach in the community.

James Trionféro ’09, senior accountant in the audit practice group at Testone, Marshall & Discenza LLP in Syracuse, N.Y., earned a certified public accountant license.

Carrie Fleischman ’10 is an HR/payroll technology consultant at HR Works Inc. in East Syracuse, N.Y.

Ashley S. Monaco Garza ’10 and A.J. Garza of Adams, N.Y., were married May 26, 2013, at E.M. Mills Memorial Rose Garden in Thorden Park in Syracuse, N.Y. She is employed by General Brown Central School in Dexter, N.Y.

Jessica Muia ’10 of Harrison, N.Y., is a social worker at the Children’s Village. Her brother, Anthony Muia ’09, also attended Oswego.

Jennifer Poplarski ’10 is a student at Cornell University School of Veterinary Medicine in Ithaca, N.Y.

Justin T. Pritchard ’10 of Liverpool, N.Y., is a senior auditor at Dannible & McKee LLP.

Lisa Seguin ’10 is manager of the Oswego Medicaid Service Coordination, Consolidated Support Services and Family Support Services programs. She started her career as a Medicaid service coordinator at ARISE, became a certified broker and then began to provide state trainings.

Michael Fedor ’11 is an audit associate at Fust Charles Chambers LLP in Syracuse, N.Y. He previously worked as a senior tax specialist at Bank of New York Mellon.

Cathy Roosa ’11 is the new regional volunteer coordinator at United Way of Central New York. She spent the past year in Los Angeles working in marketing and graphic design for a technology firm called IT Strategists.

Kevin Wright ’11 is the master control operator for Fox 68 WSYT/ MY 43 WNYS in Syracuse, N.Y.
Oswego is a long way from home for Priya Ravindran '09. She grew up near Mumbai (formerly Bombay), India, and left home after 17 years to earn two bachelor’s degrees in journalism and global and international studies at Oswego, picking up a minor in French along the way.

After earning a master’s at Fordham University in political science, Ravindran returned to India to work as a research and documentation officer and program manager with Children’s Future India, a non-profit organization dedicated to the welfare of underprivileged children.

1) How you learned about Oswego:
I hadn’t heard of Oswego until I was at a college fair in India and an Oswego representative, Ryan Lemon ’00, was present.

2) From Bombay to Oswego:
Ryan was so friendly and welcoming; plus, Oswego offered me free room and board and a merit scholarship, so that was a huge factor, too. When I first came to Oswego, I wanted to become a news reporter. My mom coaxed me into taking a more “academic” major.

3) Your best travel tip:
I have so many! It really helps if you do your research about a culture first. Having a meal with a family is a great way of experiencing a new culture, but just having a coffee or tea in a cafe outside is a good way of relaxing and sinking into a culture.

4) How Oswego is different from home:
The cold! And coming from a city of 5 million, I was initially taken aback at the small size of the city.

5) Why Children’s Future India:
In India, I saw poverty firsthand. It wasn’t until my politics and international studies class at Oswego that I became passionate about working with an NGO. I chose Children’s Future India because I wanted to play a little part in an organization that works to better these children’s lives.

6) What’s next:
In a couple months I’m moving to Ukraine, and I hope to continue working for a similar organization there.

7) Why pick up the French minor:
I was exempt from the foreign language requirement since my first language is not English. I had done two years of French in India, but took French 101 on my adviser’s insistence. My professor Allen Stagl was amazing and so animated while teaching, he made me fall in love with the language.

8) How many languages do you speak:
My mother tongue, Tamil, as well as English, French and Hindi fluently. I’m currently learning Russian because it’s one of the official languages of the United Nations. I plan to learn Ukrainian as well.

9) Down the road:
Some day I would like to get into the United Nations and possibly move back to New York.

10) What is special about Oswego:
It’s such a close-knit community. The opportunities I had at Oswego, meeting people from all over the world, having the best teachers, working at the front desk at Hart Hall, reporting for WTOP, and volunteering for various community service projects, changed me as a person.

—Tyler Edic ’13
Sharing Music for a Purpose

When a student in a guitar class of Jim Van Arsdale '08 suggested that they sponsor a concert to raise money for a fellow student’s medical expenses, the fifth-grade teacher at Millard Fillmore Elementary School in Moravia, NY, agreed. And so was born, Perform 4 Purpose.

Since that initial concert, Central New York students and veteran performers have hosted dozens of fundraisers and contributed more than $20,000 to local people in need. The nonprofit group, run by Van Arsdale and his daughter, Jen Van Arsdale M’16, has expanded into four after-school programs in two school districts in Cayuga County and a summer camp, all of which culminate with a charity concert.

Through mostly donated musical instruments, the Van Arsdales and a core group of 10 fellow volunteers provide musical instruction, concert bookings and performance support to the students. The group covers its costs through private donations and has recently started applying for grants.

“Seeing our student-driven shows never gets old,” Jim Van Arsdale says. “I love watching these young performers on stage in front of the audience, and they really feel good about themselves. Not only are they performing, they’re learning to be altruistic in the process by sharing their gift to help others. Whatever your talent, use it to uplift your community.”

Van Arsdale knows firsthand the power of sharing something you love. He left a profitable business management career to attend SUNY Oswego and become a teacher.

“It was a risky decision for me, as I had a family to support and a mortgage to pay,” he says. “But it turned out to be the most rewarding choice I could have made.”

—Margaret Spillett

Matters

By Executive Director Betsy Oberst

AS WE PUT TOGETHER THIS issue of the magazine, it was hard for me to believe that almost 30 years ago I excitedly started my new part-time job in the Alumni Office. Our oldest, Caitlin, was just a year old. As Megan and Connor added to our family, the kids grew up going to alumni reunions and other college events with Jerry ’77 and me. Coming full circle, Caitlin will be married this June at Fallbrook Barn, where she attended so many reunions as a little girl!

In those first years, I never dreamed I would still be here today, having found my calling and life’s work. I was excited, then, to work with our new magazine editor, Margaret Spillett, to chronicle the long and rich history of our Alumni Association in this issue. Alumni programs, reunions and certainly Oswego pride began almost at the birth of this college. And how we have grown and evolved—and continue to this day—since the establishment of that first Alumni Association in 1886!

But our mission remains the same today as it was in its beginning—to keep alumni connected to and engaged with their alma mater. Over my years here, I’ve met literally thousands of alumni and been honored to hear your Oswego stories of lifelong friendships, of beloved relationships with nurturing faculty and of career successes. And Oswego alumni always want to give back to our students—helping them launch their careers, supporting them with financial gifts for scholarships and more.

I have said it often over the years—I have the greatest job in the world!

In my newer role now at Oswego, I get to work more with scholarship donors and others who support our students, as well as with our wonderful and committed Board of Directors of the Oswego Alumni Association. The planning and execution of the day-to-day work of alumni events and programs and Reunion Weekend are in the hands of Laura Pavlus ’09 and her alumni team. I continue to provide the institutional history and guidance on a range of issues.

In order to continue to maintain its relevancy, the Alumni Association is seeking your feedback on the programs, services and communications that will serve you best. I hope you will please take a few moments and help us by completing an alumni survey (See page 47). Our Board of Directors and alumni team really want and need your input!

I hope to see you when you return to campus or on our travels around the country. Until then…. 
Peter Wanamaker ’09 and Colleen Fischer ’09 were married June 28, 2013, in Rochester, N.Y. From left, with the bride and groom, are Zack Bell ’13, Jared Watroba ’10, Jenna Schifferle ’13, Lorrie Clemo, Conor Hogan ’10, Joseph Merrihew ’09, Nicole Barbato ’10, Emily Martin ’10, Joseph Farrell ’09, Jessica Osorio ’11 and Connor Kelly ’09.

Debra Penfield ’02 and Brad Weiner were married Aug. 24, 2013, at Glen Island Harbour Club in Westchester, N.Y. Pictured from left are alumni Lauren Dearth Terry ’01, Lindsey Vischarsky Nierstedt ’02, Janelle Drake Popovich ’02, Caitlin Sproule Conlon ’01, Logan Roberts ’01, Andrea Tramontozzi Roberts ’02, Jessica Yearick Ritacco ’02, Amy Diehl Rominger ’02, Jared Kennedy ’00, Christy Sheldon Kennedy ’02, Kristen Murphy Conway, Michael Pool ’01, Alissa Hefter Pool ’01 and Mark Popovich ’01. Debra works in marketing for American Express and Brad is in promotional planning at HBO. The couple resides in Brooklyn, N.Y.
Kayla Brae Randall ‘09 and C. Joshua Raut ‘09 were married on July 20, 2013, at Grace Episcopal Church in Baldwinsville, N.Y. Alumni, from left with the bride and groom, are Kathryn Raut, Patrick Whitton ‘10, Samantha Beza ‘10, Trevor Gregory ‘07, Alyssa Mitchell ‘09, Christopher Klatt ‘07, Alison Richmond ‘10 and Michael Randall. Kayla is a reading teacher and Josh is self-employed.

Jamie Lyn Brown Celeste ‘07 and Craig Celeste ‘07 were married May 25, 2013, in Sayville, N.Y. From left in back row are Kati Larkin ‘08, Tom Donaldson ‘07, Dan King ‘07, Meghan Ryan King ‘07, Ryan Monahan ‘07, Ginger Shwarz Donaldson ‘08, Pat Gariepy ‘07, Katie Toukaitly Miller ‘07, Collin Emunds ‘06 and Josh Miller ‘07 M’08; front row, Michael Kelly ‘08, Brian Kelleher ‘07 and Sean Michel ‘07. Jamie works as a library media specialist and Craig is a middle school technology teacher in Merrick, N.Y. They reside in Long Beach, N.Y.

Mike Novak ‘09 and Quinn Makin Novak ‘10 were married on July 19, 2013, in Buffalo, N.Y. Mike was a member of the Lakers hockey team when it won the 2007 national championship. From left, back row, Derrell Levy ‘09, Mark Lozzi ‘09, Tyler Laws ‘09, Colleen Aragona, Jared Teal ‘08, Michelle Jordan ‘10, Pat Halpin ‘10, Lindsay Coble ‘10 and Katie Killory ‘11; front row, Erin Robson ‘09, Brendan McGlaughlin, Kyle McCutcheon ‘09, Laura Dorsey McCutcheon ‘07, Garren Reisweber ‘09 and Jeff Johnstone.
Loretta Donahue Peck ’39 of Oswego died Oct. 16, 2013. She taught for many years, beginning in one-room schoolhouses and later for Mexico (N.Y.) Academy and Central Schools. She is survived by a daughter, a son, five grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

George Maharay ’41 of Frederick, Md., died Dec. 8, 2013. He served in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. George earned a master’s degree at New York University. He was employed in a number of capacities with the federal government, beginning in 1946 as a personnel officer for the U.S. Military Academy, the Air Force, the Postal Service, the Treasury Department and the Department of Transportation. He retired in 1975 as the director of personnel of the Energy Research and Development Administration. Surviving are his wife, Janet; a daughter; two sons; two grandchildren; and one great-granddaughter.

Frances Dubois Engren ’45 of Clyde, N.Y., died Aug. 10, 2013. She was a teacher for 28 years, including several years in the Altmar-Parish-Wi-lliamstown (N.Y.) School District. Surviving are her husband, George; two sons; two daughters; and five grandchildren.

Naomi Kaufman Loble Stern ’50 of Basking Ridge, N.J., died Sept. 10, 2013. She earned an Ed.D. in educational administration from Rutgers University. Naomi taught at Glenwood Elementary School in Short Hills, N.J., for 25 years, retiring in 1989. She is survived by her husband, Jerome; two daughters; and six grandchildren.

Laura Drew ’51 of Milwaukee died Oct. 2, 2013. She worked for the U.S. Navy during World War II. She worked for the Oswego City School District, first as the truant officer and later as a science and math teacher at Oswego High School. She retired in 1984. She is survived by her husband, Betty Reed Drew ’47; two sons; a daughter; and four grandchildren. He was predeceased by his sister, Anne Dowdle Beardslee ’39.

Thomas Tovey ’57 of Lady Lake, Fla., died Oct. 22, 2013. He served with the U.S. Navy during the Korean Conflict. He later earned a master’s degree at Oswego. He taught in the Whitesboro (N.Y.) Central School District for 28 years. He is survived by his wife, Joyce; two daughters; two sons; and three grandchildren.

Margaret Scharf DeLapp ’58 of Oswego died Jan. 1, 2014. She taught in the Hannibal (N.Y.) Central School District, and in the Oswego City School District at Kingsford Park and Leighton elementary schools for more than 25 years, retiring in 1988. Margaret is survived by her husband, William; three sons; a daughter; eight grandchildren; and brothers, Fred Scharf ’62, and John Scharf ’63 and his wife, Eugenie Notel Scharf ’63.

John Claus M’62 of Fuquay Varina, N.C., died Oct. 9, 2013. He served with the U.S. Army during World War II. He graduated from Syracuse University in 1950, and earned a master’s degree in education in 1965 and an educational administration degree in 1965 at Oswego. John was a teacher and administrator in the Baldwinsville (N.Y.) School District from 1960 until his retirement in 1983. He is survived by seven daughters, two sons, 27 grandchildren and 35 great-grandchildren.

Margaret Froio Young ’63 of Minoa, N.Y., died Nov. 18, 2013. She was a teacher at Lakeshore Elementary School and later a substitute teacher at Minoa Elementary School. She is survived by her sons, two daughters and eight grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband, William ’63.

Linda Longway Malinich ’64 of Rochester, N.Y., died Oct. 15, 2012. She is survived by her husband, Richard; a son; and two grandchildren.

Eleanor Becker Roth ’64 of Fulton, N.Y., died Nov. 1, 2013. Prior to retiring, she was a reading teacher in the Fulton City School District. She is survived by two daughters, four sons, three stepchildren, 38 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

David Lansing ’65 of Essex, N.Y., died Dec. 10, 2013. He served with the U.S. Army. David taught industrial arts/technology at Vestal (N.Y.) High School and Willsboro (N.Y.) Central School. Surviving are his wife, Diane; a son; and five grandchildren.

Linton Pilituga ’65 of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, died Aug. 17, 2012. He is survived by his wife, Phyllis.

James Ferris ’67 of Stillwater, N.Y., died Nov. 2, 2013. He began his career teaching fifth grade in the Niskayuna (N.Y.) School District. He was principal at Bell Top Elementary School in the East Greenbush (N.Y.) Central School District for 27 years, retiring in 2002. He was also an adjunct professor at Russell Sage College. He is survived by his wife, Sharon; two daughters; and two grandsons.

Charles Eddy ’68 of Syracuse, N.Y., died Dec. 28, 2013. He taught at Liverpool (N.Y.) Middle School for more than 30 years. He is survived by a brother and sister-in-law.

Gary Goolden ’69 of Cortland, N.Y., died Oct. 21, 2013. He earned a Ph.D. from Columbia University. Jack was an associate professor of education at SUNY Cortland until his retirement in 1988. He is survived by his wife, Shirley; two sons; and six grandchildren.

George Maharay ’71 of Mount Kisco, N.Y., died Sept. 11, 2011.

Paul Stratton ’71 of Auburn, N.Y., died Nov. 18, 2013. He worked for several businesses in the Auburn area, including Carriera Plastic, Bo-Mer Plastics and TRW. He is survived by three children and two grandchildren.

Maureen McGuane Brownell ’74 of Sandy Creek, N.Y., died Oct. 27, 2013. She earned an accounting degree from Jefferson Community College in 2011. Maureen taught mathematics at Sandy Creek (N.Y.) Central School for 33 years, retiring in 2012. Surviving are her husband, Douglas; two daughters; and two grandsons.

Timothy Tam ’74 of Huntington Valley, Pa., died Nov. 24, 2012. He was an assistant professor of mathematics at Community College of Philadelphia. Timothy earned a Ph.D. in physics from Stony Brook University in 1982. Surviving are his wife, Julia; and a son.

Burton Colling ’77 of Phoenix, N.Y., died Oct. 23, 2013. He served with the U.S. Army Air Force. He is survived by two sons, two daughters, eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Stanley McDonald ’78 M’85 of Lowville, N.Y., died March 14, 2013. He began his career teaching industrial arts at Spaulding High School in Barre, Vt. He had taught in the South Lewis Central School District in Turin, N.Y., since 1985. Surviving are his wife, Cynthia; two sons; and three grandchildren.

Carol Morley Snyder ’79 of Fair Haven, N.Y., died July 15, 2011. She is survived by her husband, Michael ’75, and a son.

Richard Walker ’79 of Mulberry, Fla., died Nov. 28, 2013. He is survived by his wife, Corrine; three daughters; and five grandchildren.

Thaddeus Iorizzo ’83 of Oswego died Jan. 3, 2014. He also studied at University of Texas in Denton, Texas, and the Berklee College of Music in Boston, and earned a master’s degree from Syracuse University. He had performed with the Binghamton (N.Y.) Symphony Orchestra and many Central New York area bands. He had been the code enforcement officer for the city of Oswego. He is survived by his wife, Margaret Prisco ’83; two sons, Linus and Rinaldo; his parents, Marilee and Luciana, Professor Emeritus of History at Oswego; three brothers; and a sister.

Marc Seigerman ’88 of Westfield, N.J., died Nov. 15, 2013. He was a salesman for Getty Images of Manhattan. Surviving are his wife, Karen; his mother, Nancy; and three children.

Linda Sorensen Laba ’89 of Syracuse, N.Y., died Aug. 23, 2011. She is survived by two children.

Christine Bowes Morley ’92 of Farmingville, N.Y., died Sept. 11, 2011.

Brian Passero ’94 of Johnstown, N.Y., died Jan. 1, 2014. He was a graduate of Herkimer Community College in 1991. He had been the national sales manager at Spray Nine of Johnstown. He is
survived by his wife, Lydia; his parents, Richard and Linda; and two siblings.

Renee Isabell Dillon M’02 of North Syracuse, N.Y., died Jan. 4, 2014. She earned a bachelor’s degree at Columbia College. Renee was a sales account executive with Bio-Reference Laboratories. She is survived by her husband, Thomas; her parents; and three sons.

Kory Rauscher ’09 of Waterloo, N.Y., died Jan. 3, 2014. He was the operations manager of the Pennsylvania Division of D.C. Rauscher Inc. Kory is survived by his parents, David and Kelly; two sisters; and a brother.

Anthony DelPrete, Associate Professor Emeritus of Earth Science, died Oct. 18, 2013. He came to Oswego in 1963 and taught geology and oceanography for 34 years, retiring on Sept. 20, 1997. He is survived by his wife, Gloria; three children; eight grandchildren; three stepchildren; and eight step-grandchildren.

JoAn Huff, Professor Emerita of Women’s Health and Physical Education, died Dec. 9, 2013. She was appointed at Oswego in 1958 and retired in 1989.

Albert Leighton, Professor Emeritus of History, died Nov. 28, 2013. He came to Oswego in September 1964 and retired in September 1985. He is survived by his wife, Estella ’73.

Ronald Medici, Assistant Professor Emeritus of Theatre, died Oct. 24, 2013. He earned a master’s degree at Syracuse University. He taught at Oswego for more than 20 years. After his retirement, he continued teaching at Mohawk Valley Community College and Utica College. He is survived by a sister, Johann Goddard; a brother and sister-in-law, Sam and Debbie Medici; and special friend, Jay Austin.

Luther Peterson, Professor Emeritus of History, died Jan. 29, 2014. He founded Oswego’s history department in 1970. Although he retired in 2007, he continued to teach as an adjunct faculty member in the Honors Program through the 2013 fall semester. He earned a master’s and Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and a bachelor’s in chemistry from Luther College. He attended the Yale University Divinity School in 1961-62 on a Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowship. He is survived by a son, Lars-Anders of Aurora; a sister, Helen Hustad (Jack) of Mukilteo, Wash.; a brother, Hamlet A. (Suzanne), of Rochester, Minn.; and six nephews and nieces. Donations may be made in Luther’s memory to SUNY Oswego History Dept. or Honors Program. Donations can be sent to Oswego College Foundation, 215 Sheldon Hall, Oswego N.Y. 13126; made online at alumni.oswego.edu; or by calling 315-312-3003.

Stay on Campus for Harborfest

On-campus housing will be available for alumni who wish to relive their favorite Oswego memories by attending this year’s Harborfest, July 24 to 27.

Alumni will be housed on campus (dorm to be determined) according to class year, with a maximum of two adults per room. Alumni may begin checking in Thursday, July 24, at 2 p.m. and must check out by Sunday, July 27, at 11 a.m.

There is an early bird special of $60 per night for those making reservations on or before July 18 by 4 p.m. Reservations made after that time will be $65 per night.

Those who register by July 18 can rent a refrigerator and mattresses for children 16 years and younger, for an additional $10 each for the weekend. Linens for beds and towels will be supplied. The Centro bus will be running a convenient shuttle service from campus to the festival grounds.

Don’t miss the opportunity to attend this exciting Oswego tradition!

To make reservations please visit alumni.oswego.edu/harborfest or contact Allison Craine at allison.craine@oswego.edu with questions.

To register for Harborfest Housing, you will need to login through OswegoConnect at alumni.oswego.edu. Your unique security code to enter the community is the 9-digit ID number located above your address on the mailing label of the alumni magazine. You will only need this the first time you enter and then you will choose your own personal password.

Special Alumni SURVEY

Calling all alumni!

The Oswego Alumni Association is conducting a survey to explore your opinions of SUNY Oswego’s correspondence and engagement with you as well as your impressions of the college’s image.

Complete the survey online at alumni.oswego.edu/survey. You may also request a paper copy of the survey by contacting the Alumni Office at 315-312-2258 or alumni@oswego.edu.

Surveys must be completed by May 16, 2014.

The results of this survey will be used only by the Oswego Alumni Association to improve programs and communications to alumni. We strongly encourage your participation; your input is highly valued and appreciated! Thank you!
The following excerpt is from Getting Away With Murder: Benazir Bhutto’s Assassination and the Politics of Pakistan by Heraldo Muñoz ’72. In the book, he provides his personal account as the lead investigator on the United Nations Commission of Inquiry into the death of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. He has written and edited more than a dozen books on Inter-American relations and security, Latin American foreign relations, democracy and human rights, multilateral affairs, development issues and international political economy. His memoir, The Dictator’s Shadow, won the 2009 WOLA-Duke University Book Award.

In the southern-hemisphere summer of January 2009, while my wife and I vacationed in Chile at a cousin’s home by a calm river near the town of Valdivia, I got an urgent call from the office of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in New York. His chief of staff, Ambassador Vijay Nambiar, transmitted a request from the secretary-general: Would I be able to lead a commission to investigate the assassination of former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto?

I had serious doubts about accepting such high responsibility. The case looked like a lose-lose situation; any conclusion could leave many sides disappointed or even angry. I could not force anyone to testify, my powers would be limited, and public expectations would be high. Moreover, Pakistani political culture is characterized by rumors and conspiracy theories, as Pakistani writer Ali Sethi suggested in an essay about the terrorist attack in Lahore against the Sri Lankan national cricket team. While interviewing people in the street about the culprits, he was told that it could have been the work of “terrorists or criminals. . . But it could be the agencies. It could be the government. It could be India also.”

I had visited the country and read about it, but I was far from being an expert, and I came from a nation geographically and culturally distant from Pakistan. Then, I reasoned, Chile did not have any hidden agenda, interests, or prejudices regarding Pakistan—a plus in the eyes of the UN and the Islamabad government. The task would be dangerous; but the secretary-general had probably taken into consideration, when offering me this challenge, that I had presided over the Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council during 2003 and 2004.

I recalled having met Benazir Bhutto in the early ’90s, while I was ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS), at a seminar on democratic transitions held in the US Congress. We were on the same panel; she spoke about Pakistan, and I gave a presentation on Chile. She was the star of the event and seemed poised and confident. We were able to chat for a while. I said that while doing my PhD at the Korbek School of International Studies at the University of Denver, I had often discussed her father’s 1977 military overthrow and arrest with my good Pakistani friend and classmate, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, who attended all the solidarity demonstrations that I organized against the Pinochet dictatorship and the 1973 coup that had overthrown Chilean president Salvador Allende. Benazir told me that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto admired Allende and knew perfectly well that the United States had plotted with rightists in Chile to oust his socialist government. The rest of our dialogue was a brief exchange of pleasantries during our respective lectures.

Now, almost twenty years later, I would lead the inquiry into the assassination of the charming and intelligent woman I had met at that seminar in Washington DC. I vaguely remembered having seen on TV a grainy video of the moment of her assassination. I had then thought that security must have lapsed, because I recalled her waving to a surrounding crowd without solid protection.

This book is an examination of political life and death in Pakistan—not just a look at the narrow subject matter or a treatment limited to statements by political actors. This is my personal view of the murder of Benazir Bhutto and her times and in no way compromises or necessarily reflects the views of the United Nations or those of the members of the Commission of Inquiry. This is a critical analysis of the assassination of a major political leader, her country, and her circumstances.

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Jack James ’62, chair, together with the Steering Committee, celebrate the gift of higher education and cordially invite you to join them in the

Sheldon Legacy Society

by supporting SUNY Oswego with a gift in your will. Even a small bequest can have a lasting impact on future generations of our students.

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“Sheldon Legacy Society members want to leave more than memories to the university. They want to leave a better world. When you invest in education, you’re really investing in the future. You’re leaving a legacy that will outlive you and your family. That’s pretty significant.”

– Jack James ’62, Sheldon Legacy Society chair

Please RSVP for more information to:
Development and Alumni Relations
Director of Finance Mark Slayton at 315-312-3003 or sheldonlegacy@oswego.edu, or by visiting alumni.oswego.edu/sheldonlegacy.
Nose stuck in a book, wandering in words while his feet trod the streets of Meriden, Conn., Lewis Turco walked deliberately on a path that led to his career as a poet and professor.

“I loved to read when I was a kid,” he says. “I felt that I would like to give to others the delight those authors gave to me. I decided to try to become a writer myself.”

Having defined his course, he set out. At 15, while in prep school, he took third place in a local newspaper’s high school poetry contest. A job as student correspondent and newspaper morgue clerk ensued at that same paper; he began submitting poems to the local poetry column, and his literary career was launched.

Four years in the U.S. Navy after high school put Turco on the USS Hornet for two years and a round-the-world cruise. Before his discharge in 1956, he married Jean Houdlette and made plans to attend the University of Connecticut, with two scholarships from the Meriden newspaper at which he had worked to augment his GI Bill funding. With Navy-earned academic credits and an impressive list of publications, Turco completed the U. Conn. program and used the remaining funds for a master’s from the Writers’ Workshop of the University of Iowa.

Teaching at Fenn College after graduation, Turco founded and directed what is now the Cleveland State University Poetry Center, an accomplishment that brought him to the attention of Oswego’s Dr. Erwin Palmer, who was chair of the English department.

“Dr. Palmer wanted an actively publishing poet, and he wanted me to start a poetry center modeled after the one in Cleveland,” Turco says. “I had to tell him it was impossible in a city the size of Oswego.”

Turco offered an alternative. “I said I could begin a program in writing arts if he wanted it.” With that, Oswego became the site of one of the premier undergraduate writing programs in the nation. Genre specific and workshop oriented, the program demands academic rigor with commitment to creativity and publication. As director and professor, Turco shaped student authors for 31 years, nurturing them as they acquired basic skills and advanced techniques and helping them prepare their work for submission.

“I loved my students,” says Turco, who retired in 1996. “Many of them continue to stay in touch through Facebook or in person.”

He speaks with pride of his former students who have succeeded in writing careers as novelists, educators, software developers, poets and Oswego faculty members.

Poets around the world have been initiated into the principles of formal poetry through Turco’s *The Book of Forms*, now in its fourth edition. Wesli Court (an anagram) published *Epitaphs for the Poets* in 2012, and Turco last summer finished an epic poem titled “The Hero Enkidu.”

Fifty-two books, chapbooks and monographs, in addition to hundreds of poems, stories, plays and essays in journals and anthologies, are evidence of his status as a writer. Generations of former students attest to his effectiveness as a professor.

Nose stuck in a book, hands on the keyboard, directing a program and teaching developing writers: Lewis Putnam Turco reflects that he has met his goal to live a useful literary life.

—Linda Loomis ’90 M’97