

# ALUMNI CIRCUIT

## A MESSAGE FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

In the last edition of the *NJIT Magazine*, I wrote about the unbelievable transformation of the NJIT campus. A couple of weeks after the publication was distributed I was pleased to get a letter from Ronald (Ron) Van Meerbeke, class of '60 and '62. Ron was quick to point out that the campus has "always" been in a state of transformation. Ron stated that he had his Machine Tool Lab in Central High School and he also had several classes in the "new" Weston Hall! Cullimore Hall was also built when Ron was on campus so the concept of transformation is not new to him. Ron has returned to visit the campus over the years and enjoys seeing the electrical and mechanical labs as well as the collection of Dr. Weston's instruments. He states that, "I witnessed some of that incredible growth personally."

After getting that letter from Ron I had to pick up the phone and call him. We had a great conversation. We talked about the ongoing transformation and what life is like on the campus today. His views of NJIT are great memories. I know that our students today are also building such memories. All I can think of is the phrase, "It is all relative." Ron, thanks for sharing your thoughts with us and thanks for caring about NJIT.

I have to agree with Ron that the transformation has been ongoing over the years. At the end of my undergraduate studies NCE was beginning the transformation to NJIT. Since then, NJIT has continued to grow and expand its academic programs as well as the campus profile.

When I returned from the winter break, I came face to face with the latest step in the evolution of the campus. As soon as I walked up the stairs from the Newark Light Rail at the Warren Street exit I saw that construction has started on the new Wellness Event Center. The Lubetkin Field at J. Malcolm Simon Stadium was gone and the construction vehicles have moved in to launch NJIT's latest move toward the future.

Later that day, I learned that

the NJIT School of Management was going to become the Martin Tuchman School of Management. The naming ceremony took place on March 3. The School of Management was established in 1988 and added a much needed element to the NJIT curriculum. However, just like all other parts of NJIT, the School of Management has also been evolving over the years. Last year, Dr. Reggie Caudill was named the dean and he kicked off a strategic planning process that has resulted in revised programs for the SOM. People often ask "why" does NJIT need a School of Management? Dr. Caudill's revised strategy answers that question with the following statement: **"Business with the Power of STEM."** That is the Martin Tuchman School of Management's role in the NJIT ecosystem. The linkage between business and technology continues to grow in the experience economy.

The Alumni Association has also hit the ground running in 2016. In January we hosted a meeting of the Alumni Council where over 80 alumni and campus leaders gathered to focus on how the resources of NJIT alumni could be used to drive the activity in the following cohorts: Admissions, Career Development Services, Greeks,



*At the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Wellness and Events Center, slated for completion in fall 2017.*

Honors, the Martin Tuchman School of Management, CSLA/CCS and the New Jersey territory. This kickoff event was well received and there is an ongoing plan in place to drive this activity. If you are interested in helping in these efforts, please contact us. We are always looking for new ideas and people who are willing to help define the future of NJIT.

We will also be at the NJIT "Speed Networking" event working with the seniors to help them craft their interviewing techniques. That will be followed by the Speaking of Careers night in NYC where our young alumni can gain insight from other alumni based upon the twists and turns of their careers.

The work has already started to pay off. The Alumni Association was at the recent NJIT Open House and will be at all future sessions. Imagine having alums at the Open House talking to prospective students and parents about their days at NJIT and the careers they have had since graduation! That approach was very well received and the parents had many questions, and it was great to have our alumni talking to them throughout the day. These are great examples of our **"Connect - Benefit - Engage"** strategy.

The 2016 NJIT Alumni Events

calendar is now published, so take the time and look for activities where you can get involved. It would be outstanding to see everyone at the Alumni Weekend, which is scheduled for May 20-22. This is a fun family event with wine and beer tastings, networking, alumni awards and a gala dinner celebration. Take this opportunity to come back to the campus and see for yourself that transformation that is taking place. I think you will agree with Ron Van Meerbeke and Simon Schwarzschild that the campus is always changing, but from where I sit, seeing is believing!

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any question or if you want to get involved in NJIT activities.

I hope to see you at Alumni Weekend.

Jack W. Wagner '74  
President, NJIT Alumni  
Association

## SHE HELPS BUSINESSES CRUSH THE BOX: HEATHER MARTIN '07



Heather Ruth Martin

Heather Ruth Martin has a long history of transforming small businesses and helping them achieve the next level in their revenue, profitability and growth. A 2007 graduate of the Martin Tuchman School of Management's Executive MBA program, which she completed while helping to run a small business in New Jersey, Martin has been consulting with business owners, executives, sole proprietors and entrepreneurial salespeople for more than a decade. She recently launched Heather Martin, Inc., a consulting firm designed to help small and mid-sized companies with their strategy and sales and also provide career consulting and resume writing services for individuals.

While the profit motive is critical to business success, Martin strongly believes that there is "something beyond money" that must drive the business forward to success. Her motivation is to help business owners strategize from a new perspective that helps propel them to the next level.

"I like to help business owners do more than just think outside the box; I help them *Crush the Box*," she says. "I do this by working with them to understand their business, sales process and their limitations in both processes and belief systems that keep them from moving forward. Once we've figured that out, we can unlock and unleash a tremendous amount of positive energy toward developing the growth of the business."

In addition to launching her consulting firm, Martin recently published her first novel, *Reclaiming Konia: A Tale of Love*,

*Loss and the Armenian Genocide*, a work of historical fiction based on the life of her great-grandfather, Melkon Jenanyan, who fled Turkey before the genocide in 1915. It takes place against the backdrop of the Ottoman Empire in the late 1800s as her great-grandfather becomes an ordained Christian minister and missionary. Around 1894, the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II massacred upward of 300,000



Armenians in one of the first waves of violence over the next 20-plus years. Melkon married his wife Semma in Philadelphia, yet even with the awareness of violence, returned to the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the century to preach the word of God and open the first Protestant church. As they grow their family in a turbulent environment, they must decide to remain or flee, and inevitably determine the values that drive their life's meaning.

Martin says the EMBA program's intimate class size, flexible scheduling and affordability allowed her to forge alliances and continue working full time while pursuing a graduate degree. "The EMBA program helped me in two critical ways," she explains. "First, it created a set of relationships with intelligent people in many industries who I could reach out to at various stages in my career for input, advice and assistance. To this day, I am still in touch with a handful of my colleagues to discuss ideas or business ventures. The second thing it gave me was a set of tools for thinking, framing conversations and understanding a wide breadth of businesses—from small entities to large corporations, as well as the lingo, skills and methodologies being used in those companies to drive a business toward success."

## MAKING WAVES ON SPORTS JEOPARDY!: VINAY VARADARAJAN '11

As a young boy growing up in Fords, New Jersey, Vinay Varadarajan watched *Jeopardy!* with his family every evening at 7 p.m. He began to answer a few questions correctly at first and then more questions as the years went by. A longtime New York Yankees and baseball fan, his interest in transportation and civil engineering was sparked during his regular trips on the New York City subway to Yankee Stadium to watch his favorite team in action. More recently, Varadarajan has parlayed his ongoing passion for sports trivia into a remarkable 14-game winning streak on Season Two of *Sports Jeopardy!* and a total \$70,000 to date in prize money.

"I've always found sports facts easy to remember and usually was the go-to guy during pub trivia nights (including while at NJIT!)" Varadarajan said. "I found out about the show while watching a sports program and thought, 'Hey, I know sports trivia, let's give it a shot!'"

*Sports Jeopardy!* is streamed every Wednesday on the Crackle digital-only network for a total 52 episodes each year. Varadarajan applied to become a contestant when the show just started, so the process began with registering online in July 2014 and then traveling to New York City to complete a 30-question test. Those who passed the test played a mock game with buzzers and participated in a personality interview. After passing the initial test, Varadarajan was tested on his sports wits and buzzer reflexes, but was not called to be a contestant for Season One.

"I thought it wasn't meant to be," he recalled. "One year later (July 2015), I got a call from the show to fly to Los Angeles for the second season and pack my sports knowledge with me!"

How does he prepare for the show? "It's really the culmination of all the sports facts you've learned over the past years," Varadarajan explained. "Being a big Yankees and baseball fan, I began to learn about the history at a very young age. Safe to say, I used to make the commute from NJIT to Yankee Stadium quite a few times!"

As an NJIT student and Albert Dorman Honors College scholar, Varadarajan was active in the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society and also was a member of the Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity, which gave him an opportunity to meet other students interested in performing service around the Newark community along with building leadership skills for the future. During his sophomore year, he participated on the Steel Bridge Team, where seeing how a bridge was designed, fabricated and built allowed him to learn about structures in a practical fashion before taking more civil engineering-specific classes. In addition, he participated in the Study Abroad program during his junior year, where he studied in Hong Kong for a semester.

After completing his B.S. in civil engineering in 2011, Varadarajan worked in New Jersey for a year and a half and then went on to attend graduate school at Purdue University and complete his M.S. in transportation engineering last year. He is now employed as a transportation engineer in Washington D.C. and still follows the Highlanders basketball team.

"I am forever grateful for the opportunities I was given at NJIT," Varadarajan says. "The Honors College allowed me to concentrate on my studies rather than finances and the hybrid setup of taking classes from professors who were practicing engineers gave students like me a practical understanding of civil engineering."

Varadarajan's goal still is to make it on the original *Jeopardy!*

"But I'm thrilled with how *Sports Jeopardy!* has turned out!" he says.





# CLASS NOTES

## MAL & FRIENDS

**NJIT Magazine** invites new correspondents to join Mal Simon in sharing news about class members and alumni organizations. Professor emeritus of physical education and athletics, Mal was director of physical education and athletics, and men's soccer coach, for 30 years. In 1993, he received the Cullimore Medal for his service to the university.

If you would like to be a regular correspondent, don't hesitate to send an e-mail to the editor of **NJIT Magazine**: [crovetto@njit.edu](mailto:crovetto@njit.edu)

*First, the latest news from Mal –*

My column is dedicated to **Ed Cruz '62**, and Betty Wallace, partner of **Hank Krauss '54**. Both have attended the Florida Soccer Alumni Reunions. Ed, who passed away in 2015, and his wife, Sharon, hosted two of the reunions at their home in Boca Grande. Betty, a gracious lady, fit in immediately with our band of raucous revelers and was liked by everyone.

The success of the NJIT men's basketball team brought out considerable alumni support. Among them was **AJ Nayee '93, '96**, who I first met at the 2014 Alumni Weekend. I was sitting in the stands at a playoff game when AJ surprised me with a cordial hello and took the selfie included with this column.

AJ earned B.S. and M.S. degrees from NJIT and an MBA from Dowling Institute, Dowling College in Long Island, New York. Before taking on his current position as deputy chief engineer at Amtrak, AJ was president of Ashoka Consulting LLC. He began his professional career with NJ Transit, where he had an engineering internship while at NJIT.

His positions at NJ Transit included deputy project director/program manager for the \$8.7 billion ARC Trans-Hudson Express Tunnel Project. He had design and construction oversight responsibility for other projects, among



*With AJ Nayee '93, '96*

them the \$70 million right-of-way improvements for the Main and Pascack Valley Line, the \$60 million Bergen Tunnel Rehabilitation project, the \$450 million Secaucus Transfer program and the \$995 million Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System project.

Prior to starting Ashoka, AJ held senior positions with several international consulting firms, including AECOM Technology Services and T.Y. Lin International, and was involved with projects throughout the United States and South America. AJ is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and has been a leader in the New Jersey ASCE organization. In recognition of his ASCE service, he was named Young Civil Engineer of the Year.

AJ also held the rank of lieutenant in the U.S. Navy Seabees, serving as an engineering officer for the Naval Mobilization Construction Battalion. In 2004, he was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps

Achievement Medal for implementing an improved method of monitoring personnel data and other information. He received the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal for exceptional public service to ASCE. AJ and his wife, Krina, live in Edison, New Jersey.

**Charlie Wiercinski '68** wrote that he was sorry to read about the passing of Dr. Ed Monahan. He had Ed for Soil Mechanics and said he was a great guy. Charlie believed that Ed was such a devoted Yankees fan that he would have given up teaching if he could broadcast their games.

Charlie was on the NCE bowling team and active in intramural sports, especially as a pitcher on his Civil Engineering softball teams that won championships in 1967 and 1968. After college, he worked for Gannett-Fleming in Pennsylvania before moving to Maine in 1977 to work as chief civil engineer for Wright-Pierce, a consulting firm.

In 1989, Charlie started his own firm, Sitelines, P.A., working primarily with developers providing surveying, planning and engineering services for commercial and residential projects. He retired in 2012 and sold his business to his senior staff. Charlie and his wife, Jane, live in Brunswick, Maine. Their four sons were collegiate soccer players — Brian at Colby College, Kevin at Franklin and Marshall, Keith at East Stroudsburg and Scott at Middlebury College.

Charlie's younger brother, **Mike '71**, worked for Gannett-Fleming for 25 years in construction inspection, administration and management, followed by another 10 years with other consultants. Mike has lots of fond memories of his days at NCE, most related to athletics, including volleyball (intramural,



*Brothers Charlie Wiercinski '68 (left) and Mike '71*

club and varsity) and intramural softball, basketball, flag football and soccer.

Mike continued the "Wiercinski brothers" softball dominance by pitching for the intramural softball champions from 1967 to 1971 (see the photo from The Vector). Mike also wrote that Professor Monahan was his Soil Mechanics professor, saying, "The last conversation I had with him occurred as I handed in a final test, assuring him that while I did have a younger sibling, she was my sister, was not a softball pitcher or coming to NCE." I am sure Professor Monahan was relieved that there was not another Wiercinski to pitch against. Currently retired, Mike and his wife, Nancy, live in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

Another player on the 1970 intramural championship softball team in the photo is **Art Kaiser '71**. Art was on the championship softball teams all four years and was the intramural softball director for two years. After graduating, he served seven years as a USAF pilot, after which he spent the next 27 years as a pilot for Delta Airlines. Taking early retirement, he went to Macao for two years as a pilot. Art, and his wife, Elaine, now live in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and snowbird in Lake Worth, Florida, where he continues playing softball twice a week in a senior league.

Friday, September 25, 1970



**1970 INTRAMURAL SOFTBALL CHAMPIONS**

**Second Row: Jerry Syrek, Ronnie Malfatt, Jim Racz, Mike Wiercinski, Rich Martell, Bob West, Bernie Zyskowski.**

**First Row: Randy Milke, Joe Picciano, Artie Kaiser, Frank Terhune.**

**Joe Picciano '71**, also a 1970 intramural champ, received an Outstanding Alumnus Award in 2002 for his work supporting emergency management and for his service during the 9/11 disaster. He earned a master's in environmental engineering from NJIT in 1976 and is a professional engineer licensed in New Jersey.

Joe had a 30-year career with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). He was the director for FEMA's Region 2 New York City office from 1999 through 2000. In that capacity, his office oversaw the World Trade Center federal recovery effort. He also held the position of deputy director for the State of New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness from 2007 until retiring in 2015. Joe and his wife, Beth, live in Scotch Plains, New Jersey.

**Robert Finnerty '65** became a Golden Highlander at his 50th anniversary alumni reunion last May. We spent time chatting at the reunion dinner and again at the 2015 Cornerstone Society Luncheon that honors those who have contributed to NJIT for five or more consecutive years.

Bob played junior varsity basketball for NCE when I was the coach. He earned membership in Tau Beta Pi and Eta Kappa Nu honor societies. After graduating from NCE, Bob went to business school at Carnegie-Mellon. After receiving his MBA, he worked for Touche Ross, now Deloitte Consulting, until being drafted into the Army. He worked in shock and blast physics in Canada and southern Utah recording the results of large explosions.

After his Army service, Bob went to work for CBS as a financial

analyst. He then moved to NBC, working there for 28 years and moving up in the organization to head operations and finance for one of NBC's divisions. At NBC, he was fortunate to be able to bring clients to five Summer Olympics and other sporting events.

Bob retired from NBC in 2000, and in 2002 went to work for Fox News, where he started a radio news operation and talk channel on Sirius radio. He retired from Fox in 2014. Bob and his wife, Mary Helen, have lived in Scarsdale, New York, for more than 42 years.

Another alumnus at the 2015 Cornerstone Society Luncheon was **Michael H. Armm '80, '84, PE**. Mike had difficulty fitting physical education into his class schedule and we worked out a deal where he earned the required credit by teaching one of my Jamaican soccer players how to swim. Mike had been

a lifeguard and swim instructor in high school and loved teaching non-swimmers, so this was a win-win deal. He was an active member (vice president) of the American Society of Civil Engineers and took part in concrete canoe racing. He also served as president of Chi Epsilon (the civil engineering honor society) and was a member of Omicron Delta Kappa (the national leadership honor society).

After graduating in the spring of '80, he returned at night to complete a master's in civil engineering in the spring of '84, when he also became a professional engineer in New Jersey. Mike has worked mostly in site/real-estate development. He has served as municipal engineer for the Borough of North Plainfield, New Jersey, and as county engineer for Albemarle County, Virginia. Mike and his wife, Jill, reside in Culpepper County, Virginia.

**Marty Hammer '80** bicycled 325 miles in this year's California Climate Ride and exceeded his fundraising goal of \$5000 for the California Straw Building Association (CASBA). Along with 160 cyclists, he pedaled for five days down the northern California coast and across the Golden Gate Bridge.

Marty continues his efforts to develop and maintain methods of sustainable building in the model building codes. His efforts are beginning to show results as Maryland is the first state to adopt straw-bale and straw-clay construction appendices, and New Jersey is poised to follow suit along with California, New Mexico and the City of Denver, Colorado. CASBA has also supported sustainable rebuilding efforts in post-earthquake Pakistan and Haiti, and is planning to help rebuilding efforts in Nepal.

I'll end the column with some reminiscing from **Jim Morgan '56**, who ran track and cross-country and was in the Air Force ROTC program. Jim wonders if anyone remembers a musical revue put on by NCE students and professors in 1951 or 1952, consisting of singing, playing musical instruments, skits, telling jokes and the like. He has a strong memory of Fred Bauder, professor of chemistry and basketball coach, doing a great imitation of Jimmy Durante. With a Durante hat and a bass fiddle, Coach Bauder looked just like Durante, and when he sang Durante's signature song "Inka Dinka Doo," the audience loved it.

Jim also reminded me of a fun "assignment" he gave to Bob Swanson, Paul Hausser and me at the 1956 AFROTC Military Ball to aid him in selecting the Queen of the Ball and her court. He hit the nail on the head when he wrote, "I kinda think with some pre-dance imbibement these three very popular men had a great time, dancing and smiling all night, and handing out special slips to six lovely ladies later crowned Queen and Court."

Keep the news coming to [mjs@njit.edu](mailto:mjs@njit.edu).



## 1950

**Shimon Schwarzschild** shares his personal reflections on the significant transformation of NJIT's campus below. Read more about Shimon at [njit.edu/features/alumni/shimon.php](http://njit.edu/features/alumni/shimon.php).

### NJIT Then & Now: A 1950 Graduate Likes What He Sees Today

*Recently I revisited the NJIT campus as a returning alumnus, after a 60-year absence. I discovered a gigantic transformation — an engineering college that during my absence had grown up and transformed itself into a full-blown university with a global reputation!*



Shimon Schwarzschild received the Alumni Achievement Award in 2013.

*During my enrollment as an electrical engineering student, from 1946 to 1950, my classes seldom included even one female! To describe the impact that this lack of social or romantic opportunities had on us, I authored a humorous article, appearing in NCE's then student newspaper, *The Technician*, titled "Lost in the Wilds of a Coed Campus." I described my experience as a slide rule-proficient, but romance-deficient NCE engineering student on the loose in the wilds of a real coed campus! This gender disparity was certainly real. Of the 379 graduating students, all but two were males!*

*The other serious disparity was the class's ethnic makeup. My personal recollection and scrutiny of student photos in the Yearbook confirms that all my class students were white. While WWII had caused an impetus toward ethnic integration in the*

*armed forces, and the post-*

*war "GI Bill of Rights" was beginning to open up educational and job opportunities to all returning veterans, the ethnic and gender makeup of my class, predominantly veterans, did not yet reflect this shift toward ethnic diversity. As a Jewish childhood refugee whose family escaped the Holocaust by fleeing Germany in time, the free education I was offered as a returning military veteran through the GI Bill of Rights allowed me to enroll for a college education at NCE. I had known that before WWII, Jewish engineering graduates, along with other minorities, were virtually banned from most engineering jobs. Undaunted by this past, I decided to move ahead anyway with my dream of obtaining an engineering degree. NCE provided that opportunity.*

*Today, when I periodically visit the NJIT campus, I am amazed by the diversity of courses, degrees and fields of study available. I am also impressed by the ethnic, religious, national and gender diversity of today's student body, a virtual "rainbow" assembly from more than a 100 countries. To gain a more personal insight into this dramatic change, I sat in (i.e., monitored) a current electrical engineering class. I selected university lecturer Oksana Manzura's class because I also wanted to visit and monitor my first female teacher, since during my time at NCE no women teachers existed on the faculty. A lovely young woman wearing a colorful hijab graciously guided me to my destination when I asked her for directions. I watched with admiration how Ms. Manzura skillfully engaged and challenged her 18 students and how they responded. Again I was struck by the ethnic and gender diversity. Afterward, I briefly visited the Campus Center and observed the students there; I felt like I was at a U.N. assembly instead of a campus in the Newark heartland! I left the class and the school that day, feeling proud of my alma mater and lucky that I had lived long enough to have personally witnessed an exciting educational transformation!*

*I invite other alumni from the distant past to revisit the past as I did. An upcoming opportunity to reconnect as I first did in 2010 is coming up: the 2016 annual Alumni Weekend, May 20-22 ([njit.edu/alumniweekend](http://njit.edu/alumniweekend)). You will find me there.*



## 1964

**Martin Ustin** (Mechanical Engineering) has been appointed to the board of directors at South Beach Spirits, Inc. Since 2009, Ustin has been a founding partner and principal at Principal Charlestowne Premium Spirits, Inc. (CTPS), a distilled spirits

industry consulting company based in South Carolina. Before founding CTPS, from 2004-2009, Ustin was vice president of sales at Terressentia Corporation, a manufacturer of select spirit brands, private label spirits and bulk spirits for export. He joined this company at its inception and was an equity

owner and member of its board of directors.

## 1968

**Peter D'Amico** (Industrial Engineering, M.S. '70) has been named the 2015 Macricostas Entrepreneur of the Year by Western Connecticut State

University. D'Amico is the founder and president of SCB International Materials, a supplier of products to the global cement industry. He was one of the first to import raw materials into the U.S. from international sources.

## 1977

**Martin Pietrucha** (Civil Engineering), professor of civil engineering and director of the Thomas D. Larson Pennsylvania Transportation Institute at Penn State, was recently elected president of the research and education division of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA). His appointment began Sept. 28 at the ARTBA national convention in Philadelphia. As president of the division, Pietrucha will provide strategic direction for division activities and act as a member of the overall ARTBA Executive Committee. Pietrucha has been involved in ARTBA activities for more than 15 years. He is also a fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and was president of the Council of University Transportation Centers, an organization of university-based transportation research, education and outreach units. Additionally, he served as chair for the Transportation Research Board's Traffic Control Devices Committee, ASCE's Traffic and Highway Safety Committee and ITE's Education Council.

## 1979

**Ralph Cherrillo** (Chemical Engineering) has received the George V. Dyroff Award of Honorary Membership from ASTM International Committee D02 on Petroleum Products, Liquid Fuels and Lubricants. The Dyroff Award is presented for outstanding achievement in the field of petroleum products and lubricants. Committee D02 presented the award to Cherrillo for his many accomplishments over the course of his distinguished career, and his contributions to ASTM standards development since he joined in 1996. The committee has honored

him in the past, with the Lowrie B. Sargent Jr. Award in 2013 and the D02 Award of Excellence in 2011. Cherrillo is recently retired from Shell Technology Co. in Houston, Texas.

## 1980

**Kevin Gallagher** (Chemical Engineering) has retired from Croda International Plc after nearly 40 years in the global personal care industry. Gallagher was at the forefront of the industry's move from animal- to plant-derived ingredients in the early 1990s and Gallagher spearheaded many of the activities that have made Croda a leader in both sustainable chemistry and operations in the global personal care industry. Gallagher will be keeping up with the industry with Kevin Gallagher Consulting LLC, where he will help companies, including Croda, develop strategies in the personal care space. He remains an independent director on the board of P2 Sciences, a renewable specialty chemicals firm. In addition, Gallagher remains on the chemical engineering advisory board at NJIT.

## 1981

**Kenneth J. Fox** (Architecture), president and senior architect of Fox Architectural Design P.C., in Roxbury Township, New Jersey, has been named the 2015 Certified Green Professional (CGP) of the year by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). The CGP designation recognizes builders, remodelers and other industry professionals who incorporate green and sustainable building principles into homes — without driving up the cost of construction. Fox and other leading industry professionals were recognized on Jan. 18 at the Designation Achievement Reception just before the 2016 NAHB International Builders' Show in Las Vegas.

## 1986

**Jeffrey A. Beck** (Mechanical Engineering) has been appointed president and CEO of Astrodyne TDI. Beck joins Astrodyne TDI

from Presstek, LLC and previously served as chief operating officer for iRobot Corporation where he architected and implemented strategies that created the world's leading pure play consumer robotics company. Before joining iRobot, Beck worked at AMETEK Corporation, serving as senior vice president and general manager of the aerospace and defense division and earlier as vice president and general manager of the Power Systems and Instruments Division. Preceding his time at AMETEK, Beck served as a division president with Danaher Corporation. He also worked at Kollmorgen Corporation and Emerson Electric Corporation early on in his career.

## 1987

**Robert Rokicki** (Chemical Engineering) has been appointed senior vice president, head of Onshore Energy & Construction for the Americas at Aspen Insurance. Rokicki will focus on driving targeted growth across the Americas. With nearly 30 years of experience as both a chemical engineer and underwriter, Rokicki most recently served as senior vice president in the Oil, Gas, Petrochemical, and Chemical business unit at Liberty International Underwriters (LIU), responsible for profitable growth across the U.S. and Latin American portfolios.

## 1988

**David Lyons** (Electrical Engineering Technology) has been appointed vice president of PSEG Long Island Business Services. Lyons joins the Long Island team after 34 years with the utility's parent company, PSEG. As the vice president of business services, Lyons will coordinate the shared services functions, acting as a primary point of contact internally and for the Long Island Power Authority. The increased responsibilities capitalize on his experience with PSEG Long Island, where he served as the director of corporate integration, responsible for managing the integration of PSEG Long Island's back-office operations into PSEG's corporate functions.

Lyons previously served as director of treasury operations at PSEG, with the responsibility for PSEG's headquarters facilities, corporate real estate, and survey and mapping. After joining PSEG in 1981, Lyons has held a variety of senior-level positions in PSEG, including director of medical services, director of workforce planning and development, director of IT business solutions, director e-business strategy, and general manager of IT operations and client services.

## 1989

**Rowena Choudrie** (Mechanical Engineering, M.S. '91) has been appointed to the position of senior director, pharmaceutical product development at Actinium Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Choudrie has over 20 years of pharmaceutical industry experience with roles of increasing responsibility in product development. At Actinium, Choudrie will be responsible for clinical trial material supply, drug product process scale-up to support commercial supply and final product formulation. In addition, she will support Actinium's regulatory efforts particularly in the area of chemistry, manufacturing and control (CMC). Most recently, Choudrie worked at NPS Pharmaceuticals as senior director, pharmaceutical development, global technical operations, where she directed formulation development, process development and clinical manufacturing while managing contract research organizations (CROs) and contract manufacturing organizations (CMOs).

**Joseph G. Pulicare** (Civil Engineering) has been named president of the U.S. transportation and infrastructure sector at WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff. As president he will oversee planning, design and construction services for highways, bridges, transit and rail, aviation, as well as ports and marine. He will be based in the firm's U.S. headquarters in New York City. Before joining WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, he was executive vice president and chief executive for transportation for the

Americas operations of an international consulting engineering organization. He also held senior executive positions with several other consulting engineering organizations and previously served as a program manager and principal engineer with New Jersey Transit.

## 1992

**Glenn Arbesfeld** (Architecture) has been promoted to associate at SSP Architectural Group. With over 10 years at SSP, Arbesfeld has developed a broad body of work. He has amassed extensive experience in the design and implementation of complex projects throughout New Jersey. He has worked on both the design and management sides associated with educational, civic, corporate, and commercial projects throughout the state. He is a USGBC Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional in Building Design + Construction (LEED AP BD+C) with expertise in the design and construction phases of green building.

## 1994

Deputy Chief **Quovella M. Spruill** (Engineering Science) was sworn in as chief of detectives at the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, becoming the first African-American woman to serve as the highest ranking officer in the department's police unit. Spruill joined the county prosecutor's office in 1998 as an investigator and has steadily risen through the ranks, serving in a number of units, including homicide, special victims and the professional standards bureau.

## 1995

**Andre Grebenstein** (Civil Engineering) has joined The Martin Group, LLC (TMG), a New Jersey based general contractor, as a partner within the firm. Grebenstein spent the first 15 years of his career working for the nation's largest builder in jobsite supervision, project management and procurement capacities. Grebenstein joined TMG in

2008 as a project executive, and over the course of the last seven years has been an integral part of TMG's continued growth in the commercial interiors and mission critical markets. Grebenstein has held the position as project executive, director of operations and most recently, president, where he worked with notable clients such as Telx, fifteenfortyseven Critical Systems Realty (1547), The LeFrak Organization, United Business Media and Wipro. Grebenstein will continue to manage the day to day operations of TMG, and work closely with the founding partners to set strategic direction for the firm.

**Charles Shanley** (M.S. in Management) has been sworn in to Florham Park's Board of Education for the grades K-8 school district. Shanley, who has been a resident of the borough since 2003, retired early from a Fortune 50 company after 23 years of service, and is now self-employed as a managing partner in a real estate development company, with experience in marketing, negotiations, facilities management and budgeting. Shanley has been active in Florham Park as a member of the PTA, as a recreation basketball coach and with youth theatrical productions at the Ridgedale Middle School.

## 1996

**Rick Ybarra** (Architecture), along with two others, has been chosen by Cresa to head up the corporate real estate advisory firm's recently launched consulting division, Cresa Consulting Group (CCG). Ybarra brings more than 17 years of experience to CCG. He has spent most of his time in program/project management and consulting. Previously, Ybarra was an executive for a Big Four international professional services firm. He also served as an executive for a FORTUNE 500® scientific, engineering and technology applications company.

## 1998

**Paul G. Mudd** (M.S. International Business, MBA Management of Technology '07) has joined MAX

USA as eastern regional sales manager. Mudd's career includes 25 years of experience in sales of power tools and hardware through distribution into many market segments including commercial, DIY, OEM, government and residential. He has 20-plus years of experience in sales management and distribution development.

## 1999

**Christopher Tully** (M.S. in Management) has been named interim superintendent of Bergenfield schools. Tully, who has worked for the district for 10 years, runs its technology department. He has been instrumental in steering it on a path toward sustainability, keeping track of the output of copiers and going paperless at school board meetings.

## 2000

**Tom Brynczka** (Electrical Engineering, M.S. Engineering Management '06) has been sworn in as a member of the Wallington Board of Education. He is filling a one-year term and said he will run again when the term is up. Brynczka has worked for Siemens Industry for the past 15 years as a certified project manager on large commercial construction projects.

**Md Shoaib Chowdhury** (Transportation Engineering) has been elected a Fellow by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Board of Direction. Chowdhury has more than 18 years of experience combining research, academia and consulting. As a researcher he has contributed in several areas of transportation, including funding, financing and institutional issues; transit network modeling and scheduling with timed transfer; advanced mathematical and simulation modeling of traffic and transit operations; sustainable transportation development; and highway safety.

**Abir Thakurta** (Transportation Engineering) has joined Havertys, a full-service home furnishings retailer, as vice president, supply

chain. Thakurta joins Havertys with considerable experience in cross-industry supply chain strategy and operational design. He was most recently with GT Nexus as a director in their supply chain consulting practice where he implemented performance improvement programs with retailers worldwide.

## 2007

**Scott Graham** (Architecture) became principal at Muhlenberg Greene Architects, Ltd. Graham has been an integral team member of Muhlenberg Greene's premiere projects since coming to the firm. He participates in all aspects of project design and documentation, including LEED project certification. His experience on projects, ranging from traditional residences to modern commercial office buildings, has fostered a capacity to create aesthetically pleasing and functional spaces. Graham brings a decade of BIM expertise to MGA's design team. Graham was also the project architect for the recently completed retirement community Keystone Villa in Ephrata.

**Kyle Rendall** (Architecture) was named 2015 American Institute of Architects (AIA) NJ Young Architect of the Year for his dedicated professional and community achievements. An associate at KSS Architects, where he has worked for six years, Rendall has contributed to the growth of the firm's focus on pre-K-12 education, taking a lead role in construction administration phases of team projects such as a mixed-use housing building for Teachers Village and an urban high school for KIPP NJ, and actively participating in marketing for future work.

## 2008

**Shawn Michael Connolly** (M.S. in Engineering Management) has been appointed vice president for university facilities at Montclair State University effective Jan. 1, 2016. In his new role, Connolly, who has served as the associate vice president for university facilities at Montclair State since 2012, will be responsible for oversight

of the university's physical plant, energy and utility infrastructure and transportation systems. He will also oversee the planning, development and management of new construction and renovation projects, as well as the maintenance of university campus buildings, land and infrastructure.

**Vatsal Atulkumar Shah** (Civil Engineering, M.S. '09, Ph.D. '15) has been named one of New York's top 20 under 40 young professionals making a significant industry impact in their developing careers by Engineering News-Record. During his tenure at Hatch Mott MacDonald, Shah founded and led a geotechnical group that successfully completed work on more than 200 projects. His expertise ranges from tunneling and bridge-related geotechnical and structural engineering to underground storage tank and site remediation environmental design.

## 2010

**Lisa Peterson** (Survey Engineering Technology) has been hired by Dewberry, a privately held professional services firm, as a transportation services manager in the firm's Mount Laurel, New Jersey, office. Peterson has more than 13 years of experience in transportation engineering and project management. Her expertise includes bridge replacements, high-way drainage improvements and interchange design improvements. During Peterson's previous tenure with Dewberry, she was involved with the award-winning New Jersey Turnpike Interchange 6-9 widening project, as well as the Route 3 over the Passaic River project. She is currently working on a number of transportation improvement projects in New Jersey, including preliminary engineering for the Route 49 Buckshutem Road intersection in Cumberland County, the ADA South pedestrian curb ramp improvement project in Camden County, and the final design for the Route 70 Red Lion Road to Dakota Trail in Burlington County.



## 2011

**Abhishek Prasad** (Biomedical Engineering) is a recipient of the 2015 New Innovator Award from the National Institutes of Health. Prasad is an assistant professor in the department of biomedical engineering at the University of Miami, Florida. The goal of his laboratory is to develop brain and spinal cord machine interfaces to restore communication and control in paralyzed individuals. Toward enabling these neuroprosthetic technologies to interface the nervous system with devices, his laboratory uses electrophysiology, computational tools, and functional electrical stimulation in both healthy and injury models. His laboratory is also involved in neural probe development by understanding and mitigating various abiotic and biotic mechanisms in neural electrode failure.

**Melissa Salsano** (Civil Engineering) has joined Riker Danzig Scherer Hyland & Perretti's Commercial Litigation Group as associate. Salsano previously held the position of law clerk to the Honorable Yolanda Ciccone, A.J.S.C., New Jersey Superior Court in Somerville.

## HAMILTON V. BOWSER: 1929-2016

### A LEADER AND ADVOCATE IN THE NATIONAL MINORITY BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Hamilton V. Bowser, Sr. '52 '56 (Civil Engineering), a distinguished trustee, businessman and community leader who provided more than a decade of dedicated service to the university, died at the age of 87 on January 16 at his home in Annapolis, Maryland.

"Hamilton was a true pioneer and advocate for minority businesses for decades, leading national organizations and assisting these businesses in obtaining the skills and expertise to compete in the marketplace," said NJIT President Joel S. Bloom. "NJIT is a better place because of his leadership and commitment and we extend our sincerest sympathies to his family."

A U.S. Marine Corps veteran, Bowser received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in civil engineering from Newark College of Engineering in 1952 and 1956, respectively. He served on the university's board of trustees from 1988-2004 and chaired NJIT's Building Committee during a growth of new facilities exceeding \$100 million. An accomplished fencer, he was inducted into the Newark College of Engineering Athletic Hall of Fame and fenced in the national championships while in graduate school. He received the Outstanding Alumnus Award from the NJIT Alumni Association in 1984.

In the early 1970s, Bowser joined the National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC), where he served as a member of its board of directors for more than 25 years. He was elected to the NAMC Hall of Fame for his professional accomplishments, demonstrated leadership and contributions to the organization. He was recognized by Black Enterprise magazine and as a delegate to the White House Conference on Small Business. Additionally, the SBA honored him with its National Advocacy Award for the development and inclusion of small and minority businesses in local, regional and federal contracting. A licensed professional engineer in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland, he was a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers and a Fellow of the African Scientific Institute.

## MICHAEL J. PAPPAS: 1932-2016

### INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED CO-INVENTOR OF THE "NEW JERSEY KNEE"

Michael J. Pappas '59, '64 (Mechanical Engineering), an internationally recognized expert in advanced biomechanical design, died at the age of 84 on October 25, 2015. Dr. Pappas earned B.S.M.E. and M.S.M.E. degrees from Newark College of Engineering in 1959 and 1964, respectively, and a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering and computer-aided structural design from Rutgers University in 1970.

For more than 25 years, Dr. Pappas taught mechanical engineering at NJIT until he became involved in the design of replacement joints. Shortly after the New Jersey Medical School opened in Newark more than four decades ago, he was asked to teach a course in biomechanics. One of his students, Frederick Buechel, would go on to become an orthopedic surgeon and collaborate with Dr. Pappas in creating a series of innovative prosthetic joints, including the first mobile bearing knee, the New Jersey Low Contact Stress (LCS) Knee, which has been implanted in thousands of patients around the world. Dr. Pappas and Dr. Buechel were inducted into the New Jersey Inventors Hall of Fame in 1998.

"The amazing knowledge and mentoring Dr. Pappas provided me set my foundation for a now-successful 33-year career in orthopedic implant R&D," said Robert Cohen '83, '84, '87, vice president and general manager, R&D, of Stryker Orthopaedics' Reconstructive Division, who worked with Pappas in his senior year as an undergraduate mechanical engineering major and then as his thesis adviser for his master's degree. "I am forever indebted to Dr. Pappas, NJIT, orthopedic patients, and myself have greatly benefited from his unique vision, his inventions, and his desire to make healthcare better."

Dr. Pappas was a founder of Endotec, a privately held medical device firm based in Orlando, Florida, widely recognized as a global leader in the safe application of advanced technology for human implants and implantation instruments. He published over 60 scholarly publications and was awarded over 50 United States patents resulting from his work in computer-aided design and orthopedic biomechanics. In 1996, he received the NJIT Alumni Achievement Award.

"Dr. Pappas was my master's thesis adviser, first employer, and first engineering mentor," recalled Jerry D'Alessio '93, '95, chief engineer, Stryker Corporation. "I only hope he knew how much of an important and influential part he was in my life. I will always cherish the teachings, mentorship and the fact that I personally worked for such an incredible innovator, engineer and human being. He will be sorely missed, but never forgotten."

## IN MEMORIAM

Norman Pickering '36  
Robert Smith '48  
Frederick Schneider '49, '59  
Alexander Apostolina '52  
Hamilton V. Bowser, Sr. '52, '56  
Louis Carl Ripa '52  
Donald B. Wood '52

Lewis Belof '56  
John McMonagle '56  
Robert Spengler '56  
Robert F. Ruth '58  
Anthony Zotti '58  
Michael Pappas '59, '64  
Roland Barth '60

Robert Gere '62  
Diann J. Walldorf '63  
Robert Hart '64  
William Cowie '65  
Ronald Krenzel '65  
Lloyd Kovacs '65, '70  
Robert Fredericks '67

Joseph Orlando '68  
Karl Seiler '75, '78  
Ralph Helmut Storz '77  
Michael Rafferty '84  
John Gonnella '88  
Joseph W. Kearney Jr. '90