American Organic

ALUMNI DWAYNE AND RENEE BAUKNIGHT DIG INTO COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE
DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

I continue to be astonished at how tirelessly everyone at RMU works to change students’ lives. You, too, contribute greatly to our students’ success, whether as mentors, providing work experience through internships, or through your generous financial support.

Now I am giving you the opportunity to do even more. If you know a high school student, I want you to tell that student about Robert Morris University. Tell her how RMU made a difference in your life. Let him know that you found your success here. Then encourage that student to apply.

Any student you recommend who is accepted and enrolls in RMU will earn a $1,000 annual scholarship. Simply fill out an RMU Endorsement Award form (details on page 30 of this magazine). That’s a gift of $4,000, simply because you signed your name. And you can do it for as many students as you like.

Our employees and trustees now have the same opportunity, and I’m asking you to do what I ask them to do every day: change lives. I was reminded how much of an impact we can have on the life of a student by RMU trustee Norm Mitry, the president and CEO of Heritage Valley Health System and the keynote speaker at our undergraduate commencement ceremony in May.

Norm, a 1974 RMU graduate, recalled for the audience his dread when, during his sophomore year, he was faced with having to complete a required public speaking course. An eloquent speaker, Norm surprised the audience by revealing that, at the time, he had a severe stutter. In his own words, “I could not compose a sentence and get it out.”

Norm wanted the course waived, but the professor, Willy Ann Holmgren, made him a deal: If, after two weeks, Norm had made no progress, then she would waive the course for him. Needless to say, he didn’t drop the course.

“It is because of Robert Morris University and Dr. Holmgren that I’m able to stand here today and give this address,” said Norm.

The arena broke into applause, and I can’t describe how proud I was at that moment to be RMU’s president. How many young men and women came to RMU faced with similar obstacles, and graduated as self-assured leaders who have made a difference in the world?

There have been thousands. And with your help, there will be thousands more.

Sincerely,

GREGORY G. DELL’OMO, PH.D.
PRESIDENT

> MITRY
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An innovative charter high school in downtown Pittsburgh that teaches the keys to success in the corporate world relies on RMU to supply the teachers.

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With paintball and synchronized skating teams, the club sports program is trying new ideas. But its most accomplished athlete is a bowler.

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Paul Spradley would like to go to Primanti Bros. with Saint Paul. What else didn’t you know about RMU’s multicultural maven?
“Hotel Rwanda” Hero Shares His Story

A former hotel manager who saved the lives of more than 1,200 people during the Rwandan genocide asked students to get involved in the global community.

Paul Rusesabagina, whose story is told in the Oscar-nominated film “Hotel Rwanda” and in his autobiography, “An Ordinary Man,” visited campus in November. Addressing students in Rogal Chapel, Rusesabagina encouraged the audience to petition the U.S. government to intervene in Africa to promote peace.

“Many times people think that to help, we need machine guns and missiles. Me, I believe … in the powers of words. Words can be the best and the worst weapons in a human being’s arsenal,” Rusesabagina said.

Rusesabagina was one of several guests of RMU’s new Diversity Speaker Series. The program, which has also featured WTAE-TV anchor Andrew Stockey and consultant Joyce Bender, was launched by Paul Spradley, assistant director for student life and multicultural affairs. The Rwandan hero also spoke at Heinz Hall as part of RMU’s Pittsburgh Speakers Series.

Rusesabagina also praised Americans for choosing Barack Obama, whose father was African, as their next president. “This is a very good lesson of democracy to the whole universe, the whole world. All those minorities who are always threatened by the majorities should learn the lesson of democracy from this country,” he said.

Goose Your Googling

Alumni of RMU soon will have a powerful Internet search tool at their fingertips, free of charge. This semester the library will begin offering alumni online access to the ProQuest database service. Now available only to students, ProQuest includes the full text of more than 6,000 magazines, journals and newspapers. Users can browse or search The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, PC Magazine, Consumer Reports and many specialized journals in nursing, education, and many other fields. “We’re very happy to offer our most popular database to alumni,” said librarian Jackie Corinth. For more information, call the reference desk at (412) 397-3272.
Colonial Theatre ventured into new territory in November with “Awesome ’80s Prom.” The audience-participation show, directed by Barbara Burgess-Lefebvre, played off-campus in Pittsburgh’s West End and featured songs familiar to former (or continuing) fans of Cyndi Lauper and Wham!

More high notes were on display earlier in the fall, when Ken Gargaro directed Elton John’s rock-opera adaptation of “Aida.” Junior Alysha Watson starred in the title role, with sophomore Channing Frampton as her paramour and Maria Mauti as Amneris.

The program celebrates its heritage with a revival of “Godspell” from Feb. 18-22, then finishes the season with “The Miracle Worker” on April 1-4.

Also, theater alumnus David Toole ’08 has his third lead role at Pittsburgh Musical Theater, where he will star as Troy in “High School Musical.”

To help develop a new business magnet program at Carrick High School, the Pittsburgh Public Schools have turned to Dean R. Manna, head of the Department of Marketing in the School of Business. Manna is a member of the occupational advisory committee for the new Business, Finance and Information Technology Academy, which is set to open in September. The committee is helping ensure the most up-to-date curriculum for the new academy.

Kathleen V. Davis, dean of the School of Adult and Continuing Education, spoke at the Women in Educational Leadership Conference at the University of Nebraska in October. Davis spoke on female leadership styles and discussed a study of job satisfaction among female presidents of community colleges.


Fifty Pittsburgh-area high school students visited RMU in October for Disability Mentoring Day, where they learned about education and job opportunities for those with special needs. Visitors learned to “be their own best advocate in finding out what colleges and universities are best for them,” said Kishma Decastro-Sallis, director of the PPG Industries Career and Leadership Development Center at RMU. Student volunteers acted as mentors during the program. UPMC, FedEx Ground, Bayer, PNC Bank and Bank of New York Mellon were among the companies participating in the day-long event, the only one of its kind in the Pittsburgh area. Bender Consulting Services Inc. organized the event.
> Cause for Celebration

RMU’s exciting Homecoming 2008 festivities culminated in a big win for the Colonials, who snapped a four-game losing streak by knocking off conference rival Duquesne by a touchdown, 34-27.

Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania Chairman Ralph Papa ’67 received the university’s Alumni Achievement Award, given to a graduate who has achieved professional distinction. Papa, who spent most of his career at Mellon Financial Corp., received his associate’s degree from RMU before going on to Penn State and Rutgers. Hadie Bartholomew ’98 received the Young Alumni Achievement Award, and Dale Venables ’81 received the Alumni Service Award.

> Nursing News

The School of Nursing and Health Sciences launched a chapter of the honor society Sigma Theta Tau International. Fifty nursing students and local nurse leaders were inducted into the new Upsilon Phi Chapter.

Ninety-one percent of RMU nursing graduates passed the National Council Licensure Examination in the past year—a higher rate than both the state of Pennsylvania (85 percent) and the nation as a whole (87 percent).

Associate professor of nursing Valerie Howard won a 2008 Cameo of Caring Nurse Educator Award from the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. Howard is a pioneer in the use of technology and high fidelity simulation in nursing education. The award for excellence in education was presented to Howard in November at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center.

> Head of the Class

RMU is significant expanding its University Honors Program, starting with this year’s freshmen. The program is now separate from the RMU Co-Op Honors and the International Honors programs, and will be open for the first time to transfer students and matriculating sophomores starting next fall.

To be accepted into the University Honors Program, a freshman student must have a 3.5 high school GPA and a combined score of 1200 on the mathematics and verbal portions of the SAT or a 26 on the ACT. Sophomores and transfer students will be required to have earned a 3.5 college GPA after completing at least 30 credits.

Monica VanDieren, Ph.D., assistant professor of mathematics, and Philip Harold Ph.D., assistant professor of political science, are overseeing an expanding curriculum as the program’s new directors.
Psi Chi, or Psyche?

Four years after launching a degree program in applied psychology, The Department of Social Sciences has founded a chapter of the psychology national honor society, Psi Chi. The RMU chapter has 18 charter members, said associate professor Stephen T. Paul, its faculty sponsor. With more than 1,000 chapters nationwide, Psi Chi encourages excellence in scholarship in the study of psychology.

Award-Winning Action

Three years after graduating from Robert Morris University, Thomas Dixon already is an award-winning director. Dixon’s first full-length film, “The Korean” won the Alan J. Bailey Award for best action feature at the 2008 Action On Film Festival in Pasadena, Calif. The summer film festival features the work of new directors.

Dixon shot his movie, about a man hired to track down four people who have betrayed a crime kingpin, in Pittsburgh with a largely local cast and crew. One exception is the lead role, played by Josiah D. Lee, who garnered two acting nominations at the festival. The two met while they were apartment hunting in L.A., and Dixon wrote “The Korean” with Lee in mind for the role.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette critic Barbara Vancheri heralded Dixon as “a filmmaker with great promise” and gave “The Korean” three out of four stars.

Dixon wrote and directed some 20 short films while he was a student at RMU. Now he is working on a sci-fi film script.

Media Matters

The PR/Marketing Department has created several new pages online. Have you seen them? Twitter: twitter.com/rmunews
YouTube: www.youtube.com/RMUNewsTube
Blogspot: rmunews.blogspot.com. And Robert himself now has his own Facebook page! If you have a video you’d like us to add to our YouTube channel, contact Jonathan Potts at potts@rmu.edu. And if you have your own YouTube channel, we would be happy to become one of your subscribers.

R.J. Schmitt, a senior communications advertising major, won a mini-camcorder for his entry in the first RMU Experience Video Contest. Schmitt, from Monroeville, produced a 60-second short on Chris Walker, a news anchor with RMU-TV. The video focused on the engaged education and professional experience Walker has received at the university’s Academic Media Center. See Schmitt’s winning video and much more at our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/RMUNewsTube.

> Psi Chi, or Psyche?

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> A More Perfect Union

Jim Seguin, director of the Center for Documentary Production and Study, and visiting documentary scholar Bill Judson spoke about RMU’s upcoming film about labor activist Nate Smith at the October annual meeting of the national Oral History Association in Pittsburgh. Smith was a Pittsburgh worker who led the integration of trade unions beginning in 1969. The center has done extensive research on Smith and the civil rights clashes of that period, and plans to complete a feature-length documentary by next spring.

> Heading Out East

Kevin Senko is spending this spring semester in the United Arab Emirates after winning the William Jefferson Clinton Scholarship at the American University in Dubai. Senko, a junior accounting and finance major, is one of 10 U.S. students selected for the award on the basis of exemplary academic achievement. Besides the region’s history and politics, Senko also is studying banking and investment in Dubai, a Middle Eastern financial hub.

> Bringing Home the Gold

Professor Frank Flanegin’s students had better be warned: The man can really throw a hammer. Flanegin, head of the accounting and finance department in the School of Business, won three gold medals at the 2008 Pennsylvania Senior Games. His hammer throw of 95’ 4”, shot put of 38’ 9.25”, and discus throw of 109’ 4” all outclassed those of his competitors in the 50-54 age bracket. Not bad for an athlete who only started training this year after a long hiatus following his varsity shot put days at Hampton High School. Flanegin is training for the 2009 National Senior Games to be held in Palo Alto, Calif., in August.
International Appeal

An award-winning Hungarian documentary filmmaker and six other notable European visitors toured Robert Morris University in October and came away impressed.

Borbala Kriza, whose 2007 film “Rocking the Nation” examines the political subculture of Budapest’s skinhead rock groups, said the biggest surprise was seeing the flag of Hungary’s neighbor, Slovakia, flying outside the residence of the Rooney Scholars.

Vladimir Burcik and Dagmar Polackova, RMU’s visiting international professors this past fall, are both from the Slovak capital of Bratislava.

“America is much closer to Europe than it is believed!” Kriza said.

A member of parliament from the new country of Montenegro, a Dutch investment banker, and a radio reporter from Portugal were also part of the visiting delegation, which met with President Dell’Omo and other university officials and faculty to learn more about American higher education.

Their visit was sponsored by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a Washington, D.C., organization that builds transatlantic relationships.

Kriza said she might like to be a Rooney Scholar herself. “Walking around the university campus, it was striking to see the diversity among students, which reflects a true cosmopolitan ambience at RMU,” she said.

Spring Rooney Scholars

The Spring 2009 Rooney Scholars are both from China. Gu Ping is associate dean of the School of Nursing at Nanjing Medical University, and Lirong Wu is associate dean of the nursing department at the Suzhou Health College.

Board Members

Norm Mitry, president and CEO of Heritage Valley Health System, has joined the RMU Board of Trustees. A 1974 graduate of RMU, Mitry was formerly the executive vice president and chief financial officer for the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System. Mitry also served as director of cost accounting and special projects for Jessop Steel in Washington, Pa. He has a bachelor’s degree in business administration from RMU and a master’s degree in public management from Carnegie Mellon University. In May, Mitry was the speaker at RMU’s undergraduate commencement. (See the president’s letter for more about that speech.)

Richard Harshman, a 1978 RMU graduate and member of the board of trustees, was named “CFO of the Year” by Pittsburgh Business Times. Harshman, chief financial officer of Allegheny Technologies Inc., is a past recipient of RMU’s Alumni Heritage Award and was the first alumnus to give $1 million to RMU. Two other men with RMU connections also were nominated for the CFO award: RMU Trustee Stephen A. Van Oss, senior vice president and chief financial and administrative officer of WESCO Distribution Inc., and RMU’s own CFO, Jeff Listwak, vice president for financial operations.

HARSHMAN
> Ticker

Volleyball > With its perfect 8-0 record in league play, RMU claimed its first Northeast Conference regular season championship since 2004. Overall, the Colonials finished with a record of 20-9, falling to in-state rival Saint Francis (Pa.) in the NEC Tournament semifinals. Head coach Rob Thomas, in his sixth year leading RMU, was named the 2008 NEC Coach of the Year, while freshman Alyssa Bennett claimed both NEC Rookie of the Year and NEC Setter of the Year honors. Senior Alaina Gibson was tabbed the NEC Libero of the Year. Bennett was named a member of the All-NEC First Team, and joining her on the squad was senior outside hitter Emily Wolthus. Earning All-NEC Second Team accolades were Gibson and sophomore middle blocker Amanda Graham. A five-time NEC Rookie of the Week and two-time NEC Player of the Week, Bennett compiled 1,015 assists over the season, an average of 9.40 per game that ranked second in the conference. She also tied with Graham for the team’s most service aces (45), had the club’s best attack percentage (.373), and ranked third in digs (218). Gibson led the Colonials in digs with 447, helping push her career total to 1,884, a new school record. Wolthus led RMU with 308 kills while adding 296 digs, and Graham contributed 214 kills and a team-high 95 blocks.

> Scholarship Renamed for Welling Fruehauf

The Robert Morris University Colonial Athletic Club executive board has renamed its scholarship The Welling Fruehauf Colonial Athletic Club Scholarship. Fruehauf ’63, M ’06 is president and chief executive officer of the Fruehauf Group Ltd. in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, and a longtime member of the RMU board of trustees. The scholarship also was increased from a $6,000 annual grant to $10,000.

> Hall of Fame

Six former student-athletes who left indelible marks in Colonials history became the 18th class of inductees into the Robert Morris Athletics Hall of Fame. Entering the hall as the Class of 2008 were Brian Cleary (football 1994-97), Katie Dugan (soccer 1999-2002), Tim Levcik (football 1998-2001), Katie Noble (volleyball 1999-2002), Jarrad Pencek (track and field 1999-2002) and Paul Snyder (golf 1983-86). Five of the six were inducted at halftime of RMU’s Sept. 27 home football game against Monmouth; Pencek was enshrined at the Nov. 1 game against Central Connecticut.

> Fruehauf

The Robert Morris University football team was dominated by youth in 2008, and a pair of sophomores helped lead the Colonials to four wins in their final six games to surge into a tie for third place in the Northeast Conference. Sophomore halfback Myles Russ and sophomore linebacker Alex DiMichele grew into leadership positions on the field and put up lofty numbers. Russ posted the third highest single-season rushing total in school history with 1,255 yards and six touchdowns on 215 carries, an average of 5.8 yards per rush. Russ’ running showed a flair for the dramatic, including a 68-yard scoring dash against Bucknell and a 51-yard sideline tightrope run for a touchdown in a 34-27 win over Duquesne.

The running back’s strict offseason workout and an improving offensive line both contributed to Russ’s success. With 11 runs of at least 20 yards this past season, he looks like a future star in the Northeast Conference.

“Myles worked hard in the offseason, and I think you saw the fruits of that labor this year,” said 15th-year head coach Joe Walton. “He played extremely well, and more importantly, he was prepared each week both mentally and physically. He makes people miss, he breaks tackles and he has good speed.

> For the latest scores visit www.RMUColonials.com.
ONIALLS

Once he gets through the line, he’s got a burst of natural speed that helps him accelerate, and that makes him tough to bring down.”

A transfer from Temple, DiMichele took over at inside linebacker and set a new single-season record for the Colonials with 116 tackles. He posted double-digit tackles in eight games, including a career-high 19 against Bucknell. Besides having a nose for the ball, DiMichele became a vocal leader on an RMU defense that hit its stride in the second half of the season.

“We had a feeling we were getting a solid player when Alex decided to transfer from Temple, and he really became a centerpiece for us on defense,” said defensive coordinator Scott Farison. “He really helps us on run defense, but he’s also agile enough to drop back and help the secondary with coverage.”

DiMichele also understands what the future could hold for RMU. “We only lose five starters,” he said. “We’ve got 10 guys back on defense and seven back on offense. We’re young, and now we’ve got to work hard in the offseason and prepare by doing the right things to make a championship run next season.”

> ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICANS

ESPN The Magazine District II Academic All-America Teams had four Robert Morris University athletes this fall, selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). For volleyball, senior Alaina Gibson earned first team honors, and sophomore Amanda Graham was named to the second team. Gibson has earned a 3.87 grade point average as a human resource management major, while Graham carries a 3.98 GPA as a nuclear medicine technology major. In football, juniors Adam Lawrence and Mark Szymanski were each tabbed for the honor. Lawrence has a 3.98 GPA as an environmental science major, while Szymanski carries a 3.31 GPA studying computer information systems.

> FOR MORE STATS FROM RMUCOLONIALS.COM.

> TICKER

WOMEN’S SOCCER > Under the direction of eighth-year head coach John Kowalski, RMU posted a 6-12 record, including a mark of 2-7 in Northeast Conference action. The Colonials were led by freshman midfielder Jess Sharik, who scored four goals and seven assists for a team-high 15 points. Sophomore midfielder Kathleen Caggiano contributed a team-high six goals and posted 13 points. The team won the 2008 UNLV Rebel Classic in September, first beating the host Runnin’ Rebels, who at the time were ranked 25th in the country, and then defeating Idaho 2-1 in the championship game. Caggiano had a hand in all four goals of the tournament, finishing with three goals and an assist. For those efforts she was named National Soccer Coaches Association of America Player of the Week and NEC Player of the Week.

MEN’S SOCCER > Led by 12th-year head coach Bill Denniston, RMU posted a record of 2-14-3 in 2008, including 0-7-2 in the Northeast Conference. Junior midfielder Sean Riley led the Colonials with three goals and ranked second on the club in points with seven, while senior midfielder Tyler Stanley scored two goals and a team-high five assists to lead RMU in points with nine.

FIELD HOCKEY > In her second year leading the Colonials, Olivia Netzler guided RMU to 5-12 record, and 2-4 in the Northeast Conference. Junior defender Jessica Charles scored five goals and added an assist to lead the team with 11 points, while senior forward Samantha Lawless added four goals and a pair of assists for 10 points.

CROSS COUNTRY > Led by head coach Michael Smith, the RMU women’s cross country team finished seventh at the 2008 Northeast Conference championships, while the men’s squad recorded an eighth-place finish. Leading the way for the women was sophomore Jessica Duffel, who finished 17th with a time of 19:50 in the 5,000-meter race. Freshman Arthur Leathers led the RMU men, navigating the five-mile course in 27:58 to also finish 17th.
John Inserra remembers the exact moment he decided to become a teacher.

For more than a decade, he had worked in the biotech field, rising as high as CEO. But despite a successful career, he felt that something was missing. “I just reached a point where I wanted to give back in some way,” he says. So, on Thanksgiving Day 2005, Inserra decided to make a change. “I wanted to help young people,” he says, “and teaching seemed like a great way to do that.”

Today, Inserra is the 10th-grade business and technology teacher at City High Charter School (City High) in downtown Pittsburgh. Located in the Clark Building, in the heart of the city’s Cultural District, City High is a model of innovation that’s paving new pathways in education – and Robert Morris University is playing a big part in its success.

Inserra is one of several City High teachers that graduated from RMU’s Business, Computer and Information Technology (BCIT) certification program, offered by the School of Education and Social Sciences (SESS). SESS is helping people who wish to change careers and pursue teaching by offering them flexible scheduling and different opportunities once they complete their certification. The school’s success has a lot to do with the number of second-career students they attract. Seventy percent of RMU students preparing to become secondary teachers are post-baccalaureate students, like Inserra, who come to RMU for their teacher certification.

“The number of former SESS students now working at City High is just another example of our school’s growing impact on the region,” says John E. Graham, Ed.D., SESS dean and professor of education. “Our certification programs here at

ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY FOUNDATIONS • 11
RMU provide strong content knowledge and teaching preparation to ensure our students succeed in all types of educational settings. And that’s why they excel at places like City High.”

City High and RMU share common goals. Both emphasize professionalism and career preparation, and both put a premium on real-world readiness and active, engaged learning.

“Teachers who graduate RMU’s Business, Computers and Information Technology program are a key to our school’s success,” says City High Principal/CEO and co-founder Richard Wertheimer, Ph.D. “They are leaders in both our technology and career programming.”

City High is different than your average public school – and it was designed to be that way. The school centers around a career readiness and post-high school planning curriculum, which is meant to engage students in a focused program that leads to greater awareness of employment opportunities. City High’s students spend close to 200 hours investigating careers, participating in real-world simulations and preparing for life after graduation. The program culminates in a 130-hour internship at a local company or organization. The school also puts great emphasis on providing a technology-infused learning environment. Every student and staff member receives a laptop, and all parents, students and staff can access student records, grades, attendance and assignments via the Internet.

Throughout their time at City High, all students receive instruction on research, a fundamental workforce skill that also helps them with their senior project. These projects must include a 10-page research report, and they require the student to create something – a book, a fashion show for cancer awareness, a community basketball league, etc. Students must also write a blog, create both a PowerPoint presentation and a website, and finally present in front of a panel of professionals from the community.

City High serves over 500 students in grades 9 through 12, 81 percent of which come from the Pittsburgh school district; the rest are from 23 area districts. Unlike at other schools, City High’s teachers stay with the same 156 students for the entire four years they’re at the school. “The key element of the program is the looping concept,” says Wertheimer. “Every student at City High has a team of eight to 10 teachers that ‘loops’ with the student from 9th grade through graduation. This consistency and continuity of support and instruction is the key to our success.”

This new way of thinking has propelled City High to the forefront in secondary education, and it’s creating quite a
buzz both locally and nationally. Last September, Diane Sawyer and ABC’s Good Morning America show paid a visit to City High to spotlight its innovative curriculum and show how it’s addressing some of the problems with today’s educational system.

One of the leaders behind City High’s success is Maureen Anderson M’08, who earned her BCIT certification from RMU in 2003 and recently received her master’s in instructional leadership. Anderson’s energy and enthusiasm is contagious. The moment you meet her, you can tell she’s someone who knows what she wants and knows how to get it. As a 20-year-old right out of college, she started working for the federal government in information systems security. Her ex-husband was an officer in the military, and while she was still married, she lived all over the world. Anderson’s travels and experiences gave her a global perspective that helped her when she was selected by Wertheimer to develop the school’s unique curriculum and internship program, along with fellow teachers Peter Jenkins and Jackie Perhach, and internship coordinators Patti Kretschman and Keiha Peck.

“Learning about different people and different cultures really helped me design something for a diverse group of students,” says Anderson. City High prides itself on its balanced demographics of roughly 50 percent male, 50 percent female, with a mixture of various ethnic and racial backgrounds (white males, 21.6%; white females, 20.4%; African-American males, 24.4%; African-American females, 31.5%; other, 2.1%).

The school also has a policy of “full inclusion,” where all students, regardless of ability, are taught together in the same class. “Our classes include kids from special needs to gifted,” says Anderson. “We don’t isolate anyone. It’s just another way we try to mimic a real-world setting.”

One of City High’s main objectives is to prepare students for the workforce and a fulfilling future career. Their downtown Pittsburgh location and corporate-like setting plays a big part in this. “If it wasn’t for the lockers in the hallways,” says Anderson, “You wouldn’t even know you were in a school; you’d think you’re in just another downtown office.” City High students must adhere to a business casual dress code. “We try to keep the environment as professional as possible,” says Anderson. “It not only helps them keep their mind on their studies, but it also prepares them for the challenges they’ll face after graduation.

Unlike most public schools, City High operates on an 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. schedule, which is meant to be more like a normal corporate workday. They also operate under a year-round calendar with three trimesters and three one-month breaks in April, August and December. According to Anderson, the shorter breaks allow for higher retention and increased learning.

Anderson says that, at first, it takes new students a little while to get used to City High’s professional atmosphere. “This place is so different than what they’re used to,” she says. “But it’s a positive change, and once they buy into what we’re trying to do here, they end up loving it.”

Anderson is one of six City High teachers who completed RMU’s BCIT certification:

Rob Duty received his certification from RMU in the spring of 2007, and is in his second year as digital media teacher at City High. “Students here have a real advantage when it comes to technology,” says Duty. “Everyone has access to tons of equipment, and our video production facilities are second to none.” He says the students love having the opportunity to express themselves through video by doing such things as commercials, music videos, and TV shows.

Duty is an example of the type of second-career student that RMU’s School of Education and Social Sciences attracts. After graduating from Indiana University
of Pennsylvania with a degree in communications, he went on to work for two years at WTAE as associate director for morning news. It wasn’t long, however, before he knew he wanted something different. “City High posted a job for a digital educator, and I thought it was right up my alley, having the real-world experience and strong teaching background from Robert Morris University.”

While he was getting his certificate from RMU, Duty did his student teaching at Mt. Lebanon High School, where he taught a class in TV production. “RMU’s education classes were really helpful to me during that time,” he says. “They put us into different situations and showed us how to do a lesson plan and how to deal with different types of students. It made easy transitioning from the corporate world to teaching.”

Tiana DeLaRosa M’05, received both her BCIT certification and a master’s in business administration from RMU in 2005. Today she works as business and technology teacher at City High, teaching the Microsoft Office certification class. Previously, she worked in banking before deciding to go back to school at RMU.

One of the reasons DeLaRosa chose RMU was its flexibility. “I liked the 8-week class schedule,” she says. “It allowed me to work full time while pursuing my degree and certificate from RMU.”

Like many people who choose a second career in teaching, DeLaRosa was worried what the students would be like. But she soon found out that City High was special. “Teachers and students have better understanding here,” she says. “The interaction among the faculty is helpful, and, because of the positive environment here, the kids are more tolerant of each other.

“I also think the technology these kids are exposed to is a real advantage,” she adds. “and my RMU education really prepared me to work with today’s high-tech educational tools.” Currently, City High has over 200 students with more than 500 Core and Expert MOS certifications in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and Outlook.

Perry Harrop M’08, is a technology teacher at City High. He received his certification from RMU in the fall of 2007 and starting working at City High in the spring of 2008. Previously, he worked in accounting and finance as a CPA for big corporations; however, after 21 years, he decided to change careers. “I wanted to do something with kids so that I could pass along my business knowledge,” says Harrop. “I didn’t have a lot of time, but I had some friends who had completed RMU’s MBA program and really liked the flexibility and accelerated programs. Plus, I knew I wanted a solid business education, so RMU turned out to be a great move for me.”

Harrop fits right in at City High, which places an emphasis on both personal and business finance. “The courses they offer here,” he says, “you just can’t get anywhere else. When these kids graduate, they’re ready for the world.”

Robert Mays is the 11th-grade business and technology teacher at City High. He received his BCIT certification from RMU in the spring of 2007, and is currently working on his master’s in business education.

Before starting at City High in Sept. 2008, Robert worked for two years with Mellon Financial’s special investments group in Pittsburgh. He first became
interested in teaching while tutoring students and coaching youth basketball at St. Athanasius in West View. After graduating from the University of Pittsburgh in 2004, he came to RMU to get his certification.

“RMU’s small class size and accessible instructors and administrators really attracted me,” says Mays, who was able to continue working while taking classes at night.

Mays believes City High’s policy of keeping the same teachers with students over four years provides for better communication. “It allows for a more team-oriented approach to help students succeed and graduate,” he says.

RMU’s involvement with City High isn’t just on the teaching level, either. Some of its graduates are now RMU students themselves, including juniors Brittany Jones and Liz Czajkowski; sophomores Korey White and Ryan Singer; and freshman Melanie Komosa.

There was a time in Anderson’s life when she felt comfortable traveling the world, but now she feels right at home at City High. “It’s been really exciting seeing the school evolve and seeing the vision become a reality,” she says. “I love the interactive learning, and one of my great joys has been getting to teach every 9th- 10th- and 11th-grade student for one trimester each year.

Anderson believes she works with some of the most outstanding educators in the country, including her fellow RMU alumni. “I think they are significantly more invested and prepared to teach their curriculum because of their unique, real-world experience,” she says. And she credits people like Donna Cellante, Ed.D., SESS associate dean and professor of education, for helping her get to where she is today. “When I initially considered the RMU certification program, I was a single mom with two young children,” says Anderson. “Dr. Cellante worked closely with me, and her encouragement helped me achieve my goal of completing the program, including the student teaching component, in one year. I will be forever grateful for her support.

“We’re trying to promote a culture here that provides options and opportunities, and one that shows students the many paths they can take after high school,” says Anderson. “And as long as City High continues its relationship with Robert Morris University, I’m confident we’ll be successful.”

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRKICH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK Houser

To watch GMA’s visit to City High, go to http://abcnews.go.com and search for “Education in America.”
I hadn’t known Dwayne Bauknight more than five minutes before he started talking about “worm poop.”

“Worms are Mother Nature’s finishers,” he said, as we stood before a mountainous pile of horse manure behind his barn. “The way they break down the compost allows plants to uptake the nutrients more readily.” Pushing aside some manure with his boot, he exposed hundreds of earthworms wriggling around inside the steaming pile. “This is their natural habitat,” he said, offering me a handful of the moist, earthy material. “Go ahead, feel it.”

Reluctantly, I touched the worm droppings. “Very nice,” I said, wondering how long it would be before I could go wash my hands.

“It’s all about the worm poop,” he said. And I believed him. After all, he’s the one with three degrees.

Bauknight ’96, M’05, M’06 is the owner and founder of Shared Acres, a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm, straddling the border between Beaver and Allegheny counties in Clinton, Pa. Here, on just over 40 acres of land, he promotes a form of communal, sustainable agriculture that is changing the way many people get their weekly produce.

Unlike other farms, Shared Acres grows solely for its shareholders. Each pays $300 a year for an 8- by 4-foot vegetable garden, which Bauknight tends for them. They’re also welcome to work it themselves, if they choose. From May to October, shareholders can stop by Shared Acres to pick up a canvas bag filled with fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, and even some flowers, all handpicked by Bauknight himself. During the spring, shareholders receive spinach, radishes, peas, and baby carrots. Throughout the summer, they can expect a variety of tomatoes, peppers, beans, celery, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, squash, zucchini and mixed greens.

Shareholders can choose to get more of one thing and less of another, based on their individual tastes, and all the produce is grown using biodynamic methods, completely free of the herbicides, pesticides and chemical fertilizers that most farms use today. At Shared Acres, it’s all done with all-natural, sustainable methods and practices.

Hence, the worm poop.

“Shared Acres was built from the commons for the commons,” says Bauknight. “Here, it’s all about keeping it natural and local, and that’s beneficial for everyone.”

Bauknight is collaborating with RMU to use Shared Acres as a learning tool for the university’s science students. “There is a lot of real-life lab work that they can perform here,” he says. “I want students to come out and learn how Shared Acres implements sustainable agriculture. Eventually, I’d also like them to come here to learn how solar, wind, and other alternative energies work. I still have to implement these things on the farm, but they are in definitely in my long-term plans.”

Last fall, RMU seniors Jennifer Sabol, Caitlin Dilal, and Steve Zelechowski, along with juniors Sara Powell and Jovonna Kirkling, came to Shared Acres to collect soil samples from the gardens for analysis and on-site data, such as soil compaction. This spring they’ll return to test Bauknight’s theory about tillage radishes. “It’s my contention,” he says, “that these radishes can add plenty of organic matter to the soil and help with compaction, which, in turn, should eliminate the need for tilling altogether.”
to the fuel for the tractors, to the transportation to the market,” says Bauknight. “I think society is finally realizing that we need to start thinking locally again by supporting our local farmers.”

The growing number of CSAs nationally supports this theory. Today there are over 600 of these farms across the country, and Pennsylvania is one of the movement’s biggest supporters.

Bauknight believes that Shared Acres serves as a good business model. “I definitely see this type of agriculture expanding in the years to come,” he says. “And I hope that the Shared Acres model can be adopted by others so that CSAs based on sustainable agriculture can cross the chasm and be adopted by the herd.”

Bauknight and his family moved to Shared Acres on Thanksgiving Day 2007. He had been looking for property for about five years. On vacation at the beach that summer, he saw an ad for the farm in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s online edition. “When we got back, I packed up the family and went to check it out,” he says. As they drove down the long gravel driveway beneath the towering silver maples, they were immediately taken by the charming 150-year-old farmhouse, its expansive fields and wooded hideaways. “We fell in love with it as soon as we saw it.”

For Bauknight, Shared Acres is truly a family affair. His wife, Renee (Mahouski) ’99, who earned a degree in management from RMU, is very involved with the farm.

William J. Dress, Ph.D., interim head of the RMU Department of Science, sees a great benefit to this analysis, both for Bauknight and RMU students. “This data will help Bauknight manage his operation in a more sustainable way and give the students hands-on practice with collecting and analyzing environmental samples and data,” says Dress. “It is a wonderful collaboration between RMU and Shared Acres. As someone who is practicing sustainable management techniques in his business, Bauknight really is a great resource.”

Bauknight’s contributions don’t end at Shared Acres. He has also given guest lectures to classes at RMU about sustainability and environmental issues. “I enjoy working with and sharing my knowledge with the students,” he says. “I plan to have RMU’s newly created natural science department perform some vital lab work for me, which will give the students even more hands-on experience.

CSA farms are relatively new to America. During the 20th century, agriculture transformed considerably. Large specialized operations, which grew fewer crops and focused on national and global distribution, replaced traditional, smaller farms, which grew a variety of crops for local consumers. Most of the produce you buy today has already traveled hundreds, if not thousands, of miles before it reaches the grocery store shelf. This lengthy travel time not only diminishes the freshness and nutritional value of the produce, it also significantly raises the price. “Seventy percent of your food costs can be attributed to petroleum, from the fertilizers,
when she’s not busy working as an internal quality control auditor at First Health in Moon Township. They also have three young children: Joshua, 4; Jacob, 2; and Emily, 8 months. Bauknight’s mother, Elaine, and father, Brian, a retired pastor with a doctorate in theology, live in a house next to theirs and help out in any way they can. “My mom helps with the kids,” says Bauknight, “and my dad cuts the grass and helps with planting.”

My first visit to Shared Acres was on a breezy spring day in May 2008. As I pulled down the driveway and parked behind two Honda Priuses (one his; the other, his parents’), Bauknight roared up in his John Deere Gator all-terrain vehicle. In the back of the ATV, a radio was tuned in to NPR, a daily staple for this one-time financial analyst turned farmer. “The plants like the jazz, too,” said Bauknight. I hopped in, and we were off on the grand tour of the farm. As we pulled away, Bauknight’s dog, George, circled the six-wheeled vehicle again and again, somehow avoiding being run over while barking incessantly at the knobby tires.

Our first stop was the shareholders’ individual gardens, all planted in raised boxes made from scrap wood Bauknight found around the property. The rows of gardens lie on a piece of land that used to be an old vineyard. Using raised boxes allows him to easily control and monitor the soil quality and eliminates the need for crop rotation. According to Bauknight, this is the first intercropping model of vegetables grown together in a one-acre plot. It takes just one-fifth of the space that conventional row-cropping does, and it also saves the farmer time and energy. This cropping model is based on that of Mel Bartholomew, author of *Gardening by the Square Foot*. Bartholomew shows that for every 48 square feet that is planted, you are able to gain a greater yield than if you were to plant each seed in a plot of its own. Bauknight has expanded on this by showing that more than enough vegetables can be grown on one acre for all 200 shareholders.

Next, Bauknight fired up the ATV and we headed over to the barn, as George barked at the tires the entire way. As we entered the barn, I noticed something that seemed a little out of place: a paper shredder. Bauknight smiled. “It’s for shredding newspaper,” he said. “I mix it with the worm poop to make emulsified paper.” He held up a large section of the inch-thick paper. “It’s a little invention I came up with to serve as an insulator for the tomatoes and peppers, which need a lot of heat to grow.” Bauknight came up with the idea for the emulsified paper with the help of Nasim Siddeeq ’08, a student in RMU’s Environmental Science class. Most farmers use black plastic to achieve the desired temperature, then till the plastic right back into the soil after harvest. “My paper allows for more moisture content than black plastic,” said Bauknight, “which in turn allows for more heat and a better growing environment. Plus, it’s completely biodegradable, unlike the plastic.”

We left the barn and bounced down a path to the two spring-fed ponds and fishing shack that sit near the back...
of the property beneath a canopy of trees. In spring 2008, sophomores Kirsten Pasko and Krista Anders, students from RMU’s Intro to Environmental Science class, came here to analyze the water quality in the ponds as part of their senior project. “I want Shared Acres to be a learning facility for the students of RMU and other schools,” says Bauknight. “And I hope that this place can be used as a sustainable agriculture extension where other farms in the area can come and ask questions, learn about new practices and then implement them.”

Bauknight makes sure that nothing on the property goes to waste. He used Google’s satellite feature to map out the farm and use every bit of land the best way possible, and he’s also using various natural, chemical-free methods for pest control. “I use nature to protect my crops,” he says. He planted garlic throughout the farm as a pest deterrent, and uses a homemade hot pepper spray to protect against ants, mites and various caterpillars. He also planted marigolds to fight off tomato horn-worm and nematodes, and nasturtium to protect against whiteflies, aphids and cabbage moths. “Another big help, which is often overlooked, is good soil,” says Bauknight. “Pests love to attack what is weak, so allowing a healthy place for your plants to grow makes a huge difference.”

Last spring, RMU students also helped to build and install bat boxes on the farm. Each holds up to 150 of the winged predators, whose voracious appetites help control the insect population. Students also installed boxes to attract barn owls to the property, which can eat up to 3,000 rodents per year. Shared Acres isn’t just about agriculture. It’s also meant as a place where shareholders can come to relax and experience a sense of community. “It’s called Shared Acres for a reason,” says Bauknight. Near the farmhouse, there’s a large open field where people can play sports, have a picnic, or even hold a wedding reception. Next to the field, there’s a place for the kids known as “Frolic & Funland,” a fenced-in area with a large sand pile and a wooden playset. Bauknight also has plans for an obstacle course and a mini-golf course that incorporates herb gardens. “We’re thinking of calling it ‘Garden Golf,’” he says. Behind the farmhouse there’s a stone patio complete with tables and a barbeque pit, and down the trail behind the property there’s a secluded camping area known as Deer Valley. “It’s a place where people can come to camp out with their family, roast some marshmallows, and just relax,” says Bauknight.

Bauknight will surprise you. Hidden behind his dark, photochromic lenses, soft-spoken demeanor, and “Crop-hugger” t-shirt, is a man with remarkable intellect and an undeniable passion for his work. Before coming to Robert Morris University, which he chose for its strong reputation in finance and business, he served as a boatswain’s mate in the Navy for two years. After receiving his undergraduate degree from RMU, he worked as an independent financial advisor with Allegheny Investments. But the sustainable farming idea was always in the back of his mind. “I’ve always had a love of nature and gardening,” he says.
While pursuing his M.S. in engineering management, Bauknight’s wrote a master’s thesis proposing an ecological engineering and invention factory for promoting sustainable development in the local community. “I spent a lot of time reading and then implementing what I learned,” he says. “Eventually, I started to think about how I could integrate my business and technological education into my gardening – like setting up webcams to watch my plants grow, using charts to track my garden progress, and realizing the financial productivity of my model.”

Yildirim Omurtag, Ph.D., P.E., professor of engineering and science at RMU, was Bauknight’s faculty advisor. “When Dwayne worked on a research topic during his studies with me, I had no idea that he would implement his ideas later on in a real-world environment,” says Omurtag. After completing the M.S. work, Bauknight set out to create an environmentally sustainable agricultural production enterprise. “It is rewarding for us academics to see what our students can do with their original ideas, and also how Robert Morris University may have played a role in stimulating such innovative work,” says Omurtag.

Bauknight is a self-taught farmer, but he credits RMU for much of his success at Shared Acres. “If it wasn’t for the education RMU provided me,” he says, “I probably wouldn’t be where I am today. Almost every aspect of my education is being used here.”

Although Shared Acres’ first season had its challenges – issues with irrigation, damaging wind storms – Bauknight was pleased with the results. “I’ve marked my mistakes and added to my mitigation plan to overcome them,” he says. “And I’m hopeful for an even better harvest this year.” He’s also planning to expand the farm’s offerings, since he sold all 78 shares and had many more inquiries. “I had to start a waiting list,” he says.

Around the region, word is definitely starting to spread about Shared Acres. In November, it received the Innovative Business of the Year Award from the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce.

I can personally vouch for the success of Shared Acres. Not only has it reduced the number of trips I’ve had to make to the supermarket, but it’s also helped my family eat healthier. Plus, it’s introduced me to some wonderful new vegetables like lemon grass, arugula, and some sort of purple hot pepper that Bauknight calls a “firecracker.” (WARNING: Don’t eat the seeds! Take my word for it.)

If you’re ever out in Clinton, be sure to pay the Bauknights a visit. They’d love to see you. You might even get to touch the worm poop.

Writt ten by Valentine J. Brkich | Photography by Kevin Cooke

Learn more about Shared Acres at www.sharedacres.com
Call of the Wild

Wolves scholarships help needy students
Ross Pisano knows how important scholarships are to students and their families. For the past 50 years, he’s been providing financial support to high school students as a member of the National Association of the Wolves. Pisano is a lifelong resident of Coraopolis. He entered the Army in 1954 and served with the 63rd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion in Weisbaden, Germany, as a radio intercept operator until 1956.

Starting in 1957, Pisano worked in the mailroom for Crucible Steel in Pittsburgh. “Everyone started in the mailroom,” he says. “I’d catch the train from Station Square to Beaver every day to meet the mail boy from Crucible Midland. Then I’d wait for three hours or so until the next train back to Pittsburgh.” During this time, Pisano attended night classes at Duff’s Business Institute in Pittsburgh and graduated with a degree in accounting. He stayed with Crucible for 13 years, working his way up to credit manager. He then went on to work at Westinghouse as treasurer manager until 1975, when he returned to Crucible, retiring in 1982.

Last April, Pisano spoke at RMU’s annual Scholarship Luncheon, which recognizes the university’s many scholarship donors and recipients. Stephanie N. Hendershot ’98, RMU director of financial aid, knows what a valuable service the Wolves Club provides to students. “The scholarship contributions provided by the Wolves Club are a valued resource to many of our students,” says Hendershot. “Ross has a strong commitment to students and scholarships in his local community, and I am sure he will have an even greater impact at a national level.”

RMU President Gregory Dell’Omo, Ph.D., also appreciates the generosity of Pisano and the Wolves Club. “The Wolves Club has been a valued partner of Robert Morris University for many years,” says Dell’Omo. “Ross Pisano’s efforts have had a positive effect on the lives of many of our students, and we wish him nothing but the best in his new position as national president.”

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRKICH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN ALTDORFER
Tim Pfeifer is one heck of a bowler. In 2007 he was named the USBC’s Intercollegiate Singles Champion, and last May he battled legendary bowlers like Hall of Famer Pete Weber at Bowling’s Clash of Champions in Kansas City, making it all the way to the tournament’s semi-final round.

Not bad for someone who hasn’t even graduated college yet.

Pfeifer, a senior business management major, is a member of RMU’s Club Bowling team, one of 18 teams that make up the university’s growing club sports program. More than 230 current students participate in the program, which includes sports like baseball, cycling, golf, ice hockey, volleyball, dance team and synchronized skating, to name a few.

Teams practice twice a week and compete against both regional and national colleges and universities in organized leagues and associations.

RMU’s club sports program is led by Garth Ericson 1998.
Last year, the program launched four new teams: men’s soccer, women’s soccer, paintball, and cycling. This year, the program hopes to add men’s lacrosse and coed ultimate frisbee to the list. They’re also adding a short-track speed-skating team in 2009, which will be one of the first such collegiate teams in the country.

“Our club sports program is wonderful because it gives students a chance to continue their athletic career, even if they choose not to be a Division I athlete,” says John Michalenko, M.Ed., chief student life officer and dean of students. “We take students suggestions and create the club sports they want; that’s why so many students participate. Athletics and academics fit together at RMU, and this adds to our students’ quality of life.”

The bowling team has experienced much success in recent years, thanks to athletes like Pfeifer. As a sophomore in 2006, he earned a spot on the Junior Team USA, and, in 2007, he and teammates Ben Galloway ’08 and Kevin Senko ’10 were named USBC Academic All-Americans. The team ended the 2007 campaign as National runner-up at the USBC’s Intercollegiate Team Championships. This past season, the team just missed qualifying for the national championships, finishing in fifth place at the National Bowling Congress Regional Qualifier in Chattanooga, Tenn.
RMU’s other club sports have also tallied up some impressive victories and honors. The club ice hockey team was the Eastern Collegiate Hockey League’s regular season champion in 2006-2007, finishing with a record of 8-2, and coach Jason Evans AA’02, BSBA ’07, was named the league’s coach of the year. Nicholas Verch, a defenseman for the team, signed to play professionally with the Varkaus Eagles of the Finnish Ice Hockey Association.

Also that year, the baseball team won first place at the Bob Kloska Tournament at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, and senior Kristina Lippert and Jessica Harman ’08 finished first and second in the junior dance event at the U.S. Figure Skating Synchronized Skating Championships.

The club sports program had continued success during the 2007-2008 academic year. The ACHA Division I ice hockey team was crowned regular season champion for the second straight year, and it also won the league tournament, with then freshman Bryan Chiavetta being named tournament MVP. The Tier I inline hockey team won its second consecutive Western Pennsylvania CollegiateRoller Hockey League championship, beating the University of Pittsburgh in a two-game playoff series. The Tier II “Blue” team was also named league champion, defeating the Community College of Allegheny County.

The men’s volleyball team, which is coached by Ericson, tied for third place at the Penn-Ohio Volleyball League’s Playoff Tournament in Grove City last year. It was the team’s best finish ever.

In recent years, universities across the country have cut many sports programs due to budgetary constraints. For people like Pfeifer, club sports gave him an opportunity to compete and excel in a sport that otherwise wouldn’t have been an option. “RMU’s Club Sports program is vital because it provides an opportunity for young athletes to participate in sports that they may not have been able to otherwise,” says Pfeifer.

“Offering highly competitive club sports here at RMU provides both current and future students the opportunity to compete at a high level,” says Ericson. “And we see only bigger and better things for the program on the horizon.

For Pfeifer, the club sports program opened doors that could lead to a professional career. “Getting to bowl in the Clash of the Champions was a tremendous experience,” he says. “Looking back, it’s incredible that, as a collegiate athlete, I was able to participate in such an event.”

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRKICH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOE APPEL
1960s

LLOYD D. DAVIS ‘62 was an associate broker with Davies Real Estate, Inc. in Ligonier, Pa. Since retirement, Lloyd is enjoying country living. Lloyd is a certified lay speaker in the United Methodist Conference. He and his wife, Florence, reside in New Florence, Pa.

TOM D. MCKINNEY ‘62, retired as senior advisor and auditor with the U.S. Army Audit Agency. He is currently president of the Dunwoody, Ga., chapter of National Active Retired Federal Employees; and a certified senior advisor for Magellan Planning Financial Group. He and his wife, Sandra, reside in Dunwoody.

1970s

CHARLES E. LIND ’70 is employed by Victory Energy Corp. as a landman. Charles resides in Mahaffey, Pa.

BRENDA LAUDERBACH ’72, former group president of wholesale and retail at Nine West Group, has been appointed to the board of directors of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Brenda serves as a corporate director for the boards of Irwin Financial Corp., Big Lots Corp., Select Comfort, Denny’s Corp. and Wolverine World Wide. She resides in Dallas.

RICHARD A. HESS ’72 recently moved to Scottsdale, Ariz., where he is employed by Azzuro Inc. as chief operating officer.

WALLY W. JONES ’73 was named sales representative with TransCore Inc., a major manufacturer of transportation-related software products. Wally resides in Springfield, Mo.

ROGER LOOP ’77 retired in September after 25 years in the criminal justice field as a corrections officer in Pennsylvania and a parole officer and detention officer in Texas. Roger and his wife, Bonnie, reside in Springfield, Mass.

1980s

CLAUDIA SCHEIBEL ’80 was named marketing counselor with Providence Point, a continuing care retirement community under construction on the site of the former John Kane Hospital in Scott Twp. Claudia resides in Mt. Lebanon, Pa., with her husband and two children.

MATTHEW M. GURA ’82 is a certified public accountant at Gura and Associates Inc. in Sevierville, Tenn. He and his wife, Theresa, reside in Bristol, Tenn.

YVONNE BEST-PROCTOR ’87 has taken a position as “Classrooms for the Future” coach at Fort LeBoeuf High School in Waterford, Pa. She and her husband, Edward, and two children, Lance and Paige, live in Union City, Pa.

HARRY E. LECKEMBY, JR. ’87 accepted a new position with BookMyGroup as director of sports and athletic sales. He and his wife, Elizabeth, and their son, Harry III, moved back to Pittsburgh in August from Colorado Springs, Colo.

1990s

JOANNE (HEINTZ) BASKO ’90 and her husband, JOE BASKO ’94, announced the birth of their son, Joshua Francis, on June 19. He joins siblings Chris, Rachel, Rebecca, and Matthew. The family resides in Monaca, Pa.

KATHY S. (HALL) MCKAY ’92 is employed by Comcast as order management lead. She and her husband, Shawn, have a daughter, Raygan, and reside in Dallas.

JAMES BREHOVE ’71, who owns Palmer Plastics Inc. in Easton, Pa., ran the Army Ten-Miler in Washington, D.C., in October with his two sons, Jordan and Aaron. Nearly 20,000 runners compete in the event, making it the largest 10-mile race in the country. Jim proudly wore an RMU tank top, and many spectators encouraged him with cheers of, “Go, Robert Morris!”

Jordan Brehove (left) is a captain in the Army and earned two Bronze Stars for two combat tours in Iraq. He also spent six years stationed in Germany. Jordan recently ended his full time Army service and currently attends the Wharton MBA program at the University of Pennsylvania.

Aaron Brehove (right) graduated cum laude from West Virginia University in 2006, and served seven years in the West Virginia Army National Guard. He resides in Washington, D.C., and works for Ernst & Young in the fraud and dispute services department.

Jim has worked in the plastics business for over 25 years. He and his wife, ELLEN (KARAFIN) BREHOVE ’69, reside in Succasunna, N.J.
DEAR FRIENDS,

Throughout its history, Robert Morris University has been fortunate to enjoy the generous financial support of its alumni as well as its faculty and staff. The very least we can do is acknowledge this support and say “thank you.” Every fall issue of Foundations we print a list of all our donors at every level of giving.

You can imagine our embarrassment when we discovered that we excluded one of our most magnanimous donors this year. This person had chosen to remain anonymous, but even anonymous gifts should be acknowledged as a sign of our gratitude. This particular donor is a member of the RMU staff and one of the university’s finest and most visible ambassadors.

Not only does he excel in his profession and the services he offers Robert Morris University, but he and his wife are fixtures at RMU sporting events, lectures and other happenings on campus. He is a tireless supporter of the profession and the services he provides. Prior to this position, Joseph worked for Philadelphia-based Aramark. He resides in Hilliard, Ohio.

JASON W. LONGNECKER ’97 is an employee benefits specialist with The Principal Financial Group. Jason resides in Belle Vernon, Pa., with his wife, Alyson, and their two daughters, Amelia and Natalie.

MICHAEL BATTALINI ’98 married Lesley Ann Moore on Oct. 25. Michael is vice president of investments at Ferris Baker Watts and is also a licensed realtor. Lesley is a marketing manager at Thermo Fisher Scientific.

JASON P. PHILLIPS ’98 works in strategic procurement for Bayer Material Science. He and his wife, Lynn, welcomed the birth of their daughter, Aubrey Nicole, on May 31. The family resides in Baden, Pa.

2000s

LAURA C. WARD ’00 is a 9th grade English teacher at Fox Chapel Area High School. She and her husband, Nathan, live in Pittsburgh, Pa.

AMY E. LIPSCOMB ’01 is a regional sales manager for Frito-Lay. She resides in Charlotte, N.C.

JENNIFER LILLARD ’01 is a triathlete sponsored by seeMOMMYrun and Corazonas Foods. Jennifer will compete in more than nine races this season, including two half-iron distance triathlons (1-mile swim, 56-mile bike, 13-mile run). Jennifer and her husband, Sam, and daughter, Ella, reside in Springfield, Va.

PHIL MILLER ’00 M’01 and his wife, Sarah, became the proud parents of Julia Claire on August 21. Julia was welcomed home by her 3-year-old sister, Lydia. Phil is manager of server operations for RMU’s technical services division.

AMANDA E. (CALIK) BROWN ’02 married Andrew Brown on May 31 in the Italian Gardens at Felicita near Harrisburg, Pa. Bridesmaids included AMY (HOY) SELLMAN ’04, who brought her daughter, Abigail. Amanda is a senior implementation consultant with Tier Technologies in Reston, Va. The couple resides in Hummelstown, Pa.

DAMIAN JACKSON ’03 and Anya Winfield of Eden, NC were married on August 9. Damian received a master’s in history from Morgan State University in May. The Jacksons reside in Carnegie, Pa.
CODE WALKER ’03 has been promoted to assistant financial officer for the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Salem, Va. Codie resides in Roanoke, Va.

JAMES A. SPAGNOLO III ’03 is employed by PNC Financial Services as a branch manager. He and his wife, Lacie, reside in Glenshaw, Pa.

Megan (Steighner) Davis ’03 and Mark Davis were married in Negril, Jamaica, on May 11. The couple now resides in Franklin, N.C., with their two dogs, Beckham and Lily.

EUGENE MAZZUCA ’03 and his wife, Traci Ann (Zureick) ’03, welcomed their first child, Mia Elizabeth, on May 23. Eugene is a pharmaceutical sales representative with Wyeth Consumer Healthcare. The family resides in Hamilton, Ontario.

JAMES OGG ’04 married Michelle Rain on Oct. 28. James is a social studies teacher with the Pittsburgh Public Schools. The couple resides in North Irwin, Pa.

SEAN R. KOCAN ’04, an auditor with Malin, Bergquist & Company LLP, received his designation as a certified fraud examiner. He earned his CPA in 2006. Sean resides in Cranberry Twp., Pa.

JENNIFER (AUGUSTINE) LENTO ’04 is employed by Maxim Healthcare Services as a medical biller. Jennifer and her husband, John, reside in Elkridge, Md.

BRICE FRITS ’02, M’04 was named athletic director at Blessed Sacrament Huguenot Catholic School in Powhatan, Va. He had been on the coaching staff at BSH since 2005 and accepted a position as a physics and science instructor in 2006. Brice resides in Richmond, Va.

WILLIAM MCKEOWN ’04 is a sales representative with Respironics in Murrysville, Pa. Rachel (Pacisi) Mckeown ’05 is a business development specialist with Clearview Federal Credit Unit. The couple resides in Ambridge, Pa.

KELLIE M. (UNDERWOOD) SELLERS ’05 is a research accountant at the University of Pittsburgh. She and her husband, Jason, reside in Pittsburgh, Pa.

JOHN R. HENNE ’05 and JESSICA (VOLTURNO) ’05 were married on June 23, 2007. John is a teacher in the Conewago Valley School District. The couple resides in York, Pa.

DAVID D. KICHI ’05 is employed by SAIC – U.S. Department of Energy as a network administrator. David resides in Morgantown, W.V.

NEIL G. GAMROD ’05 became engaged to Elissa Gilmer on Feb. 12, 2008 while in Dublin, Ireland. Neil is an airline employee and resides in Pittsburgh, Pa.

JENNIFER SNYDER ’05 is now working as a client-based administrator for Allied Solutions in Hagerstown, Md. She is engaged to be married on June 7 in the Moon Twp. area. Jennifer resides in Cumberland, Md.

JUSTIN P. PETRAS ’06, a technical support service manager for True Commerce Inc., recently became engaged to Jillian Radley, who works in human resources for Enterprise Rent-A-Car. The wedding is planned for Oct. 17, 2009 at St. John Vianney Church in Pittsburgh.

MARK L. HAUCK ’06 married former RMU student Kara J. Stavros on July 21, 2007. Mark is employed by Scotts Lawn Service as the market sales manager for Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. Kara is employed by Benefit Concepts as a benefits administrator. The couple resides in Cranston, R.I.

SEAN S. HAMILTON ’06 is employed by PA Cyber School as a help desk analyst. He and his wife, Marcy, and son, Connor, reside in Midland, Pa.

ABIGAIL E. BURKES ’06 is a social studies teacher in the Mars Area School District. Abigail resides in Wexford, Pa.
LAURI K. FINK M’06 was recently named program officer with Hillman Foundation. Before that, Lauri was the director of development for Auberle. Laurie resides in Bethel Park, Pa.

KEVIN J. BAZNER ’06 was recently promoted to senior leadership consultant with Phi Delta Theta fraternity. Kevin began working for the fraternity in 2007 and has been traveling the South Central region of the U.S. He resides in Oxford, Ohio.

MELISSA MUSICO M’06 is director of strategic partnerships for Developers Diversified Realty. Before that, Melissa was a corporate sales account executive for the Cleveland Cavaliers. Melissa resides in Rocky River, Ohio.

RICH DEMAIO M’06 joined the Fairleigh Dickinson University coaching staff in 2008 as the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach. Previously, Rich was the tight ends coach at Middlebury College and quarterbacks coach at RMU. Rich resides in Budd Lake, N.J., with his wife, Nicole.

LINDSEY WRIGHT ’06 has been hired as the assistant to the director of supplier relations at WESCO, and is responsible for managing the affairs of the director and others in administrative, organizational, and special events coordination capacities. Lindsey resides in Beaver, Pa.

CHARLES STOWERS ’06 earned a master’s in higher education leadership and administration from Jones International University. Charles lives in Tampa, Fla., and is now pursuing his doctorate in higher education and adult learning at Walden University.


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* Endorsement award is $1,000 per year for four years and is contingent on acceptance and meeting other admission and enrollment requirements.
CLASS NOTES

SUSANNE (KINS) GALUPI ’07 is a teacher in the Northgate School District. Suzanne resides in Pittsburgh, Pa.

In Memoriam

ROBERT L BRITT ’51 passed away on June 1, 2008. In 1993, Robert retired as controller from Houston Harbaugh, a Pittsburgh law firm.

MICHAEL A. KOVACS ’52 passed away at the age of 90 on Jan. 9, 2008.

SAMUEL FREMONT CAMPBELL ’58 passed away at the age of 79 on Oct. 6, 2008.

LARRY P. STOFKO M’02 passed away on Aug. 27, 2008.

ROBERT T. SHIRLEY, JR. ’00 passed away suddenly on July 28, 2008. Robert played basketball for the RMU Colonials for three years.

KAREN LYNN (EISENHAUER) MICKUS ’91 passed away on October 20, 2008. She was a CPA at Parente Randolph LLC in Pittsburgh for 19 years.


Note: Class notes are submitted by alumni and friends and are not verified by the editor. Foundations magazine is not responsible for information contained in class notes.

Corrections

In the Aug. 2008 issue, we accidentally omitted office coordinator Ivana Spehar from the article on the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management. Sorry, Ivana!
Paul Spradley is RMU through and through. As an undergraduate majoring in Communication Media Productions, he was involved in everything from Colonial Theatre and Colonial SportsCenter to intramural sports and the Black Student Union. He got his bachelor’s degree in 2003, and earned a master’s in Instructional Leadership three years later. He’s still a familiar face on the RMU campus today, as assistant director of student life for multicultural affairs.

This summer, Paul launched the Diversity Speakers Series. Featuring one-hour conversations with regional and national leaders, the series stimulates conversation and learning about diversity for students, faculty and staff. He also was instrumental in having the university sign on to the Anti-Defamation League’s “No Place for Hate” campaign, which aims at combating prejudice and promoting equality and harmony among people of different backgrounds. Paul is also a deacon and youth director for Hillcrest Seventh Day Adventist church in the Hill District.

1. **What is it about RMU that’s kept you here for so many years?**

When students ask me that, I usually respond by saying, “I’m working my way up to president of the university.” In all seriousness, though, I stay because there are some really great people here and the campus is rich with all kinds of opportunities.

2. **Why do you think diversity is so important in a university atmosphere?**

The world is very multicultural and very diverse. Sometimes students and employees come to a university with little or no appreciation of differences. If we want our students and employees to serve as ambassadors of the university, we must help them understand and appreciate differences and other cultures. After all, the many things that make us different are fascinating!

3. **Who are your heroes and role models?**

Nowadays I would have to say my hero is Jesus, because he saves the day. My role model is Troy Polamalu because in addition to being a hard worker, a superb football player and a real man’s man, he’s a very spiritual person. I mean, he says a quick prayer after every play – how cool is that!

4. **What’s your favorite book?**

I try to read the Bible every day, but I really enjoy Tuesdays with Morrie. I love the simplicity of the messages given by Morrie as he helps the reader appreciate what’s really important in life.

5. **If you could have dinner with any one person, living or dead, who would it be and why?**

It would be a toss-up between Saint Paul and the Dalai Lama, but I think I’d love to go to Primanti’s with Saint Paul. I just think Paul and I have some things in common, and I’d like to know how specifically he transitioned from who he was in his life to who he became.

6. **What would people be surprised to know about you?**

That I sang bass in a quartet that produced two low budget CDs, and that I’ve done a lot of television work, both as a TV news reporter and an actor in several commercials and industrial videos.

7. **Do you have any hobbies?**

I write children’s stories, and I already have enough for a series of books that I’m planning on publishing within the next year.

8. **What’s on your iPod right now?**

The last song was “Mary” by Take 6, the current song is “Echoes” by Pink Floyd, and the next song is “Got to Give it Up” by Marvin Gaye.

9. **What’s your favorite movie?**

It’s a tie between “Pursuit of Happyness” and “300.”

10. **What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever been given?**

My mother told me, “Throughout your successes you’ve got to stay humble, and always keep God first because He got you where you are.”
Upcoming Events

> JANUARY
15 Alumni Pre-Game Reception, 6 p.m., Sewall Center; Men's Basketball: Central Connecticut State, 7 p.m.
28 Pittsburgh Speakers Series: Anna Quindlen, 8 p.m., Heinz Hall
31 Women in Sports Day, Basketball vs. Monmouth, Women at 4 p.m., Men at 7 p.m.

> FEBRUARY
2 Men's Basketball: Pitt Panthers, 7 p.m. at Pitt
12 Alumni Pre-Game Reception, Sewall Center; Basketball vs. Sacred Heart, Women at 6 p.m., Men at 8 p.m.
27 Winter Blast Weekend: Alumni Happy Hour, 5–7 p.m., Trivia Pub (facing campus)
28 Winter Blast Weekend: Legacy Lunch, 1:30 p.m., Sewall Center

> MARCH
4 Pittsburgh Speakers Series: Bob Woodward, 8 p.m., Heinz Hall
18 Alumni Luncheon: Downtown Pittsburgh (details TBA)
27 International Dinner, 6 p.m., Food Court, Nicholson Center

> APRIL
2-4 The Miracle Worker, 8 p.m. (also 2 p.m. Saturday), Colonial Theatre, Massey Hall
16 After-Tax Happy Hour: Downtown Pittsburgh (details TBA)
22 Pittsburgh Speakers Series: David McCullough, 8 p.m., Heinz Hall
23 RMU Idol contest, 9 p.m., Food Court, Nicholson Center

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