

PRESIDENTIAL PROFILES

December 30th, 2018

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Clarks Summit University
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Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine
Johnson College

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Collective higher education investment in Luzerne County exceeds \$519M

WILKES-BARRE — Teri Ooms, executive director of the Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development at Wilkes University, said a 2018 study shows that collective higher education investment in Luzerne County exceeds \$519 million and supports 3,147 jobs in the community with more than 700 jobs being from sectors other than higher education.

By Bill O'Boyle
boboyle@timesleader.com

Ooms said she ran a high-level model of economic impact based on the number of employees at Wilkes, Kings, Misericordia, LCCC, and PSU/WB. She said since it is based only on current employment and doesn't include student and visitor spending, it is a very conservative estimate of the economic impact in Luzerne County.

"Luzerne County has a number of higher education institutions which

the primary driver determining if a business will locate in a region."

Ooms said from the community college programs to the professional degree programs, higher education creates the region's workforce pipeline.

"Equally important and mostly overlooked, higher education is an economic driver in and of itself," Ooms said. "The institutions are criticized for being nonprofits, i.e. exempt from property taxes, but their economic impact supports our communities in so many different ways."

Ooms said the colleges and universities are major employers with family-sustaining jobs. She said employees reinvest their earnings in the region through purchasing local goods and services. And the schools themselves buy local goods and services.

"Further, there is impact of student spending and additional

spending when their families and friends come to visit," Ooms said. "Finally, their capital projects create short-term economic boosts through construction. All in all, their collective annual economic impact — not including student and visitor spending — is about \$421 million annually, and they employ about 2,000 individuals."

Wico Van Genderen, president/CEO of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce, said there is a "collegiate energy" in Luzerne County that now extends from downtown Wilkes-Barre to the Back Mountain and beyond.

"The alignment of business and academics makes for a great local economic ecosystem," Van Genderen said. "Wilkes, Kings, Misericordia, Penn State/Wilkes-Barre, and Luzerne County Community College have all expanded their programs and their facilities, resulting in more students and deeper specializations."

Van Genderen said Wilkes and Kings have seen the largest increases in incoming undergraduate and graduate students, resulting in new downtown investments and a regional "college-town" vibe.

Strong academic capital provides a great ecosystem for STEM-based innovation, research, entrepreneurial creativ-

ity and business activity — not just in higher education, but in critical specialty trades as well, Van Genderen said.

"With high demand for graduates of LCCC's welding, automotive and

community's social sector, you create "a fertile Petrie dish" producing sustainable economic momentum.

According to a 2017 study done by the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Pennsylvania, private colleges and universities play a major role in the state's economy:

- \$5.67 billion — Salaries and wages paid to employees, making private colleges and universities the fourth largest industry employer in PA.
 - \$9.6 billion — Institutional expenditures.
 - \$1.8 billion — Student and visitor spending (\$1.7 billion in student spending, \$155 million in visitor spending).
 - \$1.1 billion — Value of federal funds received for research and development projects.
 - \$945 million — Construction and renovation projects.
 - \$167 million — State payroll taxes.
 - \$136 million — Municipal taxes (wages and local services taxes).
 - \$17.9 billion — Total economic impact of private college and universities in Pennsylvania.
- Another recent study done by the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania — The Economic Impact of Independent Higher Education in Pennsylvania — revealed that the nearly 290,000 students enrolled at independent colleges and universities in Pennsylvania spend \$1 billion annually, or \$2.7 million a day at local Pennsylvania businesses. The total economic impact of this spending is \$1.7 billion.
- Student spending in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre region was reported at \$335 million. Students spent their money on:
- Book publishers
 - General merchandise stores
 - Grocery and convenience stores
 - Real estate rentals
 - Amusement and recreation establishments
 - Restaurants
 - Clothing stores
 - Telecommunications and utilities
 - Furniture and home furnishing stores
 - Wholesale trade industries

Reach Bill O'Boyle at 570-991-6118 or on Twitter @TLBillOBoyle.



Ooms

contribute so much to the region," Ooms said. "First, they support economic development activities since they have the capacity to provide a trained and skilled workforce. Workforce is



Van Genderen

additive manufacturing programs, there's now a waiting list to enroll at LCCC's Technology Center," he said. "Add academic capital, business innovation, and community leadership and you have a strong synergy in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

Van Genderen said by connecting the colleges and universities to the growing and diverse businesses and to the

Bashar W. Hanna, Bloomsburg University



Submitted

Dr. Bashar W. Hanna has served as the 19th president of Bloomsburg University since 2017.



Name: Dr. Bashar W. Hanna

Title: President of Bloomsburg University

Quote: "It takes a village. Every student who comes to Bloomsburg and enrolls will find a village of people working to help them succeed."

BLOOMSBURG — There are many practical reasons for Dr. Bashar W. Hanna to take an interest in the needs of first-generation college students.

By Roger DuPuis
rdupuis@timesleader.com

There's also a very personal motivation: He once was one of them.

"I am profoundly proud that 35 percent of our freshmen are first-generation college students," said Hanna, who has served as the 19th president of Bloomsburg University since 2017.

Hanna and his family emigrated to the U.S. from Syria four decades ago, and as a fifth-grader barely spoke English.

Today, he is an accomplished academic and administrator who leads the third largest of the 14 universities in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, with more than 9,600 students, 56 undergraduate programs and 20 graduate programs.

"When you recruit and enroll that high a percentage of first-generation students, the reality is there is also a responsibility that's very unique to that population of students," Hanna said.

"Many of them didn't

have a support system at home to help them navigate — first the application process, but also the matriculation and successful completion (of a degree), because mom and dad never went through it," he added.

In a larger sense, however, helping students complete their degrees and succeed in careers is a key focus for Hanna and Bloomsburg.

"We have a national epidemic, in my mind, where only 50 percent of college-bound students end up finishing a degree," Hanna said.

"I think it is a national catastrophe in the making when you have millions of students out there with some college credit, no degree, but almost all of them have loans that they cannot afford to pay back," he said.

"So we are looking at ways to ensure that students do not leave because of financial burdens," Hanna added. "We're working with our donors to make sure there

are emergency scholarships available for students so we can remove obstacles that are not academic, and that could stand in the way of them earning their degrees."

Bloomsburg also has a program known as "Professional U," which is designed to connect

"Every student, regardless of where they're from, the color of their skin, the gender they subscribe to, comes here and first and foremost feels like they belong on campus in a welcoming environment where they can thrive."

students with professional opportunities off campus in order to help integrate their academic experience with "real world" settings that will help them succeed after graduation.

"This aims at looking at the student's entire education, not just the classroom that the student participates in," Hanna said.

"We work with our

alumni and business partners to make opportunities available to as many students as we can to get professional experience, whether it's shadowing someone in the industry the student is studying or whether it's an internship for the semester or summer, whether it's

undergrad research experience," he said.

He also sees several "hallmark programs" on campus:

- Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

"Which is remarkable given that some of the private (schools) in Penn-

sylvania that charge three times our tuition are nowhere near those kinds of pass rates," Hanna said.

- The university's accounting program "continues to be a leader," he said, adding that graduates "are incredibly successful in passing the CPA exam."

- More recently, Bloomsburg also created a digital forensics program, which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said.

Background
Hanna earned his B.A. in biology; his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University.

Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty at Del-

aware Valley University in Doylestown from 2011 until 2016.

He previously served as associate provost at Ithaca College in Ithaca, N.Y.; and before that was dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and interim provost at Kutztown University.

His vision for Bloomsburg is a place where "every student, regardless of where they're from, the color of their skin, the gender they subscribe to, comes here and first and foremost feels like they belong on campus in a welcoming environment where they can thrive," he said, "as well as providing students with opportunities that differentiate them when they're out looking for jobs."



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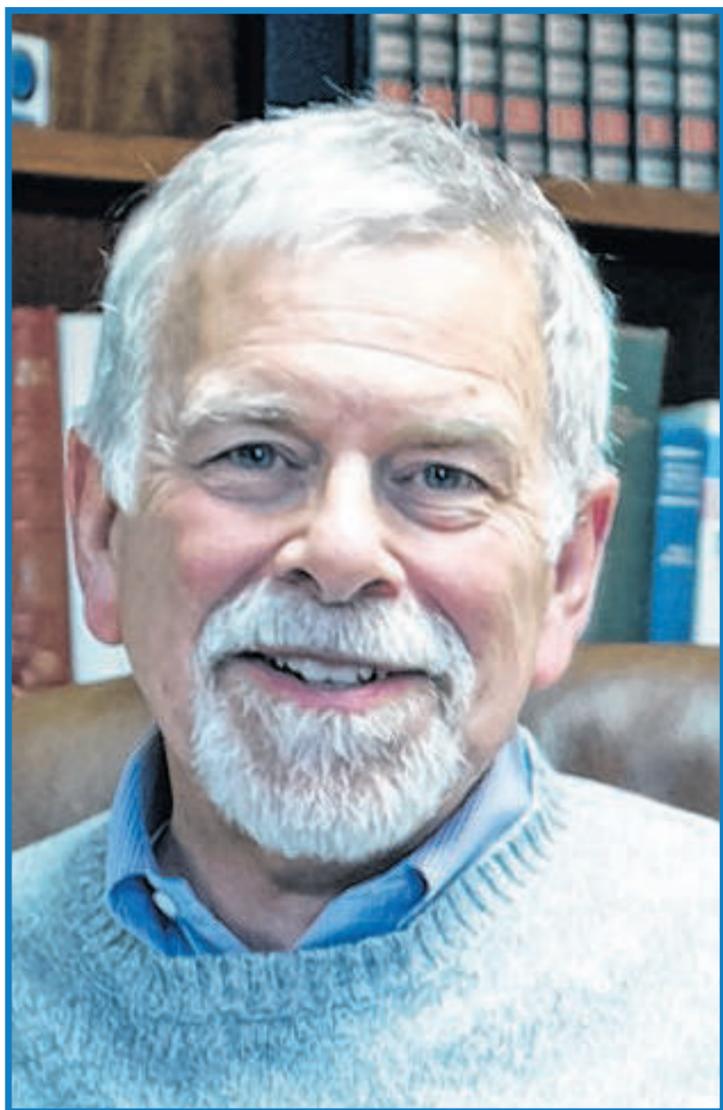
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Jim Lytle, Clarks Summit University



Name: Jim Lytle

Title: President of Clarks Summit University

Years in post: 4

Quote: "Over the years, what I've seen it do for people when they are able to get what the Bible teaches and pair that with a career, they are confident, ethical people. They are the kind of employees that employers want."

Jim Lytle has served as president of Clarks Summit University since January 1, 2015. He first came to the school, then named Baptist Bible College, as a student in 1973.

SOUTH ABINGTON TWP. – Jim Lytle and his wife had spent 14 years in South Africa.

Times Leader staff

Lytle was serving as president of Baptist Bible College of KwaZulu-Natal, and he and his wife, Diane, helped establish Bethany Baptist Church.

However, the Lytles had accomplished what they set out to do in South Africa and were looking to move on.

That's when Lytle's friend predecessor as president at Clarks Summit University offered him a chance to return to the school he had first set foot on in 1973. He did so in 2007, taking on the role of vice president for college and graduate academics and professor of Bible and theology. Then in 2008 he was appointed provost, before becoming president on Jan. 1, 2015.

Lytle earned his Bachelor of Science degree at CSU, and meet his wife, who was also a student there.

He then went on to

earn his Master of Divinity and Master of Theology degrees from BBS and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

It was while working on his Master of Divinity degree that he took a part-time position at CSU teaching "Studies in the Psalms." Then, to his surprise, the college offered him a full-time position the next summer. For the next 14 years, he taught classes and led summer ministries. His family moved into a girls dormitory, of which Diane was the resident director.

It was then that the opportunity in South

Africa opened.

Lytle was happy to return to school in 2007 because he saw a chance to expand its mission.

"Baptist Bible College basically prepared people for local church ministry,"

"They are the kind of employees that employers want."

Lytle said, referring to the school by its original name. "(The administration) was open to making a bunch of changes without losing its basic mission.

"It was a chance to make the school something it hadn't been before without losing its what it had been."

The school now offers more than 40 programs.

Undergraduate programs include one-year Bible certificate, two-year Associate of Arts and four-year Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts degrees. Graduate studies include: Master of Science in

Counseling Ministries, Master of Education and Master of Arts. Seminary studies include: Master of Ministry, Master of Arts in Biblical Apologetics, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Biblical Studies.

Lytle has seen students excel in those courses.

"Over the years, what I've seen it do for people when they are able to get what the Bible teaches and pair that with a career, they are confident, ethical people," Lytle said. "They are the kind of employees that employers want."

"I love what the school does for people."

And he would love to see more students take advantage of the school's offerings.

"Back in the day, when we had a more narrow mission, a lot of folks didn't fit," Lytle said.

But that has changed. "If people want our type of education, we are open to that. We want to serve our area."

As Lytle looks to the future, he sees the school offering more online opportunities for stu-

dents.

He also fondly looks back on the school's history.

In 2018, Clarks Summit University marked its 50th year in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The school was founded as Baptist Bible Seminary in 1932 in Johnson City, N.Y. It moved to its current location on Benard Road in 1968.

The school will mark another anniversary in 2019, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the construction of its main building. It originally served as a high school for boys.

It is now the central building of a campus that currently serves about 1,000 students, including 300 on-campus residents.

And Lytle sees plenty of opportunity for growth.

"There are people out there in a 300-mile radius looking for this," he said.

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Marcia G. Welsh, East Stroudsburg University



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Marcia Welsh has been president of East Stroudsburg University since July of 2012.

EAST STROUDSBURG – East Stroudsburg University President Marcia G. Welsh recently made a trip around campus during final exams, bringing with her a variety of cookies to fuel student brains and express her good wishes.

By Geri Gibbons
For Times Leader

Bringing the treats to various dorms has become a tradition for Welsh, who said it was a one of her favorite times of the year.

As the 13th president of the university and the first female that has served in that role, she has worked hard to pro-

pus, you realize how well (the students and faculty) work together. We are very lucky."

The university, which averages about 6,500 students, has a reputation for innovation and entrepreneurship, she said.

"We emphasize the importance of investing and collaborating with the community and the region," she said.

considering using some of those ideas," she said. "These students do excellent work."

Welsh said encouraging a spirit of entrepreneurship among its students, goes beyond those who are hoping to someday start a business, but instead encompasses all students, encouraging them to have a voice in the community and to

analyze ticks sent from all over the country, to see if they carry Lyme disease.

Welsh also emphasized the university's commitment to making its education accessible to as many people as possible.

The school recently implemented the Warrior Promise initiative which guarantees incoming undergraduate students that they will pay the same tuition rate for the next four years.

"We want to remain affordable," she said. "We are also increasing the number of scholarships available to our students."

Welsh believes the university's relationship with the region is a "win-win" providing opportunities for students to interact with high quality businesses and organizations, and then to also benefit those businesses with well-trained, well-educated members of the workforce.



Name: Marcia G. Welsh

Title: President of East Stroudsburg University

Years as president: 6

Quote: "We emphasize the importance of investing and collaborating with the community and the region."



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

East Stroudsburg University President Marcia Welsh meets with Vice President of Administration and Finance Kenneth Long and Vice President and Chief of Staff Miguel Barbosa in her office.

vide a spirit of diversity and positivity that serves as a springboard for future success.

"I believe that our campus is one of the most diverse in our region," she said. "As you make your way through cam-

Students from the Sports Management program, for example, recently spent time with the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders minor league baseball team, offering marketing ideas. "I believe they are

steer the course of their careers in whatever field they choose.

The university's Northeast Wildlife DNA laboratory initiative, for example, recently received a grant which will make it possible for students to



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

East Stroudsburg University President Marcia Welsh works at her desk. Welsh believes the school's campus is 'one of the most diverse in our region.'

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Raquel Sosa
Psychology Major
Wilkes-Barre, PA

President of the ESU chapter of Active Minds; president of Psi Chi; peer mentor to incoming freshmen.

ESU.edu

Madeline Levy Cruz, Fortis University



Levy Cruz

Fred Adams | For Times Leader

In the seven years that Madeline Levy Cruz has served as the president of Fortis Institute's Scranton and Forty-Fort campuses, she has seen the school grow, adapting to the needs of its students and providing the workforce with skilled employees.

By Geri Gibbons
For Times Leader

Cruz described the school as the "premier locations for occupational training in our area."

"Not everyone succeeds at traditional education. Career training allows people to find a career that can help them change their future outlook in a very short period of time," she said, "Whether it's Allied Health, dental, nursing, trades or CDL,

our schools run a full gamut of programming for all interests that not only positively

impacts the student but the community as we provide a viable and excellent workforce for Northeastern Pennsylvania."

Cruz believes the best way to learn about the opportunities the college offers is for potential students to call or stop by.

"It's so important to put a face to every student," she said. "We care about each individual."

Cruz said when she came to the school, she was determined to make

a difference and to adequately prepare students for the work world and to benefit the community as an institution.

"When I first came on board, I wanted to make sure that our schools partnered with other community organizations and employers to provide the best training possible for our students in their chosen field," she said.

"To that end, I made sure that our instructors had plenty of field experience in addition to didactic training."

Additionally, under Cruz's watch, the school grew its network of internship providers and clinical sites to ensure students had real-time field experience before they graduate.

Cruz's open door policy allows her to get to know students and to assist them in determining what best suits their needs in regard to education and career planning.

"My door is always open, I love hearing their stories and knowing them as individuals," she said. "I frequently say that my favorite day of the year is commencement because

I get to experience their joy at achieving their goals, while understanding many of the obstacles they may have gone through to get to that day."

When asked to define the environment of the school, Cruz said "friendly."

"The one thing I hear the most from both our students and visitors to the school is how friendly everyone is," she said. "I love that people get that vibe and it opens things up for them to feel very comfortable approaching faculty and staff with any issues, concerns or just to share a victory."

The Scranton and Forty Fort campus of the school serves upwards of 300 students.



Name: Madeline Levy Cruz

Title: President of Fortis Institute Scranton and Fortis Institute Forty Fort

Quote: "Career training allows people to find a career that can help them change their future outlook in a very short period of time."



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Madeline Levy Cruz is president of Fortis Institute's Scranton and Forty Fort campuses.



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Fortis Institute President Madeline Levy Cruz describes the school as the 'premier locations for occupational training in our area.'

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Steven J. Scheinman, M.D., Geisinger School of Medicine

President touts partnership with health system



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

President and Dean Steven J. Scheinman, M.D., of Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Scranton, is shown working at his desk at the medical college.

SCRANTON — Steven J. Scheinman, M.D., has been around at the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine almost since the beginning.

By Patrick Kernan
pkernan@timesleader.com

Serving as the school's president and dean since 2012, only a few short years after its founding, Scheinman has been able to watch the school grow and expand from a financially troubled institution to one with several campuses.

And, according to Scheinman, 2018 marked another big year of growth.

"It was a really good year for the medical school," Scheinman said, excitedly launching into a list of good news. "I could

brag about the students' success."

Students at the medical school had what Scheinman described as a "phenomenally successful" match day, where medical students are matched with residency programs.

"The integration of Geisinger has brought enormous benefit to the medical school," he said. "Now, we have four campuses."

Those include one each in Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, Sayre and Dan-

ville, with a fifth on the way in Atlantic City, N.J.

Scheinman said the opening of this fifth campus was going "smoothly." The school is currently in the process of being approved by the New Jersey Department of Education. And while a

formal ruling won't come down until February, he said the process is going well.

The school is preparing to have 18 students starting in Atlantic City next July.

'Fabulous open door' But the program Scheinman was perhaps most excited by was the Abigail Geisinger Scholars Program.

The recently announced initiative provides a full scholarship to students who commit to working for Geisinger for at least two years after graduation.

Currently, it is being offered to 10 students annually, but Scheinman is hoping it will be available to more in the coming years.

"The scholarship pro-

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine

Name: Steven J. Scheinman, M.D.

Title: President and dean of Geisinger School of Medicine

Years in post: 7

Quote: "It was a really good year for the medical school. I could brag about the students' success."

gram is wonderful," he said.

Reach Patrick Kernan at 570-991-6386 or on Twitter @PatKernan

Times Leader Media Group is proud to support the many prestigious colleges and universities in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties. Some of the Times Leader's most stand-out employees - from the newsroom to advertising to circulation and beyond - have succeeded because of the education they received in these schools.

As we begin a New Year, the Times Leader thanks these schools for the efforts they have made to better our communities and our residents.



Wilkes University

Johnson College students 'in demand'

President, CEO touts job placement rates, small class sizes



Johnson College President and CEO Katie Leonard says students at the small Scranton school enjoy high rates of job placement.



Name: Katie Leonard

Title: President and CEO of Johnson College

Quote: "Our students are in demand. Employers are basically telling me we can't produce them fast enough. This past year, close to 60 percent of our graduating class was placed in-field at the time of graduation, many of which had more than one job offer, which speaks volumes to the type of quality student we're reproducing."

SCRANTON — Johnson College, founded more than a century ago by a wealthy coal baron, is producing students who are "in demand."

Lyndsay Bartos
lbartos@timesleader.com

And that's part of the reason the two-year technical college founded in 1912 continues to thrive.

"Our students are in demand. Employers are basically telling me we can't produce them fast enough," said Johnson President and CEO Katie Leonard. "This past year, close to 60 percent of our graduating class was placed in-field at the time of graduation, many of which had more than one job offer, which speaks volumes to the type of quality student we're producing."

Leonard continued: "Nobody has the kind of connection to industry that we do. Year after year — I've been here for over 11 years in different roles — I had the opportunity to talk to students, and when I ask them what is the main

reason they chose to attend Johnson College, typically nine times out of 10, they say it's because of our high in-field job placement rates."

These deep roots in industry gained Johnson College recognition with Forbes. This year, the school was ranked No. 10 on a list of colleges working to close the "skills gap." This ranking was based on performance indicators such as retention, graduation, and job placement rates.

"Small and mighty" The school also emphasizes small class sizes, so there can be more focus

on individual students and their advancement. Leonard likes to refer to the school as "small and mighty." She views a smaller student population (450) as a strength because it allows Johnson

to customize education plans for all students, who might feel like they are just a number at a larger school. "The average age of

our student has skewed a little bit older so we really try to take the time to listen to their unique needs and work with them to craft a success plan to help them achieve their goals," Leonard said.

In developing that plan, the college takes into consideration a student's career path, life, academic goals, as well as many other factors.

Johnson's student body has steadily increased over the years, and Leonard is hoping to have 500 people enrolled in classes by 2020.

But the school isn't simply looking to add enrollment. Future plans include adapting curriculum to meet the needs of ever-changing industries. "We do assessments on an annual basis. We look at swapping out classes and new programs," said Leonard. "Right now, we're developing a partnership with the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport to introduce younger stu-

dents to potential careers in aviation maintenance. We're planning to do that this spring."

Amid all the changes, though, the school still promotes the same mission that founder Orlando S. Johnson laid out decades ago.

Johnson left the bulk of his estate to create an institution "where young men and women can be taught useful arts and trades that may enable them to make an honorable living and become contributing members of society."

That starts right away for some.

"I want to immerse students in industry from their very first week on campus," said Leonard. "Many students are working on real projects, construction sites and with real clients in their first semester with us."

"I want to immerse students in industry from their very first week on campus."

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Wilkes University

Tracy Brundage, Keystone College



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Tracy Brundage took over as president of Keystone College in La Plume in July.

LA PLUME – Tracy Brundage assumed the role of president of Keystone College last July. As the 11th president of the college, she is filled with enthusiasm and purpose.

By Geri Gibbons
For Times Leader

“We have such a proud and distinguished past, and I look forward to helping our college move forward into a new and ever-changing future,” she said. “Most importantly, I look forward to helping our students reach their

full potential, not only during their time on campus but in years following graduation.”

Brundage said the college, celebrating its 150th anniversary, has a mission consistent with the one the school was founded on over a decade-and-a-half ago.

“Our society is evolving at a pace our predecessors

could not fathom. Our job as educators is to continue to develop students who have the education and skills to succeed in an ever-changing world,” she said. “We must continue to develop the transferable skills our students will need for success upon graduation. We know they must be able to think and learn, analyze, communicate, and problem-solve in this rapidly and ever-changing world of work.”

Brundage said not only is the college preparing students for existing jobs, but also providing them with “new-to-market” skills not always included in a job description.

“We must look around the corner to meet the needs and demands of tomorrow while always striving to prepare students for continuous lifelong learning, leadership and citizenship,” she said. “In short, we must transition from ‘where we are now’ to ‘where we go next’ while upholding the values that make Keystone such a special place.”

Brundage said Keystone goes beyond simply providing academic knowledge, instead, it empowers students to

make their dreams realities.

“We’ve recently added programs that go the extra mile to provide even more value as we help students achieve their goals,” she said.

For example, • Keystone Commitment is a loan re-payment program that helps students pursue the careers of their choice without the constant worry of long-term debt.

• The KC Encompass program eliminates the burdensome cost of purchasing textbooks each semester.

• The Stairs to Success four-year plan enables students to develop a meaningful and timely path to academic, personal and career success.

• The long-standing Keystone Promise is a pledge that the school will prepare our students and then stand by them after they graduate.

The college has also expanded its athletic offerings. In particular, it looks forward to seeing the new varsity football team play its first game first game in 2019.

When asked what makes Keystone College stand out among other learning institutions,

Keystone College

Name: Tracy Brundage

Title: President of Keystone College

Years as president: 1

Quote: “Our society is evolving at a pace our predecessors could not fathom. Our job as educators is to continue to develop students who have the education and skills to succeed in an ever-changing world.”



Brundage

Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Brundage cites the value of its education and the spirit of community that motivates students to serve.

“We are a college that cares about each other and about our community, as evidenced by the

26,000 hours of service hours our students perform each year at places like senior citizens homes, soup kitchens, and neighborhood parks and playgrounds,” she said.



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Keystone College

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Rev. John Ryan, C.S.C., King's College



King's College President Rev. John Ryan earned an accounting degree from cross-town rival Wilkes.

Sean McKeag file photos | Times Leader

WILKES-BARRE — Before helping to move King's College in a new direction with athletics and academic courses, President Rev. John Ryan, C.S.C., wasn't always an educator let alone a priest.

By Dan Stokes
dstokes@timesleader.com

"I never had any ambitions to be a college president," Ryan said. "It wasn't on my bucket list of things to do. The journey was a long one to get where I (am) today."

Ryan, a Wilkes-Barre native, obtained his accounting degree from Wilkes University, then a college, in 1971 after he graduated from Coughlin High School.

Ryan then worked for as an accountant for a large international engineering firm from 1971 to 1984.

"It was very interesting

work that allowed me to travel," said Ryan. "I was able to get by MBA from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia."

After receiving his MBA, Ryan, at 34 years old, entered the Seminary at Notre Dame University in 1984.

"I was able to teach a finance course at the university because of my business background," Ryan recalled. "When I walked into the class, I felt I had just lowered the IQ of the room. It was very intimidating at first, but I really liked it. I got a taste of higher education early on and I never forgot it."

Ryan went on to get his master of divinity from the University of Toronto. Shortly after, Ryan recalled a phone call he received a call from the provincial of Holy Cross.

"I got a phone call learning that the congregation was building a new business school at King's College," Ryan said. "He knew I couldn't refuse because Wilkes-Barre is my home town and that I held business degrees."

Ryan was a professor in the McGowan School of Business for 10 years before he took over as Dean of the business school.

"I really enjoyed the

external part of that job, meeting alumni and starting up the business forum," he said.

The business forum is an annual event held every year in the business school that the college takes a bus load or two of students to travel to meet King's College alumni in Philadelphia, Washington D.C. and New York City.

Ryan credits his prior role as business school dean for preparing him to become King's College president.

"I was selected and I really have enjoyed the many parts of my job," he mentioned. "When I travel and get to meet alumni



KING'S COLLEGE
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Name: Rev. John Ryan

Title: President of King's College

Quote: "Everyone at the college, no matter their role has their own part of transforming these young men and women's hearts and minds. Creating knowledge and preparing these students for the future is a great asset."



Sean McKeag file photos | Times Leader

and hear their stories is great.

"Men and women, many of whom are first generation college graduates are able to identify with the demographic of students enrolled at the college."

Since Ryan's role overseeing the college, new athletic and academic programs have seen great growth, but he mentioned how his role can be tough.

"It's tough to mediate resource allocation because everyone has great ideas," Ryan said. "Saying no to a good idea because there is a better

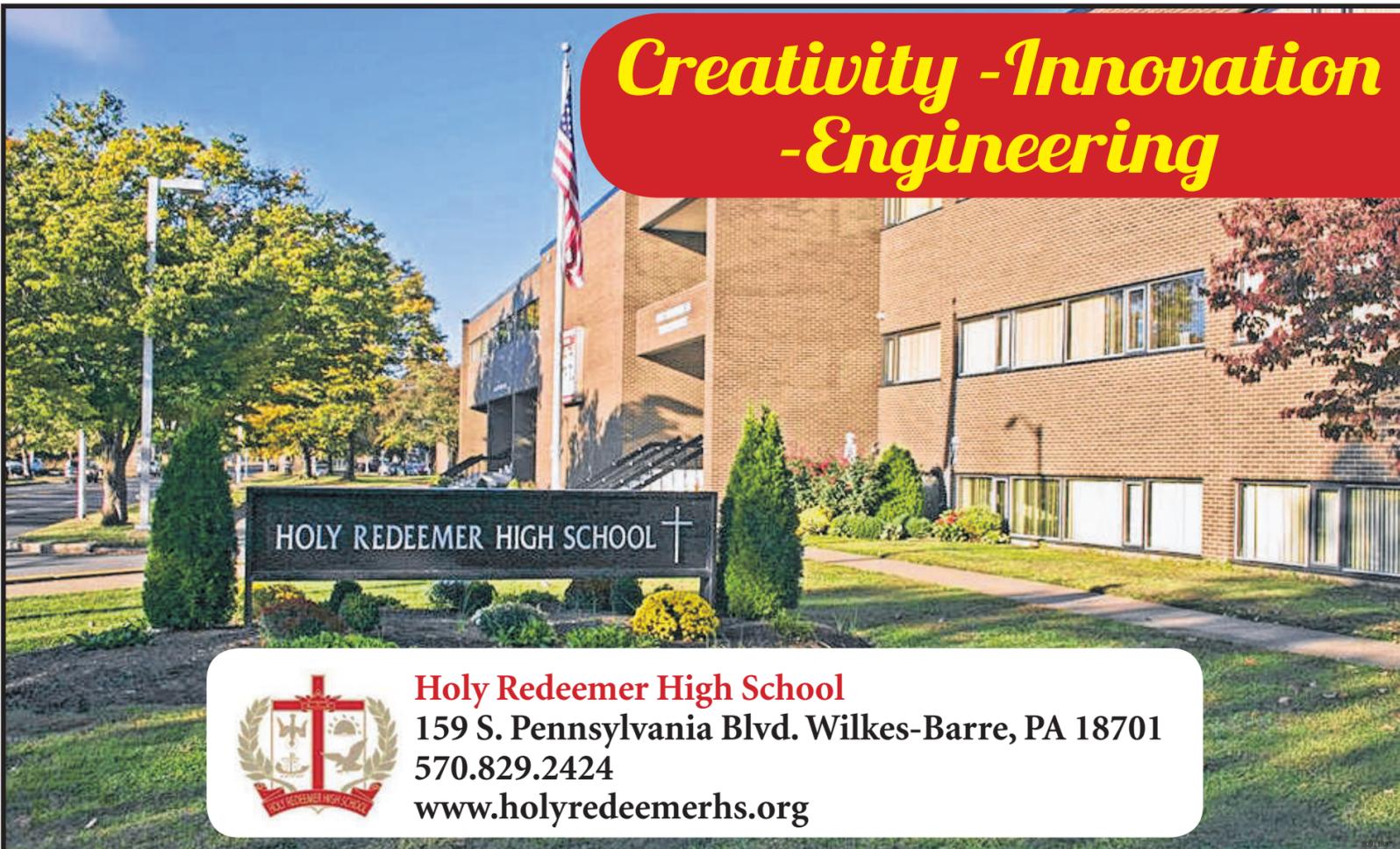
one is hard. But at the end, I make the decision what's best for the college."

Ryan credits everyone at the college for its students success.

"Everyone at the college, no matter their role has their own part of transforming these young men and women's hearts and minds," Ryan said. "Creating knowledge and preparing these students for the future is a great asset."

Reach Dan Stokes at 570-991-6389 or on Twitter @ByDanStokes

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Mark Volk, Lackawanna College



Mark Volk, president of Lackawanna College, exits his office to attend a meeting.

Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

Mark Volk is not your average college president.

By Marcella Kester
For Times Leader

He even says so himself.

The Lackawanna College president and Army veteran can offer advice on anything from education, raising a family and even how to navigate a hot air balloon or be a beekeeper.

Volk has used all these

skills – and more – to create an optimal area college for all.

A native of Easton, Volk found himself a pre-law/history major at the University of Scranton in 1973. It was there that he met his wife, Lynn, and within two years the couple was married and had their first child.

Soon after, it became

apparent to Volk that he would have to rearrange his educational priorities.

“We were blessed to have the support of both our families, but I realized that law school was not going to be possible then – and, in reality, I had for most of my life felt a calling to serve as an officer in the military,” he said. “Perhaps it was destiny, but I met one of the Army ROTC instructors at Scranton one day and that began a life-changing set of events.”

Volk met former Lackawanna College president and ROTC instructor Ray Angeli, who became a friend and mentor. With Angeli’s help and the creation of a new dual enrollment program, Volk was able to complete all of the necessary ROTC requirements and graduate from the University of Scranton.

He spent the next 26 years on active duty in the Army, earning a degree in National Security and Strategy from the National War College before ultimately retiring as a colonel.

It was Angeli who con-

vinced Volk to return to Scranton, joining Lackawanna College in 2004 as the special assistant to the president. He spent the next eight years in various roles at the college until becoming the executive vice president, later applying for the role as Lackawanna College president after Angeli’s retirement.

“Perhaps the best part of moving from the EVP position to president was that I had already worked with the amazing group

and enter the job market at age 18 already having an associate’s degree at a cost of \$6,200 or less? To complete a bachelor’s degree in only a year or two post high school?” he said. “Imagine the impact that could have on the total cost of an education and the value of money when one can enter the workforce years earlier with little to no loan debt. We see this as one of our most impactful programs ever offered.”

Lackawanna College has also expanded available programs in their health-care and sciences fields, and is the first college in the area to offer degrees in petroleum and natural gas technology. Listening to student requests, Volk also announced that the school now offers six different bachelor degree programs and will be unveiling an online-only RN to BSN program in January.

“At \$299 per credit, our program is among the lowest-priced in the country. We believe it will provide tremendous opportunities locally and nationally for RNs to complete

the BSN degrees, helping to meet shortages in all of our area-wide medical facilities,” he continued.

When it comes to choosing a college, the president asks students to consider what’s really important and to be mindful of what their tuition dollars are going toward. While it’s nice to attend a beautiful campus with tons of lavish extras, those luxuries have no impact on one’s actual education and worth in the workforce, he said.

Volk and his staff have worked to not only keep Lackawanna College affordable, but for it to remain rich in diversity, programs and uniqueness – something he himself believes deeply in.

“After all, how many hot air balloon chasing, beekeeping, vintage sniper rifle shooting, tattooed college presidents do you know? At least one. Life is too short not to enjoy it and if I can do anything beyond my basic role of leading this fabulous college, it will be to show people that being who you are is more important than who others think you should be,” he said.

Visit Lackawanna.edu to learn more about Volk and Lackawanna College.



Name: Mark Volk

Job title: President of Lackawanna College

Years of service: 14.5

Quote: “Higher education should be about pushing you out of your comfort zone, not surrounding yourself with ideas and opinions you already hold.”

“Being who you are is more important than who others think you should be.”

of leaders at the college, so the transition into my new role was fairly easy. We’d already begun to work on a set of priorities and continued that process.”

A top priority for Volk has been the Lackawanna Level Up program, which allows high school students the opportunity to earn college credits during the summer, thus giving them the chance of having an associate’s degree by the time they graduate.

“Imagine being able to graduate high school

Times Leader Media Group is proud to support the many prestigious colleges and universities in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties. Some of the Times Leader’s most stand-out employees - from the newsroom to advertising to circulation and beyond - have succeeded because of the education they received in these schools.

As we begin a New Year, the Times Leader thanks these schools for the efforts they have made to better our communities and our residents.



Wilkes University

Thomas P. Leary, Luzerne County Community College



Sean McKeag | For Times Leader
Luzerne County Community College President Thomas Leary stands for a portrait in his office on the college campus in Nanticoke.

NANTICOKE — In his 12 years as president of Luzerne County Community College, Thomas P. Leary can list a lot of accomplishments.

By Bill O'Boyle
boboyle@timesleader.com

But when you ask him to tell you what he is most proud of, he smiles and talks about the students he serves — more than 5,000 each year — and the average age of those students being 28. “The role of a community college is so important,” Leary said. “We provide an opportunity for many who never imagined they would pursue a college education. But they come here and they are successful.”

Leary gives a typical example of an LCCC student — a single mother who postponed her education to care for her family.

“She had a responsibility of raising her children and now wants to pursue a career so she can better provide for her family,” Leary said. “She comes here and she finds a path — an area she finds interesting — and it’s available at an affordable cost. That’s what a community college is all about. This is a special place that

literally changes people’s lives.”

Leary, 67, began his career at LCCC more than 30 years ago, serving as assistant director of admissions. During his career, he has served in several senior leadership positions including vice president of student development for approximately nine years. In February 2008, he was inaugurated as the sixth president of the college. He also serves as an adjunct professor of history and political science.

Leary received a bachelor’s degree from King’s College, a master’s degree from the University of Scranton, and worked on post-graduate studies in a doctoral program at Temple University.

Leary said he most enjoys interacting with the students, helping them adjust to challenges they may face when arriving on campus.

“It’s amazing to watch how their lives change while they are here,” Leary said. “And we have small class sizes here, giving students the opportu-

nity to know the faculty and connect and interact. Our faculty members are very passionate about what they do.”

Leary said he is always pleased when people come up to him in the community and they credit LCCC for their success in life. He said they tell him they, too, give back to the community.

To meet the unique needs of students, Leary said LCCC makes education and training available throughout the region, serving the community at the 167-acre main campus in Nanticoke, plus 10 off-campus sites, including dedicated sites in downtown Wilkes-Barre, Pittston, Hazleton, Berwick, Scranton and Shamokin.

Growth is key to LCCC and Leary said it continues. The LCCC foundation has increased from \$2.5 million to \$6.5 million.

“That speaks to the impact LCCC is having in the community,” he said.

Accomplishments

- Joseph A. Pagliarone Culinary Institute opened.
- Francis S. and Mary Gill Carrozza, R.N. Health Sciences Center opened, which also includes the Benco Dental Clinic.
- Expansion of the Public Safety Training Institute to include the Walk of Honor.
- Increase in community and alumni fundraising efforts for scholarships, capital and instructional equipment — foundation

and alumni have grown to \$6.9 million over the past 10 years; scholarship awards have grown to approximately \$350,000 in scholarships awarded to students each year.

- Expanded articulation agreements and dual admission agreements with many four-year colleges and universities in the region.

- Growth of the Early College Program which serves high school students.

- Patrick J. Solano Veterans Center opened.

- Establishment of a tobacco-free campus.

- Participated in \$10 million Department of Labor TAACCCT Grant to prepare students for high demand occupations.

- Partnered with Luzerne County Head Start to establish a center on campus.

- Creation of the Goldman Sachs Learning Center at the LCCC Northumberland Regional Center in Shamokin.

ESL program
LCCC launched a new English as a Second Language (ESL) program which offers credit equivalent courses to potential full-time and part-time college students whose first language is not English.

The program is a new English language skill building program for academic purposes, designed to bridge the gap that exists for a growing population of non-native English speakers who wish to earn a college degree or

validate an international college credential.

Human Services

The LCCC Human Services program specializes in addiction recovery and is designed to prepare students for work in the drug and alcohol field specializing in peer support recovery.

The curriculum was created in conjunction with Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance (PRO-A). It is for individuals interested in pursuing the Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) credential through the PA Certification Board (PCB).

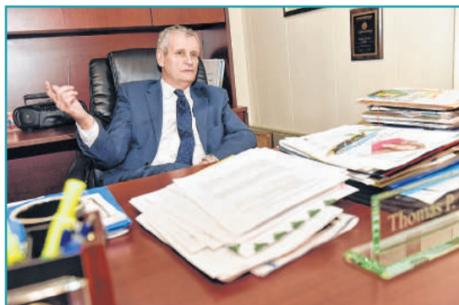
History

LCCC has been serving the community since it first opened on River Street in Wilkes-Barre in October 1967. Today, LCCC offers more than 100 degree, certificate and diploma programs and an extensive array of non-credit programming to almost 16,000 students each year.

“So much has changed, yet one constant remains the same — our mission to serve our students and the community,” Leary said.

Reach Bill O’Boyle at 570-991-6118 or on Twitter @TLBillOBoyle.

Name: Thomas P. Leary
Title: President of Luzerne County Community College
Years in post: 12
Quote: “The role of a community college is so important. We provide an opportunity for many who never imagined they would pursue a college education. But they come here and they are successful.”



Sean McKeag | For Times Leader
Luzerne County Community College President Thomas Leary discusses accomplishments during his 12-years as president of the college in Nanticoke.

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Sister Mary Persico, Marywood University



Marywood University President Sister Mary Persico feels back home at the Scranton campus. She's held the top position at Marywood since 2016. Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

SCRANTON — For Sister Mary Persico, president of Scranton's Marywood University, the school has always had a special place in her heart.

By Patrick Kernan
pkernan@timesleader.com

"If I had to be working anywhere, I'd like it to be here," Persico said.

Taking on the role of the university's 12th president in 2016 was a homecoming of sorts for Persico, a Hazleton native who attended the school previously. She's spent most of her life in education, working as the principal at Notre Dame High School in East Stroudsburg, Monroe County.

"I feel energized by young people," she noted.

Before taking on the presidency at Marywood, though, she worked for a stint with Trinity Health in Livonia,

Mich., a position that she said helped her make the transition into working in higher education.

And based on what Persico sees, she thinks higher education is changing.

"It's always been competitive, but now it's more so," she explained.

"Students want to be in-

non-traditional students than ever: adult learners who want to go back to school, first-generation students who might need a bit more financial help and others. She said that Marywood is working to meet the needs of all of these students.

Part of that, she said,

programs" — dietetics, architecture, nursing and physician assistant courses and speech language pathology — along with the traditional liberal arts.

She also said the university has been committed to adding new courses, such as an upcoming respiratory therapy program and a new professional writing course. Marywood has also been partnering with other universities and local organizations, like the Creative and Performing Arts Academy of NEPA, to bring new experiences to students.

After a recent brand research project, Marywood has a new "brand promise,"

which is emblazoned on the inside of the university's magazine: "From day

Marywood

UNIVERSITY

Name: Sister Mary Persico

Title: President

Years in post: 3

Quote: "It's always been competitive, but now it's more so. Students want to be in-demand immediately."

one, Marywood empowers students to discover their passion and realize their purpose."

She said this promise has struck a chord with alumni she's discussed it with.

"A lot of alumni have told me they found their purpose here," she said.

And, in many ways, it seems as though Persico herself has found her purpose at Marywood.

"When I was younger, I thought I'd never come back," she recalled, saying she planned to leave the region. But even though she did that for some time, she was still drawn back by Marywood's opportunity.

"It's always good to come home."

Reach Patrick Kernan at 570-991-6386 or on Twitter @PatKernan



Marywood University President Sister Mary Persico, IHM. Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

demand immediately."

In addition to this, Persico said there are more

includes a deeper focus on what she called the university's "signature



M

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Tom Botzman, Misericordia University



Misericordia University President Tom Botzman sits in his office.

Aimee Dilger | Times Leader

DALLAS TWP. — Sage advice from the president of Misericordia University: If your mother crafts a clever clown costume for Halloween out of crepe paper, stay dry.

By Mark Guydish
mguydish@timesleader.com

“I did not realize I would start to dissolve if I went bobbing for apples,” Tom Botzman recounted with a laugh. “I had unique coloration.”

Indeed, he tells a life story with a great deal of unique coloration. Immigrant parents from “somewhere in Eastern Europe;” both grandfathers working as miners in the aptly named coal town of Crucible, near Pittsburgh; growing up with 12 siblings in a house of about 1,100 square feet. (“We had six in one bedroom for a long time.”)

Then there was his most memorable pet, Brewster the Rooster. “Cramped” may describe childhood quarters inside the Akron, Ohio, homestead, but the yard boasted sufficient space for the strutting cock.

How could a university president spring from all this? Consider the old notion of standing on the shoulders of giants.

“I was surprised to get to go to college,” Botzman smiled. His father had skipped higher ed to fulfill a dream of becoming a machinist, his mother earned a degree and became a teacher aid and a librarian who worked with special needs students. There was not a lot of money to send 13 kids to school. “I couldn’t figure out how I was ever going to afford

it.”

Yet the parents set the precedent for tireless devotion to tough causes.

Dad made wooden toys in his spare time, including “At least 50 trains. He would give his creations to the school with the caveat that a toy reward “wasn’t for the smartest kid, it was for the kid who did the most to really try that year.”

Despite running a home of 15, mom found boundless hours to help others. “If there was a clothing drive, or a need to clean something up in a park, she had her own group to drop off and get the work done,” he smiled. “She was the county volunteer of the year.”

The high-achievement gene transferred to the 13 siblings. “All nine boys were Eagle Scouts, all four girls were Gold Star Girl Scouts.”

Somehow he managed to pay for a bachelor’s degree at Case Western in nearby Cleveland, thinking he would go pre-med but quickly realizing that wasn’t a good fit. As if subconsciously heeding the advice of Mr. McGuire in 1967’s *The Graduate*, Botzman gravitated toward one word: “Plastics.”

“It was a big thing,” he remembered. It was the late 1970s and “that was a big part of where the future of the economy was going.” When Goodyear announced they were opening a new tech

center in Akron, Botzman found his first job.

He also found the secret to success, in any job, one he readily admits using repeatedly since.

“I got to work with a lot of really smart people, many research types. My job was to find out what they were researching and try to make something out of it. All I had to do was figure out what to do with all those cool ideas.

“That has served me very well in higher education, where I’m surrounded by people who are a whole lot smarter than I am.”

After eight years and 12 patents at Goodyear, with a business degree earned at Kent State in his spare time, Botzman heard Mt. Union College was looking for a teacher in business statistics and international business. With zero teaching experience but ample hands-on knowledge in those topics (having worked in Luxembourg for Goodyear for a while), he made the leap to higher ed, teaching full-time.

The shoulders of giants continued to forge his success. “I was really fortunate to be working with a number of really outstanding teachers, so again that made the transition much smoother.”

Mt. Union was home for 15 years as he worked his way up to academic dean. Then he applied for a job at St. Mary’s College in Maryland as chief

financial officer for business. A lack of any accounting degree proved irrelevant.

“Same thing as when I went into teaching: Transferable skills, but not experienced doing exactly that,” he said. “I’d say 80 percent of working in higher education is building relationships.”

That lasted another nine years, until he landed the top spot at Misericordia. While vhe stresses the school was doing well when he came in 2013, he humbly offers a litany of accomplishments since arriving. New degree programs, new buildings, new stress on research (including a summer internship program), more parking, an expansion of the Women With Children program, numerous community service clinics in the health care field, a new full-tuition scholarship program.

The list is long, but the capstone is sure to be the largest capital campaign in the school’s history as they work to raise \$30



Name: Tom Botzman

Title: President of Misericordia University

Quote: “The world changes, we change with it. I’m not a polymer engineer anymore, and I’m certainly not in the Boy Scouts anymore. I don’t teach statistics courses anymore. But there are a lot of transferable skills that helped make me successful. That’s a lot of what we’re trying to build here.”

million (the previous high was \$19 million), and the soon-to-be new Henry Science Center, which will be the largest building on campus at 78,000 square feet, taking the title from iconic Mercy Hall itself, about 74,000 square feet.

“In 1921 they broke ground for Mercy Hall, by 2021 I’m hoping the science center will be done,” he said. “There is symmetry.”

As his history suggests, it has always been about leveling the playing field for the less advantaged. Even when asked his favorite Christmas gift, that idea comes out. “Rock ‘em Sock ‘em robots were big,” he laughs, “That was one where you had an equal opportunity, even if you weren’t the biggest person.”

And he admits his own story is one of unexpected success. “I’m the one they didn’t see coming.” That success shapes his view of higher ed, which he believes must prepare students for an “inter-professional” world where job boundaries are constantly blurred.

“The world changes, we change with it. I’m not a polymer engineer anymore, and I’m certainly not in the Boy Scouts anymore. I don’t teach statistics courses anymore. But there are a lot of transferable skills that helped make me successful.

“That’s a lot of what we’re trying to build here.”

Reach Mark Guydish at 570-991-6112 or on Twitter @TLMarkGuydish

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Davie Jane Gilmour, Penn College



Davie Jane Gilmour has been the president of Pennsylvania College of Technology for 20 years.

PENNSYLVANIA
COLLEGE OF
TECHNOLOGY

Name: Davie Jane Gilmour

Hometown: Williamsport

Job, title: President, Pennsylvania College of Technology

Years of service: 20 as President; 41 with the College

Looking back, it's easy to connect the dots that placed Davie Jane Gilmour in the position she's in today.

By Marcella Kester
For Times Leader

Gilmour is the president of the Pennsylvania College of Technology – also known also as Penn College – a local and national leader in delivering applied technology education while producing what Gilmour dubs “tomorrow makers” for the future.

“We are a student-centered institution that prides itself on teaching – often by faculty with real-world experience – and hands-on learning, reflecting our unique educational mission,” she said. “Our ultimate goal is to no longer be regarded as a ‘best-kept secret’ in higher education, but to be recognized both in Pennsylvania and nationwide for the success of our educational model and our reputation as a leader in workforce development.”

Originally from Enola, Gilmour said her mother, a teacher herself, and father pushed the idea of going to college from

a young age. Gilmour did just that, earning her bachelor's degree in dental hygiene at West Liberty University before landing the title as the first full-time instructor at Penn College (then named Williamsport Area Community College) when it began its new dental hygiene program.

She has been with the higher education system ever since, even earning her master's degree and a Ph.D. in health education from Penn State. Spending four decades at the school – 20 years as president – Gilmour has watched the college grow not only in its programs offered, but through the thousands of students who graduate into the workforce each

year. The college offers more than 100 academic programs with varying degree options, from Brewing and Fermentation Science to Gaming and Simulation Program-

plastics programs in the country.

Running a college doesn't come without its trials and tribulations, Gilmour noted, especially a college that primarily concentrates in fields

students, Gilmour said watching graduates flourish in the workplace after graduation makes all the struggles worthwhile.

“Keeping our lab equipment and facilities up-to-date to accommodate our applied technology focus is always challenging, given the associated costs, but we continually cooperate with business and industry to assist us in that regard,” she said, explaining that while students get to learn on state-of-the-art equipment businesses receive new graduates

who already have knowledge of how to use the equipment in the workplace.

Speaking of tuition costs, Gilmour was

pleased to announce that for the last six years Penn College has been able to keep tuition increases at just four percent or less. She said she does this through maximizing student scholarships, creating industry collaborations, controlling costs and more.

“Keeping tuition costs as low as possible is always a primary goal in our budgeting process; it is vital for our students, many of whom are the first from their families to attend college,” she said.

“Penn College is changing lives using the ‘future made by hand’ approach to technology education. We are not a technical college; we are a college of technology. Students get a complete education and a full college experience on the path to becoming ‘tomorrow makers’ and future leaders.”

For more information about the Pennsylvania College of Technology, visit pct.edu. The college's next open house is April 6.



Davie Jane Gilmour, president of the Pennsylvania College of Technology, has been at the school for four decades.

ing, Industrial Design to Nursing. It even has a bachelor's degree in Welding and Fabrication Engineering Technology – one of just six accredited

of ever-advancing technologies. Despite facing challenges of keeping the campus and programs up-to-date without pushing the cost of upkeep onto

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Gary Lawler, Penn State Hazleton



Gary Lawler taught at Adirondack Community College in Queensbury, N.Y., before coming to Penn State Hazleton.

HAZLETON – It was Northeastern Pennsylvania’s natural, scenic landscape that made Dr. Gary Lawler decide to make the Wyoming Valley his new home, relocating from Vermont to take on his position at Penn State Hazleton.

By Marcella Kester
For Times Leader

Lawler is the chancellor of the university branch, serving Penn State Hazleton and its surrounding community since 2007.

Before taking his position with the university, Lawler taught at Adiron-

dack Community College in Queensbury, N.Y., for more than two decades, which is where he earned his associate’s degree in math and science studies.

After obtaining a his bachelor’s degree, Lawler continued onto his master’s in math as well as a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction from the

State University of New York at Albany.

During his tenure at Penn State Hazleton, Lawler has spearheaded the “Every Student Counts!” initiative while sitting on various faculties, increasing diversity and programming, driving campus beautification and more. For the chancellor, its the people of Penn State Hazleton that make his job worthwhile.

“First, I’m most proud of the incredible students at Penn State Hazleton. They are bright, respectful, diverse and engaged individuals who bring life to the campus as they follow their pathway to success,” he said. “Secondly, I’m proud of the faculty and staff at the campus because they all are here for the right reasons: to help students be successful.”

Lawler and the Penn State Hazleton community have joined in the effort to revitalize downtown

Hazleton through various collaborations, including partnering with local organizations to launch Hazleton LaunchBox – an innovation hub that will offer everything from academic to business and funding programs after its scheduled launch in 2019.

His efforts to reinforce community relationships can be seen through his multiple commitments to community organizations, such as the Hazleton Public Library, Partners in Education, Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce and more. The Concerned Parents of the Hazleton Area recently honored Lawler with a Humanitarian Award.

Through efforts to remain state-of-the-art and offer in-demand programs, the university has been undergoing a complete transformation over the last few years by investing in new programs, infrastructure and facilities to meet the demands and needs of its student population.

“The university carefully researches the area where new degree programs are being considered and explores businesses, opportunities and job forecasts to help graduates succeed,” he



PennState
Hazleton

Name: Gary Lawler

Title: Chancellor at Penn State Hazleton

Quote: “First, I’m most proud of the incredible students at Penn State Hazleton. They are bright, respectful, diverse and engaged individuals who bring life to the campus as they follow their pathway to success.”



Gary Lawler is chancellor at Penn State Hazleton.

said, noting an upcoming Health Policy and Administration program, expanding its healthcare programs, a recent \$15.5 million renovation to the Kostos building and several upcoming fitness and recreation upgrades.

Lawler said college applicants should take the time to visit with colleges and universities they are interested in attending first hand.

“I would encourage stu-

dents to visit and explore these colleges and universities and to meet with faculty, staff and students to become more familiar with all aspects of the institution under consideration. The most important thing, though, is to ask a lot of questions.”

Visit hazleton.psu.edu for more information, or sign up for Penn State Hazleton’s next open house Jan. 26.



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Marwan Wafa, Penn State Scranton



Marwan Wafa has been chancellor of Penn State Scranton since 2015.

SCRANTON – Marwan Wafa knows the importance of a good foundation. As a civil engineer in Kuwait, he learned this in the literal sense, by building bridges and retaining walls.

By Connor Moffitt
cmoffitt@timesleader.com

“Engineers deal with structure, and it has to be sound,” he said. “You start building below ground level and go up.”
But after almost two years of working in what Wafa describes as the hottest populated place on Earth, he decided it was time for a change and came to the United States to pursue further education.

Now, as the chancellor of Penn State Scranton, Wafa keeps a collection of miniature flags on display atop his conference table. Each flag is for a state that is dear to him for a different reason. Such as South Carolina, for example, where Wafa got his Ph.D. in Industrial Management from Clemson University, or Indiana where he got his first academic job at the University of Southern Indiana.

Each flag represents a building block in the foundation of Wafa’s career in

education and serves as a reminder of how he got where he is today.

Wafa became chancellor in 2015 and since then has been hard at work strengthening the foundation of the Penn State Scranton community.

One of the first changes Wafa worked for was in the security department. While the campus has always been secured by a campus safety team, Wafa saw room for improvement and was able to start a full fledged campus police department. He got the campus its own police car and was even able to be the first to ride in it.

Another even more noticeable change comes in the form of the campus’s name. Until recently, the campus was referred to officially as Penn State Worthington Scranton. Popularly the campus would often be referred to as Penn State Worthington or even simply “Worthington.”

Wafa spent a year working with the university to change the name to

Penn State Scranton. He believes this is better for the campus community and name recognition. By referring to the campus as anything other than Penn State, students and prospective students were understating the value of the Penn State degree that can be earned there.

But perhaps the change that affected the campus foundation the most was the change to one of the campus’s strategic goals. Wafa changed one of the campus’s goals to state “Welcoming Campus.” As the chancellor, how does Wafa translate this goal into the day-to-day services the campus provides?

“It has to come from the heart,” he says. “Anyone who walks on to this campus with the hope of earning a Penn State University degree should feel welcome because we are going to go out of our way to do whatever we can to help that person achieve their dream.”

Wafa sees the community at Penn State Scranton as a family, and

his passion for helping the campus community comes from the love of his own family.

He raised four children and says he has learned a lot from each one.

“Each time [one of my children] had a bad experience at college I promised myself not to let that happen to anyone’s child,” he said. “I feel that every student here, regardless of age, gender or background, that person is a dear one to someone, to a mother, father, husband, wife, child or loved one and I want them to love learning.”

To anyone who may be considering the next step in their academic journey, Wafa offers some advice. “Whatever their degree might be, and whatever institution they might choose, the number one point I’d like to emphasize as an academic is that people deserve to invest in themselves and that is through higher education,” he said.

“I want to help them succeed in that journey of theirs.”



Name: Marwan Wafa

Title: Chancellor of Penn State Scranton

Years in post: 4

Quote: “Anyone who walks on to this campus with the hope of earning a Penn State University degree should feel welcome because we are going to go out of our way to do whatever we can to help that person achieve their dream.”









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Dale Jones, Penn State Wilkes-Barre

Penn State Wilkes-Barre leader looking to grow campus



Dr. Dale Jones has been chancellor and chief academic officer at Penn State Wilkes-Barre in Lehman Township for the last two years.

LEHMAN TWP. — The two years Dr. Dale Jones has been at the Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus have gone by quickly.

By Jerry Lynott
jlynott@timesleader.com

He'll begin his third year as chancellor and chief academic officer in January, displaying an evident enthusiasm and feeding off the energy at the Back Mountain campus.

"Higher education is fast-paced, believe it or not. There's a lot going on," Jones said during a recent interview.

The local campus, established in 1916, has embarked on its second

century of higher learning with a firm plan in place.

"So what we intend to do over the next 10 years, the 10 years since the anniversary which started in 2016, is to create a dynamic campus with enrollment growth, a high performance organization and a first-class faculty. Those are the pillars," Jones said.

On his campus, Jones is in the process of updating the five-year strategic plan that will cover the time period of 2020 through 2024. He is

responsible for overseeing its development that comports with the overall big-picture mission of the university and fulfillment of Penn State's land grant mission of access and affordability to students.

"I lead here on the one hand autonomously in many ways. But also we're one university. We truly are one university. And so I'm part of the university's executive leadership team," Jones said.

Each month, he travels to State College to meet



Dr. Dale Jones, who leads Penn State Wilkes-Barre, is shown during a recent interview. The Back Mountain campus celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2016, and Jones plans to grow enrollment over the next 10 years.

with deans of the colleges and other chancellors, university President Dr. Eric Barron and Executive Vice President and Provost Dr. Nicho-

las P. Jones.

Back on the local campus of about 460 students, it's a collaborative effort, too.

"It isn't just me," Chancellor Jones said. "It's the entire faculty working to deliver a world-class education for our students. And so we work together to look for ways to offer degrees that are beneficial to students in this region of the state."

Spurring development A new addition is the supply chain management degree at a time when the logistics and warehouse sectors are setting up shop in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The Hazleton and Scranton campuses offer the program as well.

In conjunction with the Invent Penn State initiative that applies the university's research and entrepreneurialism resources to spur economic development and create jobs, the local campus has a "launchbox" at the THINK Center in downtown Wilkes-Barre. The campus participates in the initiative in conjunction with the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce to mentor area students.

"That's the reach of the university into our com-



PennState
Wilkes-Barre

Name: Dale Jones

Title: Chancellor at Penn State Wilkes-Barre

Years in post: 2

Quote: "So what we intend to do over the next 10 years, the 10 years since the anniversary which started in 2016, is to create a dynamic campus with enrollment growth, a high performance organization and a first-class faculty. Those are the pillars."

munity to spur economic development," Jones said.

If he was a student today, he would "absolutely" want to attend Penn State. But it's been years since he graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy and he's followed a lengthy path in the military, government and academics to Lehman Township.

"It was a decision that was based on career advancement. It was at the point in my career

where I wanted to lead an institution and I was prepared to do that," Jones said.

Prior to Penn State, Jones previously served as vice president for strategy, administration and board affairs at Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. He and wife Kristen reside locally.

Reach Jerry Lynott at 570-991-6120 or on Twitter @TLJerryLynott.



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Rev. Scott Pilarz, University of Scranton



Submitted photo

Father Scott Pilarz

SCRANTON — Rev. Scott Pilarz has a unique vantage point on the outlook for the University of Scranton.

By Patrick Kernan
pkernan@timesleader.com

While Pilarz took over as the 27th president of the university in July, this isn't his first go-around on campus; he previously served as the university's 24th president from 2003 to 2011.

During his previous stint as president, Pilarz said one of his main focuses was on constructing new buildings and infrastructure of which the university was in desperate need.

This time, though, the university has those things, so the focus is a bit different. According to Pilarz, the university now has a threefold commitment. The university will be focusing on building its sense of community, broadening its focus on the liberal arts and humanities and increas-

ing its commitment to the region.

"We're working to make our resources available to the region," Pilarz said, specifically highlighting a new task force recently established on campus focusing on "healing, reconciliation and hope" in light of recent developments with the ongoing sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church.

Pilarz said that the university will soon be launching its new capital campaign and, unlike his previous tour of duty in Scranton, the majority of the money raised will be going toward the university's endowment.

"What we need is to make sure we're offering the kind of programming that can only grow through scholarships," Pilarz said.

One specific program he mentioned is an effort

to get students to work side-by-side with professors on special projects, saying that students are "hungry for that opportunity."

"There's enough interest in that, even if we grew it four times, we'd still have a long list of students waiting for the program," he said.

Pilarz is a scholar himself — a professor of medieval and Renaissance literature — and has spent time at a handful of academic institutions around the country. He was previously the president of Georgetown Prep, a Jesuit preparatory school in Maryland, before his first time as president at the University of Scranton. He also served as the president of Marquette University in Milwaukee from 2011 to 2013.

Pilarz says he plans on

focusing exclusively on being president for the first year, and then plans on adding a class onto his workload.

A native of Cherry Hill, N.J., Pilarz says that he sees Scranton, especially the university community, as a second home of sorts.

"It's about the people that are here," he said. "What makes this place unique is the quality of the people that are here together."

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SCRANTON
A JESUIT UNIVERSITY

Name: Rev. Scott Pilarz

Title: President of the University of Scranton

Years in post: 9 (2003-2011, 2018)

Quote: "It's about the people that are here. What makes this place unique is the quality of the people that are here together."

TIMES LEADER MEDIA GROUP



Jerry Lynott is the Times Leader Media Group's reporter covering Wilkes-Barre. He began working as a night reporter in October 1988 and has covered a variety of beats. He lives on a family farm in Wyoming County with his wife, Jean, and daughter, Sarah. Jerry is a proud graduate of the University of Scranton, and the Times Leader is proud he chose to live and work locally.

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SCRANTON
A JESUIT UNIVERSITY

Patrick Leahy, Wilkes University



Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

Wilkes University President Patrick F. Leahy smiles as he talks about his seven years at the downtown school and his plans for the future.

WILKES-BARRE — As Dr. Patrick Leahy looks back on his seven years as president of Wilkes University he said one thing comes to mind — pride.

By Bill O'Boyle
boboyle@timesleader.com

Leahy, 50, will leave Wilkes at the end of July to become the new president of Monmouth University in New Jersey. Until then, Leahy is intent upon finishing some projects and continuing to improve all things at Wilkes.

"What is most satisfying is how people feel about Wilkes University," Leahy said. "The level of pride has gone up considerably since I've been here."

Leahy has served as president of Wilkes since 2012, having served the previous eight years in

the administration at the University of Scranton. He will be Monmouth's 10th president.

During his tenure at Wilkes, Leahy introduced 20 new academic programs, the school's first Ph.D. program and the university's first five patents. Leahy was instrumental in construction and renovations at the campus totaling more than \$100 million.

"You can see the cosmetic changes, but it's harder to show all the other academic and program changes," Leahy said.

Sitting in his office at Weckesser Hall, Leahy talked about the develop-

ment of an online graduate nursing program, drawing 1,000 students from 2014 to 2017. Wilkes now has an undergraduate enrollment of 2,500 and a full- and part-time graduate student body of more than 3,000.

Monmouth University has an enrollment of 6,167, with nearly 5,000 undergraduates.

Faculty growth Since 2012, Leahy said Wilkes has grown the full-time faculty from 160 members to 193 members, an increase of more than 20 percent at a time when many institutions are decreasing the number of faculty members.

"This academic year alone, we welcomed 17 new faculty members to campus," Leahy said. "And there are people on our faculty who will spend the lives here. Those individuals should have a say in the decision-making process."

Leahy also said the Wilkes faculty has not only increased in size, but in diversity as well.

"And that reflects the diversity of our students," he said.

Nursing program Leahy smiled when he talked about the success of the Wilkes University Passan School of Nursing that has achieved a pass rate that exceeds the national and state averages on the National Licensure Examination

for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). Leahy said Wilkes bachelor of science in nursing graduates taking the test between October 2017 and September 2018 achieved a 95.12 percent pass rate.

That exceeds the national average of 88.56 percent and the Pennsylvania average of 92.84 percent. Its also marks the highest pass rate of bachelor's-degree granting nursing programs in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties.

Work to be done Before he leaves for Monmouth, Leahy said there are several items on his to-do list. He said

there are a few capital improvement projects he wants to get started, the Ralston Athletic Complex needs a face-lift, and a new admissions/wellness center is planned.

"We've accomplished a lot in seven years and there is still a lot to be done," Leahy said.

Bittersweet days ahead Leahy said he was "quite happy" at Wilkes when Monmouth came calling. He said he has mixed feelings about leaving his current job where he has developed many solid relationships and friendships.

"This is not easy for me to say goodbye to

all those relationships," Leahy said. "Yes, I'm excited about this new opportunity, but not without considerable trepidation."

Leahy said he and his wife had two children when they arrived at Wilkes and have added two more since becoming president.

"I will always hold a special place in my heart for Wilkes for the rest of my life," Leahy said.

Reach Bill O'Boyle at 570-991-6118 or on Twitter @TLBillOBoyle.



Wilkes University

Name: Patrick Leahy

Title: President of Wilkes University

Years in Post: 7

Quote: "What is most satisfying is how people feel about Wilkes University. The level of pride has gone up considerably since I've been here."



Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

Wilkes University President Patrick F. Leahy answers questions about improvements made over his seven years in office.

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Kerry Miscavage, Vice President of Sales & Marketing of Times Leader Media Group is a proud 1995 Wilkes University Graduate. In her 23 year tenure at the Times Leader she has had various leadership roles.



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