Here’s Alice
Novelist Alice McDermott ’75 credits Oswego with nurturing her passion

PLUS

- $7.5 Million Estate Gift to Fund Scholarships
- Creative Arts Alumni and Faculty Vignettes
- Diplomat Heraldo Muñoz ’72 Writes about ‘Getting Away with Murder’
Get Your Passport to Oswego!

A Journey You Will Never Forget.

Visit the hottest destinations on campus, including the new Richard S. Shineman Center for Science, Engineering and Innovation (complete with a new planetarium and weather—or sunset!—observation deck), the renovated Rice Creek Field Station and the overhauled School of Education’s Park Hall as well as Romney Fieldhouse and favorite “hot spots” along Lake Ontario.

Everyone is welcome, but special events are planned for these milestone classes and groups:


For more information:

Reunion Hotline: 315-312-5559
Email: reunion@oswego.edu
Advance registration is required and can be completed online.

alumni.oswego.edu/reunion
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Take advantage of early-bird pricing and register by May 16!
A Transformative Legacy
Lorraine Marano’s $7.5 million bequest to Oswego—the largest single gift in college history—establishes a scholarship endowment that will educate future generations of students in perpetuity.

Here’s Alice
Award-winning novelist Alice McDermott ’75 recalls how her SUNY Oswego experience affirmed her passion for fiction writing.

The Creative Arts
These snapshots of alumni and faculty showcase the range and impact of Oswego’s Creative Arts programs.

Keeper of the Torch
The Oswego Alumni Association connects graduates to their alma mater and each other through diverse programs that have evolved throughout the association’s history.

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ON THE COVER:
Best-selling novelist Alice McDermott ’75 at her office at Johns Hopkins University, where she is Richard A. Macksey Professor for Distinguished Teaching in the Humanities. Photo by Will Kirk, Homewood Imaging and Photographic Services in Baltimore.
FROM THE

President’s Desk

I remember the moment vividly. Last June, sitting in the Princeton Club in Manhattan, listening as New York Times reporter and emcee Sam Roberts reflected on the exceptional quality of writers in the room, I was filled with pride to be representing SUNY Oswego, as one of our own—Alice McDermott ’75—was inducted into the New York State Writers Hall of Fame. As president of such a wonderful institution, I am fortunate to be able to share in the accomplishments of our prestigious alumni and faculty. We celebrate these moments as one community, connected by our Oswego roots.

At Oswego, we strive to uphold our founder’s vision to raise the college “to its highest degree of usefulness.” We are equally committed to empowering our students, employees and alumni to pursue meaningful lives and to improve the quality of life for all people. In this issue, we pay tribute to our creative artists—to the writers, like Alice, to the filmmakers to the musicians who elevate the quality of writers on the exceptional grounds. Her extraordinary generosity will help keep college affordable for future generations of Oswego students. (See page 14 to read more about this historic gift.)

These are exciting times at SUNY Oswego. Like the artists in this magazine, we continue to create, rework and push beyond the boundaries of past generations.

FROM THE

Editor’s Pen

I am all about signs—just ask any of my family and friends. Yes, I’m one of those people who takes guidance from the “universe,” the “divine” or whatever term you prefer. That’s why my heart started pounding with excitement late last summer. Betsy Oberst from the SUNY Oswego Alumni Office was calling. It was a sign. The stars were aligning, and I eagerly accepted the offer to become the new editor of the OSWEGO Alumni Magazine.

Although I am not an alumna of Oswego, I consider this to be a homecoming of sorts. As an avid angler—particularly ice fishing—and a lover of all forms of water, I can’t imagine a more perfect spot at

continued on page 6

President Deborah F. Stanley

Margaret Spillett

OSWEGO • Spring 2014 2
Alumni-In-Residence Visits Deepen Students’ Exposure to a Range of Professions

The Forecast for Forecasters

National weather scientist James LaDue ’86 discussed extreme natural disasters and the state of meteorology during a presentation last semester in the Shineman Center for Science, Engineering and Innovation.

“Forecasting science has drastically improved,” said LaDue, who earned a B.S. in meteorology at Oswego. “We can tell with pretty good confidence where there will be a tornado. But while forecasting has improved, getting the desired reaction from the public remains a challenge.”

LaDue, a meteorologist instructor at the National Weather Service Warning Decision Training Branch in Norman, Okla., said NWS is working to improve communications with the public, and mobile technologies can help NWS customize warnings to people based on their specific location.

“We can’t issue a one-size fits all warning and accommodate everyone,” he said. “Warnings have to be personalized.”

Through his work, he has witnessed devastating destruction as well as stories of good planning, preparation and execution of emergency plans. LaDue shared ideas of how we can improve the resiliency of our communities to severe weather through smarter building construction, different kinds of materials and better design.

He concluded the talk by predicting the future role of the human forecaster in meteorology will be more about risk management and interpretation of data than on creating models and calculating statistics, which computers are already doing better and faster than humans.

“I encourage meteorology students to take courses in crisis communications, risk management and human behavior in addition to their meteorology courses,” he said. ●

—Margaret Spillett

Evolution in the Workplace

When Hollie Elleman Calderon ’81 began thinking about college, she recalls how many people believed that female college graduates would get married, have babies and not work until their children were grown.

“Thank goodness I had parents who told me I could be anything I wanted to be,” said Calderon, now a senior vice president at JP Morgan Chase. She returned to campus Nov. 14 to deliver a talk, “Smart Moves in the Workplace: Strategies for Achieving Success,” part of the Ernst & Young Fall 2013 Lecture Series.

“Conditions for women in the workplace will change when more women assume leadership roles and when women start thinking differently about themselves,” she said.

She shared lessons learned on her road to success, including becoming aware of and overcoming fears about seeking a high-impact career. She described the qualities sought by management teams and gave students advice about how they can differentiate themselves and make a positive impact on their organizations.

“Keep your goals in the front of your mind and in the mind of those around you who have the power to make it happen and sometimes make it not happen,” she said.

Hollie Elleman Calderon ’81 speaks with attendees following her presentation, “Smart Moves in the Workplace: Strategies for Achieving Success,” part of the Ernst & Young Fall 2013 Lecture Series.

Calderon’s lecture was supported by Robbi and Robert Feinberg ’78 and Ernst & Young; and it was co-sponsored by Women’s Studies and the Institute for Global Engagement. ●

—Margaret Spillett
Alumni Association Hosts Dessert Reception for December Graduates

Members of the Class of 2013 and their families joined together Dec. 13 for a Commencement Eve Dessert Reception and Champagne Toast in the Sheldon Hall Ballroom. The event was sponsored by the Oswego Alumni Association, with support from The Fund for Oswego and Auxiliary Services. Inset: Jenna Arcese ’14, center, and mistress of ceremonies Ariel Hutchison ’13, right, present the Class of 2013 Senior Legacy Gift—a check for $5,798.87—to Interim Director of Alumni Relations Laura Pavlus ’09, left.

Oswego Business School, Online MBA Program Earn National Rankings

Oswego’s School of Business appears on Princeton Review’s 2014 list of the nation’s most outstanding MBA-granting business schools for the 10th consecutive year. Oswego’s online MBA tied for 14th among online graduate business programs—the highest of any institution in the state, according to U.S. News’ 2014 “Best Online Degree Programs: Business (Graduate)” rankings, published Jan. 8.


“We recommend SUNY Oswego as one of the best institutions a student could attend to earn a business school degree,” wrote Robert Franek, Princeton Review’s senior vice president and publisher. “We chose the schools we profile in this book based on our high regard for their academic programs and our reviews of institutional data we collect from schools.”

The online MBA ranking affirms Oswego’s successful translation of campus-based instruction to serve students anywhere, said SUNY Oswego President Deborah F. Stanley.

“This ranking reflects our emphasis on providing real-world opportunities and outstanding teaching to ensure that Oswego students receive the best possible preparation to enter the business world,” she said. “The professors teaching our online students have excellent backgrounds, and our well-connected alumni working in the field help students with job placements, co-ops and other hands-on experiences.”

The U.S. News rankings of online MBA programs emphasize such factors as student engagement (in which Oswego ranked fifth overall), peer reputation, admissions selectivity, faculty credentials and training, student services and technology.

Oswego’s School of Business, accredited by the International Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, was the only school in New York State to crack the list’s top 30 online graduate business programs.

Dr. Richard Skolnik, dean, said the quality of the online MBA “reflects the investment SUNY Oswego has made in online education.”

—Office of Public Affairs
Fred Festa Receives SUNY Oswego Presidential Medal during December Commencement

During December Commencement, SUNY Oswego President Deborah F. Stanley awarded the Presidential Medal to Fortune 100 business leader Fred Festa ’81.

“You’re success as a business leader has been extraordinary,” she said. “What’s more impressive, however, is your ability to look beyond the bottom line to the backbone of any successful venture—the people. Throughout your life, you have maintained a strong sense of service to others and support for your community.”

“. . . if you approach life as a series of lessons, as a series of self-reflections, as a series of events from which you can learn and improve, you will ultimately accomplish everything you want to.”

—Fred Festa ’81

Chairman and chief executive officer of W.R. Grace & Co., Festa gained experience as he ascended the management ranks over two decades with General Electric, Allied Signal, ICG Commerce and Morgenthaler Private Equity Partners. Under his leadership, the revenue of Grace, a global specialty chemicals and materials company, grew 60 percent, from $2 billion in 2003 to $3.2 billion in 2011. Festa, a 1981 magna cum laude graduate of the business administration program, delivered the Commencement address, sharing lessons he has learned about leadership and professional development.

“I can tell you, if you approach life as a series of lessons,” he said, “as a series of self-reflections, as a series of events from which you can learn and improve, you will ultimately accomplish everything you want to.”

Festa and his wife, MaryLynn Barbaro Festa ’82, established the Festa Graduate Leadership Fellows Program to provide exceptionally motivated individuals an opportunity to pursue leadership experience in a professional environment. An inductee into the 2012-13 World Council and Assembly on Cooperative Education (WACE) Hall of Fame, Festa helped establish the W.R. Grace Internship Program at Oswego.

Festa owns the minor league Greenville (S.C.) Road Warriors hockey team, an affiliate of the New York Rangers. At Oswego, the Festas have also established the new Festa Graduate Assistantship Award for Men’s Hockey.

He has shared lessons on leadership with Oswego students as the keynote speaker at the 2011 Future Oswego Leaders Conference, as a 2010 recipient of the School of Business Beta Sigma Gamma Award and through a 2004 visit to chemistry and business classes with the Oswego Alumni Association’s Alumni-In-Residence program.

—Margaret Spillett
Journalism Alumna Shares Career Tips

Kristin Quinn '08, communications and publications manager at the U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Foundation in Washington, D.C., returned to campus last fall to share advice about establishing a career as a writer and editor.

In Washington, D.C., Quinn began her career as a writer for a trade publication in the printing industry, then moved to Gannett Government Media, where she wrote about aerospace and defense technology and traveled nationally and in Europe for conferences.

Quinn highlighted the success of several of her Oswego classmates who have also pursued careers in publishing. She advised students to use their skills to support not-for-profit organizations as a means of gaining experience and as a matter of responsible muscle movement.

"You are a writer," he said, "and you're never going to shake it."

As May approaches and I look forward to participating in my first Torchlight Ceremony, I hope I carry the torch for the magazine as aptly as the editors who preceded me did. I hope also in time that I can demonstrate to you—the Oswego alumni and campus community—that I do belong here, and to paraphrase Dr. Briand, that you’re never going to shake me!

My new position with the alumni magazine feels like a return to the core of my professional identity as a writer. Writing has been the common thread for me, as initially I was a writer of articles as a daily newspaper reporter, of stories as a magazine writer, of marketing and development pieces as a communications director and, most recently, of news releases and promotional messages as a public relations director.

I am thrilled that my first issue as editor depicts a cover story by fellow writer Linda Loomis '90 M'97 about a nationally best-selling and award-winning novelist, Alice McDermott '75. I chuckled as I read Alice’s recollection of the late Writing Professor Dr. Paul Briand’s troubling analysis of her: “You are a writer,” he said, “and you’re never going to shake it.”

College Names New Vice President

Jerald Woolfolk is the new vice president for student affairs and enrollment management, effective Jan. 1. She succeeds Joseph Grant who retired in 2012.

Woolfolk oversees admissions, financial aid, auxiliary services, residence life and housing, student conduct and compliance, Mary Walker Health Center and the counseling center, campus life, athletics, student advisement, orientation and career services.

Woolfolk had been vice president for student affairs, enrollment management and diversity at Mississippi Valley State University since 2011 and was previously vice president for student affairs at CUNY’s College of Staten Island.

“Across 25 years in higher education administration at three institutions, Dr. Woolfolk has built a record as a strategic innovator in student affairs who sets clear and high goals and provides the leadership to achieve them,” President Deborah F. Stanley said. “We are delighted to welcome her to SUNY Oswego.”

Woolfolk is active nationally in her field. She is an accreditation evaluator for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Higher education institutions in Delaware, Alabama, North Carolina and Arkansas have retained her as a consultant on accreditation, strategic planning, enrollment management and organizational management.

Woolfolk earned a doctorate in urban higher education at Jackson State University in Mississippi. She began her career as a counselor at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff after earning a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Jackson State and a master’s degree in counselor education from Iowa State University.

“I am thrilled that my first issue as editor depicts a cover story by fellow writer Linda Loomis '90 M'97 about a nationally best-selling and award-winning novelist, Alice McDermott '75. I chuckled as I read Alice’s recollection of the late Writing Professor Dr. Paul Briand’s troubling analysis of her: “You are a writer,” he said, “and you’re never going to shake it.”

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Start-Up NY at Oswego Identifies Prospects, Assembles Board

Last fall, Gov. Andrew Cuomo launched Start-Up NY, providing major incentives for qualifying businesses to relocate, start up or expand in this state through affiliations with colleges and universities. Businesses will have the opportunity to operate free of state and local taxes on or near academic campuses, and their employees will pay no state or local personal income taxes for 10 years. Participating companies must add new jobs, providing an economic lift to the surrounding community that does not endanger nearby competitors.

"Linkages with Oswego’s academic strengths will be critical to building our Start-Up NY partnerships," President Deborah F. Stanley said. "In a successful partnership, SUNY Oswego and the company will work together in a key area of the college’s competency for mutual, complementary benefit."

The president has selected three initial sites for tax-free zones to attract new and expanding businesses to campus: the Romney parking lot bordering State Route 104; Mackin Hall on Sheldon Avenue; and the lake-view tennis courts and adjacent parking lot on Rudolph Road. Potential exists to add properties within a mile of the Oswego campus, SUNY Oswego Phoenix Center and SUNY Oswego Metro Center in Syracuse.

A 25-member Economic Development Advisory Board has been meeting with business prospects, some of them global companies. 

—Office of Public Affairs

Pamela Caraccioli has been working on Start-Up NY and other business partnerships and development projects at SUNY Oswego since she was named deputy to the president for external partnerships and economic development in July.
Ninth Annual Media Summit Brings Top Communications Professionals to Campus

For the first time since its debut nine years ago, the Dr. Lewis B. O’Donnell Media Summit featured an all-Oswego alumni panel whose expertise in sports media aligned with the theme, “Get in the Game.”

Jay Beberman ’89, Bloomberg News managing editor for sports; Donna Goldsmith ’82, former chief operating officer at World Wrestling Entertainment Inc.; John Kucko ’87, sports director for WROC television in Rochester, N.Y.; and Steve Levy ’87, ESPN “SportsCenter” anchor, spoke on sports-related topics, prompted by questions from moderator Louis A. Borrelli Jr. ’77, chief marketing officer of NimbleTV.

They discussed such hot topics as steroid use, racial diversity in broadcasting, the decline in high school athletics participation, compensation for Division I athletes and taking American sports to an international market.

The summit began with informal conversation, “Wake Up with Steve and Lou,” and breakfast for students. The panelists and five additional alumni who are early in their professional development visited classes throughout the day. Following the panel, the young alumni “Career Connectors” participated in roundtable discussions with students. They shared advice on how to transition from student to media professional, build effective resumes and make job-seeking successful.

Career Connectors were: Ben Amey ’10, reporter for WETM-TV in Elmira, N.Y.; Lewis Karpeł ’12, photojournalist for WSTM-NBC3/WSTQ-CW6/WTVH-CBS5/CNYcentral.com in Syracuse, N.Y.; Stephanie Robusto ’11, field reporter at WMBF News in Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Samantha Shelton ’11, assistant web editor for FITNESS Magazine in New York City; and Maria Urda ’12, promotional log editor for Fox Sports I in Charlotte, N.C.


About the Media Summit

SUNY Oswego’s annual Media Summit is named in memory of Dr. Lewis B. O’Donnell, professor emeritus of communication studies. “Doc” O’Donnell died Aug. 28, 2007, but his influence lives on in hundreds of broadcasters whose careers he helped launch. Louis A. Borrelli Jr. ’77 founded the summit through a leadership gift in 2005. In 2007, a significant gift to Oswego made by Edward Przywara ’00 of NBC’s “Today” show, including a matching gift from NBC, provided the funding to rename the summit in honor of Dr. O’Donnell.

The 2013 summit was organized by Dr. David L. Moody, faculty advisor; Janelle Francisco ’14 and Marissa Sarbak ’15, student event directors; and a team of SUNY Oswego students, with support from the Office of Alumni Relations.

—Margaret Spillett
Getting at the Heart of Lake Effect Snow Storms

Last spring, SUNY Oswego received a $320,000 National Science Foundation grant to fly and drive into the heart of lake effect snowstorms to study their structure and improve forecasting. Field work began in December.

“We are getting awe-some data from this storm!” said Associate Professor of Meteorology Scott Steiger ’99 after a mid-December snow storm that hit Oswego County and other parts of Central and Northern New York. He and a team of collaborators from three universities and the Center for Severe Weather Research collected lake effect data with the help of a King Air plane, a Mobile Integrated Profiling System and three Doppler-on-Wheels radar-equipped trucks.

The project—involves Steiger, Professor Robert Ballentine, Oswego alumni Ted Letcher ’09, a graduate student at the University of Albany, and Jason Keeler ’07, a graduate student at Illinois-Urbana, as well as dozens of Oswego students. Steiger’s team is studying long-fetch lake-effect storms, whose snow bands run parallel to the long axis of Lake Ontario and can turn into relentless snow machines. The first phase of their research, which included five research flights into the heart of the December storms, was highly successful, since the weather was unusually biased toward long-fetch events.

“An NSF grant two years ago gave us some insight into the detailed structures of the snow bands,” Steiger said. “There were a lot of instances of spinning air—we call them vortices—about a hundred meters wide. They could have been related to waterspouts; we really don’t know. We want to investigate how and why these areas of rotation form in the snow band. Rotation can influence where the band moves and how heavy the snow gets.”

Another goal, he said, is to see whether there are ways to better estimate snowfall rate based on radar data. Students on the ground will take measurements at preselected sites and integrate aircraft data for comparisons.

The third goal is to determine how and why lake-effect clouds sometimes become electrified and produce lightning.

“This is kind of the climax of my life in terms of my passion with weather, because I’m going to be able to get up close and personal with lake-effect snowstorms and understand how these things work,” Steiger said.

—Office of Public Affairs

International Student Reception

President Deborah F. Stanley welcomed 221 students, representing 21 countries, during the International Student Reception on Jan. 31 in the Sheldon Hall Ballroom. International-themed student organizations displayed materials and projects created by their clubs at tables around the room. Students in the Nihon-Go Japanese Language and Culture Club arrayed examples of Japanese origami, calligraphy and brushes, fans, umbrellas, Sudoku and thoroughly American cookies. Kaylina Rivera ’15 and Arnaldo Martinez ’15, two officers of the Latino Student Union display Latin American Heritage Cards, co-founded by Newton Paul ’97 M’99 and Yorick Kemp ’97, which give capsule histories of 52 prominent leaders among Latinos. During spring semester, 198 SUNY Oswego students are studying abroad in 21 different countries through 40 distinct programs.

—Office of Public Affairs
Return on Investment Initiative Provides Financial Boost

Graduates who complete their degrees in four years receive a return on investment of $300 through a new provision of the Oswego Guarantee. President Deborah F. Stanley initiated the Oswego Guarantee ROI with December 2013 Commencement.

“We are enhancing the guarantee we introduced over a decade ago to remind students of the value and financial benefits of earning their baccalaureate degree in four years or less,” Stanley said.

Kristi Eck, the president’s interim chief of staff, said the new Oswego Graduation ROI could provide graduates with funds for job-hunting expenses or graduate school applications and help SUNY Oswego graduates transition from college into the next phase of their adult lives.

The Graduation ROI supplements the original Oswego Guarantee commitments:

- necessary classes will be available to complete a baccalaureate degree in four consecutive years or the college will enroll the student in the course or courses tuition-free;
- the college will continue to make small classes available to encourage discussion and interaction between students and faculty;
- and Oswego pledges to hold each student’s cost for room and meal plans constant for four consecutive years.

For more information on the Oswego Guarantee and the Graduation ROI, visit www.oswego.edu/guarantee.

—Office of Public Affairs

Oswego State Inducts Four New Members into Athletic Hall of Fame

Swimmer Anne Sarkissian DeRue ’04, right, wrestler Brian V. McGann ’70, center, and lacrosse and soccer player Kathryn “Kat” Stead ’05, left, were inducted into the Hall of Fame during a ceremony on Nov. 2 in the Sheldon Ballroom. They joined the ranks of 78 other accomplished individuals who have been voted into the college’s Athletic Hall of Fame. Not pictured is baseball player Bob Brutsch ’71.

Students Network with Alumni and Explore Careers at NYC Event

More than 100 students gathered for the 2014 New York City Career Connections event over winter break to visit with a few well-known employers and network with more than 30 Oswego alumni who live and work in the metro-New York area.

Selected students visited one of four employers: Madison Square Garden, a sports, music and entertainment venue; Kellen Communications, a national public relations agency, hosted by Joan Reinhart Cear ’80 and Stephanie Meyering ’08; KPMG, a global network of professional audit and tax firms, hosted by Bob Garrett ’83; and FOX, an American commercial broadcast television network, hosted by Bill Shine ’85.

The trip culminated with a networking fair for students to learn how to develop professional contacts and explore different careers in the area. Fox Networks Group Talent Acquisition Manager Emanuel Adelum ’05 delivered the keynote presentation at the fair. NYC Career Connections is sponsored by the Oswego Alumni Association, with support from The Fund for Oswego.

OSWEGO • Spring 2014
Oswego Expands Its Global Connections in China and India

SUNY Oswego administrators recently announced two new partnerships that will expand international exchanges and opportunities for campus members.

In November, SUNY Oswego and Communication University of China in Beijing signed an agreement that could send as many as 20 Chinese students a year to Oswego to complete their undergraduate degrees in broadcasting and mass communications, journalism and public relations. The door also is open for SUNY Oswego students to study at the university known as “a cradle of China’s radio and television talents.”

The five-year renewable pact with CUC represents the latest in a growing number of links with universities in Asia, particularly in Korea and China, as well as a new exchange agreement with St. Xavier’s College in Kolkata, India. That agreement lays the foundation for student, faculty and staff exchanges for semester-abroad and visiting-scholar programs, collaborative research, cross-cultural art opportunities and professional development.

Oswego’s chemistry program has a degree-completion agreement with Zhejiang Gongshang University in Hangzhou. Another pact offers students of Zhejiang Sci-Tech University, also in Hangzhou, and Oswego the opportunity to complete degrees at each other’s institutions in business administration, human resource management and marketing. A similar agreement exists with Nanjing University of Science and Technology.

“These agreements are an important part of our overall strategy to become more internationally connected and to develop partnerships that offer reciprocal benefits for students and faculty across institutions,” said Lorrie Clemo, provost and vice president for academic affairs.

—Office of Public Affairs

Oswego One of Six SUNY Colleges to Debut Open SUNY

The SUNY system has selected SUNY Oswego’s nationally ranked online master’s in business administration and MBA in health services administration to join only six other degree programs in the soft launch this spring of Open SUNY.

SUNY Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher introduced the new Open SUNY degree programs during her annual State of the University address Jan. 14 in Albany.

“Open SUNY will provide our students with the nation’s leading online learning experience, drawing on the power of SUNY to expand access, improve completion and prepare more students for success,” Zimpher said.

The first Open SUNY degrees were chosen based on factors including student interest, accreditation, and capacity to meet current and future workforce demand throughout New York state.

“We are proud to have our online MBA and our MBA/HSA as the only graduate programs in the first wave of Open SUNY,” SUNY Oswego President Deborah F. Stanley said. “All the qualities that make our programs great will be available throughout SUNY and beyond as premier online offerings.”

Open SUNY support network

Campuses with bachelor’s and associate’s degree programs in the initial rollout of Open SUNY are Stony Brook University, Empire State College, SUNY Delhi, and Broome and Finger Lakes community colleges. Students will enroll in each program through the campus that hosts it. Open SUNY will eventually encompass every online course offered at every SUNY campus, the chancellor said, “and make them easy to find and accessible for every SUNY student.”

SUNY’s signature initiative will offer online courses and programs with a comprehensive suite of support and services to aid in degree completion. Built-in supports will include 24/7 assistance for students, whether they need technical help, tutoring, financial planning or academic advisement services, as well as a Center for Online Teaching Excellence where faculty can opt-in to training programs and online forums to broaden their knowledge about developing effective online courses or share best practices and learn directly from colleagues across SUNY.

—Office of Public Affairs

Stephen Aschkenes ’14, a marketing major at SUNY Oswego, said the three online courses he has taken proved to be rigorous and collaborative. He was chosen to attend a brainstorming session on Open SUNY last fall.

—Office of Public Affairs
O-RITE Teacher Training Model Results in Lasting Benefits

Three-year funding for the Oswego Residency Initiative for Teacher Education expires in August. But the positive effects of the clinically rich O-RITE model are being felt by the 31 participants, secondary students and mentors in high-need placement schools, and faculty in the department of curriculum and instruction.

Barbara Garri, school of education associate dean, and Anneke McEvoy, O-RITE project manager, say success has exceeded expectations. At program end, two classes of graduate students will have earned dual certification in special education and secondary science, math, or teaching English as a second or other language, and they will teach in high-need schools. They have participated in a 13-month program, including online coursework taken while engaged in two 20-week school placements, and a series of cohort-building campus residencies.

Federal Race to the Top funding provided $10,000 to cover tuition plus stipends of $30,000 for each participant. “The intense demands on their time required the stipend,” Garri says. “They were fully engaged for more than 180 days in classroom placements, then they spent evenings in online classes and weekends meeting academic requirements.”

McEvoy says O-RITE builds on Oswego’s history of training students to “teach where they’re needed most.” The challenge now is to find ways to retain the positive aspects of the program. Among them are:

- Graduate students received daily support from mentor teachers as they develop meaningful relationships with school communities.
- Mentors benefitted from the candidates’ current, creative pedagogy.
- Faculty who observed O-RITE are now considering expanded clinical components in existing programs.
- Oswego School of Education alumni are supporting teacher candidates in clinically rich programs across the state.
- Oswego faculty members participated through online teaching.
- Dual certification means O-RITE teachers will support learning for all students.

McEvoy says the most important take-away of O-RITE will be felt in the secondary schools where the graduates teach. “We are confident that each of them is going to have a tremendously positive influence in the classroom,” she says. — Linda Loomis ’90 M’97

O-Rite participant Jean Pierre Rosas M’13 teaches English as a second language at Westside Academy at Blodgett in Syracuse, NY.

President Stanley Invites Public to Cruise the Campus

College President Deborah F. Stanley invited the public to participate in Cruisin’ the Campus at the Holidays, from Dec. 23 to Jan. 26. “SUNY Oswego has many exciting and engaging activities and venues for families and individuals to explore and enjoy,” Stanley says. “Cruisin’ the Campus is a new program that offers everyone a variety of recreational and entertainment options on our campus during times when most of our students and faculty are taking a break from regular classes.” Community members could try out the new planetarium in the Richard S. Shineman Center for Science, Engineering and Innovation, the renovated Romney Field House track, Rice Creek Field Station’s nature trails, Campus Center ice skating rink and various other opportunities for recreation. —
The Department of Athletics had several teams reach milestones during the fall season. Oswego is proud to be laying the groundwork for success, as many squads are trending upwards with various improvements in 2013.

**Women’s Soccer**
Oswego State women’s soccer team ended the year with a record of 10-7 improving from its 7-9 record last year. The Lakers finished the year strong, earning a bid to the SUNYAC Championship for the first time since 2002. Leading the team was Nikki Liadka ’14 and Tia Segretto ’15, who netted 10 and nine goals, respectively. Also benefitting the team were All-SUNYAC honorees Bailey Waterbury ’15, Georgia Traynor ’15 and Bri Dolan ’15. In his seventh season, Head Coach Brian McGrane earned Coach of the Year in the conference.

**Volleyball**
Oswego volleyball finished its season with the outstanding record of 20-14, achieving its first 20-win season since 1994. Stephanie Bailey ’15 led the Lakers in kills (209), while Sabrina Sutton ’14 (317) and Rachael Ruggaber ’15 (386) led the team in digs, each with more than 300. Another milestone earned during 2013 was Head Coach J.J. O’Connell’s 300th victory. O’Connell has had great success in the coaching ranks, including 10 years at Stevens Institute of Technology in which the Ducks made the NCAA Championships seven of those seasons. Graduating only three seniors, the volleyball team has high hopes for next year.

**Field Hockey**
The field hockey team ended its season with a record of 5-9. Rachel Johnston ’14 led the team in scoring with five goals, while classmate Ashley Fiorille ’14 led the team in total points with 10 on six assists and four goals. Fiorille and Ashley Collins ’14 both earned SUNYAC All-Conference honors.

**Men’s Cross Country**
Oswego men’s cross country had a good year, placing sixth in this year’s SUNYAC Championship. Eight Laker men ran personal records in the 8K. Damian Archie ’14 M’15 finished first for the Laker crew in 37th, while Nick Montesano ’14 and Ben Sweet ’13 finished second and third, respectively. In the Atlantic Regional Championship, senior Ryan Kroczinski ’14 finished first for Oswego in 76th place out of 275 runners. The men’s team ended up placing 16th out of 39 schools.

**Women’s Cross Country**
The women’s cross country team had four Laker runners finish in the top 70 of the SUNYAC Championship. Emily Yerdon ’15, who placed 39th, led Oswego. Yerdon continued her strong efforts into the Atlantic Regional Championships, finishing first for the Lakers again, placing in the top 100 (90th).

**Men’s Soccer**
The men’s soccer team found itself in several tough situations, coming up empty with an overall record of 0-10-5, despite taking seven of 15 games to overtime. Leading the team in his senior season was Mike Naab ’16, with four goals. The young team will look to use the 2013 season as a growing experience toward next year’s campaign.

—Michael Bielak
$7.5 Million Marano Bequest Plants Seeds of Learning for Student Scholars

The late Lorraine and Nick Marano may have never imagined that their farming endeavors would grow a legacy of learning for future generations of SUNY Oswego students. When Lorraine E. Marano designated $7.5 million from her estate to benefit SUNY Oswego, she did just that.

The bequest—the largest single gift in the college’s 153-year history—establishes the Nunzio “Nick” C. and Lorraine E. Marano Endowment, which will be used primarily to fund scholarships for students with financial need, especially those who are first-generation college students.

“Lorraine Marano’s profound understanding of the transformative powers of public higher education is affirmed by this extraordinarily generous gift,” says Oswego President Deborah F. Stanley. “Her gift will help put a college education within reach for many students, fulfilling their hopes and dreams and investing in a better future for all of us, as our graduates forge productive lives in their communities. We are deeply honored by her confidence in establishing the Marano family legacy at SUNY Oswego. It will live on for generations.”

Lorraine Marano openly discussed her admiration for SUNY Oswego and believed the college was worthy of a gift of such magnitude because of the benefits it accords to students through academic programming, committed faculty and staff and strong, imaginative leadership.

An estate gift of this size reinforces the important role Oswego plays in the region and recognizes the college’s strong track record of success and prudent decision-making, said Jack James ’62, a retired Marine Corps colonel and chair of the Sheldon Legacy Society Steering Committee, which honors those who include Oswego in their estate plans.

“That she wasn’t an alumna made her gift even more remarkable,” says James, a College Foundation board member, a Reunion volunteer and the former chair of The Fund for Oswego. “Here’s a person who has been in the area a long time and sees what the college has done for the community—the economic impact, the cultural activities, lectures and sporting events. The Marano gift will help plant the seeds for success to grow everywhere our students go.”

Agricultural Innovator and Educational Enthusiast

The late Lorraine and Nunzio “Nick” Marano had a prosperous agricultural business located on a muck farm in Scriba. Nick was a communicant of Sacred Heart Church in Scriba and a former officer of Marine Midland Bank in Phoenix, and Lorraine served as the organist at Sacred Heart Church in Scriba and St. Peter’s Church in Oswego from 1991 to 2004.

A Scriba native, Nick owned Marano Vacuum Cooling and Sales Inc. in his hometown and held a seat on the New York Mercantile Exchange until his death in 2002.

Originally from Philadelphia, Lorraine graduated from Glassboro State College (now Rowan University in Glassboro, N.J.) with a bachelor’s degree, Drexel University with a master’s degree and the accelerated paralegal program at Syracuse University. She worked many years as a librarian at Cherry Hill High School East in New Jersey, and then worked for Resorts International and Tropicana Casinos in Atlantic City. Lorraine died on Oct. 1, 2013, at the age of 67.

“A highly educated woman, Lorraine believed in the value of education and considered this a gift to the entire community,” says Theresa A. Sugar Scanlon, a close friend of Lorraine. “She hoped to help keep a college education affordable for all students, especially those who are the first in their families to attend college.”

Nourishing the Minds of Future Generations

Joan Carroll, associate professor of accounting and Faculty Assembly chair at Oswego, said the gift will have a direct impact on the education that unfolds within the classroom and is a vote of confidence.

“The Marano Scholars will no doubt work hard and deeply engage in learning to honor this bequest,” Carroll says. “Receiving a gift of this magnitude signifies to the entire campus that we are making a difference, that our work is worthy of such an investment.”

James adds that the Marano bequest will encourage others to consider supporting Oswego.

“This gift will make others take note of SUNY Oswego,” James says. “The college inspires confidence that this institution will use donors’ investments wisely. When you leave a bequest to Oswego, you’re leaving more than memories. You’re leaving a true legacy that will outlive you and your family—an investment in the future.”

Just as their farm provided a bountiful harvest for the region, the Maranos—through their bequest—will nurture the minds of Oswego students in perpetuity.

—Margaret Spillett
First 24-Hour Challenge Raises More Than $100k

On 11-12-13, 605 alumni and friends participated in SUNY Oswego’s first-ever 24-Hour Challenge, and contributed $101,823.79 to The Fund for Oswego, exceeding three goals announced throughout the day.

Loyal alumni Jim Kaden ’78 and former Oswego Alumni Association board member Debbie Adams-Kaden ’78 donated $11,121.30 to The Fund for Oswego before noon, when 100 donors—the first goal—made gifts.

To secure his gift of $11,121.30, College Foundation board member Bob Moritz ’85 set the bar higher, more than doubling the original goal to 250 donors. Enthusiastic donors surpassed that number before the end of the workday, but the Telefund students were just getting warmed up.

To keep the momentum going, another generous alumni couple issued a third challenge of 500 donors to secure their $11,121.30 gift to The Fund. By 11:30 p.m., donors met that final challenge, and gifts continued to roll in right up until midnight EST.

“Each of the three separate challenges unleashed a new level of excitement and energy among our constituents that far exceeded our expectations,” said Joy Westerberg Knopp ’92, director of annual giving. “We received gifts from members of the Class of 1940 through the Class of 2014! The response from Oswego’s alumni, faculty, staff, parents and friends was absolutely fantastic.”

Kristine Hyovalti Bushey ’72, administrative assistant in Student Affairs who has worked at Oswego for 27 years, said she was impressed by the generosity of the alumni challengers and wanted to help reach the goal. “It was exciting to think about the possibilities created by that kind of generosity, rather like ripples on a pond: far reaching and touching so many different people,” Bushey said. “We can make a difference in the lives of students, just as Oswego made a difference in our lives.”

Oswego College Foundation board member Louis A. Borrelli Jr. ’77 kept the conversation exciting on the Facebook event page, and even came up with suggested donation amounts playing off the 11-12-13 theme. He posted: “Some ideas—$1,112.13 or 111.21x3=$333.63 or 11.12x13=$144.56.”

Although she is currently between jobs, Lisa Valentine O’Beirne ’86 posted to Facebook that she couldn’t make a huge gift, but she gave “at least something and the matching will help.”

Indeed, every gift helped secure the $33,363.90 in matching funds from the Kadens, Moritz and the anonymous alumni couple, and the 605 gifts from other challenge participants totaled an impressive $68,459.89.

“It was an exciting day here,” Knopp said. “Our alumni really showed their Oswego pride, and I am so proud to say I am an Oswego alumna!”

—Margaret Spillett

Benita Zahn Makes $15,000 Gift In Support of Students’ Dreams

Benita Zahn ’76, an anchor for WNYT-TV in Albany, N.Y., and an avid supporter of SUNY Oswego, says she always knew she wanted to give back to her alma mater. After her father died, Zahn put part of the money she inherited toward her master’s degree. The rest she donated to SUNY Oswego.

“For me, going to college was a financial stretch,” Zahn says. “Any little bit would’ve helped.” Zahn gave $15,000 to establish the Benita Zahn ’76 Endowed Theatre Fund. She says she hopes the fund will “take a little bit of the worry away” from students struggling financially.

The endowment will support full-time students majoring in theatre who show exceptional levels of dedication and involvement in the department. “The study of theatre gives students the ability to dream and the support to act on their dreams,” Zahn says. Her own time as a student of theatre significantly influenced her approach to life.

“No one ever told us no,” she says. “They said ‘let’s find a way to make it happen.’” Zahn has often contributed her time and expertise to Oswego. She served on the 2005 Reunion committee, served as the 2008 Torchlight Commencement Eve speaker and was a panelist at the 2010 Dr. Lewis B. O’Donnell Media Summit. She is a member of the School of Communication, Media and the Arts Advisory Board.

“Involvement has really enriched my life by allowing me to meet the next generations of SUNY Oswego students,” Zahn says. “It’s been good to be able to share my experiences and to see the school blossom and change with the times.”

—Brittany Sperino Horsford ’14
Giving the Gift of Education

Ed Kelly says he has long wanted to generate a legacy for his mother, Florence Williams Kelly ’31, an alumna who loved teaching and recognized the opportunities it brought to teachers and to students. Kelly’s gift to establish the Florence Ellen Williams Kelly ’31 Scholarship commemorates the contributions she made through her life’s work.

While Kelly himself is not a SUNY Oswego alumnus, his mother, by her example and through the memories she shared, conveyed to him the quality of education she had received at her alma mater. Florence Williams Kelly’s career as a first-grade teacher in Middletown, N.Y., afforded her opportunities to influence the educational experiences of children at one of the most important learning times in their lives.

“Her teaching influence guided me throughout my life, helping me establish goals, study diligently and stay focused,” Ed Kelly says. “This allowed me to achieve my objectives.” Thanks to his mother’s support, Kelly has had a successful career as the proprietor of two engineering firms.

Florence Williams Kelly died in 1962, but the memorial scholarship for education majors created by her son has ensured that her love of teaching and her commitment to public education live on.

“Through education my mother achieved a career in which she was able to give her heart and soul every day,” Kelly says. “She both nurtured and educated the many children who passed through her classroom for 20 years. She would be very proud to be helping deserving students begin teaching careers at this local level.”

—Brittany Sperino Horsford ’14

LECET Gift Helps Oswego

For 16 years, the New York State Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust (LECET) has consistently supported SUNY Oswego’s Presidential Scholars Program. Bill Shannon, business manager for the Upstate New York Laborers’ District and LECET representative, presented a check for $25,000 to President Deborah F. Stanley in the autumn.

The funds help Oswego attract the nation’s best and brightest students who are in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class, have SAT scores higher than 1,200 and GPAs higher than 90.

Celebrating Two Dozen Years of Continuous Support:

Kevin Bryans ’89 Endows New Scholarship

Since graduating, Kevin Bryans ’89 has given a gift to his alma mater every year. As a newly minted alumnus, he committed his unwavering support with an initial gift of $25 to The Fund for Oswego, hoping to increase his gift as he progressed through his career. He has now become a generous leadership donor.

“I am proud of what SUNY Oswego, the School of Business, President Stanley and the faculty and students have accomplished,” Bryans says. “I am honored to be an alumnus and a volunteer and to contribute to Oswego’s success.”

Today, as chief financial officer and shareholder of Polaris Library Systems, Bryans says he is able to increase his level of support for Oswego. His most recent and largest gift to date establishes the Bryans Family Endowed Scholarship, which will support accounting students in the School of Business.

His generosity to Oswego goes beyond financial gifts. He has also given back his time, serving on the School of Business Advisory Board for several years and on the School of Business dean search committee. Bryans is the current Class of 1989 Reunion Giving chair.

Bryans credits his education at Oswego for giving him the necessary knowledge to advance as a certified public accountant. His brother, John Bryans ’86, also graduated from Oswego with a degree in accounting and has a successful CPA firm in the Albany area. Kevin is proud of Oswego’s role in his family’s life, and says his time here was “a valuable and fulfilling experience.”

“We are proud to give back to the college, the School of Business, the faculty and students with the Bryans Family Endowed Scholarship,” he says. “We certainly hope to continue to do so long into the future.”

—Kaitlin Provost ’12
**Former Campus Leader Establishes Scholarship**

Timothy Barnhart ’02 says he always believed in the power of student involvement and in giving back. A loyal Oswego volunteer, he is a seven-year member of the Oswego Alumni Association Board of Directors, a former member of the GOLD Leadership Council, active in the Alumni-In-Residence program and the Alumni Sharing Knowledge program and a speaker for several Oswego events.

Now, he has expanded his giving through the Timothy Barnhart ’02 Scholarship, to be awarded to a School of Business student who is active on campus.

Barnhart, who majored in communication studies and business administration and was a resident assistant, president of Student Association and a member of theater productions, says he was the recipient of others’ gifts during his undergraduate years.

Even though the scholarship bears Barnhart’s name, he says it honors his Oswego leadership mentors. “The generosity of other people inspired me to give,” Barnhart says. “Had I not had those opportunities, I don’t know that I would have the level of success that I’ve had.”

Barnhart, who lives in Baldwinsville, NY, with his wife and two children, is managing director of Northwestern Mutual in Syracuse. He has been with the company since he graduated, having completed an internship there his senior year.

“In the role I now have with Northwestern Mutual, I often reference Oswego and the leadership positions that I held,” he says. “Oswego’s influence remains with me in things that I do every day.”

Grateful for the support, mentors and enrichment opportunities he had at Oswego, Barnhart says he is pleased to be in a position to help current and future students develop leadership skills and achieve their career goals.

— Aimee Hirsch ’14

**Helping the Dream of an Oswego Education Take Root**

For Kay Benedict Sgarlata ’65, Oswego planted in her a seed that dropped from the pedagogical tree of its founder, Dr. Edward Austin Sheldon. Now, she and her husband, Anthony, have established a scholarship that she hopes will do the same for future generations of Oswego students.

A former elementary teacher, Kay Sgarlata says she was drawn to Oswego, like many educators before her, to gain the foundational knowledge and practical experience, which were integral to Dr. Sheldon’s vision when he founded the Oswego Primary Teachers’ Training School.

“He’s work isn’t trite or fanciful,” she says. “It is rock hard, concrete pedagogy that people flocked to Oswego to garner. I was just one of those 100 years later that took advantage of that.”

The 1973 West Genesee Central School District (Camillus, N.Y.) Teacher of the Year, Sgarlata credits Oswego for not only helping her achieve her goal of becoming a qualified teacher but also for providing her with a greater worldview and being part of a valued institution.

“When I think of Oswego, the term alma mater truly applies,” says Sgarlata, who has served the college as a former governor-appointed member of the College Council, former Oswego Alumni Association president and a current member of the Scholarship Committee—a role which makes her keenly aware of the impact a scholarship can make.

“I read students’ essays every year, learn about the hardships their families face and admire them for their courage to pursue college,” she says. “I am grateful that my husband and I are able to contribute to the college and establish a scholarship that will assist students in their college careers.”

—Margaret Spillett

A proud Oswego alumnus, husband and father, Timothy Barnhart ’02, his wife, Andrea, and children Lindsay and Kyle, are pleased to provide a scholarship that will help ease the financial burden of higher education for future Oswego students.
“Well, I have bad news for you kid. You’re a writer, and you’ll never shake it.”

—DR. PAUL L. BRIAND (1920 – 1986)

Award-Winning Author of Seven Novels

By Linda Loomis ’90 M’97
The artist’s life began early for Alice McDermott ’75. She was always writing, creating stories, as children do, as a means of shaping and controlling her world. At a very young age, she was in love with short stories and novels, in love with fiction.

Here’s Alice. She is filling page after page with her own fictional stories. She is keeping a series of notebooks. She is, at 12 or 13, completing a novel on loose-leaf portfolio paper.

Does she think she can be a writer? No.

“Writing was something other people could do,” McDermott says. “It was a secret thing that nobody ever said could be done by someone like me, a middle-class girl from Long Island.”

High school graduation loomed, and, long past the point at which a certain nun should have stopped giving academic advice, she told the girls of Sacred Heart not to go to “one of those public colleges, where the boys and the girls are all put together.”

Here’s Alice. She is reading Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, Melville and Dickens. She is reading Seventeen and the Saturday Evening Post. She is reading Jacqueline Susann and Leon Uris.

Does she think she can be a writer? No.

“I was a totally indiscriminate reader,” McDermott recalls. “I read the classics and the commercial blockbusters as well as all the good and bad fiction in magazines of the day. But it still felt as if becoming an author was a distant, almost sacred thing.”

The Josephite nuns who taught McDermott and the other girls at Hempstead’s Sacred Heart Academy in the late 1960s provided them with a comprehensive reading experience that extended even beyond the school year. The renowned SHA summer reading lists were comprised of six or seven books with reports due the first week of school.

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At first considering a major in sociology, McDermott later decided on a degree in English. She was always expecting to go to college, she was not intending to pursue a degree that would lead to a career as an author.

When McDermott applied to SUNY colleges, Oswego became a top choice. Her older brother was enrolled nearby at Syracuse University, and the family saw the logic of Alice having rides to Central New York for a couple of years. At first considering a major in sociology, McDermott later decided on a degree in English.

“Oswego is where I learned about the craft of writing, where thoughtful professors were concerned about how students could be taught to be better writers,” McDermott says.

Professor Emeritus Lewis Turco, founder of Oswego’s English Writing Arts program, recalls McDermott as an excellent student, a serious writer. “But she was Briand’s from the start. She knew she wanted to write fiction,” he says.

**EPIPHANY**

McDermott’s epiphany in Dr. Briand’s Nature of Nonfiction class, when he declared her “a writer,” stems from the first assignment. He asked students to write an autobiographical essay, and McDermott told a story of something that happened to a first-person narrator. She wrote with the pronoun “I.” What happened to the narrator had not, however, happened in real life to McDermott. Thus, a short story was born.

She recalls sitting in the large lecture hall while Dr. Briand used an overhead projector to display her text on the screen, as he did with all student work. She recalls seeing her words scrutinized, her commas deleted, her sentences shaped. She recalls that when he finished, he said, “McDermott, I want to see you after class.”

It was then, after class, that Dr. Briand made his declaration: “Well, continued on page 20
I have bad news for you kid. You’re a writer, and you’ll never shake it.”

A university teacher herself—she was appointed in 2002 as a professor at Johns Hopkins University—McDermott now takes advantage of opportunities to encourage student writers as she was encouraged at Oswego. She says Briand’s affirmation in that long-ago class was transforming.

“It was so generous and kind of him to tell me that,” she says. “It was as if I had just been waiting to hear it. Coming from a respected writer, from an innovative teacher, it meant everything to me.”

**LEARNING TECHNIQUE**

In the early 1970s, beginning to believe that she could become an author, McDermott focused on literature and creative writing courses. Her undergraduate work was so strong that faculty members selected her in 1975 to receive the James E. Moreland Award, given to the outstanding senior in literature.

“Oswego was innovative,” she says. “It was uncommon to have so many options within the English degree. I took workshop classes in nonfiction and poetry, but it was my second class with Dr. Briand, a tutorial, that shaped my future as a novelist.”

Tutorial classes were limited to five students who never met as a group but, rather, wrote independently and met individually with a professor.

McDermott recalls those sessions like this: “I’d go in and meet with Dr. Briand, my draft in hand. He’d take it. He’d begin to read aloud. He’d stop. ‘Why that detail?’ he’d ask me. ‘Why a yellow dress? Why not a red dress?’ If I hedged, if I said I just picked the color randomly, he’d say, ‘You have a choice in every word. You make every detail say what you want to say.”

Having declared all that, Dr. Briand passed along one more golden nugget: “And when you have said it, stop.”

**LITERARY STYLE**

Briand’s advice to “stop” might be the defining characteristic that has shaped McDermott’s oeuvre. Her writing is spare, sensuous and densely constructed. In a review of *Someone* (*New York Times*, Sept. 6, 2013) Leah Hager Cohen observes, “Such is the crisp purposefulness of McDermott’s prose. Her sentences know themselves so beautifully: what each has to deliver and how best to do it, within a modicum of space, with minimal fuss.”

McDermott says her work “assumes a certain confidence in the reader.” Thus, it is not for everyone.

“My writing asks a lot of the audience,” McDermott says. “Not every reader is looking for this kind of fiction. I am aware, always, of the agreement between the reader and the writer. Dr. Briand nurtured that in me.”

In terms of technique, McDermott says she is always conscious of her choices as a writer. “Will you, as a writer, pay attention to each sentence?” she asks. “The art and the architecture of each sentence is something Dr. Briand taught me to see.”

He also was the person who urged McDermott toward the graduate writing program at the University of New Hampshire and connected her with the legendary advocate of process writing, Donald Murray.

**COLLEGE LIFE**

McDermott says her Oswego experience was, academically and socially, more than she expected when she chose a public school. She lived in Onondaga Hall for two years, then she took a year abroad at the University of Nottingham with 15 others.

“We became students in the British tradition while there,” she says. “For the entire year we studied only one subject: literature.” Upon her return for senior year, McDermott discovered she had met the maximum number of credits she could accrue in the English department. She was especially disappointed to face
graduation without having taken a class from Turco.

“I appealed to Professor Turco, and he arranged for me to receive a ‘dispensation’ so I could take his poetry class in my final year,” McDermott says. “The most wonderful thing about being an English major at Oswego?” she asks, then answers her own question: “I got a full background in literature there, including two wonderful Shakespeare seminars. From Beowulf and Edmund Spenser’s The Fairie Queen, right up to the works of Faulkner, Fitzgerald and Hemingway, I learned about the literary tradition I was secretly hoping to join.”

Dr. James Perdue was president when McDermott was a student. In those days, students registered in the gym, standing in line and moving up to the table to sign in. Reaching the front only to find the class had just filled was cause for groaning, but McDermott also recalls the festive atmosphere of the experience. “In the fall, it was like a big reunion,” she says. “We were all eager to see one another, and we could just feel the excitement of being back on campus, of being together again.” She recalls ducking inside from the howling wind and snaking in line across the muddy floors to register for spring semester.

Missing the large shopping malls of home, downstate students adjusted to commerce in Oswego. “We’d walk or hitchhike into town,” McDermott says. “We went to Green’s five and dime to pick up things for our dorm rooms. We bought Christmas presents at a little gift shop run by a retired Oswego English professor. We made good use of the sub shops. The bank on Bridge Street gave a hardcover dictionary to any student who opened an account. I still have mine. And, of course,” she adds, “on weekends we were at Buckland’s or Broadwell’s. In the spring, we were at Nunzi’s.”

McDermott recalls students of that period, when the legal drinking age was 18, also frequented the Rathskeller, a tavern downstairs at Hewitt Union. Designed and built by students, it included multiple seating levels, professional-grade stage and sound, murals and a bar.

In the SUNY Oswego tradition, McDermott and many of her classmates maintain their campus friendships. Four couples with Oswego connections will travel to Italy this spring.

One of the couples, Jim and Mary Ellen Lisiak Ryan, can thank McDermott for their romance; she introduced them at Broadwell’s. Doris Miele Caliguri ’75 and her husband, Frank, will be on the trip. She recalls being the only Italian girl hanging out with “a bunch of Irish kids.” On St. Patrick’s Day, she simply became “Dotty O’Miele.” Unable to condense 42 years of friendship into a few sentences, Caliguri says, “The Oswego legacy is still being formed.”

A birthday plaque from McDermott hangs in the home of Elizabeth Evans continued on page 22
continued from page 21

Corcoran ’76, who, with her husband, John, will join the Italy excursion. It says: I like you … you knew me when I was young and stupid.

“That plaque about sums it up,” Corcoran says. “I clearly remember the day of senior awards. I was sitting with Alice when she was recognized as the outstanding senior in the English department. I never would have known it from Alice. She always seemed ready to party. Those were the days.”

Recalling the undergraduate revelry and the good lives they’ve shared since graduation, McDermott says, “We have been together through dating, engagements, job hunts, weddings, births, joys and troubles. We are Oswego friends for life.”

THE ARTIST

While authors don’t generally attain celebrity status, McDermott, with the high-profile awards she has earned, comes close. Her fourth novel, Charming Billy, has been printed in 57 editions in seven languages, and is held by 3,358 libraries worldwide. It won the American Book Award and the National Book Award.

Her novels have been included on the New York Times bestseller list, shortlisted for major prizes, including the Pulitzer, and reviewed positively. In spring 2013, McDermott was inducted into the New York State Writers Hall of Fame, along with literary luminaries Walter Mosley, Marilyn Hacker and Calvin Trillin.

“Deborah Stanley came to Manhattan for that,” McDermott says, “and it pleased me tremendously—so generous of her. Other recipients were impressed that my college president had come to celebrate her. She always seemed ready to party. Those were the days.”

President Stanley says, “I was delighted to represent the students, faculty and staff of Alice McDermott’s alma mater in a celebration of her longstanding success as a writer. She has touched so many people through their memorable stories and characters and is an inspiration to our students.”

Alice McDermott ’75 with her family at the presentation of her honorary doctor of letters degree from the State University of New York in 1993.

The hall of fame honor came just a few months before the publication and promotion of McDermott’s seventh novel, Someone, which resonates with the protagonist’s ongoing quest to understand the ordinary events and their consequences in her life. Details are revealed in spiraling waves of time that carry the reader from Marie’s childhood in the immigrant neighborhood where she lives with her parents and saintly brother, to her dignified acceptance of the burdens and blessings of age.

As the Richard A. Macksey Professor for Distinguished Teaching in the Humanities at Johns Hopkins, McDermott conducts writing seminars and conveys to students many of the same principles she acquired at Oswego.

“There is something wonderful about working with students, being reminded that the struggle is the same every time,” she says. “It’s good to be reminded, and it’s also good to be the one to cheer new writers on, to say, ‘There is good material in there. Let’s work to find it.’”

Having completed the book tour for Someone—“The biggest distraction to writing is to publish a book”—the author focuses on her next project.

“When I’m working,” she says, “I try to approach it as if I have a regular job: just keep a routine, just give it time. Write and write. Write more than I need.”

Recalling an incident from a women’s seminar in Los Angeles, when her oldest child was 2 and she was obviously pregnant with a second, McDermott says the novelist Diane Johnson gave her advice.

“Diane told me to put the children on the school bus in the morning, go to the kitchen table and—she illustrated this advice with a dramatic sweep of her arm—clear everything off the table and sit down to write. She told me that way, I’d get in a day of writing. And when the children came home, I could pick it all up and do the dishes,” McDermott says.

“While raising three children, I learned to take whatever time I could get to write.”

Those three children are now adults, pursuing their own passions. The elder son, at 28, is a jazz pianist in New York City; the daughter, 25, is a visual artist and a curator of performance art in D.C., and the younger son, 20, a student at Fordham, plays traditional Irish music. McDermott’s husband is a scientist at the National Institute of Health.

Only Rufous, the family’s 11-year-old labradoodle, poses a possible distraction. But his call for daily walks suits the author. “When I’m at my desk, eight hours can go by before I realize it,” she says. “It’s nice to have Rufous to remind me to go out and get some fresh air.”

IF YOU CAN DO ANYTHING ELSE

In a Sept. 11, 2013, essay for “The 6th Floor,” a blog of the New York Times Magazine, McDermott relates three incidents in which successful writers are dispirited—by critics, by the press and by the pressures of producing their next success. She concludes with this advice, which she offers her students: If you can do anything else, kids, do it.

“I tell my students, if you can do anything other than pursue this literary fiction thing and still sleep at night and wake joyful in the morning and know that the hours of your days have been well spent, then you should do that—that other thing.”

McDermott says the advice clarifies what she—like other artists—knows deeply. She can’t do the other thing.

She has known since her sophomore year at SUNY Oswego the inevitability of her vocation, the certainty of her calling.

Here’s Alice. She is a writer.
Creativity...

demands risk-taking
rejects prevailing thoughts
bubbles up from within
spawns innovation
follows no rules
accepts mistakes
begets creativity
thrives at Oswego

The Creative Arts programs at Oswego encompass a range of academic disciplines, including fine arts, music, theatre, film and creative writing. The work of faculty and alumni enrich the cultural environment of the Oswego campus and communities around the world. Some focus on aesthetics and originality. Others dedicate themselves to merging function and purpose with beauty. All combine skill and imagination to provoke thought, arouse emotion and elevate the human experience. These creative artists, to paraphrase Pablo Picasso, “wash the dust of daily life off our souls.”
ARTSWeGo Brings the Creative Arts to Oswego

Since its creation 25 years ago, the ARTSWeGo program at SUNY Oswego has supplemented classroom experiences available to students by bringing outstanding professional artists to the campus for performances, exhibitions, screenings and readings. Frequently, guest artists also participate in extended residencies that build connections with public schools and other partnering organizations in nearby communities.

In a typical year, ARTSWeGo presents 10 to 12 performing arts programs—including dance, drama and classical, contemporary and world music—through its main stage season and the affiliated Ke-Nekt Chamber Music Series. Through two advisory committees, ARTSWeGo provides support for programming carried out by other academic departments and campus organizations such as the music department, art department and creative writing program.

In February, ARTSWeGo's small staff was focused on an ambitious project that brought the 12-member cast of The Acting Company to Waterman Theatre for performances of William Shakespeare's Hamlet and Sir Tom Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead. Students from 12 classes attended the performances and explored these related plays from the viewpoint of their respective disciplines, from literature to psychology to philosophy.

All of this is made possible by the voluntary student arts fee paid by SUNY Oswego students. Those resources are supplemented by generous patrons and frequent programming grants from funders like the National Endowment for the Arts, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation and CNY Arts. Private foundations such as the Gifford Foundation and Richard S. Shineman Foundation are also important allies in projects that extend ARTSWeGo's reach beyond the campus.

A comprehensive calendar of events is maintained at oswego.edu/arts with links to video previews and purchasing details for ticketed events. All programs are open to the public.

—John Shaffer


The Acting Company's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead played on campus in February.