CONGRATS CLASS OF 2011

For video and pictures from commencement, go to Foundations Online rmu.edu/foundations.

THE RESULTS ARE IN
YOU TELL US HOW WE RATE
P. 20

SEE HOW RMU STUDENTS ARE USING PHOTOGRAPHY TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
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DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

One of my early goals as president was to boost alumni communications, including the launch of a new magazine, Foundations. With all the demands on your time and attention, we wanted to create a magazine that grabs you with compelling articles and photos from the moment you pull it out of your mailbox.

Judging from the response to our recent readership survey, we’ve succeeded. The survey was designed by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education and used by 200 alumni publications around the country. While only 37 percent of readers nationwide claim to read most or all of their alumni magazine, almost twice as many Foundations readers do—68 percent.

Something you saw in Foundations persuaded 41 percent of you to attend an event, and the same portion to recommend RMU to a friend or relative—both higher than the national average. But we’re not quite hitting our targets when it comes to getting you to connect in other ways. Only 13 percent of you have submitted an item to Class Notes, and only 25 percent have discussed an article you read with others or shared it online—both lower than national averages.

So consider that survey the beginning of a conversation. We love Foundations, but like any print publication, it’s only a one-way communications vehicle. We tell you stories we think are important. You read them. And that’s where it has ended, until now.

The five years we’ve been publishing Foundations have witnessed seismic shifts in how people communicate and how organizations interact with their members. Facebook and Twitter have experienced explosive growth, and smartphones have proliferated so that many people now regard them as a necessity. RMU has been at the forefront of these communications revolutions. We were one of the first universities to use Twitter to communicate regularly with students and alumni. We were early users of Facebook to organize events and welcome newly admitted students to campus, and we jumped onto Foursquare to enhance the sense of place on campus.

These outlets let you talk to us. In this issue of Foundations, we introduce a new one: the Foundations Facebook page, at facebook.com/rmufoundations. You can respond to what you read in the magazine, share the RMU memories those stories spark, and comment on what your fellow alumni say. Foundations on Facebook is where it has ended until now.

This is just one way in which we are marrying print and digital communications. Another is Foundations, the electronic edition of the magazine, distributed via email. With this issue, we are also introducing QR codes, which launch exclusive content such as stories, photos, or videos when scanned with a smartphone.

Here’s how it works: Go to your phone’s app store and download a free QR scanner, such as QR Reader for iPhone or Barcode Scanner for Android. Launch the app and scan the code that appears at right with your phone’s camera. The content will open on your phone. I hope you find it informative, and that you’ll keep letting us know what you think.

Sincerely,

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Spraying Goodwill
Sherry Hazuda ’98 got her college diploma while working and raising four children. As Pittsburgh’s school board president, now she has 26,000 kids to worry about.

The Results are In
We asked, you answered. See the highlights from our readership survey.

10 Questions
The former U.S. ambassador to Nigeria and the Republic of the Congo, Robin Renee Sanders D’10 now turns her focus to a nonprofit organization aiding Africa.
For the first time in the 10-year history of the actuarial science program, four students passed the notoriously difficult Actuarial Exam P during their first year in the program: Andrew Grunauer, Michael Holcomb, Christopher Ludwiczak, and Callen Oster. Few students pass the test during their freshman year.

Six students captured awards from the national Society for Collegiate Journalists annual student competition, judged by working journalists. Justin Downs won first place awards for TV feature and sports packages, and Heather Lowery won first place for news writing; Kevin Williams, Maria Satira, Aimee Morgan, and Heidi Hickle also collected awards.

The nuclear medicine technology program has received initial accreditation by the Joint Review Committee on Education Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology, the national accrediting body for degree programs in the field.

Brendan Mathers, a junior majoring in manufacturing engineering, was awarded the $7,000 Directors Scholarship by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers Education Foundation. He is the second RMU engineering student to win the highly competitive national scholarship; the first was Chris Bird ‘09, who is now a manufacturing engineer with Auma Actuators.

Trustee Patricia R. Rooney is this year’s recipient of the Robert P. Casey Medal for Commitment to Independent Higher Education. Named for the late Pennsylvania governor, who greatly strengthened need-based financial aid during his tenure, the medal is given annually by the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania.

Rooney was nominated by President Gregory G. Dell’Omo, Ph.D., in recognition of her longtime service and support of RMU, including 28 years as a member of the Board of Trustees; she also is a former adjunct professor in the communication skills program. In 2004 she created the Rooney International Visiting Scholars Program, which seeks to enhance the richness and diversity of teaching and scholarly activities at RMU by inviting qualified individuals to serve as visiting faculty members.

A native of Pittsburgh’s North Side, she is the wife of Daniel M. Rooney, the U.S. ambassador to Ireland and chairman emeritus of the Pittsburgh Steelers. The Rooneys reside in Dublin. The couple has nine children and 18 grandchildren.
> Changing Lives and Winning Awards

The “Change A Life” advertising campaign has won several prestigious awards, including:

- A Gold Addy award for TV commercials and a Silver Addy for website, from the Pittsburgh Advertising Federation.
- Best of Show and a Gold Educational Advertising award for advertising campaign, and a Silver award for TV advertising, from Higher Education Marketing Report.
- A Golden Quill for most creative website and TV commercials and a Silver Addy for TV advertising, from Higher Education Marketing Report.
- A Silver Cuppie Award for website, from the Pittsburgh Public Relations Association of Western Pennsylvania.
- A Golden Quill for most creative online storytelling, from the Press Club of Western Pennsylvania.
- A Silver Cuppie Award for website, from the College and University Public Relations Association of Pennsylvania.

The campaign, launched in September, was created by Wall-to-Wall Studios in Pittsburgh in conjunction with the university’s public relations and marketing department. See the website and TV commercials at Foundations Online.

> Taking the Pressure Off

A team of RMU engineering students won first place in the Pennsylvania regional Energy Efficient Building Competition at the Engineering Sustainability conference in Pittsburgh in April. Eugene Werner, Allan Page, and Tom Tenne’s proposal for a turbine water pressure regulator won a $5,000 prize, and beat out teams from the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University, who sponsored the conference. The students were advised by Tony Kerzmann, Ph.D., assistant professor of mechanical engineering.

> Benvenuti a Pittsburgh

RMU’s downtown walking tour podcasts, produced by university editor Mark Houser and web/social media designer Douglas Dierda and recorded by international students in 10 languages, won a Silver Accolade Award at the District II conference of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education in Baltimore and a Bronze Cuppie Award from the College and University Public Relations Association of Pennsylvania. Download the free tour at Foundations Online and try it out — there’s one in English too.

> The Magic Touch

Sara Meier ’11 received the first Mentoring Magic Award, along with Diane Todd Bucci, Ph.D., associate professor of English, given by the authors of Mentoring Magic: Filling the Gap for Your Success. The book was co-authored by Michele Hipsky, Ed.D., associate professor of education, and her former Ph.D. student, Claudia Armani-Bavaro D’07.

> Speaking of Changing Lives

Whitney Pappas ’11, a senior defender on the women’s ice hockey team, was one of eight national finalists for the BNY Mellon Wealth Management Hockey Humanitarian Award. Pappas was recognized for her community service and volunteering, including time with Holy Angels Orphanage, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Skate for the Cure, and Project Bundle Up.

> When Did He Sleep?

Matthew Feryus ’11 was awarded the university’s highest undergraduate honor, the Presidential Transformational Award, at this spring’s commencement. The award is given annually to a graduate who has been transformed by his or her experience at RMU and has also contributed to the transformation of the university in a meaningful way.

Feryus, the 2010-11 student government president and an RA, earned a perfect 4.0 in his demanding actuarial science major and graduated summa cum laude. He received the prestigious John Culver Woody Scholarship from the Actuarial Foundation, and last summer he was an actuarial intern at Coventry Health Care.

Outside the classroom, Feryus volunteered with the Special Olympics, Little Sisters for the Poor, and World Vision, and took an alternative spring break in rural Virginia repairing houses for the poor. He was also active with the Coalition for Christian Outreach, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and the International Justice Mission.

> Be Our Guest! Be Our Guest!

Film scholar Richard Grupenhoff was the university’s first visiting artist at the Sven-Birnbaum Charitable Foundation House for Media Arts. Grupenhoff, professor emeritus in radio, TV, and film at Rowan University in New Jersey, presented lectures and screenings featuring the pioneering contributions of African American filmmakers from 1915-1950. Grupenhoff’s two-day visit in February coincided with Black History Month.

Artist Hasan Elahi stayed at the house for two days in March, featuring his “Tracking Transience” project. The web-based self-tracking system constantly presents Elahi’s location and other personal data, and grew out of the artist’s harrowing experience as the subject of an FBI terrorism investigation in 2002. After six months of interrogations and nine consecutive polygraph tests, he was cleared of all suspicion.

“I GAVE MY COPY TO A LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL BUSINESS TEACHER.”

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Recycle this magazine.

Give it to a neighbor who’s in high school.

And help spread the word about RMU.
Peggy Outon Day

Peggy Outon, the executive director of RMU’s Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management, was honored by Pittsburgh City Council, which proclaimed March 22 “Peggy Outon Day” in recognition of her work in studying the role of women in nonprofit organizations and in coaching women to be leaders at nonprofits. In May the center launched “74%: Exploring the Lives of Women in Nonprofits,” a three-year research and community awareness project that aims to narrow the wage gap and develop successful career models for women in nonprofits.

Voci Italiane

Michael DiLauro, M.F.A., director of the Academic Media Center, received the Italian American Heritage Award from the Italian Club at the University of Pittsburgh for his work bringing two students from L’Aquila to finish their degrees at RMU after their university was heavily damaged in an earthquake. He was also recognized for a new documentary he is creating about Italian Americans, and for helping to create an RMU organization for students of Italian heritage.

Making Global Villages

Lisa Nutt, M.B.A., associate director of the Center for Global Engagement, is part of a new initiative by NAFSA: Association of International Educators aimed at promoting a global perspective. As the first cohort in the Connecting Our World Grassroots Leadership Program, Nutt and 10 others chosen from universities around the country will spend the next year developing and documenting methods to increase support of international education. Nutt hopes to create a “Connecting Communities Corp” comprising international students, faculty and staff. These ambassadors will share their cultural perspectives and experiences with the campus community and with other local schools, colleges, and universities, and carry out community service projects.

Farm to Table

Richard Mills, Ph.D., associate professor of hospitality and tourism, co-authored “How the Sustainable Food Movement Has Created the New Farm to Table Industry,” which was named a Best Paper at the American Society of Business and Behavioral Sciences conference in Las Vegas in February. Mills wrote the paper with Stephanie Westfall ’01 M.B.A., the general manager of the Courtyard by Marriott Washington Meadowlands.

Author! Author!

Jackie Kleintein, Ph.D., outreach and information literacy librarian, published “Collective Success: A Phenomenological Case Study of Ohio Public Libraries” in the October issue of Public Library Quarterly. Addie Matte, assistant athletic director, co-authored Forvard Falcons, a history of women’s athletics at Bowling Green State University, with Bowling Green professor Janet Parks and archivist Ann Bowers.

Dean Manna, Ph.D., university professor of marketing, and marketing professor Gayle Maron, Ph.D., cowrote “Sustainable Markets: Case Study Of Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.,” which was accepted for presentation at the New Orleans International Business & Economics Conference and for publication in the Journal of Business Case Studies. Students Brittany Lynn Khalil ’11 and Sara Meier ’11 also were co-authors.

Arif Sirinterlikci, Ph.D., co-authored “Design and Manufacturing of Medical Devices with Antimicrobial Technology,” published in the 2011 Medical Manufacturing Yearbook of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers. Biomedical engineering students Samantha Pogel and Justin Wissinger also were co-authors.

Honors & Awards

Kim LaSota, Ph.D., associate professor of mathematics and science, was given the Distinguished Service Award from the Pennsylvania Association of Boroughs for his performance as mayor of Heidelberg, an office he has held since 1997. LaSota also serves on many area commissions and boards, including the South Hills Area Council of Governments, the Route 50 Corridor Commission, and the Greater Clarksburg Valley Long Term Recovery Team, which helped residents after severe flooding.

Arif Sirinterlikci, Ph.D., professor of engineering, was awarded $2,000 by the Material Handling Education Foundation and Association of Inspection and Mobility to attend an Ohio University summer institute on electronic identification technologies. Also, the Society of Manufacturing Engineers has asked Sirinterlikci to join their committee to plan new journals. Read more about Sirinterlikci on p. 25.

Arts & Entertainment

Tim Hadfield, M.F.A., professor of media arts, is showing eight of his paintings (left) at an Andy Warhol Museum exhibition this summer as part of “Mind Signals: Artists Consider Masculinity in Sports.” Hadfield received a $1,000 grant from the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council in conjunction with the exhibition, which continues to August 17.

Carolyn Loyola-Garcia, M.F.A., associate professor of media arts, starred in Quantum Theatre’s tango opera “María de Buenos Aires” in March. She also received a $9,500 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation for a documentary she is producing about the history of flamenco in the United States. The Heinz Endowments also has given Loyola-Garcia two grants to support the film.

Hyla Willis, M.F.A., associate professor of media arts, presented “subRoSa’s Bodies Unlimited: A Decade of Collective Feminist Art Practice” for Emory University’s Women’s Studies Research Seminar Series.

To Infinity and Beyond

Yildrim Omurtag, Ph.D., interim head of the engineering department, was invited to attend the NASA Academy of Aerospace Quality Workshop in Cape Canaveral, Fla., and offered a $1,000 stipend by the organization to cover his travel expenses.
COLONIALS ROUNDUP

GOLF

Finishing 1-under-par after three rounds, C.G. Mercuri won the NEC Championship in Orlando, Fla., by two strokes in April. He shot a 71, 70, and 74 on the par-72 international course at ChampionsGate Golf Club, with 14 birdies. The Colonials placed second in the men’s team tournament.

The women’s team placed third at the NEC Championship in Orlando for the second year. Elizabeth Wenger tied for the lead after two rounds, but finished third.

ICE HOCKEY

Both men’s and women’s teams capped winning seasons with a playoff appearance, where both came up short against in-state rival Mercyhurst.

Led by Third Team All-American and Atlantic Hockey Association Defenseman of the Year Denny Urban, whose 1.14 points per game was second in the nation for a defensive player, the Colonials notched 28 points her first season, tied for No. 18.

For the women, College Hockey America Rookie of the Year Allie Patton, whose .382 season batting average was fourth in the NEC, scored a gamewinner and finished 6-of-11 in the championships, including going 4-for-4 in a final loss to Quinnipiac, and was named All-NEC First Team and All-Tournament. Ann Duvovc became the third athlete in Robert Morris history, and the first female, to be named First Team Academic All-America, with a 3.92 average as an applied math major and a .338 career batting average.

SOFTBALL

Craig Coleman, M.D., became the first coach in any RMU sport to win 500 games as the Colonials finished the regular season atop the conference at 13-5. Allie Patton, whose 392 season batting average was fourth in the NEC, scored a gamewinner and finished 6-of-11 in the championships, including going 4-for-4 in a final loss to Quinnipiac, and was named All-NEC First Team and All-Tournament. Ann Duvovc became the third athlete in Robert Morris history, and the first female, to be named First Team Academic All-America, with a 3.92 average as an applied math major and a .338 career batting average.

VOLLEYBALL

After posting a strong 13-3 conference record, the team beat six-time champions Long Island in the NEC playoffs before falling to No. 1 seed Sacred Heart in the finals. Hannah Weid led the league with 1.22 blocks per game and was second in hitting percentage with .347, earning All-NEC First Team honors.

LACROSSE

Both men’s and women’s teams made the playoffs in the spring. Both saw standout performances, not just in the NEC, but in all of NCAA Division I.

The men’s team was the highest ranked 4th in all of NCAA Division I.

The women’s team finished 6-of-11 in the NEC and made the playoffs for the sixth time in seven years. The Colonials lost to Monmouth 65-62 in the semifinal round.

First-year coach Andrew Teale took his young men’s team — with only one senior on the roster — to the third consecutive NEC Championship.

The Colonials lost a thriller to host Long Island 85-82 in the first overtime championship in the conference’s 30-year history.

SOCCER

Both women’s goalkeeper Ayana Davis (6.72) and men’s goalkeeper Toba Bolaji (5.00) led the NEC in saves per game.

FIELD HOCKEY

Catherine Myrick ranked 4th in NCAA D3 with 9 defensive saves.

TRACK & FIELD

After winning the 5k race and coming within a split-second of winning the 3k race, freshman Merel Van Steenberg was named Most Outstanding Rookie at the NEC Indoor Championship in February. She also finished second in the 10k at the outdoor championship, and second in the 5k cross country championship.

Steve Mitchell won gold in the hammer throw and silver in the shot put at the NEC Outdoor Championship in April, earning the title Most Outstanding Field Performer. The men’s team placed second overall, and seven members earned All-NEC honors. Mitchell also won a silver medal for the weight throw in the indoor championship.

BASKETBALL

With the help of NEC Rookie of the Year Artemis Spanou, whose 9.6 rebound average topped the conference, the women’s team finished 12-6 in the NEC and made the playoffs for the sixth time in seven years. The Colonials lost to Monmouth 65-62 in the semifinal round.

First-year coach Andrew Teale took his young men’s team — with only one senior on the roster — to the third consecutive NEC Championship.

The Colonials lost a thriller to host Long Island 85-82 in the first overtime championship in the conference’s 30-year history.

FONDATIONS

I LIKE TO KEEP UP WITH THE SPORTS TEAMS.

Robert Morris University Foundations

“MORE MEN’S HOCKEY”
Every Tuesday afternoon, half a dozen RMU students and their professor drive to Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in the city to help Pittsburgh high school students learn the art of photojournalism. Members of the university’s chapter of the Society for Collegiate Journalists, the students were inspired to volunteer at the after-school program by its founder, Bill Strickland, who spoke on campus last year.

“It’s one thing to be in a classroom and talk about connecting with a community, which is at its heart what journalism is,” says Andrea Frantz, Ph.D., the students’ advisor. “It’s another thing completely to have students go into a community and connect with it on a real level, and that’s what’s happening here.” Germaine Watkins welcomes the help from his RMU teaching assistants. He has taught photography at the program for 15 years, and took classes there himself as a high school student. Following Strickland’s philosophy, the class is about more than learning what aperture setting to use on a Pentax SLR.

“My students are all inner-city students. For them to broaden their scope and look outside themselves, it helps them to be able to see other people who are doing things very similar to themselves, who are actually going to college and thinking about life after high school,” Watkins says. “It helps give them an actual goal to achieve.”

Turn the page to read the stories of three RMU student volunteers at the Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild photojournalism program.
When I read Male The Impossible Possible, Bill Strickland’s book about how he created Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild and how it has grown, I was glad to find someone who took a different approach in helping to solve the issue of poverty in urban areas.

In most charitable organizations, such as the ones in my native country, Haiti, volunteers do not connect with children in the personal way Strickland’s organization does. The high school I attended in New Jersey had some at-risk students, but it seemed that even when the teachers tried to help them, they did not believe in them. If I were in these kids’ position, I would certainly want to be treated like I deserved to succeed in life. So I was thrilled to join Dr. Frantz and the other students mentoring kids at Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild, and I got to see what makes the unique program so successful.

Strickland always talks about using beautiful buildings as a way to help the people in them feel better about themselves. I was impressed with how clean, well-maintained, and decorated the place actually was. The tools and equipment were new. For the photography class, students each were given a flash drive and a camera to use during class. They had Mac laptops available, with advanced photo-editing software.

However, what really caught my attention was the way teachers and staff treated the students. The way the instructor spoke to them showed respect and trust, not pity. He did not remind them of their situation at home, but was only focused on their abilities. The way the instructor’s concern seemed more about helping the students create a portfolio for college than helping them stay out of trouble. They were allowed to borrow the cameras so they could take pictures outside of class time if they wanted to. It felt like the instructor saw them not as at-risk children, but as students preparing for their future. He showed that he had no other expectation for them than that they succeed in life.

Getting to know this program inspired me to learn more about Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild. Now I am writing my honors thesis on how it could expand to other countries.

The first day my classmates and I went to mentor the high school students at Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild, I was an internal mess. My nerves weren’t just heated, they were short-circuiting.

First, I hadn’t pondered how removed from high school I was. It may have been only four years, but these kids had Facebook, and we’d had Xanga. These kids had iPads, and we’d had one PC at home that didn’t even have wireless Internet. “Uh, oh,” I thought. “I’m a dinosaur to these kids.”

Second, I felt like I was going into this from another planet. My classmates and I would be working primarily with students from city schools, an environment in which I had never been. I went to high school an hour away from Manchester, in an area recently converted from a cornfield to a neighborhood of cookie-cutter McMansions. “I can handle the city,” I thought to myself. “But how do I mentor students if we can’t relate to each other?”

After months of gearing up, the day finally came to meet the students. We all introduced ourselves, and I thought, nothing, bad yet. We watched the instructors give the students a crash course on how to work the camera. Where? Nothing bad happened then either! And I began to realize that I had nothing to fear from these high school students. They weren’t there to somehow make a 21-year-old feel ancient. They were dedicated, invested, hard-working students who came to Manchester to learn.

And just like that, my days of short-circuiting nerves were over.

The second week, while we waited for everyone to get there, our instructors had the students play around with Photo Booth, a program that lets you take pictures of yourself and change the colors and composition to make yourself look funny. I was bouncing all over the room, helping the students figure out the program and taking pictures with them. We were beginning to forge friendships through those photos, with their literally ear-to-ear grins and elongated noses looking as if they had been sucked into a black hole.

I never had time after that to be nervous with those students. We were all too busy having fun. And I figured out that people can learn from each other no matter where they’re from, the color of their skin, or what kinds of technology they had when they were in high school.

Before attending my first session with these students, I was more clueless than some of them about photography. They picked it up far more quickly than I did. I was amazed by their ability to seek out unique angles and capture the beauty of simple objects. I was looking through a whole new set of eyes, as theirs lit up with inspiration.

Most of our classes were indoors, but on a few occasions we went out into the city. It was then that the students really opened up and tried something new. The day they went to Station Square for a trip on the T, I think, was when they unleashed their full potential.

The assignment was to visually document life in the city, implementing techniques they had learned for capturing objects in motion. Walk. Pause. Click. Click. Click. Just like that, the students continued the active city around them in one single shot.

As we slowly made our way down Carson Street, they took their approach to photography in a new direction. We walked along with her camera aimed at the cracks and grooves in the sidewalk, telling the story of the people who walk there every day. Another student pointed his toward the sky, at a plane that was casting its shadow upon us. Up, down, and all around, they found art waiting to be encapsulated. Of course, every frozen frame wasn’t a masterpiece worth a thousand words. Some were merely blurs, but as they say, you have to learn from your mistakes.

When we reached the platform, the students continued to snap away despite the odd looks strangers cast at them. I was delighted to see that other people’s negative attitudes did not disrupt the students’ creative process, and that they had confidence and pride in their work.

Before long, the trolley came rumbling in like a roller coaster after its final hill, and the students got on board. We waved goodbye, but our bids of farewell were not returned. Instead, we suddenly saw them pointing at points along the horizon.

"WE WERE BEGINNING TO FORGE FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH THOSE PHOTOS"
The venue was the former Giants Stadium, the teams were from the failed venture known as the United States Football League, and the players have long since retired. But in Bergman’s mind he can still see the quarterback roll out, he can see the ball being caught over the shoulder by the running back, and he can see the defensive back driving the receiver out of bounds.

“I’m extremely visual. If you’re not real visual, you’re not going to be in this game very long. Me, I can see a play that takes place in six seconds as a series of 8-by-10 glossies,” explains Bergman.

The NFL line judge, entrepreneur, and consultant is the recipient of Robert Morris University’s 2010 Alumni Heritage Award, the university’s most prestigious honor for those whose achievements bring honor to themselves and their alma mater.

That he chooses to recall this play has to do with its significance not to the teams or players involved, but rather to him. He got the call wrong, and he heard about it. First from his supervisor. And then, when he returned home later that day, from his father, Jerry, himself a NFL referee for 30 years.

“I had a lot of feedback,” Bergman says. “I had an unfair advantage.”

From the sixth grade on, Bergman remembers watching Monday Night Football with his father, who taught him to focus on the parts of the game most viewers don’t notice. He learned how to spot holding, how to recognize which way the play was going before the ball was snapped, and how to shift his focus from moment to moment. An advantage, yes, he says. But a talented referee needs something more.

“What separates a good referee from a great referee is seeing the call, recognizing it, and being able to make that call in the fourth quarter. You have to be totally oblivious to the game situation, to the teams and players involved. You have to have the intestinal fortitude to make that call when the game is on the line,” he says.

There was a time in his life when Bergman wasn’t quite as decisive, at least not concerning his own future. He grew up on the North Side, graduated from North Catholic and was attending the University of Pittsburgh when he realized that sitting in a large lecture hall studying subjects he did not feel connected to was not where he wanted to be.

So he dropped out and got a job, but that proved equally frustrating. Bergman knew he wanted to go into business, and be more than just part of a work crew. It was about that time that he had the good fortune, to, as he puts it, “run into Robert Morris.”

He immediately liked the fact that he was learning about business from people who actually ran businesses, so that those lessons were directly applicable to the real world. Suddenly, an underachieving student was making the dean’s list.

“I learned that you have to have the ability to adjust and cope,” Bergman says. “Nothing in business is going to be exactly like they teach it in the book. You have to have the ability to adjust to the situation and cope. In officiating it’s the same — sometimes you have to adjust to make the right call.”

Throughout his business career, he has adjusted to the increasing demands of mixing business and family with a “part-time” job that requires a flexible schedule and, in the fall, a minimum of four days a week traveling, going to meetings, and studying film. That Bergman managed all that while also developing, running, and eventually selling a Wexford-based company, Shared Medical Therapies Inc., is a testament to his time-management skills.

Now a private investor and consultant to approximately 20 different companies, Bergman is also a real estate developer in the Wexford and Cranberry area. He has no plans to quit his fall job either. Bergman still loves the game and relishes being in the stadium.

“There’s nothing like it. When I hear that crowd cheering, I think they’re cheering for me.”

WRITTEN BY BILL MODDINO
PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY JEFF BERGMAN

The play took place more than a quarter century ago, in a stadium that no longer exists, in a league that not many people remember, in a game that no one has reason to recall. And yet, Jeff Bergman ’77 can recall it, moment for moment.

A football referee for more than four decades, including 21 years in the NFL, Bergman has seen enough plays to last him several lifetimes. But this one still comes back to him.
When Michael Smith ’79 wasn’t studying accounting, one of his favorite activities was intramural team handball in the John Jay gymnasium. “I liked it because it was a team sport,” says Smith, who played for Delta Tau Delta. “It was fast-paced and very competitive. I remember we won the intramural championship one year — in fact, I think I still have the newsletter article.”

Today Smith heads a different kind of team as CEO of Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The organization serves 17 counties, and with more than 1,000 employees, is one of the largest Goodwill chapters in the nation. The nonprofit agency provides employment education and workforce development programs for people with physical and mental disabilities and other special needs. Revenues from the company’s retail thrift stores help to support its programs.

“When giving people education, training, support, and most importantly, the opportunity to work, Goodwill gives people the dignity and respect that comes with employment,” says Smith, who has been with Goodwill for 22 years. “The programs and services we provide are needed now more than ever.”

The chapter operates 27 stores in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. It is in a growth phase, recently moving its workforce development center and administrative offices to Lawrenceville from the South Side, opening two new stores in Embreeville and Norwin Heights, and planning three more in the North Hills, Lawrenceville, and Robinson Township. The stores bring in annual revenues of over $20 million, Smith says. “The more profit we can generate, the more people we can serve. As a result, each year we are able to serve at least 70,000 people with special needs and find jobs for about 1,500.”

Smith serves on Goodwill’s board of directors with two others with university ties: Gary Claus ’74, chairman of the RMU Board of Trustees; and Sidney Zonn, university vice president and general counsel. Claus just finished a two-year term as Goodwill’s chairman in March, and Zonn is secretary.

“Goodwill is an incredibly effective organization,” Claus says. “It’s one of Pittsburgh’s best-kept secrets. They were doing ‘green’ before ‘green’ was cool. They’ve been recycling old clothes and housewares for over 100 years now, and to use that to make someone else’s life better has a far-reaching effect.”

“I sincerely believe in the mission of Goodwill,” says Zonn. “What is distinctive to me about Goodwill is not only the largely self-sufficient nature of the organization, but the supportive environment to train clients to be active, productive, and gainfully employed members of the community.”

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They are two of my most active and committed board members,” Smith says of Claus and Zonn, “and if I need their assistance, all I have to do is ask. Both bring a great business sense but, more importantly, keep the mission at heart.”

Smith, a Pittsburgh native, worked his way through college and was hired immediately after graduation for a field accounting position with a construction company. “The education I received and the whole Robert Morris experience prepared me well for my career and life in general,” he says. “Even back then, the Robert Morris name was well respected by employers, as it is today.”

The university’s 2002 Alumni of the Year, Smith is proud to say his son, Michael Anthony Smith, just finished his freshman year at RMU as an actuarial science major. Both he and his son were impressed by RMU’s elite designation by the Society of Actuaries as a Center of Actuarial Excellence, of which there are fewer than 20 in the United States. “I think Michael also liked the fact that I was an RMU grad,” Smith adds. His daughter, Sarah, a high school freshman, already has her sights on Robert Morris too, he says.

Smith is a champion of education, and he recommends that students take advantage of every opportunity that comes their way. “If you’re thinking of going on for your master’s degree,” he says, “don’t wait until you’re 47 like I did, when you’re working full time and helping raise a family. Do it while you’re younger and have more time and energy. Take your education very seriously and work hard, but have some fun along the way.”

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRKICH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL WILL ’08
Sherry Hazuda ’98 knows all about the difficulties of juggling work, family, and education. She earned her college degree while working full time and raising four children as a single mom.

Always active with youth-oriented volunteer work in her neighborhood of Beechview, Hazuda ratcheted up her commitment by joining the board of the Pittsburgh Public Schools in 2007.

In December Hazuda was elected president. In that role, she must help to set the agenda for a 26,000-student district grappling with dwindling enrollment, curriculum changes, and budget constraints. Compassionate and well-reasoned school board leadership is important, she says, but little can touch the role of parental involvement in helping a child succeed in school and in life.

“We’re competing with so much, technology-wise, and so many parents work outside the home,” Hazuda says. “It’s hard to make time to sit down and read with your kid, to make sure they’re doing their homework, that they’re getting up and getting to school on time. Or even enforcing bedtimes — how much can a tired child learn?”

“It’s hard. I got it. It’s really hard. But when we become parents, we have to accept the responsibility that our role in life is now to help our kids learn and grow. Sometimes you think you’re too tired to argue. But you have to do it anyway.”

That is something Hazuda experienced in her own life. After high school she took a few community college classes, but put it aside in order to be a stay-at-home parent. Her four children were still small when her marriage broke up in the early 1980s. With her steno skills and a friend’s recommendation, Hazuda found a job at the phone company.

After a few years, she began looking for a college program that would allow her to go to school on weekends. She opted for RMU, earning a bachelor of science degree in business administration. “Because most of us were older students, we really came prepared,” she says. “We did our homework and we wanted to learn. The size of the class was small enough that it allowed you to develop a support base. And boy, do you need it.”

In those years, most free time was spent studying, often side-by-side with her four children. “We sat at the dining room table together with our books,” she recalls. “There were many nights when we’d all be doing our homework together.”

Though there was little time for relaxation, Hazuda relied on a wide circle of friends — from classes, PTA, and other community volunteer groups — to help achieve a work-life balance. Debby Lesniak, a fellow volunteer with Hazuda at the Beechview Athletic Association, said her friend would often call and offer to help with yard work so that the two could have some time to chat. “She’d help me weed, she helped me build a wall,” Lesniak says. “Sherry really is a testimony to the way that women support each other.”

Hazuda worked for 18 years at the phone company, then took a buyout and moved on to an administrative job at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, where she works from 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. to accommodate her school board schedule. She remains active with Beechview’s Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, and serves as lay worship leader for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Hazuda enjoys being in the classroom so much that she began pursuing a master’s degree in divinity at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary a few years ago, she studied for two years before the demands on her time made it too difficult to continue.

The school board involves 15 or more hours of meetings and preparatory reading each week, but also a raft of invitations to school plays, sporting events and concerts. “I try to go to as many things as I can,” Hazuda says. “I like talking to people. It a way to learn about the concerns that are out there that I wouldn’t have a way to know about otherwise.”
Our readers, along with readers of 200 other alumni publications across the country, recently took an online survey about their magazine. The survey, offered by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, provides the first chance to compare how Foundations stacks up against other alumni magazines.

More than 300 of you took the survey, and we're pretty happy with what we learned. As you can see on this page, our readers are more likely to read Foundations cover to cover and more confident they're getting the straight story.

Like most readers, you said your favorite articles are about what your fellow alumni are up to now. You also enjoy reading about campus growth and sports, and we'll keep supplying that.

Besides the compliments, you also suggested areas for improvement, and we take your suggestions seriously. Starting with “more Class Notes” — we’ve squeezed in a bunch more this issue. The more you send us, the more we’ll print.

Our goal, as always, is to make Foundations your favorite magazine.
What do a radio-controlled eyeball and a robotic wolf’s head have in common? For Arif Sirinterlikci, Ph.D., they’re examples of engaged, hands-on learning. The professor of engineering and co-head of the School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science’s Research and Outreach Center spends much of his time teaching elementary and secondary school students about robotics and animatronics, often with the help of such unusual contraptions.

In the last six years, Sirinterlikci, a native of Turkey, has led teams of Moon Area School District students to several competitions for mechanical toys, robots, and other design challenges. Students from the high school meet weekly at RMU’s engineering laboratories to create their own robots.

“Each program is different,” he says. “Students might do simple workshops relating to science and engineering, they might learn how to make perfume by mixing different materials, or they might spend time learning how to make a toy. It’s all hands-on learning.”

Of course, outreach is just one part of his job. Sirinterlikci spends most of his time developing close relationships with his students at RMU.

This January, Sirinterlikci helped organize the university’s 5th Annual Science Bowl, and in February he worked with the Pittsburgh Society of Professional Engineers to cohost the Allegheny County MathCounts competition.

“He truly cares about our students, and there is nothing he would not do for them,” says Maria V. Kalevitch, Ph.D., the school’s dean. “When someone is sincere, students respond to that.”

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRKICH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK HOUSER & MICHAEL WOLL '08
1970s

RICHARD BARCELONA ’71 was honored for his service on the Monongahela Valley Hospital board of directors by having a community room at the hospital’s conference center named after him. He is president of Bailey Engineering in Canonsburg. Richard and his wife, Carol, have two children. They live in Charleroi.

HELEN GOODMAN ’74 was hired as conference director for the Marcellus Shale Coalition, an industry group based in Canonsburg. She is the founder of Event Resources, a conference and event management firm where she worked for 20 years. Helen resides in Pittsburgh.

1980s

L. THOMAS MARCHLEN M’80 and JUDITH B. MARCHLEN M’87 are proud to report that their daughter AMY E. MARCHLEN, a graduate student in RMU’s human resource management program, began working for Hay Group Inc. in Philadelphia. Tom is a senior tax attorney with Alkoma He and Judy reside in Pittsburgh.

JOSEPH T. SENKO M’83 was named “Slovak-American of the Year” by the Slovak Embassy in Washington, D.C. Senko, who lives in Pittsburgh, is an honorary consul of Slovakia, chairman of the national group Friends of Slovakia, and executive director of the Western Pennsylvania Slovak Cultural Association.

RICHARD HARSHMAN ’78 has been with the postal service accounting officer. He has been the government agency’s top controller, for the U.S. Postal Service, becoming the appointed vice president, R M U W W W. E D U.

1990s

BETH DOMNORSKI BEECH ’91 is a claims adjudicator for Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, where she has been employed almost 20 years. Beth and her husband, Don, live in West Mifflin with their son, Alex, 11, and twin girls Erin and Jenna, 8.

DARWIN YOUNG PATBERG ’92 has joined SAE International, an automotive engineering professional organization, as a marketing specialist. She lives in Pittsburgh with her daughter, Grace.

“IT REMINDS ME THAT I’M GETTING OLD.”

“DOESN’T DO MUCH IN REVIEWING THE WORKS AND ACTIVITIES OF GRADUATES.”

“I’M GETTING OLD.”

“We asked for your honest opinions, and you gave them. To prove we weren’t just blowing smoke, here are some of your most sizzling critiques of foundations.

“THE BRAGGY ALUMNI NEWS WEREN’T JUST For ALL YOUR RESPONSES. WE PROMISE TO USE THEM TO MAKE FOUNDATIONS BETTER.”

“THE HEAVY COVERAGE OF SPORTS, THE NEWSPAPER ALREADY DOES THIS.”

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“THE BRAGGY ALUMNI NEWS WEREN’T JUST For ALL YOUR RESPONSES. WE PROMISE TO USE THEM TO MAKE FOUNDATIONS BETTER.”
George Dunkar ’33 M’39 was elected state representative for the 56th state house district in Westmoreland County, defeating the 13-year incumbent. George and his wife, Sandy, have four daughters: Stephanie, Erin, Alexandra, and Samantha, and live in Jeannette.

Bill McGaffick ’53 was promoted to vice president at BNY Mellon, where he is unit manager for client accounting and reporting services. Bill and his wife, Lisa, live in Pittsburgh with their children, Amber, 9, and Ryan, 4.

Matt Plautz ’69 was hired as Managerial Share client services manager in the Canonsburg office of UniversalPegasus International, a Texas-based gas pipeline firm. He resides in Cranberry Township.

Mary Beth Moore ’96 was named vice president of human resources at Allegheny Technologies Inc. in March. She has been with the specialty metals company for 20 years. Mary Beth lives in Canonsburg.

Traci Conlon ’97 is vice president and regional manager for First Commonwealth Financial Corp., where she oversees 11 offices north of Pittsburgh. Previously she was a marketing and business consultant in the finance, health care, and information technology industries. Traci lives in Sewickley.

James M. Flynn Jr. ’72 was elected assistant treasurer for the board of trustees of the Community College of Allegheny County. James is Allegheny County manager, making him the chief administrative officer for Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato.

Heather Schaffer Cordell ’98 is media director for Pittsburgh-based Big Picture Media Solutions, managing strategic planning and media buying for clients. Heather lives in Pittsburgh.

Garth Ericson ’96 and Katie Cram were married in November. Garth is the director of parks and recreation for Manchester Township near York, Pa., where the couple resides.

Lucas Brown ’99 and Sarah Hulse Brown ’99 were married in October. They both work for BNY Mellon, Lucas as a supervisor in the accounting department and Sarah as a client service officer. After honeymooning in Hawaii, the couple lives in McKees Rocks.

Michelle Schmidt ’99 joined Trend Strategies, a lobbying and communications firm in the state capital, as a senior government relations associate. She previously worked for the university’s office of institutional advancement. She has relocated to Harrisburg.

2000s

Jery Schreiner D’02 was named president of Newbold Technologies Inc., an information technology firm. She has led large IT divisions at Weirton Steel, Metalrite, and ScrapeTech, and co-created two corporations, Idea Foundry and WillowRock Inc., to assist startup companies. Jery lives in Negley, Ohio.

Bobbie Jo Belus ’03 and Emily Kosloff ’04 are the proud parents of Abigail, born on June 27, 2010. Patty is a logistics analyst with Vestco Distribution. The McClellans reside in Zelienople.

Dana Lynn Cammer ’96 married David Keith D’Calleo in August. Dana is a database marketing coordinator for the Pittsburgh Penguins. They reside in Pittsburgh.

Phil McNeal ’96 was named the 2010 recipient of the Holy Family Class Notes would love to hear from you. Email us at rmualum@rmu.edu.
Institute’s Courage House Award. The institute gives the annual award to an alumnus who has shown extraordinary courage in overcoming personal and career challenges. Phil is a fiscal accounts technician with the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. He lives in Pittsburgh.

TODD PRICHARD ’06 joined the MarketSearch Advertising agency in Raleigh as a regional account executive. He will manage 11 subway restaurant markets across the Southeast. Todd and his wife, Katy, live in Apex, N.C.

VERONICA SEEVERS THOMAS ’05 has been hired as an assistant professor of marketing at Towson University in Baltimore after earning her Ph.D. from Kent State. Her husband, JARED THOMAS ’10, is a stockbroker with Scottrade.

AMY SCHARNITZBECKER M’06 is director of individual giving for the Pittsburgh Public Theater. She is also owner of PulpBlossom Crafts. Amy lives in Pittsburgh.

ANDREA TASKER ’06 is an account manager for ENEXDI, a document services company in suburban Washington. She lives in Arlington, Va.

KRISTINA UPPERT ’08 and the other members of her team, the Boston-area “Esprit de Corps” synchronized skating team, won the gold medal at the 2011 U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships. Kristina, a former member of RMU’s synchronized skating team, currently lives in Massachusetts.

2010s

BOBBY FRESE ’10 is a box office assistant with the Bowie Baysox, a minor league AA baseball club affiliated with the Baltimore Orioles. He lives in Burke, Va.

KATE MEARS ’10 is employed with Alperm Rosenthal in the accounting and auditing department. She lives in Pittsburgh.

THEODORE MITCH ’10 is a financial professional at AXA Advisors. He resides in Butler.

JORDON SEALOCK ’10 recently signed a rookie contract with the Calgary Roughnecks of the National Lacrosse League. Jordan, a native of Alberta, Canada, is a former captain of the Colonials men’s lacrosse team.

SIMONE SOUTHWELL M’11 is account executive with the WNBA’s New York Liberty. She lives in New York City.

In Memoriam

BILL HODGE, former men’s and women’s head track and field and cross country coach, died on November 5. Bill coached the Colonials from 1995 to 1999 and was inducted into the RMU Athletic Hall of Fame in October.

ROBERT J. HARTMAN ’66 of Newark, Del., died on October 4 at the age of 69. He had worked 25 years for the DuPont Co. and started his own consulting firm in 1991.

JOSEPH IRVIN ’70 of Bellewood, Pa., died on March 12 at the age of 63. He was employed as a credit manager at Martin Oil Co.

RICHARD EBBEL ’71 of Baldwin died September 17 at the age of 60.

VAUGHN ROBERT JOHNSON ’93 of Washington, Pa., died January 5 at the age of 56. He was a part owner of Washington Rotating Control Heads Inc. for 34 years.

MICHELE “MIKKI” BRYANT ’00 of Conshopah died on March 7 at the age of 55.

GET INVOLVED

HELP PLAN YOUR REUNION PARTY

Classes of ’06 & ’01, ’96 & ’91, ’86 & ’81, ’76 & ’71, ’66 & ’61

Want to make sure your reunion at Homecoming is all it can be?

Come to the Alumni Association Council meeting at Sewall Center at 6 p.m. on Thursday, August 18. Ideas welcome! Call the Alumni Office if you’re coming, and we’ll save you a plate for dinner. (412) 397-6464

> BOWLING REUNION

Former members of the bowling team came to a February tournament at Paradise Island Bowl in honor of 35-year bowling coach ROCCO CONIGLIO ’71.

> FOR MORE PICTURES, CHECK OUT “RMU BOWLING TEAM ALUMNI” ON FACEBOOK.

NOW IT’S EASIER THAN EVER TO CHANGE A LIFE.
RMU.EDU/GIVE ONLINE

Your donation in any amount will help an RMU student find success.

By giving online, you can choose the beneficiary. Select from more than 100 RMU scholarships, student funds, departments, programs, and sports teams.

Call Jen Crawford at (412) 397-5452 if you need help finding a fund or would like to create a new one.

> Stay connected! Follow, friend, watch RMU.
ROBIN RENEUE SANDERS

looking back on your childhood, what did you want to be when you grew up? anything that i have become today or that i have done today is a reflection of the commitment to public service my parents taught me as a kid growing up in a military family. i learned to respect other people and their cultures as a part of living abroad with my family.

what advice would you give to today’s students? live your passion and choose a career that will let you do that. i never saw my job as work, but rather as my passion.

what type of music do you listen to? jazz mostly. one of my favorite artists today is alisha, a fantastic african singer. the other is a cultural artist, Chief Niles Okundaye. in all my travels and in my fascination with the arts, she is one of the most profound and talented artists i have ever met.

has anyone ever had a positive, life-changing effect on you? lots of people...and i always thank them for coming into my life, including president dell’omo and dr. fred kohun, who encouraged me to graduate from rmu board of trustees, to share some of my global perspective, thanks to a commencement address from one of their own, robin renee sanders ’10.

i was proud to serve the american people and donate my time as a diplomat, as i believe that africa is so important to the united states and to the american people.

i have done that without the benefit of the doctorate from rmu.

we asked sanders, a new member of the rmu board of trustees, to share some of her global perspective with readers.

what did you enjoy most about working in africa? i was proud to serve the american people in several african countries as a diplomat, as i believe that africa is so important to the united states and to the american people.

what would people be surprised to know about you? that i love certain cartoon characters, particularly the old and now creative ones that have a message as part of the show. i really like “kim possible,” “the wild thornberries,” and “american dragon,” and some of the older ones like “tom & jerry.” i also love the arts and almost any cultural activity.

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how did you do your doctoral thesis at rmu? how various artifacts and cultural signs and symbols are used to communicate issues about a particular culture.

what did your rmu education benefit you? i came to africare as its various artifacts and cultural signs and symbols are used to communicate issues about a particular culture.

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