Executive Ambition

UPSACLE CIGAR LOUNGE
OWNER ANDREW LEE ’91
DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

When our men’s basketball team made the NCAA tournament for the second year in a row, several reporters asked me how the attention from March Madness benefits Robert Morris University. We can point to a lot of tangible effects – media coverage, website traffic, increased applications – but our vice president of enrollment, Mike Frantz, summed it up best: Everybody loves a winner, and everyone wants to be a part of one.

We’ve had a lot of wins this year, both on and off the courts and playing fields. The fall brought a record freshman enrollment and a record number of resident students. Our Actuarial Science Program was designated a Center of Actuarial Excellence by the Society of Actuaries, an honor shared by only 10 universities in the United States. The Doctor of Nursing Practice Program graduated its first class. The women’s basketball team made its third post-season appearance in four years, a run that includes two NCAA tournament bids. And RMU’s first Olympian, Brianne McLaughlin, earned a silver medal with the U.S. women’s hockey team.

RMU likes to be associated with winners, which is why we are eager to celebrate the success of our alumni, including those whose stories you will read in this edition of Foundations. It’s why we put up those “Faces of Success” billboards around Pittsburgh, to highlight some of our most prominent alumni, people like Kevin Colbert, Richard Harshman, Gary Claus, and Ola Jackson. Those billboards let people know that many more colleagues than they realize – and many of Pittsburgh’s most successful professionals – got their start at RMU.

Many of the people featured on those billboards, as well as in this issue of the magazine, graduated from RMU’s School of Business. While we’ve grown considerably since our days as a business college, the School of Business continues to be the largest of our five schools, accounting for approximately 35 percent of our enrollment. And yet, the business school has no real home on campus, no physical presence worthy of the high esteem in which its faculty and graduates are held throughout the Pittsburgh community and beyond.

That’s about to change. We will soon break ground on a business school building, a 17,800-square-foot-facility that will form a quadrangle with Massey and Lafayette halls at the Rudolph Family Garden. The building will be devoted entirely to education and student learning and research, including the PNC Trading Center, the U.S. Steel Videoconferencing and Technology Resource Center and the Allegheny Technologies Global Business Library. You can read more about it on page 28.

Set to open in the fall of 2011 – which, coincidentally, will mark our 90th year – the building will give RMU and its graduates the reputation they have earned through their hard work, professional success, and dedicated service to the community. Put another way, it will extend our 90-year winning streak far into the future.

Sincerely,

GREGORY G. DELL’OMO, PH.D.
PRESIDENT
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Top Notch for Top Jobs

Joining some very exclusive company, the university has been designated a Center of Actuarial Excellence by the Society of Actuaries. The professional association grants the distinction after a rigorous on-site evaluation of faculty, curriculum, graduates, and the program’s connection to industry.

RMU is one of only 10 American universities with the designation; others include the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Georgia State, and Temple University.

Launched in 2001, the program readies students for a career that The Wall Street Journal ranked as the No. 1 job in the country, based on pay, future prospects, and stress levels. More than 80 students are majoring in actuarial science at RMU, including a freshman class of 38 that was the largest in the program’s history. To be admitted, prospective students must score at least 650 on the math portion of their SAT, placing them in the top 25 percent.

Real Techno Whiz

Congratulations to Chief Information Officer Ellen Wieckowski, nominated for the Pittsburgh Technology Council’s “CIO of the Year” awards in April. Fellow nominees included chiefs for Heinz, PPG, Alcoa, and American Eagle Outfitters; the only other higher education nominee was from Carnegie Mellon University, a school known for its technology.
> Broadway at the Pops

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra’s PNC Pops! All Star College Chorus this year featured four RMU students. Pictured above from left to right, with Grammy Award-winning choral and orchestral conductor Robert Page, are English major Samantha Koch, actuarial science major Brad Perciavalle, finance major Paul Berard, and manufacturing engineering major Nikki Rodgers. They performed a selection of Broadway tunes at Heinz Hall in February.

> Changing Lives

For its commitment to student volunteering, service learning, and civic engagement, the university has been named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the third year in a row. The Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that selects schools for the honor, credited three RMU student projects for the recognition:

> A community needs survey to aid revitalization in nearby Coraopolis.
> A marketing plan and kickoff event for Storehouse For Teachers, which provides supplies to low-income schools.
> A mentoring program for elementary school children in Moon Township.

> Never Forget, Never Again

Jim Lucot, a history teacher at Seneca Valley Senior High School, is one of the nation’s best educators on the tragic subject of the Holocaust, according to the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous. The New York organization named Lucot one of only two teachers in the country to receive its Robert Goldman Award for Excellence in Holocaust Education.

Lucot, who received his teacher certification from RMU, augments an extensive lesson plan with personal testimony from visiting Auschwitz survivors. “I try to make it real for them, to make some analogy to something the students do in their daily lives,” Lucot said.

> Bookshelf

Len Asimow, Ph.D., professor of actuarial science and mathematics, co-authored the textbook, *Probability and Statistics with Applications: A Problem Solving Text*. His collaborator is Mark Maxwell of the University of Texas-Austin, the former director of RMU’s actuarial science program.

Matthew Maurer, Ph.D., assistant professor of science and coordinator of the biology teacher certification program, has written a chapter for the book, *Telementoring in the K-12 Classroom: Online Communication Technologies for Learning*.
> A Credit to the Institution

Overseeing more than 100 university administrators, faculty, staff, and students in a major two-year initiative is no simple job, but Ann Jabro, Ph.D., is up to the task. The university professor of communication is chairwoman of RMU’s comprehensive preparation to earn reaccreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in 2011.

The process measures RMU’s progress in 14 standards, from educational offerings and student support services, to planning, leadership, and governance. Working closely with Jabro is David Majka, director of institutional research; they are steering the work of seven university subcommittees.

“Our students, parents, and a number of other people have made an investment in RMU, and they deserve the confidence that investment is well placed,” said Provost David Jamison, J.D.

> No Tuition Tax

When Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl announced in November that the city would close a $16 million budget deficit by taxing college tuition, President Gregory G. Dell’Omo, Ph.D., and the presidents of the nine other accredited institutions in the Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education fought back.

Through weeks of public hearings, press conferences, intense media scrutiny, and high-pressure negotiations, the presidents maintained a united front, until eventually Ravenstahl withdrew his proposal.

For the council’s “stunningly effective political leadership in a crisis with huge implications for higher education around the commonwealth and around the nation,” the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania gave the council its Benjamin Franklin Medal for Distinguished Achievement on Behalf of Higher Education. It is the first time the medal has not been given to an elected official.
Heritage Valley Health System added Lynn George, Ph.D., to its board of directors in January. The associate dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, George said she is impressed with the electronic records system in use by Heritage Valley, which includes two hospitals, four physician groups, and a foundation.

Associate professor of media arts Jon Radermacher, M.F.A., has been named head of the Department of Media Arts.

Professor of accounting James Rebele, Ph.D., has been named the head of the new Department of Accounting and Taxation.

Associate professor of organizational studies Beatrice Gibbons, Ed.D., has been named to the board of trustees of Pittsburgh Public Theater. The theater in the downtown Cultural District presents contemporary drama and comedies.

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**Faces of the Barrio**

After two visits to Nicaragua with an RMU professor to volunteer in a poor barrio clinic, David Lee Folk ’10 was honored with the Presidential Transformational Award, which is the university’s highest honor, and the Rising Star Award, given to a senior who demonstrates academic success, individuality, determination, passion, and potential in his field.

University professor of nursing Carl Ross, Ph.D., praised Folk’s essays and photographs documenting the work of nursing students in Nicaragua. Nursing students have to pay $2000 of their own money to go on the trip, and many of them worry – as do their parents – about going to a Third World country. “My job has gotten easier thanks to the work of one special young man: David Lee Folk,” he said.

*To see Folk’s photos and essays, visit Foundations Online.*

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**Helping the World**

When Three Cups of Tea author Greg Mortenson came to campus in April to talk about his work building schools for poor girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan, he got more than a friendly reception. Motivated by his story, a group of students raised $3,000 on campus for Mortenson’s Central Asia Institute.

To support relief efforts in Haiti, students independently organized a “Where’s Your Heart” dance marathon and a “Hoops 4 Haiti” 3-on-3 basketball tournament on Valentine’s Day weekend in February. The events raised $1,550.

*Go to Foundations Online to see videos from Mortenson’s visit and the Haiti fundraisers.*
> Big Time Honor

The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival selected RMU’s production of “Rent” as one of nine semifinalists for Region II, which includes Pennsylvania and seven surrounding states. Director Ken Gargaro, Ph.D. said performing at the festival, held at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in January, was the theatrical “equivalent of being invited to a bowl game.”

> Honors Prof Headed to Germany

Philip Harold, Ph.D., assistant professor of political science and co-director of the RMU Honors Program, has received a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship from the U.S. Department of State to study this fall at the Catholic University in Eichstätt, Germany. Harold will conduct research at the university’s Center for Marriage and Family Studies for a book he plans to write about the language of values in politics. The book will explore what politicians mean when they use phrases such as “family values,” and what the implications are for political discourse.

> Close Your Eyes

Research by an RMU psychologist suggests that people who read a lot are more likely to get less than 8 hours sleep at night. In a paper published in the journal Reading Improvement, associate professor of psychology William E. Kelly, Ph.D., said a study of 223 college students found significant correlation between reading for pleasure and insufficient rest.
> Conferences

More than 60 professors from other institutions attended the February conference, “Teaching Economics: Instruction and Classroom Based Research,” on campus. Organized by associate professor of economics Mark J. Eschenfelder, Ph.D., and sponsored by RMU and McGraw-Hill/Irwin Publishing, the event featured lecturers from RMU, the University of North Carolina, Middlebury College, and others.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Network for Growth of Service Learning’s Third Annual Symposium and Showcase in March featured talks by RMU faculty members Ann Jabro, Ph.D., Angela Bires, Ed.D, and Donna Mason.

> Changes on the Board

Gary R. Claus ’74, a CPA and retired partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Pittsburgh, succeeded Joseph Nocito ’70 as chairman of the university board of trustees in March.

The university also added three new board members: Carrie Coghill-Kuntz ’08, president of D.B. Root & Company Wealth Management; David Lancia, ’78, M’08, partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers; and Kolia J. O’Connor, head of school at Sewickley Academy.

> Women’s Work

Girls thinking about careers that may require a calculator or a lab coat spent a day on campus in March for the university’s fourth annual Expanding Your Horizons Conference. An outreach effort of the School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, the conference for 6th to 9th graders featured RMU professors and others presenting workshops on cryptography, air pollution, computer programming, and other subjects. One session examined the process of natural adaptation, with some animal guests from the Pittsburgh Zoo as visual aids.

> ARE YOU A FRIEND OF ROBERT?

Name: Robert Morris
Email: foundations@rmu.edu

> FOR THE LATEST NEWS & UPDATES FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @RMUNEWS
> WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

RMU stormed through the schedule, winning its first sole Northeast Conference regular season title with a 17-1 conference record. The Colonials also beat Duquesne and Marquette among nonconference opponents to finish 23-9 overall, and grabbed a berth in the Women’s National Invitation Tournament for the first time in school history. Much of the team’s success came thanks to senior guard Angela Pace, the first NEC athlete named both Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year. Pace’s 2.59 assist-to-turnover ratio, tops in the NEC, was also fifth-highest in the nation. She showed great heart in an NEC Tournament semifinal match against St. Francis (Pa.), scoring a career-high 30 as the Colonials stormed back from a 17-point halftime deficit to fall just short, 80-79. Pace’s outstanding play earned her a spot on the Eastern College Athletic Conference All-Star Team, rarefied air for an RMU athlete. Two of the other 14 all-stars started for the UConn Huskies, two-time national champs, and others played for Duke, Georgetown, and Providence. Freshman Vega Gimeno-Martinez made the All-NEC Rookie Team, leading RMU with 54 three-pointers.

> COWAN > PACE

> EXCLUSIVE OFFER

When you call (412) 397-2222 to order your season or single-game tickets, mention Foundations magazine and receive a Robert Morris University window decal for your car, absolutely free!
LACROSSE

MEN > The Colonials’ sixth season was the most successful to date, finishing 10-5. The team beat Penn State and Ohio State, hung tight for two periods at the No. 1 Virginia Cavaliers, and nearly upset the then-No. 3 North Carolina Tarheels in an April game at Walton Stadium. Junior Corbyn Tao-Brambleby scored five goals in that contest, earning NEC Player of the Week honors.

WOMEN > Seniors Alana Beck and Erica Webb set school records – Beck with seven goals in a win against Central Connecticut State, and Webb with a career .476 save percentage – as the team finished 5-4 in league play and 7-8 overall. Freshman Tara Southworth made the All-NEC Rookie team.

IT’S TOOLE TIME

Expect a fresh face and a fresh approach at Sewall Center arena next basketball season, as new men’s head coach Andrew Toole takes over. But Toole, former associate head coach during the Colonials’ two consecutive NCAA Tournament runs, has promised to maintain the team’s high standards for performance.

President Gregory G. Dell’Omo said Jamie Dixon of Pitt, Phil Martelli of St. Joseph’s, and Fran Dunphy of Temple all gave glowing endorsements of the “potential (Toole) to be a dynamic Division I basketball coach.” Many players on the team, including NEC Rookie of the Year Karon Abraham, pushed hard for Toole to get the job after former coach Mike Rice took the head coaching job at Rutgers.

“Toole was the one who recruited me, and helped me make my decision to come here,” Abraham said. “His intensity, what he demands from the players, is unbelievable, and that’s a great thing for a college coach to have.”

Toole, 29, becomes the youngest Division I head basketball coach. He promised to produce “a team that plays with energy and intensity that’s unmatched, a team that plays with a passion and purpose.”

INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

MEN > RMU beat Villanova – after a fashion – in the Northeast Conference Championship. With his 4.75-meter pole vault, junior Chris Spataro pushed past Mount St. Mary’s Rick Villanova to win gold, while teammate Jared George earned bronze and Anthony Trunzo finished fourth. Spataro then went on to clear 4.8 meters at the IC4A in Boston, beating athletes from Pitt, Harvard, and Dartmouth, finishing 10th, and inching – make that centimetering – closer to the conference record of 4.88 meters, set by RMU’s Eric White in 2001.

WOMEN > Senior pole vaulter Erica Schmidt also won gold at the NEC Championships, besting a pair of challengers from Sacred Heart and setting a new school women’s record of 3.45 meters. And the meet’s third RMU gold went to sophomore Gabriella Rinehart for her weight throw of 17.63 meters, less than a meter away from the conference record of 18.48 set by RMU’s Nicole Downing in 2005.
They call it March Madness for a reason. The NCAA basketball tournament brings out the most fanatical, the ones who will move mountains – or cross them – to root for their beloved teams. Ray DePofi ’91 can tell you a story or two.

In 1989, he and George Welker ’91, a fellow hoops nut from the same floor in Adams Hall, spent two days on a train to Boise, Idaho, to see their team play. “As far as a student section, we were it,” DePofi remembers. It was a tough game – top seed Arizona suffocated the Colonials, who got only one basket in the first seven minutes. The next year, George and Ray carpooled down to Atlanta to see Robert Morris almost shock Kansas in the first round, falling 79-71. Two years later, the two grads met up in Arizona to see UCLA manhandle their alma mater.

It was their last tournament together. Welker died of cystic fibrosis in 2001. DePofi, a data transcriber in Burghill, Ohio, is on dialysis. He still follows the team, but was unable to make RMU’s return to the tourney in Minneapolis last year. This March, with the Colonials up against Villanova in Providence, DePofi got to thinking about his old friend. “I’m sure that he would have chastised me had I not at least made the attempt.”

So on a Wednesday morning, as soon as his blood had filtered through the machines, DePofi jumped in a car with another loyal alumnus, Steve Kennaday. Ten hours later – his shortest NCAA road trip so far – there they were. The next day was true Madness, as three excited busloads of RMU fans morphed into a whole arena roaring for the underdog, in an overtime thriller just a whistle away from being an upset for the ages.

All four times were special, DePofi says. “You go to college for the experience, and it’s a lot more than classrooms and textbooks. We did whatever we could to make it, because you never know how many opportunities you’re going to get. You have to look at every year as that’s your one opportunity to go and be a part of something like this.”

WRITTEN BY MARK HOUSER
PHOTOS BY MITCH KRAMER ’08, KEVIN LORENZI, JOHN MICHALENKO, BEN SOLOMON
GIANT KILLERS

It wasn’t anticipated, but it wasn’t another “Miracle on Ice” either. When Robert Morris University swept the nation’s No. 1 college hockey team via back-to-back upsets in January, it fell somewhere in between. “A surprise but not a shock,” assessed Mike Eidelbes, editor of Inside College Hockey.com.

The victories over Miami of Ohio – 3-1 on Jan. 8 at Mellon Arena, then 2-1 two days later in Oxford, Ohio – were the first time the Colonials beat a No. 1 team since they began competing in Division I in 2004-05. In fact, RMU had never played a No. 1 team before meeting the RedHawks, who narrowly missed the national title last year after losing 4-3 to Boston University in the NCAA championship game.

The Colonials had previously played giant-killer with victories over No. 2 Notre Dame in January of 2007 and over No. 8 Boston University the following October. This season they followed up their success against Miami with two victories over Bemidji State, a perennial Top 10 team. The Colonials and Beavers met again in the conference tournament consolation game, and played to a 3-3 tie.

Of RMU’s “big-time upset” over Miami, Eidelbes said, “Nationally, it’s viewed as a surprise. But people also know the type of program Robert Morris has, and how good a job Derek Schooley has done building that, and the talent level that he has there. Guys such as (defenseman) Denny Urban and (forward) Nathan Longpre, those are kids that can play. You can put them up against anybody in the nation. They’ve come a really long way in a short period of time, no question.”

Eidelbes is impressed with the Colonials’ aggressive style of play. And with its annual Pittsburgh College Hockey Showcase, which pits the Colonials against a top national team on the Pittsburgh Penguins’ home ice, RMU shows it is serious about wanting to host the NCAA “Frozen Four” tournament in the future.

“They have a good coach and they’ve found a formula there that’s definitely going to work,” Eidelbes said. “They’re always reaching for the next rung on the ladder rather than being content. I really like that about their program.”

WRITTEN BY MIKE PRISUTA
PHOTO BY RACHEL SMITH
OF THE COLONIALS’ 3-1 UPSET OF THE MIAMI REDHAWKS AT RMU.EDU/FOUNDATIONS.

FOR TICKETS TO THE NEXT RMU HOCKEY SHOWCASE, OCT. 15 IN CONSOL ENERGY CENTER.
While most of us are still sound asleep, J. Lynn Prosser is on her way to the Severstal Wheeling coke plant in Follansbee, W.V., where her shift as plant nurse begins at 6 a.m.

From there, she heads over to the ArcelorMittal plant before moving on to Paris Preferred Family Health – her private practice – where she sometimes stays late into the evening.

“I want to serve the working people,” she says. “A working mom can’t take two hours in the middle of the day to go to the doctor.”
with Doctorates

Prosser is a student in the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program at Robert Morris University. Nurse practitioners are advanced practice nurses certified to diagnose and manage patients, though in Pennsylvania they must have a physician collaborator. The D.N.P. is an advanced-level practice degree focusing on the clinical aspects of nursing, rather than academic research. RMU’s first 27 recipients of the D.N.P. were presented with their doctorates last month at commencement; 64 more, including Prosser, will get their degrees next year.

In 2007, the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing approved the university’s “B.S.N. to D.N.P.” program, making Robert Morris University the first institution in the state to offer a nurse practitioner program at the doctoral level. As nurses’ responsibilities continue to grow and become more complex, a new type of nursing leader is needed – one with doctoral-level training who can work with an interdisciplinary team to deliver evidence-based, patient-centered care. With the baby boomer generation entering its golden years, the demand for additional health care providers, especially nurses with advanced practice degrees, will be in high demand.

The D.N.P. program is designed to prepare advanced-practice nurses to apply nursing science and clinical reasoning at the highest level. Utilizing expert communication and leadership skills, D.N.P. students are taught to integrate theory, clinical inquiry, information technology, and evidence-based practice for clinical decision-making and quality patient care.

Prosser, in her final year of doctoral studies at RMU, began as a medical assistant and spent more than 18 years as an Army nurse. While in the service, she earned her bachelor’s degree from Excelsior College and her master’s degree from the Franciscan University of Steubenville.

Working in the plants, Prosser sees lots of patients with injuries to their backs, knees, and shoulders. Her capstone project for the DNP is on musculoskeletal injuries. “I’m trying to determine if pre-shift stretching can help prevent injury,” she says. Prosser also treats spine and neck injuries and orders MRIs when needed. “I see a lot of cuts and lacerations from the steel too,” she adds. She analyzes worksites to make sure they are safe, holds regular health fairs, and, at Severstal, does regular “coke physicals” to make sure workers’ masks are properly filtering the heavy dust from the air they breathe.

Prosser has seen a little bit of everything while working as a plant nurse. One Halloween at the Severstal plant, the staff nurse she was working with was dressed like a witch. An intoxicated pedestrian wandered onto mill property, tripped on some railroad tracks, and was hurt. Plant security brought the man into the clinic, but when he saw the nurse dressed
as a witch, he assumed he had died. “He thought he was in hell,” says Prosser. “Every time the nurse tried to approach him, he’d do the sign of the cross.”

She opened her own practice last October and is now serving her community by providing much-needed, patient-centered health care to local residents. “There is a shortage of family physicians now,” she says, “and we’re filling that gap.”

**Judith Kaufmann**, Dr.P.H., is director of the program in the School of Nursing and Heath Sciences. She says the D.N.P. supports the idea of the interdisciplinary team – that no one provider fits all. “We’re looking at how nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists, clinical specialists, midwives, and so on, can be working with physicians, physical therapists, pharmacists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and others,” she says. “And everyone is moving to the doctoral level.” One of the reasons that the D.N.P. is so important, she says, is that it enables nurse practitioners to talk the same talk as other people who have learned how to use research and evidence in their decision making. “That way, the nurse practitioners have more of a voice in this whole team approach,” she says.

“The D.N.P. doesn’t change nurse practitioner practice,” says Kaufmann. “Nurse practitioners can’t practice in Pennsylvania without a physician collaborator. What the D.N.P. does, however, is give master’s-prepared nurse practitioners additional education in how to look at current evidence and research and how to evaluate outcomes of their particular practice.”

Before the D.N.P. came about, a master’s degree was required to be an advanced practice nurse. Then in 2004, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing called for raising the level of preparation necessary for advanced nursing practice from a master’s degree to a doctorate.

Some physicians have spoken out against the D.N.P., unhappy with how some practitioners are now being referred to as “doctor” by their patients. Kaufmann defended the D.N.P. in a letter published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*: “This is a nursing degree that signifies the highest level of nursing practice, using the best evidence for making patient-care decisions,” she stated. “It is in the best interest of all health-care providers (and patients) that each profession comes to the interdisciplinary table with comparable academic preparation. This degree does not make physicians out of
Ann Linguiti Pron is a pediatric nurse practitioner for PHMC Health Connections in north Philadelphia and at the Children’s Health Center in Abington, Pa. “I really like working with kids,” says Pron. “I don’t like giving them shots, but otherwise I really enjoy it.”

Pron first heard about RMU’s program from a friend who was one of the first students enrolled. At the time, Pron was working as an assistant professor of nursing at Temple University, which was looking to start a program of its own.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing recently gave Pron its AfterCollege Scholarship, a prestigious award for graduate and undergraduate nursing students who demonstrate strong scholarship and leadership skills. Pron says the scholarship will enable her to expand her teaching focus in order to assist the next generation of advanced practice nurses. “The main reason I wanted to pursue the D.N.P. was to stay involved with nurse practitioner education,” says Pron. “A Ph.D. didn’t appeal to me,” she says. “I liked the D.N.P. because it was practice-focused and clinical.”

She liked how RMU’s program had everything rolled into one, and the flexibility was compatible with her busy work schedule. Plus, she liked the combination of in-class and online courses, which allowed her to work at her own pace. “It really allows you to get to know the other students,” she says. “We e-mail each other and talk on the phone, and it’s nice to have a group of people that you can identify with. And Dr. Kaufmann is a dynamo. She really stays connected with us.”

The response to RMU’s program has been overwhelming. Each year the school has accepted more students than anticipated, and there is currently a waiting list. One of the challenges Kaufmann sees in the development of the D.N.P. is turning clinicians into academic scholars. “They are experts at what they do and how they see patients,” she says, “but they have very little experience with the research process, with scientific writing, with the precision for disseminating results. The amount of mentoring that they require in order to do quality studies... It takes a lot of faculty.

“That said, it’s probably the most exciting thing I’ve ever done – to watch them become clinical scholars,” says Kaufmann. “They’re primed and ready to take on that role. And to watch the transformation is very, very exciting.”

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRKICH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM JUDKIS & JOE APPEL
ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY JOAN ROMBOLI
“The best cigar is the one that you like,” says Andrew Lee ’91. “Cigars are like flowers in a garden. There are roses, violets, daisies… and they’re all beautiful. But he who is wise will try them all.”

Shrewd words from someone who owns his own cigar store. Lee’s new North Side shop, Executive Cigars, features an impressive 300-square-foot humidor with thousands of stogies, as well as a lounge with plush leather furniture and flat-screen TVs where he and his customers can enjoy luxurious smoke. It’s a sophisticated yet contemporary space where cigar lovers can enjoy their favorite blends, and it’s the result of Lee’s vision and dedication.

His journey to success was a winding one, and one that was rife with challenges. Lee first studied computers at the University of Pittsburgh, but he soon realized how isolated a computer career could be. “I was like a monk,” he says. “I love people. I’m not a cubicle kind of guy.” Lee knew that if he wanted to deal with people on a daily basis, he had to get into business. That’s how he ended up at Robert Morris University.

After earning his B.S.B.A., Lee held various jobs before engaging in volunteer work with inner-city kids at Mercy Hospital. Soon he was recommended for community outreach with Mead Behavioral Health, where he worked for seven years. Through the Pitts Public Schools, he developed a program to bring kids from rival gangs and set them on the right path.

Next he tried his hand as an admissions counselor for the Pennsylvania Institute, but after six months they let him go. “It was the best thing that could have happened to me,” says Lee. He formed his own catalog suit business, Executive S. Each day he would walk around the city, approach men in suits, give them a business card, and offer to come to their office and tailor a suit for them. Business was so good, in fact, that in 2003 Lee opened a store at Century III Mall.

Nine months later, however, disaster struck. Flooding caused by the remnants of Hurricane Ivan destroyed over $100,000 of Lee’s inventory which was in storage for a fashion show, and he was forced out of business. He tried flipping houses, but when the real estate market started to head south and banks began to tighten their loan requirements, Lee had to try something else. He took a job with a legal services company, quickly becoming one of their top sales executives. But when one of his best employees left and took his clients with him, once again it was back to the drawing board for Lee.

Then, at a promotional event at a local cigar store, he met Sam Lacia, a salesman for Oliva Cigars. After speaking with Lee, Lacia recommended him for a position as a regional sales rep with Oliva. Soon Lee was covering a territory that stretched from New York to Kentucky. It wasn’t long before he began to think about opening his own cigar shop. He bought an old pizza shop on the corner of Suismon and East streets, renovated it, and in November, Executive Cigars opened for business.

“Stogie” is a slang term for cigar. Visit rmu.edu/foundations to find out where it comes from.
When Lee first told people about his plans, few believed he would succeed. “People told me I was out of my freakin’ tree,” he says. “But I knew I could make it happen. I’ve been a trailblazer my entire life.”

Lee credits much of his success to RMU, where he says his instructors challenged him. When his organizational behavior professor gave him a C, even though he had gotten all A’s on all his tests, Lee questioned him. “He told me I’d never get better than a C in his class unless I showed up on time, all the time,” he says. “That was big. It made me understand the importance of the little things, both in school and in business.”

When it comes to being an entrepreneur, Lee has plenty of advice to offer. “Unless you own your own business, you really don’t understand what all’s involved,” he says. “There’s a lot that you have to learn on your own, but you also have to listen to others who have been there before you.”

Most of all, he’s grateful for the guidance he received while at RMU. “That’s when it started getting serious for me,” he says. “That’s when I grew up. RMU was the pivotal turning point in my life. It was all about business there.”

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRKICH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS '08
The only rookie on the women’s hockey team in Vancouver, goalie **Brianne McLaughlin** had a Winter Olympics she will never forget, culminating in a silver medal. While she looks forward to finishing her studies at RMU and becoming a nurse, she also plans to keep training for Sochi in 2014.

Like kids fighting for the back seat of the school bus, USA athletes scrambled to be the last team out in the opening ceremonies parade. The women’s hockey players struggled with Shaun White and the snowboarders, linking arms to fend them off, even chicken-fighting. “It was like an hour ordeal,” McLaughlin laughs. “We won.”

She expected to spend the Olympics cheering from the bench, but with 8 minutes left in the first game and USA holding a 10-0 lead over China, coach Mark Johnson sent No. 29 between the pipes. “I tried not to freak out,” she remembers. She stopped the first scoring chance with her left pad after it caromed off a teammate’s skate. Then China got a power play, and in seconds she had fended off two more shots, one with an excellent kick save, another she snagged in her glove. The flurry prompted NBC announcer and former gold medalist Cammi Granato to exclaim, “Brianne McLaughlin is up to the task!” That jinxed it; seconds later, Jin Fengling blasted a shot through two defensewomen and a screened McLaughlin for China’s only goal of the game. She stopped one more shot at the buzzer to end a memorable night.

After a disappointing 2-0 loss to Canada in the final, the team was crestfallen as it skated out to receive silver medals. “I didn’t want to be smiling when everyone else is crying. But then the goalie who played, Jessie Vetter, looks at me and says, ‘I know we lost and everything, but we’re about to get our first Olympic medal.’ And then she smiled and gave me this big high five, and that kind of gave me license to be happy. You look up in the stands and see all those people there. My family had a gigantic banner that said, ‘We love Brianne!’ And when everyone in the arena started chanting ‘U-S-A,’ even I got a little emotional at that moment. It was such a cool feeling.”

The women’s team was on vacation in St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands during March Madness. When RMU took an early lead over Villanova, defensewoman Caitlyn Cahow announced that if the Colonials won, she’d get McLaughlin’s face tattooed on her arm. “She was sweating pretty bad in overtime,” McLaughlin says.

WRITTEN BY **MARK HOUSER**
PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY **BRIANNE MCLAUGHLIN & GETTY IMAGES**
Linda Kuga Pikulin ‘81 didn’t set out to win awards or recognition. She just wanted to support her family.

The Aliquippa native was a 19-year-old freshman when her father died. The oldest of four children, she scaled back her studies while working full time to support her mother and siblings. “My dad had worked three jobs to make ends meet,” she says. “The lesson I learned from him early on was you have to have a strong work ethic if you want to survive.”

Three decades later, Kuga Pikulin has gone far past mere survival. As president of Pepsi Bottling Group Co.’s operations in Canada, she oversees 4,500 employees and more than $1 billion in annual revenue. In recognition of her leadership, performance, and community service, the Toronto-based Women’s Executive Network recently named her one of the 100 most powerful women in Canada.

The recognition was no surprise to her colleagues. “Linda has established herself as one of the most talented and accomplished leaders in the beverage industry,” says Rob King, president of Pepsi Bottling Group North America. “Her vision, passion, and integrity have enabled her to significantly grow our Canada business over the past 10 years and made her someone who is widely respected and admired throughout our organization.”

Following a brief stint with Xerox after earning her B.S.B.A. from RMU, Kuga Pikulin took a Pepsi service rep job with the McKees Rocks office, shopping the fountain drink to delis, pizzerias and taverns across the region. She credits mentors at Pepsi who offered training and encouragement for her to take on increasingly challenging assignments in sales, marketing and operations in New Jersey and Texas before earning executive positions in Florida, Georgia, New York, and Ohio.

That moving up and around – 12 moves in 28 years – wasn’t always easy. The first time, in her mid-20s, was the hardest. “I’d always lived at home with my mom,” recalls Kuga Pikulin. “I packed all my things and drove to Asbury Park, New Jersey. I think I cried for a month.

“It was extremely challenging,” she says, “but the priority for me was always to continue to
take advantage of career opportunities, to make enough money so that my mother would never have to worry about money for the rest of her life.”

That mission has been accomplished, she said. In 1998, she was appointed to Pepsi’s top job in Canada, and has settled in suburban Toronto. Her husband of nine years, chiropractor Dr. John N. Pikulin, still lives in Harrisburg, so the couple maintain a long-distance marriage. Kuga Pikulin also insists on clearing time in her schedule for the local United Way, serving on the organization’s cabinet and helping it to increase its major donations. “It is a very personal priority,” Kuga Pikulin says. “Many of the people who need support are people like my mother and father, who had no idea how to access community dollars or services. They have families they’re raising, they have a strong work ethic, but it’s not always easy to find work.”

So does she feel like one of the most powerful women in Canada? “I feel like one of the most blessed women in Canada,” she says with a laugh. “I have been blessed in exceeding my expectations for myself, financially and in terms of personal growth.”

And she’s within driving distance of her childhood home, which she visits at least once a month. “My focus on my mother now has nothing to do with money and everything to do with time,” she says. “I can jump in the car, get to Aliquippa in five hours, and sleep in the bed I slept in growing up. Every moment with my mother is precious.”

WRITTEN BY BONNIE PFISTER
PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY PEPSI BOTTLING GROUP CO CANADA
Growing up in the Garfield Heights public housing project in Pittsburgh, Arlinda Moriarty ’03 learned the basics of being an entrepreneur. That was before she knew that such a curious word could describe a man like her grandfather. To her, he was Papa.
“He owned Tony Brown’s Auto Service on Penn Avenue in Lawrenceville for 40 years,” Moriarty says. “A lot of people knew Tony Brown’s. I have his picture. It sits on my desk right next to me every day.”

Since starting her own business in 2001, a temporary home health care staffing company, Moriarty has guided Moriarty Consultants Inc. to a level of success that surely would make her grandfather proud. The company has expanded to four offices, with its headquarters in the city’s Observatory Hill neighborhood, employs close to 800 people, and has annual revenues of more than $8 million. Last year Moriarty received the Entrepreneur of the Year award from OWN: The Onyx Woman Network, a communications company that publishes Onyx Woman magazine and is headed by RMU trustee Ola Jackson ’87.

Watching her grandfather and other family members who shared a spirit of enterprise taught Moriarty lessons that took deep root. “I come from a small family, and we were a family of entrepreneurs from the very beginning of my life. I didn’t realize that’s what they were until I became an adult,” she says. “My father’s mother, Rachel Dickens, ran a little nanny business. While people would go to work, she watched their children.”

Sharon Buford, a long-time business associate, saw an entrepreneurial spark in Moriarty’s zeal for projects. “I encouraged her to start her own business because she was so talented,” says Buford, owner of Buford Enterprises International. “She was doing quite well for this company. I said, ‘You need to do that for yourself.’” “This is no commercial, but I’ve got to tell you: Robert Morris had a lot to do with it,” says Moriarty, who earned a degree in social science from the university. “They are responsible for more entrepreneurs than you can shake a stick at.”

Moriarty’s largest staffing division is home health care and disability care, where the firm got its start. In recent years, she has diversified into other areas of staffing and created offshoot companies, such as the Moriarty Institute, which trains her employees for a broader range of jobs. A licensed and bonded employment agency, Moriarty Consultants has a tandem goal of helping people become employable through job training. And the company helps employees work out personal snags, such as finding affordable day care and transportation to and from the job. “We are a for-profit agency with a nonprofit heart,” Moriarty says. “I must take care of my employees because my employees take care of my customers.”

“She’s a guardian angel to so many people,” says Ruth Gregory, the company’s executive secretary. “She will do anything it takes to keep the company going. She has done it all, from the phones, to taking care of consumers, to going to battle with the state over things. She is Moriarty Consultants, Inc. She comes to work in her scrubs with her sleeves rolled up, or in her suit ready to go to a meeting with the state.”

WRITTEN BY DAVID BROWN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASMINE GOLDBAND
If he could be the ambassador for RMU, Nazari Dorosh ’10 wouldn’t hesitate. In a way, he already is.

Born in Soviet Ukraine, Dorosh came to the United States at the age of two, the youngest of 11 children. His mother and father emigrated to escape communist rule and gain religious freedom. As an early graduation gift, Dorosh’s family joined him this February at the federal courthouse in Pittsburgh, where he finally took the oath to become an American citizen.

Since freshman year, Dorosh has taken keen advantage of opportunity. He graduated magna cum laude last month after collecting a lengthy list of awards and activities, most notably the President’s Undergraduate Award as a junior. He’s used his production skills as events producer for the campus, and has made several promotional videos for RMU’s public relations and marketing department. He also tackled production in internships for Fox Sports Network and the Steelers, operating the Jumbotron on game days and interviewing players, including hometown hero Troy Polamalu. “He’s so nice,” says Dorosh. “I told him I was Ukranian and he said, ‘Ya tebe lublu,’ which is Ukranian for ‘I love you’. So I said it back to him.”

When not in the studio or behind a camera, Dorosh spent three years working as an RA, so he’s well known on campus. Chatting at RoMo’s Café, he personally greets nearly every passerby with a vivacious smile and a nod of the head. This spring he and others incorporated Haiti relief into the RA program, raising about $1,500 from students through a “Hoops for Haiti” basketball tournament and a student dance marathon.

“I love it so much that I want to stay here after graduation,” Dorosh says. “I love making videos, I love RMU, and I love being an advocate for it. I feel privileged to be a part of the school and I want to remain a part of it.”

WRITTEN BY | KAYLEE STURM

Check out Foundations Online to see Nazari and his family at his citizenship ceremony.
A sign by the airport lured Rex Crawley to visit Robert Morris University weeks after getting his Ph.D. from Ohio University. A decade later, he is assistant dean of the School of Communications and Information Systems and chairman of the Council on Institutional Equity.

“I try to mentor as many students as possible,” he says. “When I was in school and had the opportunity to interact with administrators like me, I was instantly intimidated. What I love about RMU is that it’s small enough that faculty and administration can really get to know a lot of students.”

Crawley’s working class parents expected him to go to college, and he has spent much of his career trying to encourage other young black men to do the same. He worked with the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh to create the Black Male Leadership Development Institute; its summer program at RMU, which will bring 65 students to campus for a week this year, promotes leadership and stresses the value of a university diploma.

As president of the Kappa Scholarship Endowment Fund of Western Pennsylvania, Crawley is guiding his fraternity’s efforts to award scholarships to top students in the area. Realizing four years ago that RMU had yet to award a Presidential Scholarship to a student of color, Crawley and Provost David Jamison, J.D., agreed to partner to recruit and retain qualified candidates identified by the fraternity. Now RMU gives two full-tuition awards each year to minorities.

He didn’t plan to stay long at RMU, Crawley says, but then, “I fell in love with it.” His wife, Daria Crawley, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of management here. The couple and their son, Xavier, are regulars at campus events, and in March they moved to Moon Township.
On a crisp late April afternoon, students, faculty, and staff in the School of Business gathered for a picnic in the Rudolph Family Gardens to mark the end of the academic year – and to celebrate an even more significant milestone.

RMU was weeks away from breaking ground on an 18,000-square-foot building that will form a quadrangle at the gardens and provide a home – including classroom, library and study space – for the university’s flagship business school. The building is set to open in the fall of 2011.

“Being here as long as I have, seeing all the changes I’ve seen, this will be the greatest addition to Robert Morris University,” says Dean Manna, Ph.D., who has taught at RMU for 36 years.

Freshman and sophomore students speak enthusiastically about what the building will mean for their education. Graduating seniors, admittedly a bit envious, appreciate its significance. “I’m happy because this will add value to my degree,” says Rachel Cooney, a senior majoring in both marketing and hospitality and tourism.

When the board of trustees gave the go-ahead for RMU to move forward with construction, it represented a victory for President Gregory Dell’Omo’s long-term vision over the lingering effects of the nation’s 2008 financial meltdown. Like every other organization, RMU made sacrifices in response to the recession. A hiring freeze and salary freeze were imposed last year.

Departmental budgets were cut. Money saved was poured into financial aid and enhancing the quality of RMU’s academic programs.

And guess what? This past fall saw a record freshman class enroll at RMU, and the university is on pace for another. Residence halls are full, and students who moved off campus are clamoring to come back.

“When somebody asks, ‘What do you think? You’ve been here five years. How are you feeling?’ I’m more excited today than I was the day I started. We’re seeing results that are coming back from all of our hard work,” says Dell’Omo.

The new building also represents the faith that the Pittsburgh business community has placed in RMU. The PNC Foundation donated $520,000 to create the PNC Trading Center. The United States Steel Foundation gave $500,000 for the U. S. Steel Videoconferencing and Technology Resource Center. Allegheny Technologies Inc. gave $250,000 for the Allegheny Technologies Global Library.

“The building will at long last give Robert Morris University and its graduates the reputation they deserve, the reputation they have earned through their hard work, professional success and dedicated service to the community,” says Derya Jacobs, Ph.D., dean of the School of Business. “It will be a transformative facility that will move our business school and university to another level.”

WRITTEN BY JONATHAN POTTS
1960s
FRANK LEISTNER ’62 is vice president and chief financial officer of NFL Alumni, a Fort Lauderdale membership group of former pro football players. He has been with the organization since 1985 and previously was its controller. Frank resides in Delray Beach, Fla.

1970s
FRANK NAPOLEON ’73 is the mortgage sales manager for the Pittsburgh market at Citizens Bank. He resides in Sewickley.

WALTER H. YOUNG ’74 is executive director of The Residence at Hilltop, a personal care community near Monongahela, Pa. He also teaches administration courses for nursing homes and assisted living facilities at the Community College of Allegheny County. Walt resides in Pittsburgh.

JAMES F. BAKER ’78 is chief financial officer for VA Healthcare VISN 4, a network of 10 VA medical centers and 44 clinics in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, and parts of three other states. He was formerly chief financial officer and vice president of business services at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. James resides in Pittsburgh with his wife, Carole and daughters, Stephanie and Alissa.

SANDRA TOMLINSON ’78 was named to the board of Pressley Ridge, a nonprofit organization that serves troubled and developmentally challenged children. She is a senior vice president of Highmark. Sandra resides in Presto, Pa.

1980s
L. THOMAS MARCHLEN M’80 was elected to the board of directors of John Carroll University. He is a senior tax attorney with Alcoa. Tom, his wife, JUDITH BREELOVE MARCHLEN M’87, and their daughter, Amy, reside in Pittsburgh.

GUS MATHEWS JR. ’78 is the Internet Sales Manager for Morrow Chevrolet in Beaver Falls. He lives in Rochester.

Sandra Tomlinson ’78 was named to the board of Pressley Ridge, a nonprofit organization that serves troubled and developmentally challenged children. She is a senior vice president of Highmark. Sandra resides in Presto, Pa.

ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY FOUNDATIONS • 29
DALE H. KILMAYER '81 is chief financial officer and director of mergers and acquisitions for Financial Transaction Services in Canonsburg. Dale and his wife, DEBBIE KILMAYER '83, reside in Pittsburgh.

WILLIAM MCKAIN '82 is the director of administrative services for Baldwin-Whitehall School District. He previously served as director of finance for Mt. Lebanon.

JIM LUCHINI '83 was appointed president of Kirk Trucking Service in Delmont, Pa. He previously was vice president with the company. Jim, his wife, Jean, and their children, Jamie and Josh, live in Wexford.

ROBERT E. ROUT '84 was named executive vice president and chief financial officer of First Commonwealth Financial in Indiana, Pa. He will oversee the company’s accounting policies, regulatory and tax reporting, budgeting and forecasting, and investor relations. He resides in Blawnox.

WILLIAM F. RODERICK '81 is the vice president for corporate banking with Dollar Bank for the Pittsburgh market area. He resides in Allison Park.

STEVE SWETOHA '86 was named president of the Tulsa Shock, a division of the Tulsa 66ers of the National Basketball Developmental League. Steve resides in Oklahoma City.

JIM LUCHINI '83 was appointed president of Kirk Trucking Service in Delmont, Pa. He previously was vice president with the company. Jim, his wife, Jean, and their children, Jamie and Josh, live in Wexford.

WILLIAM MCKAIN '82 is the director of administrative services for Baldwin-Whitehall School District. He previously served as director of finance for Mt. Lebanon.


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JEFFREY T. DEANE '87 has been elected North American deputy on the International Practice Group. He is partner at the Malin Bergquist accounting firm, where he heads the international businesses group. Jeffrey resides in Baden.

Jonathon Ernst ’87 is vice president of sales and export at AWISCO New York, a welding and industrial supplier. He resides in Andover, N.J.

Amin Saigol ’88 is president of the Khushab District Industries Association in Pakistan for 2010-2012. He is resident director of Kohinoor Sugar Mills. Amin resides in Lahore, Pakistan, with his wife, Natasha, and son, Azan.

Erik M. Sockman ’89 is the director of controlling and cost accounting for Pergo, a flooring manufacturer in suburban Raleigh. Jeff resides in Apex, N.C., with his wife, Carol, and daughters, Victoria and Rachel.

Jeffrey Deane ’87 has been elected North American deputy on the International Practice Group. He is partner at the Malin Bergquist accounting firm, where he heads the international businesses group. Jeffrey resides in Baden.

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Erik M. Sockman ’89 is the director of controlling and cost accounting for Pergo, a flooring manufacturer in suburban Raleigh. Jeff resides in Apex, N.C., with his wife, Carol, and daughters, Victoria and Rachel.

Paula Baker Gabauer ’94 is a notary in New Brighton. Paula and her husband Jeff are the proud parents of Cody, 9, and Travis, 7. The Gabauers live in New Brighton.

Rick Christensen ’95 and Wendy Schulz Christensen ’95 are the proud parents of Kami Rebecca, born on September 22, and Kacy, 4. Rick is the assistant athletic director for compliance at Duquesne University and Wendy works part-time as a financial analyst for Celtic Healthcare in Mars, Pa. The Christensens reside in Cranberry Township.

Christopher King ’95 is director of athletics for the University of Texas-Pan American in Edinburg, Texas. Chris previously was head of compliance and associate athletic director for the University of Alabama.

Shawn Ryan ’95 is director of finance for the Allegheny Valley School. He resides in Pittsburgh.

Angela Rullo Winslow ’95 is shareholder with the law firm of Dickie McCamey & Chilcote. Angela resides in Mt. Lebanon.

Cindy Komarinski ’96 was one of eight culinary professionals named regional apprenticeship trainer by the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation. She is an associate professor at Westmoreland County Community College. Cindy resides in Farmington, Pa.

Kirk Weiss ’97 is a partner in investment management with Emmanuel Capital Management, where he has worked since 2008.
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Go to www.rmu.edu/careercenter and follow the link to ColonialTRAK.

> CIVIL WAR STUDY TOUR

VAL BRKICH goes on the road with professor Daniel Barr’s class, touring the great battlefields of Cold Harbor, Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, Antietam, and Gettysburg. Watch your email for his dispatch – an e-mail exclusive.

Drop us a line at FOUNDATIONS@RMU.EDU if you don’t get RMU e-mails, and we’ll get you on the list.
Kirk lives in Irwin with his wife, Michelle, and daughter, Alexandria.

KAREN QUIDETTO LATTNER ’99 and her husband, Ryan, are the proud parents of Abigail Elaine, born on October 6. Karen is the office manager at the accounting firm of Kathy L. Hess & Associates. The Lattners reside in Pittsburgh.

TARA RZEPECKI-LEAS ’99 and her husband, Brad, are the proud parents of Piper Rose, born January 3. Tara is the director of corporate sales for the Holiday Inn Pittsburgh Airport. The Leas family resides in Weirton, W.V. Read more about Tara on page 36.

2000s
JIM DUZYK M’00 and his wife, Laura, are the proud parents of a baby girl, Keely, born December 22. Jim is the sports information director at RMU. The Duzyk family resides in Coraopolis.

RICKY FRAZIER ’01 was named one of the Most Influential Minorities in Cable in 2009 by CableFAX magazine. He has worked at Comcast for six years, moving up from a call center supervisor in Pittsburgh to his current job as vice president of customer care for the Indianapolis region. Ricky lives in Fishers, Ind., with his wife, Charmel.

ROBERT CALABRISI D’02 was promoted to human resources consultant, information systems, for the Veterans Health Administration. He will oversee the automation of human resources departments across the VA Systems. Bob lives in Elizabeth, Pa., and is an adjunct faculty member in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences.

ALLISON MOHR ’04 married Eric Oltmann on October 10. Allison is a heart walk director with the American Heart Association in Youngstown, Ohio.

AARON THOMAS ’04 M’08 was appointed high school principal for the Cornell School District. He had been a social studies teacher at Cornell and previously taught in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

JAMAAL PARKER ’02 married Melanie DuBose on October 2 in Temple Hills, Md. He is a budget analyst for the U.S. Department of State, and she is a high school math teacher. Fellow Colonials football alumni ABU SESSAY, REGINALD CHAMBERS III ’02, H. BRANDON MORGAN ’03 and JOSIAH WARD ’02 were in the wedding party.

> LACROSSE FOR YOUR THUMBS
Thanks to CARLO SUNSERI ’07, lacrosse fans now can play their rough-and-tumble game without getting up from the couch. The former player and former assistant coach for the men’s lacrosse team is co-creator of College Lacrosse 2010 for the Microsoft Xbox 360. Since its release in November, the game has become one of the most popular downloads on Xbox Live Marketplace, the indie game channel where it sells for $5.

To make the game, Sunseri teamed up via e-mail and videoconferencing with Jonathan “Fritz” Ackerly, a Scottish videogame developer who used his own soccer videogame as the programming building blocks for the lacrosse title. “We ripped it back to the fundamentals of players running around a field and then rebuilt from there,” Ackerly explained.

“This experience has been extremely surreal and I was happy to be a part of it,” said Sunseri.

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BE ONE OF THE FIRST FIVE PEOPLE TO E-MAIL A CLASS NOTE WITH PHOTO TO ROBERT AT FOUNDATIONS@RMU.EDU.
BILL ROMAN GO

Robert’s FEATURED FRIEND

Bill Romango

Currently pursuing an M.F.A. at the New York Film Academy in L.A.

Networks:
RMU Alum ’08

Current City:
Los Angeles, CA

Favorite Quote:
The saddest thing in life is wasted talent.

Top 10 Movies I watched while at RMU (2004-08):
Million Dollar Baby
The Aviator
Collateral
Crash
Hustle and Flow
The Departed
Pan’s Labyrinth
Borat
Children of Men
The Incredibles

Want to be a featured friend?
Send your top 10 list to Robert at foundations@rmu.edu. The more creative your top 10 is, the better!

Featured friends will receive a boatload of RMU swag as well as other perks!

Robert’s featured friend

JOE SEIDEL ’03 and his wife, Heather, are the proud parents of Lindsey Shannon, born on October 13, and her big sister, Hayley. Joe is an instructional technology specialist at Duquesne University. The Seidels live in McCandless Township.

MICHAEL CHETOCK M’05 is a web developer for Brady Communications in Pittsburgh. Michael resides in Mars, Pa.

ANTHONY ANTONINE ’06 and EMILY TALMAGE ’06 were married in July. Anthony works for Verizon Wireless and Emily teaches fifth grade at Brooks Elementary School in the Moon Area School District. The Antolines reside in Coraopolis.

KEVIN BAZNER ’06 is coordinator of Greek life at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas. He previously served as a leadership consultant for Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

ANGELA KOKANOS ’06 and George Lagonis of Lebanon, Pa., were married on November 14 in Oakmont. Angela is employed in the office of full-time admissions at Point Park University. The Lagonises reside in Pittsburgh.

WILLIAM MERTEL ’07 and Kathleen Raymond were married on May 23, 2009. William is a technical analyst in endpoint security with FedEx Services in Pittsburgh and Kathleen is the client services representative for Serviclink in Moon Township. The Mertels reside in Imperial, Pa.

CHRISTIAN BOUCHER ’08 M’08 is the goalie for the Nijmegen Devils in the Dutch professional hockey league. Christian was selected for the league’s All Star Game in February, in which his team, the non-Dutch players, beat the Dutch players 8-5. Follow his blog at christianboucher.blogspot.com.

SEAN VOSS BERKSTRESSER ’08 is a forward for the Johnstown Chiefs of the ECHL. It is his second year with the Chiefs and his third year playing minor league hockey in the ECHL.

IN MEMORIAM

OSCAR H. MIHM ’36 of West View passed away on November 21 at the age of 96. He was employed for 43 years with the U.S. Postal Service.

JASON M. THOMAS ’73 of Moon Township passed away on November 7 at the age of 57. He was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity.

COL. ROBERT D. DANFORTH (RET.) ’76 of Moon Township passed away on February 22 at the age of 87. He was a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and a career Army officer who served in World War

> ROCKING THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

LYLE ABBOT M’98 was an operations manager for Canadian network CTV during the Winter Olympics, and helped to coordinate a cross-country music festival during the games. Canadian acts Simple Plan, David Usher, Barenaked Ladies, and others performed free public concerts in Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg, St. John’s, and Quebec City while the world’s athletes competed in Vancouver.
II and Vietnam. Upon retirement in 1973, he returned to college and earned his degree.

MICHAEL J. DE GORI '78 of Sewickley passed away on February 12 at the age of 54. An agent with Erie Insurance, he was an active member of the Sewickley Valley YMCA, past president of the Sons of Italy, and a stadium usher for the Pittsburgh Pirates and Steelers.

GEORGE W. LANGAS, longtime university caretaker and physical plant worker, passed away on November 25 in Clearwater, Fla., at the age of 89. He is survived by his wife, Angie, and daughters RITA LANGAS WILSON ’77 and ELLEN LANGAS CAMPBELL ’79.

JOSEPH M. MORICZ, D.B.A., former professor and dean of the School of Business, passed away February 4 in Orlando, Fla., at the age of 83. As dean until his retirement in 1993, Moricz was instrumental in creating the university’s graduate program in business. He was active in many local groups here, and after retirement worked as a cast member in Walt Disney World for 12 years.

HELEN MULLEN, Ed.D., former dean of enrollment, executive studies, and the School of Continuing Education, passed away on February 8 in Moon Township. She joined the faculty in 1965 and spent 28 years at the university before becoming academic dean of Mercyhurst College, her alma mater.

Two well-known and well-loved seniors, AMANDA WERKMEISTER, a hospitality and tourism major and the 2009 Homecoming Queen, and business major SARAH GOFF, died suddenly during the spring semester. Both women were awarded B.S.B.A. degrees posthumously and their families were invited commencement, where the provost promised they would always remain “part of the RMU family.”

Join the alumni council today and help plan future alumni events. Call (412) 397-2586.
Over at the Moon Township Holiday Inn on University Boulevard, you might notice they’ve got a thing for Robert Morris University. When you step into the hotel’s newly renovated Iron City Grille, you immediately notice the Colonials logos and student and campus photos covering the walls. The hotel is obviously proud of its collegiate neighbor – after all, it was RMU that gave them one of their most dynamic employees, Tara Rzepecki ’99.

A graduate of the university’s top-ranked hospitality and tourism management program, Tara handles group bookings for the hotel’s sports, military, education, religious, fraternal, and government clients. On top of that, this Imperial, Pa., native still finds time to raise her baby daughter, Piper, with her husband, Brad.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE RMU? At the time, RMU was just starting its hospitality and tourism management program, and it was something I was extremely interested in. I also loved the campus, the small class sizes, and how the professors knew you by name. You weren’t just a number.

WHAT GROUPS/TEAMS/ACTIVITIES WERE YOU INVOLVED IN? Cheerleading. In fact, I was Cheerleader of the Year in 1999.

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR MAJOR? I liked how, with a business degree, I had a lot of different options. I decided to minor in hospitality and tourism because I was working at a local hotel at the time, and I liked the varied day-to-day activity and the interaction with people.

WHAT PART OF YOUR EDUCATION WAS ESPECIALLY BENEFICIAL TO YOUR CAREER? The required internships taught me what to expect in a professional work environment, which really helped me prepare me for my current position.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT RMU? I loved the faculty and how they worked with you on an individual basis. And having professors who actually worked in the hospitality field made the classes more relevant and true to life.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR JOB? I have a great time working with my clients and co-workers, and every day brings new challenges and people into my life.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR FREE TIME? As a new mother, I spend a lot of time with my daughter, family, and friends.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE 1) MOVIE 2) BOOK AND 3) TELEVISION SHOW? Movie: “Grease.” Book: Anything by Dr. Seuss (Yes, still!). Television: I am a sucker for “reality” TV.

IF YOU WEREN’T IN THE HOTEL BIZ, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU’D BE DOING? I’d be a financial planner. I really enjoy telling people what to do with their money. Ha ha!

SO, WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR TARA? I’m cool with wherever life takes me. But if I ever leave the hotel industry, I would love to work for RMU in helping the university grow.

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRKICH

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**WHY DON’T YOU TELL US ABOUT IT?** *Foundations* is looking for class news from all RMU alumni. Promotions, weddings, babies, get-togethers with other alumni, retirements – don’t be shy. We want to hear it all. (And we want to see the pictures, too.)

You can send your news to rmualum@rmu.edu, enter it at www.rmu.edu/classnotes or cut out the alumni news form below and mail it to us!

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**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.