RMU WANTS YOU

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

The Big Dance
Colonials in March Madness
DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

On Dec. 12, 1776, members of the Continental Congress fled Philadelphia as the British and Hessian troops advanced on the city. The cause of American independence seemed lost, and it was one week later that a local newspaper published Thomas Paine’s famous rallying cry, “These are the times that try men’s souls.”

One member of Congress, however, stayed behind to raise badly needed money and supplies. No doubt the man, a wealthy and well-connected businessman named Robert Morris, was buoyed by George Washington’s victory at Trenton on Dec. 26. But just five days later, the Continental Army was faced with a crisis: Its terms of enlistment were ending just as the British were preparing their counterattack. Washington pleaded with his troops to stay for six more weeks, promising them $10 each.

To get the money, Washington turned to the stalwart who had stayed behind in Philadelphia when his colleagues had fled. The general sent a dispatch asking the financier for $50,000. Morris went out to Philadelphia’s Quakers – pacifists, mind you – and asked them to lend him the money, with nothing to pledge as collateral except his honor. They gave Morris the money, and Washington’s men were paid in time.

Ten dollars – even in 1776, it was a paltry sum, given what those soldiers were being asked to do. More than 230 years since the United States gained its independence, the sacrifices it asks of its men and women in uniform remain as daunting. That’s why Robert Morris University has chosen to honor those troops with the RMU Military Service Award.

This award, which you can read more about on page 18, will allow veterans who qualify under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill to enroll for free as graduate or undergraduate students at Robert Morris University. The award will cover the difference between their tuition subsidy under the G.I. Bill and RMU’s tuition.

Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the United States has fought wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and 200,000 U.S. troops continue to serve in those two nations. Thousands of other soldiers are returning to civilian life or stateside duty in the midst of the worst economic downturn in more than a generation. That’s why the new G.I. Bill comes at such an opportune time not only for veterans, but for our nation.

The original post-World War II G.I. Bill helped to create the modern American middle class, and it powered America’s postwar economic ascendancy. Giving today’s veterans an opportunity to further their education will help fuel our recovery from this current crisis.

During his historic inaugural address, President Barack Obama issued a call to national service, and the RMU Military Service Award is one way for us to answer that call. It is also a way for us to honor our namesake, whose efforts on behalf of those troops near Philadelphia helped give us the freedom we cherish today.

Sincerely,

GREGORY G. DELL’OMO, PH.D.
PRESIDENT
SPRING/09

DEPARTMENTS
02 < CAMPUS REPORT
08 < SCOREBOARD
28 < CLASS NOTES
33 < UPCOMING EVENTS

CREDITS
EDITOR
Mark Houser

CONTRIBUTORS
Valentine J. Brkich, James Duzyk M’00,
Gregory Dell’Omo, Mitch Kramer ’08

ART DIRECTOR/DESIGNER
Amy Joy

PHOTOGRAPHY/ILLUSTRATIONS
Front Cover: Howard Romero
Back Cover: John Schisler
Other Photos: Terry Clark, Jason Cohn,
Kevin Cooke, Lynda Davidson, Scott Golmic,
Natalia Jimenez, Amy Joy, Craig Lassig, Ed
Macko, John Schisler, James Seguin, Arizona
Cardinals, Pittsburgh Steelers/Mike Fabus

PRINTING
Herrmann Printing & Litho Inc.

SPECIAL THANKS
National Football League, Pittsburgh
Steelers, Arizona Cardinals

Foundations (ISSN 1934-5690) is published three
times a year by the Office of Public Relations
and Marketing in conjunction with the Office of
Institutional Advancement and mailed free of
charge to alumni, donors, trustees, faculty, staff
and friends of Robert Morris University. The
opinions expressed in the magazine do not
necessarily reflect the official policies of
Robert Morris University.

Contributions to Class Notes and address
changes may be sent to:
Office of Alumni Relations
Robert Morris University
6001 University Boulevard
Moon Township, PA 15108-1189
Phone: (412) 397-2586
Fax: (412) 397-2142
E-mail: rmualum@rmu.edu

It is the policy of Robert Morris University to provide
equal opportunity in all educational programs and
activities, admission of students and conditions of
employment for all qualified individuals regardless
of race, color, sex, religion, age, disability, national
origin and/or sexual preference.

18
RMU Wants You
New award makes college free for veterans

The Big Dance ............... 10
For the first time since 1992, the Colonials make it to the
NCAA men’s basketball tournament. Read more
about their record-setting year.

RMU Means Business ....... 12
The School of Business reaches a milestone with accreditation
from AACSB International, a distinction of which only
one-third of all American business schools can boast.

On a Wing and a Prayer .... 16
When he heard a bang and the jet’s engines shut down, Luther
Lockhart ’99 began to wonder if the end was near. Minutes later,
he was standing on the wing, soaked by the frigid Hudson River.

On The Field ............... 24
Steelers director of football operations Kevin Colbert ’79
wasn’t the only RMU alumnus earning a paycheck at
Super Bowl XLIII. (And some were working for the other side!)

Eastern Influence ........... 26
Two Chinese nursing professors spend a semester
in Moon Township, the latest participants
in the Rooney Visiting Scholars Program.

10 Questions ............... 32
Dave Hanson, general manager of the Island Sports Center
and legendary goon from the cult classic comedy “Slap Shot.”
> RMU Aids Special Olympics Bowlers

Student volunteers from the sport management program took a leading role in the 2009 Special Olympics Pennsylvania Western Bowling Sectional. Nearly 300 bowlers participated in the university-sponsored event this March at alleys in Pittsburgh and Mt. Lebanon.

“Every year we have countless members of the RMU community volunteer their time to make the Western Bowling Sectional a success, and this year is no different,” said Jessica Thompson, who is studying for a master’s degree in nonprofit management. It was Thompson’s third year volunteering at the event, and her second as its director.

The event got a bit of extra attention this year, thanks to a gaffe by President Barack Obama. Appearing on “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno,” Obama derided his own bowling abilities by comparing them to the Special Olympics. He quickly apologized to the organization, which was founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the sister of former President John F. Kennedy.

News reports of the event recognized the hard work of nearly 100 university volunteers. They also mentioned that many contestants bowled considerably higher scores than Obama’s 129.

> A Living Remembrance

President Gregory Dell’Omo led students, faculty, and staff on January 22 in a formal dedication of the university’s new Memorial Garden. The garden, at the entrance to Rogal Chapel, was conceived by students as a way to honor two classmates, Jonathan Gilbert and Michael Tatalovich, who were murdered on that date a year ago. The garden is a tribute to the memory of those men and to other members of the RMU community who have died.
> Another Pre-Med Partnership

The Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine is the latest partner in the university’s pre-med linkage program. In an agreement announced in March, the Philadelphia school will automatically enroll up to 10 select RMU graduates each year to study for a degree as a doctor of osteopathic medicine. The university has similar agreements with three other medical schools: Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Erie, and Palmer College of Chiropractic in Iowa, which is considered the founding institution of chiropractic.

Students are chosen for the program upon their admission to RMU’s Pre-Medicine Program, which is part of the School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science. Maria Kalevitch, the school’s associate dean, oversees the program at RMU. “In addition to providing talented students with an excellent medical education, RMU and PCOM are helping to address a critical shortage of physicians in Pennsylvania,” says President Gregory Dell’Omo.

> Faculty Notes

Kathleen V. Davis, dean of the School of Adult and Continuing Education, has been elected secretary of the board for the Pittsburgh Disability Employment Project for Freedom. The nonprofit organization provides job opportunities in information technology to people with disabilities.

Matthew Maurer, assistant professor of science education and coordinator of the biology teacher certification program for the School of Engineering, Math, and Science, was recently appointed to the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association’s board of directors. He will represent all western Pennsylvania colleges and universities in the four-year term with the professional organization. Maurer is also active with the National Science Teachers Association and is faculty advisor for an emerging student chapter of the association at RMU.

James Seguin was named emeritus professor of communication and media arts upon his retirement this month. Seguin, the founder of the university’s Center for Documentary Production and Study, was a faculty member for 15 years. He worked in local television before coming to RMU and was the president of Creative Video, an independent production company.

> Euphoric Euphoniumist

An RMU student got to toot his own horn at the annual conference of the College Band Directors National Association this March at the University of Texas. Andrew Schiren plays the euphonium – sort of a tenor tuba – and is the university’s first performer to be named to the association’s Small College Intercollegiate Band. He was nominated for the 90-member band by RMU band director Elisabeth Charles, who says Schiren is a “a very talented musician and a young man of excellent character.”
We’re Going Green

Hungry students and professors can still find a variety of delicious foods and beverages in the Food Court, but one thing they won’t find any more is styrofoam. The environmentally unfriendly packaging was phased out during the spring semester as a step toward reducing the university’s output of non-biodegradable waste.

Celebrating Earth Day last month, the university also introduced new single-stream recycling bins in Nicholson Center and Massey Hall. Now people can toss paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum waste all in the same container, rather than having to sort their trash on the spot. The containers are also in the residence halls and Pittsburgh Center.

The Tradition Continues

Robert Morris University is proud to announce Gary R. Claus ’74, a CPA and retired partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Pittsburgh, will become the next chairman of the university board of trustees in March.

Claus, who will succeed Joseph Nocito ’70, has long been an energetic supporter of RMU and is currently vice chairman of the board. He received the Alumni Heritage Award as the university’s outstanding alumnus in 1989. Claus is actively involved in community organizations, as chairman of Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania and immediate past chairman of the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium, and he is also moderator of the congregation at North Hills Community Baptist Church.

“I’m honored and humbled to be asked to serve as chairman, and I look forward to continuing the rich tradition of Robert Morris University’s outstanding service to its students and the community,” Claus says.

A partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers for 22 years, Claus had clients ranging from individual income tax accounts to global Fortune 100 firms. Now he is a managing director at Jade Group, a downtown executive search firm.

Claus lives in Hampton with his wife, Jo Ann (Spiri) Claus ’73, and two sons, Damon and current student Adam Claus. “My youngest son asked me if I ever thought when I was a student at RMU that I would one day be chairman of the board of trustees,” says Claus. “I said, ‘Son, when I was a student, I never knew that there was a board of trustees, let alone that you could be chairman of it.’”

Bright Bunch

Stacey Vigliotti ’09 was one of five students in the state honored in February with an Outstanding Adult Student in Postsecondary Education Award from the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education.

Vigliotti, who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in organizational studies this month, is a certified purchasing manager and procurement specialist at Bayer Business and Technology Services.

Sophomore communication major Kevin Williams, news editor of student newspaper The Sentry, won a Mark of Excellence Award from the Society for Professional Journalists for his coverage of last year’s campus power outage. “Our investment in the journalism program is now beginning to pay dividends. Kevin, along with many others on the staff, has worked hard to make The Sentry a solid journalistic enterprise,” says Marc Seamon, assistant professor of communications and Williams’ advisor.

Media arts major Rob Maher is part of a team at Pittsburgh marketing firm SpaceBoy Interactive that recently won a regional Gold Addy award for “Stuck Inside,” an online advertisement for Outdoor Recreation Partners. The Addy awards recognize excellence in ad campaigns. Maher started at SpaceBoy as an intern in 2008 and has been working there full time since last fall.

Bright Bunch

Stacey Vigliotti ’09 was one of five students in the state honored in February with an Outstanding Adult Student in Postsecondary Education Award from the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education.

Vigliotti, who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in organizational studies this month, is a certified purchasing manager and procurement specialist at Bayer Business and Technology Services.

Sophomore communication major Kevin Williams, news editor of student newspaper The Sentry, won a Mark of Excellence Award from the Society for Professional Journalists for his coverage of last year’s campus power outage. “Our investment in the journalism program is now beginning to pay dividends. Kevin, along with many others on the staff, has worked hard to make The Sentry a solid journalistic enterprise,” says Marc Seamon, assistant professor of communications and Williams’ advisor.

Media arts major Rob Maher is part of a team at Pittsburgh marketing firm SpaceBoy Interactive that recently won a regional Gold Addy award for “Stuck Inside,” an online advertisement for Outdoor Recreation Partners. The Addy awards recognize excellence in ad campaigns. Maher started at SpaceBoy as an intern in 2008 and has been working there full time since last fall.
Report Card

If you would like a closer look at RMU’s performance, we invite you examine our own report card. The university has posted a report on how well it is meeting outcome assessment standards, including measures that are part of the latest five-year strategic plan, at www.rmu.edu/results.

“The numbers show we’re doing a good job fulfilling our educational mission,” says David Majka, director of institutional research. He points out high pass rates on comprehensive exams, good employment rates for graduates, and improvements in retention and graduation rates.

G-Man on Campus

Special agents from the Pittsburgh office of the FBI visited the university last month to talk about fighting cyber crime, including identity fraud, online terrorist cells, and child pornography.

The free event April 22 was the third visit by the local FBI office. It complements the university’s plan to offer a new program in cyber forensics and information security next year.

Changes in the Works

In what Provost David Jamison says is “a major step toward enhancing degree opportunities for all adult students,” the School of Communications and Information Systems next month will assume administrative responsibility for the M.S. and B.S. degree programs in organizational studies and the B.S. in professional communications, and the School of Nursing and Health Services will administer the B.S. in health services administration.

The programs previously had been under the School of Adult and Continuing Education. As of June 1, that school will cease to exist, and its functions and faculty members of academic rank will be integrated into the existing schools.

“We believe that students will be better served by having the full range of degrees and services in the larger schools of which they will now be a part, as well as the ability to be fully integrated into the curricular and cocurricular activities of those schools,” Jamison says.

Degree programs and requirements will not change. A transition team will assure that service to adult students continues without interruption.

Are You a Friend of Robert?
Helping Change More Lives

Michael J. Frantz joined RMU in March as vice president for enrollment and financial aid. The Iowa native was formerly vice president of enrollment services at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and previously worked at Buena Vista University in Iowa. “I have a lifelong commitment to small private schools that are vital to the economic health of the regions in which they reside,” he says. Frantz has a master’s degree in political science from the University of Iowa and bachelor’s degrees in German and political science from Simpson College.

Snowing Here But Warm in Chile

Eight media arts and communication students spent two weeks this winter in Valparaiso, Chile, working on short documentary films through an exchange program between the Center for Documentary Production and Study and the University of Valparaiso. Visiting the seaside city at the height of Southern Hemisphere summertime, student teams shot footage for films about graffiti artists, a busy central plaza, and poet Pablo Neruda. The films debuted at Docufest in Massey Theater in April.

The student filmmakers were Jonathan Harchick, Todd Lewis, Chad Cunningham, Adrienne Knouse, R.J. Schmidt, Ashley Weber, Nicole Storey, and Joe Zerbe. Barbara Jeraldo and Gonzalo Manzo, two University of Valparaiso film students who visited RMU in 2007, helped the student crews, which were overseen by the center’s director, James Seguin, and production coordinator Erica Peiffer.

Seguin says the center’s documentary student exchange programs in Chile, Germany, and Turkey are excellent training for future professional filmmakers. “Part of making a documentary is observing and learning about other people. When you go to another culture, you just have to listen and let the other culture wash over you so you can tell a story,” he says.

> WATCH THE DOCUMENTARIES AT FOUNDATIONS ONLINE

> Recycle this magazine

Give it to a neighbor who’s in high school and help spread the word about RMU.
> He Needs a Book

David McCullough, who won Pulitzer Prizes for his biographies of Harry Truman and John Adams, said during a visit to RMU that somebody needs to write a biography of Robert Morris.

“Robert Morris was an extremely important figure, greatly admired and greatly liked by his contemporaries,” the popular historian said during a speech in Rogal Chapel in April. “His importance is established fact, no question about that. And some time someone’s going to write a first-rate book about him, and he will be given the attention he deserves. Maybe one of you. That’s how it happens; somebody decides to do it.”

In his book 1776, McCullough gives some details of Morris’s role in the pivotal year of the Revolutionary War, including a letter the “Financier of the American Revolution” wrote to his friend George Washington on New Year’s Day, 1777.

“The year 1776 is over,” wrote Morris. “I am heartily glad of it, and I hope neither you nor America will ever be plagued with such another.”

> Trustee Heads to Emerald Isle

Patricia Rooney, member of the university board of trustees and sponsor of RMU’s international visiting scholars program, soon should be crossing the ocean back to her ancestral home. Her husband, Steelers owner Dan Rooney, has been chosen by President Barack Obama as the next U.S. ambassador to Ireland, pending Senate confirmation.

Mr. Rooney, a lifelong Republican, is the grandson of an Irish immigrant and helped found the American Ireland Fund, which has raised millions of dollars to promote peace and education in Ireland. Mrs. Rooney, whose maiden name is Regan, is the daughter of Irish immigrants who came from County Mayo.

Among the Rooseys’ first embassy guests could be English professor Jim Vincent and a group of RMU students visiting Dublin in June to study William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, and other giants of Irish literature at Griffith College.

We wish the Rooseys all the best, and look forward to hearing Mrs. Rooney’s future stories about life in the Emerald Isle – including the blarney. In the meantime, turn to page 26 to read more about the Rooney Scholars.

> Donating Their Spring Break

While many used their spring break to soak up some rays, 24 RMU students spent their time away from class helping those less fortunate.

Senior nursing major Kristen Graziano was part of a group that spent time with homeless people in Washington, D.C., assisting at a food bank, visiting with children at an after-school program, and selling copies of a newspaper written by homeless people. “This is definitely one of those life-changing experiences,” Graziano says. “It gives me a better understanding and respect for everything that I have.”

A second group traveled to North Carolina, where they worked with Habitat for Humanity building a house for the Garcias, a low-income family. The dozen RMU students were on a team with students from Syracuse University and the State University of New York at Cortland, along with a church group.

Students raised money through private sponsorships to cover most of the costs of both trips. Randon Willard, community and volunteer services coordinator for the university, organized the two “alternative spring breaks” and joined the group in North Carolina.

Check out Foundations online to see a video report on the two trips.

ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY FOUNDATIONS • 7
A wild, see-saw battle at the men’s lacrosse home opener Feb. 14 in which the lead changed six times ended in triumph, as the Colonials upset favorite Penn State 12-11 in double overtime.

The loss shocked the Nittany Lions, who had crushed the Colonials 18-2 the year before. “That’s a game we certainly expected to control throughout,” Penn State head coach Glenn Thiel said afterwards. His team outshot the Colonials 52-35, but a ferocious opening volley by RMU put Penn State on the defensive, and steady goaltending by junior Sal Barcia kept...
the Colonials in the game after the Nittany Lions came roaring back.

The Colonials raced to a 6-1 lead before the visitors rallied for seven straight goals. RMU tied the game at 8-8 in the third, then fell behind again before knotting the score 11-11 with six minutes left thanks to a goal by junior Patrick Smith, who finished with a hat trick. Scoreless after one overtime, the game was decided early in the second extra period when sophomore Corbyn Tao-Brambleby earned his own hat trick.

It was the biggest win so far for the team under five-year head coach Bear Davis.

For the second straight season, RMU’s Division I club hockey team won the Eastern Collegiate Hockey League championship, defeating Mercyhurst College, 6-2. Head coach Jason Evans is on a streak of his own, after winning ECHL Coach of the Year for the third time in a row, and senior captain Jake Javitt was named league MVP. RMU outshot Mercyhurst 47-17 at the championships in Rochester, N.Y., to win the league title. In the last three seasons, the team has lost only once in regulation time against league opponents.

> FOR THE LATEST SCORES VISIT WWW.RMUCOLONIALS.COM.
The Robert Morris University men’s basketball team made it to March Madness this year, the sixth time for the university and the first time in the NCAA tournament since 1992. Seeded 15th, the Colonials drew a tough opponent in Michigan State. But RMU held its own, taking a 28-26 lead in the first half before falling to the Spartans, 77-62. The Spartans went on to beat four more teams before losing in the finals to North Carolina.

Led by Northeast Conference Player of the Year and NEC Tournament MVP Jeremy Chappell, the Colonials defeated rival Mount St. Mary’s in the conference championship, in front of the first sellout crowd in Sewall Center history. Junior forward Dallas Green hit the game-winning shot with 2.5 seconds to play to propel Robert Morris to the 48-46 victory.

It was a big year for Mike Rice, who won NEC Coach of the Year for the second time in two years at RMU. Rice signed a three-year contract extension last month and is set to coach the Colonials through 2016. “He has been a great coach, a great representative of the university and a great campus presence,” says Athletic Director Craig Coleman.

Senior guard Bateko Francisco was named NEC Defensive Player of the Year, and junior forward Rob Robinson set a school record with 35 blocks, garnering a spot on the 2009 All-NEC Second Team.

Chappell, a senior guard, led Robert Morris in scoring (16.7 ppg), rebounding (6.3 rpg), assists (112), steals (86), and three-pointers (84). He owns a host of records, including most starts in a Colonials uniform, with 123.

Over the last two seasons, RMU has tied or broken a total of 16 school records. Its 50 wins is the most by an NEC program in back-to-back years in league history.
Heinz knows it. So do Bayer, PNC, UPMC, BNY Mellon, Highmark, U.S. Steel, and many other major corporations who employ Robert Morris University alumni. Now the rest of the world knows it too: RMU means business.

In April, RMU’s School of Business joined 559 other schools worldwide accredited by AACSB International – The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. It’s a highly coveted recognition, and one that represents the peak standard of achievement for business schools.

“This is a great honor for RMU’s School of Business,” says Dean Derya Jacobs. “Only about one-third of all U.S. business schools have earned this important accreditation. It shows how committed we are to meeting and exceeding the highest standards of business education.”

Receiving this sought-after accreditation signifies the end of a long, sometimes challenging process, and it makes RMU’s School of Business only the fourth such program in Pittsburgh to achieve this credential, along with Carnegie Mellon University, Duquesne University and the University of Pittsburgh.

“AACSB accreditation only confirms what we at the university have known for a long time,” says RMU President Gregory G. Dell’Omo. “When it comes to getting a solid, engaged business education, there’s really no better place than RMU.”
benefited the school,” says Jacobs. “It helped us establish processes to systematically monitor and assess our educational and support programs for our students. It taught us to become efficient and effective in addressing problem areas and continuously improving our school.”

The final AACSB review team came in February for three busy days of assessments.

AACSB International, based in Tampa, Fla., is an association of educational institutions, businesses, and other organizations. Founded in 1916, it is recognized worldwide as the premier accrediting agency of collegiate business schools and accounting programs.

In granting accreditation, AACSB International assures that the school is:

- properly managing its resources to achieve a vibrant and relevant mission
- advancing business and management knowledge through faculty scholarship
- providing high-caliber teaching of quality and current curricula
- cultivating meaningful interaction between students and faculty
- producing graduates who have achieved specified learning goals

RMU’s effort to attain AACSB accreditation for the School of Business began in 2002. Since then, the School of Business has submitted five annual reports on its progress in meeting 21 specified standards. In July, the school submitted five volumes of data demonstrating how they had met the accreditation criteria. “Although it took several years to complete, this process really
They visited classrooms; met with faculty, administrators, students, alumni, and trustees; toured campus extensively; and reviewed documentation and other data. Team members included chairman W. Randy Boxx, dean of the business school at Shenandoah University in Winchester, Va.; Kjell R. Knudsen, dean of the school of business and economics at the University of Minnesota-Duluth; and Maling Ebrahimpour, professor of management and former business school dean at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I. The review team was also joined by AACSB International Accreditation Services Manager Maria Baltar.

AACSB International voted on the School of Business’ application in March and officially announced the school’s accreditation in April. Overall, it was a gleaming recommendation. The team was especially impressed with the university’s level of student participation. During the team’s visit, business student organizations set up tables in Massey Hall to display information about their participation in professional and community activities. “Prior to the visit, we emphasized to the students that this accreditation was for them and it was their time to shine,” says Jacobs. “It was important for the review team to directly interact with our students as much as possible.”

“Our business students are engaged in so many professional activities including participation in knowledge and skill competitions nationwide. They are passionate about their discipline and school,” says Jacobs. “During their interactions with the team members, they demonstrated how well they are prepared for the business professions, and the team members couldn’t stop talking about them.”

The team reported that RMU’s board of trustees, president, and provost are strongly committed to “building and sustaining a high quality business school.” They recognized Dean Jacobs’ outstanding leadership and the school’s “high quality and caring faculty,” and they noted the school’s emphasis on communication and its strong relationship with the regional business community.

The team singled out RMU’s focus on “professional development and active student engagement through internships, co-op experiences, and research projects.” They were also pleased with the level of support given to students through the career center and the Early Success Program, which has resulted in “great success and an admirable graduation rate.”

In their report, the review team said the following:

- The school prepares students with strong communication skills through both required and elective classes. Businesses highly value such skills.
- The university’s separate Student Engagement Transcript allows students to showcase their accomplishments outside the classroom.
- Strong collaboration between the Career Center and the school’s faculty and administration leads to a high number of internships.
- A climate of collegiality, collaboration, and pride permeates the daily operations and the overall environment of the school.
“We couldn’t be happier with the AACSB’s findings,” says Jacobs. “This entire process has been a wonderful learning experience that will help us continue to improve and provide high-quality programs and opportunities for our students.”

Along with the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) accreditation that the School of Education and Social Sciences received last July, the AACSB International accreditation completes the university’s goal under its strategic plan to have all of its professional programs of study accredited.

Seventy-five percent of RMU students are enrolled in professionally accredited programs, and every program for which a discipline-specific accreditation exists has earned it. RMU also is accredited as an institution by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

Accreditation is a part of a banner year for the School of Business, which soon will break ground for its new PNC Trading Center and U. S. Steel Videoconferencing and Technology Resource Center on the Moon Township campus. Both will be housed in a new 8,000-square-foot building next to Massey Hall, completing a School of Business quadrangle that will surround Rudolph Gardens.

When it is constructed, the PNC Trading Center, which was made possible by a $520,000 grant from the PNC Foundation, will be a state-of-the-art facility offering students dynamic, hands-on experience in financial trading strategy. The U. S. Steel Videoconferencing and Technology Resource Center, made possible by a $500,000 grant from the United States Steel Foundation, will enable the School of Business to provide distance learning and corporate training, and will link the school’s undergraduate programs in Moon Township to its graduate programs in downtown Pittsburgh.

“These exciting new additions, made possible by the generosity of the PNC Foundation and the U.S. Steel Foundation, along with the AACSB accreditation, will help us take our School of Business to the next level and further enhance our ability to provide our students with a top-of-the-line business education,” says Dell’Omo. “Together, these improvements demonstrate our commitment to remaining the premier business institution in the region.”

For other accreditations and outcomes assessments see www.rmu.edu/results.

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRICICH
On January 15, at 3:25 p.m., Luther Lockhart ’99 was seated in the back of U.S. Airways Flight 1549 as it lifted off from New York City’s LaGuardia Airport. Bound for Charlotte, N.C., the 32-year-old personal trainer from Queens was looking forward to a little getaway in warmer climes to visit friends and family.

Less than 10 minutes later, he was soaked to the bone and standing on the wing of the plane as it floated in the frigid waters of the Hudson River.

Lockhart, a former media arts major and running back for the Colonials football team, was one of the 155 lucky passengers to survive the ill-fated flight, thanks to the efforts of Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger and the rest of the plane’s crew.

“There wasn’t a single person on that plane who didn’t think their life was over,” says Lockhart. “It was an out-of-body experience. You know the statistics. You know the odds of survival are slim to none.”

About two minutes after taking off, Flight 1549 struck a flock of geese at about 3,000 feet. “I didn’t feel the plane hit the birds,” says Lockhart. “I heard a loud bang, and once that happened, it was very quiet. You knew the engines were off.”

Shortly thereafter, a burning smell filled the cabin, and the flight attendants went into action. “They were kind of frantic but controlled,” he says. “They went back and forth, looking around to check the inside of the plane. They didn’t say much, just told us to stay in our seats. I knew something was wrong when I didn’t hear any engines.”

While the flight crew checked the cabin, the passengers talked among themselves. Everyone looked anxious. Some were quiet, others were hysterical. “The majority of people were panicking,” says Lockhart. “Some were praying, others were screaming, children were crying. It wasn’t all calm as the media tried to portray it.

“We were pretty much waiting to die,” he says. “I was ready to go. I was in a good place before it happened, and I was very content with my life. ‘If this is it,’ I said, ‘then so be it. Just let it happen quickly.’ I didn’t necessarily want to go that way, but I accepted it.”

When Capt. Sullenberger concluded that the airliner would be unable to return to the airport or any other airfield, he turned the plane southbound and looked for a place to ditch in the Hudson River. After gliding without engines for about eight miles, the pilot was able to put the Airbus A320 down successfully in the river.

“The landing was not smooth,” says Lockhart. “It may have looked smooth on video, but believe me, it wasn’t.” It felt like they were landing on concrete, he says, and the entire plane shook vigorously before coming to a halt.

“Immediately after we landed, I thought the plane would blow up, rip apart, I’d be burned to death, game over.” As soon as the plane hit the river, the icy water came rushing in and was soon waist deep in the back of the plane. “I got up, grabbed a seat cushion and climbed over seats,” says Lockhart. “Everyone was crowding the center aisle. I wasn’t thinking about being orderly, I was trying to get the hell out of there.”

Lockhart was the sixth person out on the left wing. “I probably should have been one of the last,” he says. “But my adrenaline was going, and I only had one thing on my mind: getting out of that plane.”

Since the crash, Lockhart’s life has been hectic at times. But he says it hasn’t changed who he is. “I’m not a ‘why me’ type of person,” says Lockhart. “I’m no better than any other human being. There are reasons for everything and I would never question the will of God. As the plane was going down, what I was really worried about was how my family would handle it.”

Lockhart was back to work in Manhattan the following week. And although the questions and interviews got a little tiresome after awhile, pretty soon his life was back to normal, or as close to normal as he could get.

Before the crash, Lockhart had some travel plans for the summer that he’s now postponing. “I’m not ready to get back up in the air anytime soon. It’s a healing process, and I hope to be back up flying soon. I want to see the world one day, and hopefully I’ll get back to a point where I’ll be comfortable flying again.”

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRKICH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATALIA JIMENEZ, THE STAR-LEDGER

Luther Lockhart is a personal trainer in Manhattan, N.Y. Visit his website at www.lifestylefitness.us.
Last summer, when Silas Watkins was sent to the Charles C. Carson Center for Mortuary Affairs at Dover Air Force Base, Del., he wasn’t sure what to expect.

Watkins, a sport management major at Robert Morris University and senior airman at the 911th Air Reserve Station in Moon Twp., was charged with receiving the remains of military personnel from overseas and beginning the process of returning them to their loved ones. It was an important duty that required a high level of respect and professionalism. “I had to take my job very seriously,” says Watkins, “because my crew and I were the last people to see a soldier before his loved ones did. So we treated each one as if he were our own family member.

“I didn’t know how I’d react to the realness of the situation,” he says. “It’s a sad environment, no question. But the sense of pride and respect you feel for those soldiers is undeniable. I have never been more proud to be in the military and perform a job such as that.”

RMU appreciates the sacrifices our military personnel make for us every day. So beginning this fall, veterans will study free at RMU. The university’s Military Service Award will enable veterans who qualify for full benefits under the new Post-9/11 G.I. Bill to enroll tuition-free in any of the university’s undergraduate or graduate programs.

RMU was among the first private universities in the country to offer free tuition to veterans under the new G.I. Bill. The university made the official announcement February 12 at the Heinz History Museum in downtown Pittsburgh, where several military and government officials were present, including State Sen. John Pippy, who is currently a major in the Pennsylvania National Guard.

“You’re not just doing the right thing at Robert Morris for the military veterans,” said Pippy during the event, “but I think you’re doing the right thing for students.” Pippy, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, served on active duty in 2003-2004 during the Iraq War. He feels that military veteran students have a different set of life experiences that
can benefit those around them. “So not only are you helping make our country better because you’re going to educate the future engineers and entrepreneurs and financiers of our country, but I also think you’re going to make it a better educational experience for the students at Robert Morris.”

“Not only are you doing the right thing and going to do well for the men and women who served,” he said, “but also, I think Robert Morris will be better for it.”

Since the announcement of the RMU Military Service Award, many other colleges and universities across the nation have followed suit.

“RMU believes that veterans should have as many opportunities as possible,” President Gregory G. Dell’Omo said at the event. “And if they choose to study at a private institution like RMU, we want them to be able to do it and graduate debt-free.”

“We’re doing this because we believe it’s the right thing to do,” said Provost David L. Jamison at the February news conference. “That’s the fundamental reason RMU became involved with this program. The Military Service Award continues our tradition of being a companion and reaching out to adults and other people who need an educational opportunity. We’re unique among private schools in many ways in doing that.”

The original G.I. Bill – formally known as the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act – was signed into law by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on June 22, 1944. Among the bill’s other provisions, which included financing for home ownership and low-interest business loans, its most significant benefit was tuition-free higher education for any veteran who wanted it. This groundbreaking legislation helped make going to college a reality for many veterans. The bill reached its peak in 1947, when veterans represented 49 percent of college admissions, according to the U.S. Veterans Administration.

“The G.I. Bill really did revolutionize and democratize higher education in the United States,” says John McCarthy, assistant professor of history for RMU’s department of social
Being a college student while serving your country can be a challenge. Senior Airman Silas Watkins knows all about it.

A sport management major who plays defense on RMU’s inline hockey team, Silas has had to stretch out his studies a couple extra years because of deployments with the Air Force Reserve. Visit vets.rmu.edu for the rest of Silas’s story.

Being a college student while serving your country can be a challenge. Senior Airman Silas Watkins knows all about it.

A sport management major who plays defense on RMU’s inline hockey team, Silas has had to stretch out his studies a couple extra years because of deployments with the Air Force Reserve. Visit vets.rmu.edu for the rest of Silas’s story.
with the downtown Veterans Business Outreach Center, which assists entrepreneurs who have served in the military.

Rota, a retired member of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, says there has been a big response to the new veterans program. “In the first month after announcing the new program, we had close to 300 e-mails and phone calls from interested veterans. They like how they can take any of the university’s programs,” says Rota. “I always tell them at RMU you can be whatever you want to be. The sky’s the limit.”

Rota is a professor emeritus in the university’s doctor of science in information and communication systems program. He also serves as board chairman for the Veterans Business Outreach Center.

The VETS Center will be a “one-stop administrative and educational center to serve the full needs of our military personnel,” says Tomei, a veteran himself who oversees the university’s honors and study abroad programs, in addition to veterans and ROTC programs. Tomei was in ROTC and was commissioned in the Air Force, where he served in nine different states, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines in a 22-year career, retiring in 1994 as a lieutenant colonel. He started off in finance, then moved into computers and communications. “I grew up in the first days of the PC,” he says, “back when local networking was still a pipe dream.” Thanks to the G.I. Bill, Tomei earned two master’s degrees and a doctorate. “Without the benefits I received from the G.I. Bill, I wouldn’t be where I’m today,” he says. “And I’m proud that RMU is now doing what it can to offer the same opportunities to our current military personnel and their families.”

RMU has a long history of serving adult and non-traditional students, including veterans. Currently, the university enrolls 130 veteran students and counts dozens of veterans among its faculty and staff. Considering the thousands of veterans who call Western Pennsylvania home, the new RMU Military Service Award could have a very positive impact on the region.

The U.S. has over 200,000 troops still serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many of them are returning to civilian life in the midst of the worst economic downturn in decades, so the new G.I. Bill comes at an opportune time.
“During his inaugural address, President Obama issued a call to national service to remember the promises of our Founders and the sacrifices that Americans have made since to keep us free,” said Dell’Omo. “Here at RMU, we take this very seriously. After all, it was our namesake who financed the American Revolution.”

Besides loaning large sums of his own money to the Continental Army and helping create America’s navy, Robert Morris was particularly influential in obtaining munitions and other supplies for the soldiers. The wealthy Philadelphia financier, a member of the Continental Congress, used his company to import arms and ammunition, and relied on his extensive international trading network to gather intelligence on British troop movements. In 1776, when Congress fled Philadelphia under threat of a British attack, Morris stayed behind as the sole representative of the young government. He personally borrowed money from wealthy Quakers to pay George Washington’s soldiers each a $10 bounty after they crossed the icy Delaware and shocked a Hessian garrison in Trenton. As superintendent of finance, Morris created the Bank of North America, helping to establish the country’s credit with Europe and securing further revenues for the war effort.

“Robert Morris set the example,” said Dell’Omo. “Now we’re continuing this tradition by helping to finance the future of so many of our veterans.

Amanda Saunders understands the meaning of sacrifice. And she also understands the value of a strong education. 

After enlisting in the Army in 1999, she broke her back in basic training during one of the field activities. “I had to change the way I did everything,” says Saunders. Since the accident, life has been limited for the 27-year-old from Freedom, Pa. “There are things that I would love to do,” she says, “such as going skiing or taking my kids ice skating, but one fall and I could be back in the hospital.”

Saunders isn’t one to give up easily, though. Now discharged, she is studying health care administration at RMU. “My professors have been great,” she says. “If I had any issues with classes or assignments because of my medical conditions,” she says, “they were more than willing to work out an arrangement so that I could participate in the activities with my other classmates.”

Rob Tallon
Machinist 1st Class (Retired)
Information Systems Major

Rob Tallon wasn’t a college guy. He thought he had learned all he needed to know, working in the engine room of nuclear submarines.

But now the old sea dog is learning some new tricks.

Visit vets.rmu.edu for the rest of Rob’s story.
With the help of daily physical therapy, Saunders was able to work at an Army warehouse in Hanau, Germany, that supplied over 500 different units. “I worked with everything from hazmat materials to toothbrushes,” she says.

Saunders comes from a strong military family. “Growing up, we were kind of expected to join one of the services after high school,” she says. “My father thought it was a great way to build self-discipline, and bring meaningful values into our life.” She married her high school sweetheart, Kevin, in 1999, and together they have two children: Kaitlyn, 8; and Kane, 5.

Currently, Saunders is a hospital volunteer at Heritage Valley Sewickley. After graduating this month, she plans on pursuing her master’s degree in human resources. “Down the road I’d like to work as a director at the veterans’ hospital,” she says. “I’d really enjoy helping my fellow veterans.” Dell’Omo said he hopes the Military Service Award will enable many dedicated veterans to pursue their career goals by studying at Robert Morris University.

“We are doing this because we believe our veterans deserve it,” he said at the announcement. “We pride ourselves on offering academic excellence with a professional focus; those in the armed services demonstrate excellence in action, and many of them wish to turn their attention to building new careers back home. We try to give our students a global perspective and active, engaged learning; returning veterans already have an expanded worldview and have committed their very lives to national service. We believe that individuals matter, and that an RMU education changes the lives of our students so that they can go out and change the lives of others; this is exactly what our men and women in uniform are called to do each and every day.

“RMU shares many of the goals and ambitions of our outstanding military veterans. That’s why we’re extremely proud to offer this new program.”

Shawna Wilson
Senior Airman
Finance Major

Shawna Wilson’s not shy about hard work.
She grew up on a farm, for one thing. She spent four years as an Air Force signals intel analyst. As if the sophomore finance major isn’t already busy enough now with her classes, she puts in 35 hours a week at a local bridal shop.
Visit vets.rmu.edu for the rest of Shawna’s story.
He was standing right on the sidelines during the most exciting play in Super Bowl history. But lifetime Steelers fan Brian Tirpak ’07 completely missed linebacker James Harrison’s electrifying 100-yard interception return for a touchdown.

Tirpak, a video production assistant for the Steelers, was among several RMU graduates working at Super Bowl XLIII in Tampa. His job was getting crowd reaction shots, so with the Cardinals looking at first-and-goal from the 2, and 18 seconds left until halftime, Tirpak zoomed in on an Arizona fan and waited for him to cheer.

“He stands up like they’re about to score, and then he covers his mouth,” Tirpak recalls. “And then the Steeler fans around him start going crazy, and then they’re turning their heads as Harrison runs past. So I knew something big was happening. I panned around really quickly to get our sideline, which was going nuts. And I still had literally no idea what happened, until I turned and saw James lying in the end zone.”

But Tirpak got the shot, which is what the Steelers pay him to do. Another RMU alumnus, Rob Brakel ’98, got to watch the whole thing unfold in his camera’s viewfinder while perched high over the stands. But while Brakel earned a Super Bowl ring as a Steelers video assistant three years ago, he collects his paychecks from the Cardinals now, so Harrison’s record-breaking runback was much less fun to witness. “I can’t tell you how many times I was shaking my head. Of all the teams in the NFL to play in the Super Bowl, I could not believe we were playing the Steelers,” he says.

Brakel spent a decade with the Steelers after graduating from RMU. When offensive coordinator Ken Whisenhunt became head coach of the Cardinals in 2007, he offered Brakel the top video job in Arizona. Brakel jumped at the chance; he and Whisenhunt are close friends and golfing partners. They’re also both “Survivor” fans, and on Thursday nights Brakel brings a bucket of wings to the Whisenhunts’ place and watches the show with the family.

At high school in New Jersey, Brakel was play-by-play announcer for the football and hockey teams. At RMU, he handled game video for Colonials coach Joe Walton, whose staff also included current Cardinals wide receivers coach Mike Miller M’98 and defensive assistant Matt Raitch. Brakel credits Walton, a former Steelers offensive coordinator, for getting him the job with the Steelers after graduation.

“I’m still very good friends with a lot of people with the Steelers,” Brakel said. “I’m happy for them. I wish we’d won, but we’ll just have to win next year.”

Several other RMU alumni working for the Steelers got to see the team win its sixth Lombardi Trophy in Tampa in February. James Sacco, the executive director of stadium management at Heinz Field, studied business administration downtown for two years in the 1970s. Michael Marchinsky ’99 is marketing manager for youth football. Breanne Mueller ’04 is client services coordinator. The most satisfied of all had to be Kevin Colbert ’79, who as director of football operations is the man who drafted Harrison.
But perhaps nobody at the game was more excited than Scott Golmic, who is hoping to follow a similar career path as Tirpak and Brakel. The sport management major and RMU Colonials video coordinator already is working as a freelance cameraman and video editor for the Steelers.

The senior class president, Golmic took 18 hours of classes this fall while working 40-hour weeks and still managed a 3.6 QPA. “It’s easy to get motivated when you’re going down to Heinz Field to work,” he says. One of his jobs is recording Steelers players taking turns as guest sportscasters at local high school football games. Feeding star athletes their next line can be a bit surreal, Golmic says. “In the moment, they’re just another guy. But when you’re driving home, you’re like, ‘What just happened?’”

While they didn’t need Golmic to carry a camera at Super Bowl XLIII, the team thanked him for his hard work this past season with a plane ride down and a ticket to the game. On Super Bowl Sunday, Golmic left his room at Concord Hall at 4 a.m. with no luggage, wearing shorts, and boarded a team charter at the airport. Twenty-four hours later he would flop back down onto the bed, exhausted but deliriously happy. Sandwiched in between was a day he will never forget. Perhaps the high point was sitting in the 23rd row in the Steelers’ end zone, watching Harrison gallop towards him down the sideline, a host of desperate Cardinals flinging themselves at the ferocious linebacker in a futile attempt to bring him down.

At that moment, Golmic had only one job to do: scream his head off. So he did.

Written by Mark Houser
Photography by Scott Golmic, Arizona Cardinals, & Pittsburgh Steelers/Mike Fabus
Arriving in Pittsburgh early this year, Wu Lirong saw something that took her mind off the daunting prospect of a semester away from her job, her friends, her husband, and her 12-year-old daughter back in China.

Not normally considered a tourist attraction, a typical Western Pennsylvania January blizzard brought back happy memories for Wu, the associate dean of nursing at Suzhou Health College and one of RMU’s latest Rooney Scholars.

Snow is almost unheard of in Suzhou, a charming old city filled with parks and pagodas in China’s subtropical coastal belt. But Wu grew up in the northern province of Heilongjiang, which shares a border with Siberia. “I like the winter in Pittsburgh,” she says. “The snow reminded me of my childhood. It was so exciting.”

There have been several surprises for Wu and Gu Ping, two nursing professors who spent the spring semester living in a house on the RMU campus. Besides the snow, they also couldn’t wait to tell the folks back home about the deer in the woods behind their house. “In Suzhou you have to go to a zoo to see them,” Wu says.

Since it began in 2004, the Rooney Visiting Scholars Program has brought 16 visiting professors and scholars to RMU from Europe, Africa, Australia, Asia, and the Middle East. Scholars conduct research, teach a class, or conduct a service project during their semester. They also give public presentations on their fields of expertise and their home countries.

“I think it’s a phenomenal opportunity for us to pursue the ‘global perspective’ core value the university established years ago,” says Associate Provost Lawrence Tomei, who oversees the program. “This is the walking, living, breathing example of how this core value can change the lives of our faculty and our students.”
Previous scholars have included a bioinformatics expert from India, an actuarial science professor from Australia, and a corporate branding guru from Slovakia.

Gu is associate dean of the nursing school at Nanjing Medical University, where she once studied, intending to become an obstetrician. Her professor instead suggested she had a talent for teaching, and could be a bigger help in academia at a time when China had a shortage of professors. She and Wu both are impressed with RMU’s nursing computer simulation programs, and by the give-and-take of American college classrooms.

Living in America is an adventure, and sometimes challenging. Because grocery stores don’t stock Chinese cooking spices and condiments they’re familiar with, Wu and Gu make do with tofu – and a lot of rice and chicken. Both love badminton, which is widely popular in China. But without a court nearby, they have resorted to regular ping pong matches at the Jefferson Center. They can explore further afield if they wish; besides a two-bedroom house in Colonial Village and a monthly stipend for living expenses, Rooney Scholars get a car, and Tomei said one scholar drove as far as Florida.

The program is designed to build international connections that work in both directions. Nine RMU nursing students and two faculty members are visiting China this month, where Wu and Gu will give them tours of Suzhou’s massive nursing school, which has almost 5,000 students, and Nanjing’s smaller school of about 600 – still twice as many nursing students as RMU has.

It won’t be the first trip for Lynda Davidson, dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. She was part of an RMU delegation that visited Suzhou and Nanjing in 2007. “For us, the scholars provide a window to diversity and a worldview that our students wouldn’t get any other way,” Davidson says. Gu says she is eager to host the visitors. “In recent years tremendous changes have taken place in China,” she says. “I hope I can show the group from RMU how we are changing health care and education in China. Then we will have a productive cooperative program.”

The next Rooney Scholar is Michal Maoz, a biotechnology professor and head of the Center for Teaching and Learning at ORT Braude Engineering College in Israel. Maoz’s institution last summer became the 15th to sign an international academic exchange agreement with RMU. This fall, Maoz plans to help the university create a center similar to hers, with a focus on improving both students’ study skills and professors’ teaching skills.

RMU Trustee Patricia Rooney, whose personal financial support makes the visiting scholars program possible, said travel has broadened her outlook. (It will again, now that her husband has been named ambassador to Ireland.) “I just think you come to realize that there’s a vast world out there that we need to know about,” she says. Rooney encourages faculty and students to make an extra effort to welcome visiting scholars and spend time with them outside the classroom. She’s struck up friendships with several, including Syed Tanvir Wasti, a Turkish civil engineering professor who bowled Rooney over with his deep knowledge of the work of Irish poet William Butler Yeats. Wasti still sends her Christmas cards. “He’s one of those fellows who send those wonderfully lengthy letters,” she says, “but I actually read his because they’re from Turkey.”

WITTEN BY MARK Houser | PHOTOGRAPHy BY TERRY CLARK

Lynda Davidson, RMU dean of nursing, took these snapshots of Nanjing (left) and Suzhou Health College, including its statue of Florence Nightingale. Rooney Scholar Wu Lirong, associate dean of nursing at the college, is at far right in the group photo.
1960s
JONNA LOONEY ’63 and her husband, William Looney, are owners of Appalachian Engineering & Surveying Inc. in Bluefield, W.V. Jonna is also a real estate agent. The Looneys reside in Bluefield, W.V.

1970s
GARY WHITE ’76 has been named client services specialist for American Print Management, a service offering of e-LYNXX Corp., the leading print management firm in the United States. Gary resides in Chambersburg, Pa.

RAY HARPER ’77 is director of the Bureau of Commercial Institutions for the Pennsylvania Department of Banking, where he oversees all state-chartered banking depository institutions. He joined the department in 1981 as an examiner. Ray resides in Harrisburg, Pa.

ASSUNTA NACCARATO ’78 retired after 30 years with the Central Intelligence Agency. Assunta and her husband, Alan Terpolilli, and their daughter, Isabella, reside in Springfield, Va.

1980s
KEVIN VINROE ’80 has joined Allmand Brothers Inc., a Nebraska manufacturer of portable light towers, as northeast regional manager. He was formerly employed in a similar position for Compact Power. Kevin and his wife live in Butler.

JEFF JASO ’82 is a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army, now in his 32nd year of military service, stationed at Fort McPherson, Ga. He and his wife, Veronica, recently became had twin baby girls, Alanna and Brianna. They also have another daughter, Francesca, 3, and a son, Joey, 2. The family resides in Atlanta, Ga.

WILLIAM FREEBING ’89 moved to Texas in 2008 after 18 years in Memphis, Tenn. He now travels as a UBS business development coach for the company’s west Texas region’s financial representatives. William and his wife, Ann, reside in Austin, Tex. They have three sons in college and a daughter in high school.

JOSEPH SENKO M’83, a certified public accountant, was recently named a Fraternal Most Valuable Participant by the National Fraternal Congress of America for his work with the Ladies Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Union. Joe and his wife, Albina, reside in Pittsburgh.

1990s
JAMIE (FALLONE) SCARANO ’80 has been promoted to director of workforce inclusion strategy for UPMC, where she helps develop work plans that meet the needs of business leaders. She and her husband, Jim, and their son, Anthony, reside in North Huntingdon.

KARA (MOSIOWY) Rutowski ’91, M’06 is now executive director of The Early Learning Institute, where she had been development director. TELI provides early intervention and education services for learning disabled children up to age 5. She and her husband, Tom (who also attended RMU), and their son, Ethan, live in Upper St. Clair.

JASON BALOG ’92 is director of facility management for CB Richard Ellis in New Kensington. Jason and his wife, Michelle, reside in Aliquippa.

JUSTINE (RUSIN) HURRY ’94 and her husband, John Hurry, had a daughter, Joslyn Ava, in September. The Hurrys also have three boys: J.C., Jordan, and James. Justine is CEO of Scottsdale Capital Advisors, where she and John are also principals. They live in Scottsdale, Ariz.

PAUL MORALES ’94 is a youth ministry worker with the New Grace Church in Fleming Island, Fla. Paul has been working as a chef before earning a master’s degree in mission and evangelism, with a focus on youth ministry, from Trinity School for Ministry. Paul and his wife, KRISTI (RAMSEY) MORALES ’93, reside in Fleming Island, Fla.

DON OWREY M’95 has been appointed interim president of UPMC Horizon. Previously he served as Horizon’s vice president of clinical operations, and he has two decades of experience in health care operations. Don lives in Mercer County with this wife, Kelly, and their three sons.

DAVE DEFIDE M’97 is chief finance operating officer with Conservation Consultants Inc., a home and office energy conservation firm. Dave resides in Pittsburgh.

LAURA FRESE M’97 was recently elected to city council in San Juan Capistrano, Calif., in December. She owns a local marketing business. She and her husband, Steve, a local business owner, have three daughters: Corine, 28, working on her master’s degree in nursing; Shauna, 26, a marketing professional; and...
Alexa, 25, a graphic designer. The Freeses reside in San Juan Capistrano, Calif.

COURTNEY ADAMS ’08 is the e-commerce manager for Kipling-USA.com, a retailer of handbags and backpacks. Courtney lives in New York City, N.Y.

MICHAEL RENCHECK ’98 became president and CEO of Areva NP Inc. in January, taking over responsibility for North American operations of the French nuclear power conglomerate. He came to Areva from American Electric Power, where he was senior vice president and chief nuclear officer of the nuclear generation group. Michael is a professional engineer in eight states and a certified senior reactor operator. He resides in Powell, Ohio.

ERIC JOBE ’99 is a senior associate attorney with The Cook Law Group PC. Eric has a diverse practice in the areas of criminal defense, civil litigation, and family law. He earned his Juris Doctorate from Duquesne University School of Law in 2003. While at Duquesne, Eric received the prestigious CALI award. Eric resides in Pittsburgh.

LISA BARGMANN ’99 launched Bargmann Management LLC as a one-person consulting firm for home medical equipment providers. The company was recently sold to Invacare HCS in Elyria, Ohio. Lisa remains with the company as vice president of strategic development. She and her husband, David, have one child and live in Broadview Heights, Ohio.

2000s

DAVID LUFFY ’00 is vice president and network manager at Washington Federal Savings Bank in Washington, Pa., where David resides.

HEIDI BUSHKO ’01 is president of Bushko Insurance Group, which incorporated in August. Heidi is also president of the Tampa Bay Association of Health Underwriters. She and her husband, Justin, reside in Safety Harbor, Fla.

BRIAN LANG ’01 has joined the Pittsburgh office of Hill, Barth & King LLC as manager. He was formerly employed by Alpern Rosenthal for 11 years. Brian resides in Cranberry.

RICKY FRAZIER JR. ’01 is the new vice president of customer care for Comcast in Indianapolis. He had been director of Internet protocol support for Comcast’s Three Rivers region. Ricky received the Minority Achievement Award from Minority Opinion Magazine. He and his wife, Charmel, reside in Robinson.

TODD AHERN ’01 is an IT system analyst II at PPG Industries. He resides in Allison Park.

MICHAEL WODZINSKI ’02 was named Western Pennsylvania sales & service manager for ESI Equipment, a distributor for Holmatro hydraulic rescue tool systems. Michael resides in Ben Avon.

ERIN (MOSSLEY) MANN ’95, M02, counselor in the Center for Student Success at RMU, and her husband, Chris, had a daughter, Crisann, on January 5. Crisann is also the granddaughter of Dean Manna, head of the marketing department in the School of Business. The Mannas reside in Coraopolis.

Spam Free.

You have enough to do without having to pick through your inbox to find your real e-mail. Now alumni can have spam-free, Google-powered e-mail, calendars, document sharing and IM, all from your @alumni.rmu.edu. RMU and Google are teaming up to give @alumni.rmu.edu account holders innovative, reliable e-mail, plus other products (like Google Talk and Google Calendar) to help you communicate and collaborate.

Get started! Go to: www.rmu.edu/MyRMUAlumniConnection
SCOTT A. KOSKOSKI ’02 was recently named senior associate athletics director for development at Temple University in Philadelphia. Scott will assume responsibility for all athletics revenue generation efforts. He was previously with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Scott and his wife, Melissa, recently had their first child, Benjamin Matthew. The Koskoskis reside in Thorndale.

KELLY KUCZINSKI ’02 has been promoted to manager of finance and administration for the Bender family of companies. Kelly lives in Pittsburgh.

GAYLE BENDER ’02 is engaged to Guy Tarowsky. Gayle is employed at Vitac in Canonsburg and at Barnes & Noble in the South Hills. The couple has set a June 12, 2010, wedding date. Gayle resides in Wexford.

MICHELLE HOUGH D’02, an associate professor of business at Penn State in McKeesport, was named a Fulbright Scholar and is teaching business this semester at the University of Malta. It is her second Fulbright; in 2005 she taught in Copenhagen. She and her husband, Joel, and their two daughters reside in New Kensington.

SCOTT BENZEL M’03 was recently promoted from assistant coach to co-defensive coordinator for the RMU Colonials football team. Scott completed his sixth season as assistant coach at RMU last year and will continue to coach the defensive backs and serve as assistant recruiting coordinator. Scott resides in Pittsburgh.

BETHANY GALLAGHER ’04 is a staff accountant with Federated Investors Inc. She and Dave Chavarrie were recently engaged on New Year’s Eve. An August 2011 wedding is planned. Bethany resides in Pittsburgh.

JOSEPH BLANKENSHIP D’04 was hired as an assistant professor of information systems at Fairmont State University. Joe held similar positions at the University of Findlay, Youngstown State University, and Dowling College. Joe resides in Fairmont, W.V.

ELISE (JAMES) DECRUISE M’04 recently founded AthletesWork LLC, which prepares athletes for life after sports. Her website, athleteswork.com, covers topics such as resume writing, image development, and career exploration. She and her husband, James DeCruise, reside in Cliffside, N.J.

BARTLEY GATES M’04, a tax director with PricewaterhouseCoopers in Pittsburgh, was named a board member of Catholic Charities of Pittsburgh. Bartley resides in Mt. Lebanon.

THOMAS “T.J.” WILLETTS ’04 has been promoted from marketing communications specialist to manager of creative services at All-Pak Inc. in Bridgeville. T.J. resides in Bethel Park.

KELLY (CLIFFORD) SCOTT ’05 is a marketing/account manager with Communifx in Cranberry. She and her husband, Joseph Scott, had a baby boy, Brice Jonathan, on October 31. The family resides in Freedom.

NICOLE (HILDERBRAND) VOLL ’05 is a family and consumer science teacher at Moniteau School District in West Sunbury, Pa. Her husband, Adam Voll, works for Soergel Orchards in Wexford. The couple resides in Renfrew, Pa.

STELLA (SMITH) EPEThENER ’06 is a marketing/account manager with Communifx in Cranberry. She and her husband, Joseph Scott, had a baby boy, Brice Jonathan, on October 31. The family resides in Freedom.

DEANNA GILKEY M’06 is a college instructor at the Bidwell Training
Center in Pittsburgh. Deanna will be married on May 30 to Eric Schmuck, a CMU graduate. Deanna resides in Pittsburgh.

ELEANOR WAGNER M’06 has joined the certified public accounting firm of Cottrill, Arbutina Professional Services in New Brighton as senior tax manager. Previously with the executive search firm Boyden, Eleanor holds a CPA certification in Pennsylvania and Michigan. She resides in Cranberry.


KATHRYN (NILES) HICKLE ’06 and her husband, David, who also attended RMU, moved to Junction City, Kan.

JENNA GASPARINE ’07 was appointed a staff consultant in the audit and accounting group of Goff Backa Alfera & Company LLC in Pittsburgh. She previously worked as a staff accountant with other firms in the Pittsburgh area. Jenna resides in Wellsburg, W.V.

DEIDRE MAYHEW ’07 is employed by Bank of New York Mellon as a control analyst. Deidre resides in Pittsburgh.

JEREMY GAGIANAS ’07 is a technical support analyst in for the University of Pittsburgh. Jeremy resides in Baden.

JODI STEVENS M’07 returned to her alma mater, Kent State, as a volunteer assistant coach for the women’s softball team. Jodi was a graduate assistant coach with the RMU women’s softball team for two years. She resides in McCutchenville, Ohio.

PHILLIP ZLOKAS ’08 has been hired as a staff accountant with Kline, Keppel & Koryak. Phillip resides in West Mifflin.

ANDREW WATT ’08 is a forward with the National Lacrosse League’s Minnesota Swarm in St. Paul, Minn. Andrew resides in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.

GREGORY GUSSHARD ’08 was recently hired by PLS Logistics as an account executive trainee in freight solutions. Gregory lives in Allison Park.

ANDREW RICHARDSON M’08 was promoted from graduate assistant coach to full-time assistant coach of the RMU Colonials football team. Andrew spent the past two seasons tutoring the RMU offensive line, a position he will continue to coach in his new role. Andrew resides in Pittsburgh.

LAUREN HARTSFIELD ’08 joined the RMU women’s lacrosse coaching staff for the 2009 season. Lauren was a member of the team’s inaugural season in 2005 and played goalie for four years.

LORI RANKIN M’08 was special awards coordinator for the Pittsburgh Regional Future Cities Competition, a January contest with students from 27 area middle schools. Lori is a material handling project engineer at FedEx Ground in Moon Township. She resides in Imperial.

TIARA (HICKS) WHITFIELD ’08 married Brandon L. Whitfield on September 20. Tiara is a youth counselor and student assistance program provider for Addison Behavioral Care in Pittsburgh. The Whitfields reside in West Mifflin.

MELISSA MORETTI ’08 is assistant audience coordinator for the ABC daytime talk show “The View.”

Deaths

NORMAN TANNEHILL JR. M’89 passed away on January 5 at the age of 58. Norman was a faculty member at Online Computer Information Systems. His wife, Darcy Tannehill, was former dean of the RMU School of Adult and Continuing Education.

ROBERT BERKEY M’04 passed away on October 28 at the age of 48. Robert was an elementary school teacher in the Greensburg-Salem School District. He and his wife, Marsha, were married 28 years.

ELLIOTT FALK, a retired vice president for financial affairs at RMU, passed away on December 18 after a long illness.

ELSIE LEFFINGWELL, a retired professor and the first chairman of RMU’s business education department, passed away on December 7 at the age of 94.
Dave Hanson knows business management. He also knows how to check someone into the boards...hard.

Hanson is the general manager of the Robert Morris University Island Sports Center (ISC). He’s best known, however, for his role as Jack Hanson, one of the infamous Hanson brothers in the 1977 feature film classic “Slap Shot,” starring Paul Newman.

Hanson was born in Cumberland, Wisc., and grew up in St. Paul, Minn., where he attended the University of Minnesota on a full academic scholarship after being recruited by legendary hockey coach Herb Brooks. He won two national championships with the St. Paul Vulcans junior team before being drafted by the Minnesota Fighting Saints of the World Hockey Association. He also played in the North American Hockey League with the Johnstown (Pa.) Jets and in the NHL for both the Detroit Red Wings and the Minnesota North Stars.


1. **How would Jack Hanson fare as manager of the Island Sports Center?**
   Jack would do great. He’d be popular with all the hockey and figure skating moms (chicks love the glasses), and all the kids would want to play with him and his race car set.

2. **How has your experience playing hockey helped you in your career?**
   It helped me establish a network of friends and associates in the ice rink and recreation business. Through them, I’ve been able to have a dependable resource of knowledge to draw from whenever necessary.

3. **What have you enjoyed the most about making the “Slap Shot” movies?**
   The connection with millions of people who are great fans of the movies and the Hanson brothers has been a thrill, and it’s given me the opportunity to help many of them through charity work.

4. **What makes the Island Sports Center such an asset to RMU and the community in general?**
   It’s a great place for people of all ages and abilities who like to skate, play golf, or work out. And it gives them a place to do it in a safe and fun way.

5. **What was the most difficult part of writing your autobiography?**
   Clearly remembering the details of some parts. But, that also made it fun by giving me a reason to contact some of those who were involved in certain aspects of my life in order to help me recall.

6. **What NHL player today is most like Jack Hanson?**
   There are none that come close. Jack had it all: good looks, charisma, intelligence, and he was tougher than anyone who dares to “put on the foil.”

7. **What is the Putting On The Foil Foundation?**
   In “Slap Shot,” the Hanson Brothers put foil on their knuckles before each game. It’s one of our fans’ favorite parts of the movie, so I decided to use the phrase for my foundation. Putting On The Foil is just my way to contribute, through the sales of my books, to Paul Newman’s Hole in the Wall Gang charity camp, the world’s largest family of camps serving children with serious illnesses.

8. **You worked with Paul Newman. What do you think made him so special?**
   If you didn’t know what Paul did behind the scenes, you’d never know the special things he did. He never made it about himself. His low-key manners disguised his passion to make things better for those less fortunate, like ill-stricken children in need of some extra help or compassion. Quietly, yet passionately, Paul did his best to reach out to others in need and try to satisfy those needs, not only through the money he raised but often through humor and hands-on participation.

9. **What’s was the bigger honor: Being on the cover of Sports Illustrated or having a bobble-head of yourself?**
   Although the bobble-head is pretty cool, being chosen for the cover of SI is something that only a select few have had the privilege of experiencing. Plus, the bobble-head makes my head look goofy.

10. **What’s next for the Hanson Brothers?**
   “Slap Shot 4: The Senior League.”
Upcoming Events

> AUGUST
24 Fall classes start

> SEPTEMBER
18 RMU Night
Pirates vs. Padres,
PNC Park, 7 p.m.
26 Homecoming Weekend
Football vs. Bryant U.
Joe Walton Stadium
30 Pittsburgh Speakers
Series: Pervez Musharraf,
8 p.m., Heinz Hall

> OCTOBER
1 RMU Colonial Golf Classic
Allegheny Country Club
Sewickley Heights
14 Pittsburgh Speakers
Series: Jean-Michel Cousteau,
8 p.m., Heinz Hall

> NOVEMBER
23 Pittsburgh Speakers
Series: Laura Bush,
8 p.m., Heinz Hall

Do you know a good candidate for the Alumni Achievement or Young Alumni Achievement Awards for Homecoming Weekend?
Details for nominations are at www.rmu.edu/alumni.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on these and other upcoming events, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at (412) 397-2586 or rmualum@rmu.edu.

UNIVERSITY-ON-THE-ROAD
Stay tuned for upcoming alumni events in Akron, Cleveland, Erie, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and the Washington, D.C., area this summer.

MAIL THIS COMPLETED FORM TO: Office of Alumni Relations, Robert Morris University, 6001 University Boulevard, Moon Township, PA 15108-1189. Or, send your news via e-mail rmualum@rmu.edu or fax (412) 397-2142.
“A lot of private institutions are going to say, 'Why didn’t we think of this first?’ And I think RMU thought of it because they understand that interaction between the military and our community.”

- State Sen. John Pippy at news conference announcing the RMU Military Service Award