

# Muhlenberg

Magazine

SUMMER 2023

## Inspiring Action

Daniela Quiroz '10, a film editor who tells stories with a focus on social justice and diverse perspectives, was honored at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival



### **175th Anniversary**

The College celebrates its past by looking toward its future

### **A Historic Gift**

Muhlenberg receives \$15M from the Robertson family



# CREATING **BOUNDLESS** OPPORTUNITIES

By supporting the **Muhlenberg Annual Fund**, you are making an immediate and meaningful impact on the College community. These gifts touch every facet of the Muhlenberg experience and allow the College to address the needs of students, faculty and staff as they emerge. To make your gift, scan the code to the right to visit [give.muhlenberg.edu](https://give.muhlenberg.edu), call **800-859-2242** or email [themuhlenbergfund@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:themuhlenbergfund@muhlenberg.edu).



Or, you may opt to **create an estate plan** that protects everything you love and transforms the lives of future Mules. Planning a gift to Muhlenberg College in your estate plan builds a legacy of student success for generations to come. To learn more, scan the code to the right to visit [muhlenbergcircle1848.org](https://muhlenbergcircle1848.org), contact Director of Planned Giving Theodore Kocher at [theodorekocher@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:theodorekocher@muhlenberg.edu) or call **484-664-3102**.



**B O U N D L E S S**  
THE CAMPAIGN FOR MUHLENBERG

**FEATURES**



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**Inspiring Action** 38

Daniela Quiroz '10, a film editor committed to telling stories that advance social justice and spotlight diverse experiences and perspectives, won the Jonathan Oppenheim Editing Award at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival.

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# Our People Drive Our Success

This spring was a historic one for Muhlenberg College. We marked our 175th anniversary with a weekend-long celebration in April. It was wonderful to host so many members of the Muhlenberg family for gatherings that ranged from the dedication of the new Fahy Commons for Public Engagement and Innovation, to a gala attended by hundreds, to a keynote address from Leo Lambert, one of higher education's preeminent thinkers (see page 30 for more). It was an affirmation of what has made Muhlenberg distinctive and successful since 1848: our unique embodiment of the liberal arts and our community-driven excellence.

And while we enjoyed renewing friendships and recalling the past, our anniversary celebration was and continues to be about the future — what it means to be a top liberal arts college in the 21st century and beyond. It means continually building and maintaining a robust, talented community in which collaboration and personal growth go hand in hand. We do that by recruiting promising students from every part of our society and around the world, as we have been through our leadership role in the American Talent Initiative (page 15). We do it by fostering integrative teaching and research, as through Assistant Professor of Neuroscience Leah Wilson's drive to explain connections — between neuroscience and other disciplines, animal behavior, human relationships and more (page 8). We do it by providing our students an immersive, fully realized coaching experience that offers the mix of challenge, support, impact and belonging that produces real growth and real learning.

Perhaps the best argument for our community-driven excellence is its outsized results: the achievements of alumni like Daniela Quiroz '10, a film editor whose work earned her the Jonathan Oppenheim Editing Award at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival (page 38); or Michael Petriello '10, whose research on "forever chemicals" illuminates profound implications for human health (page 28); or Timothy Janovsky '19, who will publish his third novel in less than two years (page 14).

And then there's the sheer dedication of people like Edward '42 and Lois Robertson, whose decades-long love for and engagement with the College culminated in their extraordinary estate gift (page 6), announced at the 175th anniversary celebration. Or Chief Business Officer Kent Dyer, who has served this great institution since 1987 and is retiring this summer (page 16).

Whether it's coming from alumni, faculty, staff or students, this devotion has its roots in the same challenging, supportive culture. One of our Commencement (page 4) speakers, Christian Johansson, described the challenges he faced in returning to college and his gratitude for Muhlenberg's School of Continuing Studies and the community that helped him overcome his self-doubt: "I know [my degree] is worth it in the end and how it changes my work prospects, career path and future potential."

In the end, our people are the drivers of our success. Together our efforts add up to a whole far greater than the sum of their parts. Thank you for being an essential part of Muhlenberg College and all we will achieve in the next 175 years.

**Kathleen E. Harring**  
President

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LETTERS TO THE  
**EDITOR**



### A Variety of Voices

I just finished reading the latest issue of the alumni publication and wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed it. Sometimes it seems like we read about the same people over and over; this issue seemed to feature a variety of people with diverse and interesting experiences. There are so many more majors and opportunities at Muhlenberg now than there were in the 1970s when I was a student and so much of the focus was on our social lives. Although today's students face many more challenges than we did, it seems like they are overcoming the challenges and doing amazing things in the world.

**Barbara Shoemaker Kehr '78**

### Impressed and Excited

The Spring 2023 *Muhlenberg Magazine* was yet another outstanding issue. So many topics presented in various and appealing ways. It is both impressive and exciting to see all that Muhlenberg is doing to inspire students and better the world.

**Susan Pohl '71**

WE WANT  
**TO HEAR  
FROM YOU**

If you see a story you like (or don't like), put your thoughts into an email to [magazine@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:magazine@muhlenberg.edu). If we publish your letter in a future issue, we'll send you a free Muhlenberg T-shirt.

## ONLINE STORIES NOT TO MISS

Check out these features on the Muhlenberg website.

### A Student's Love for Dance Grows at Muhlenberg

Keanna Peña '25, a first generation Dominican-American from Brooklyn, New York, shares how her experiences at the College gave her the confidence to pursue a dance minor and to perform in departmental shows despite not having grown up dancing in studios. Read her story at [muhlenberg.edu/keannapena](http://muhlenberg.edu/keannapena).



### Meet Martin Art Gallery's New Director

Jessica Ambler is prioritizing student and faculty involvement in the gallery's exhibitions and in displays she's helping to curate throughout campus. To learn about her background and her vision for the role, visit [muhlenberg.edu/ambler](http://muhlenberg.edu/ambler).

### The Muhlenberg Response to ChatGPT

Faculty and staff gathered this spring to discuss the possibilities and limitations of this rapidly advancing technology and the ways in which good pedagogy can counter its supposed threats. To find out why faculty aren't worried — yet — visit [muhlenberg.edu/chatgpt](http://muhlenberg.edu/chatgpt).





*From top: Jordan West and Maria Rivera outside the PPL Center; Commencement speaker and honorary degree recipient Cecilia A. Conrad addresses the Class of 2023; President Kathleen Harring with Michael Colasurdo, who began appearing as Marti the Mule at campus events as a first-year student*

# Celebrating th

**O**n Sunday, May 21, more than 500 members of the Class of 2023 gathered at the PPL Center in Allentown for Muhlenberg's 175th Commencement. Surrounded by friends and family, the graduates reveled in one another's achievements, cheering and clapping despite the request to hold reactions until all the names were read. No one could blame them, though: After persevering through "Zoom University" (the early pandemic-era online and hybrid courses), as it was jokingly put by senior-class speaker Nour Yousry, the Class of 2023 had earned their jubilation.

College President Kathleen Harring presided over the ceremony, and, along with Chair of the Board of Trustees Lance R. Bruck '89 P'21, conferred honorary doctorates on two recipients: Cecilia A. Conrad and George Wheeler '72. Wheeler was honored with a Doctor of Science degree for his scholarship and work in historic preservation. Conrad was honored with a Doctor of Humane Letters degree for her groundbreaking work in economics, education and philanthropy.

Conrad gave the commencement address, giving thanks to her family and crediting both them and luck for her successes. She spoke of the values instilled in her by her parents and the hard work that transcends luck, what she called her "ingredients for living a good life."

She told graduates that they will realize their greatest potential by elevating and amplifying others. She told the story of a boy she tutored in reading in 10th grade, who was not quite literate when he started the year. He eventually competed in a speech and debate tournament alongside Conrad.

"My debate team won, but nothing, nothing compared to the exhilaration of watching Kevin give that speech when one year before he was struggling to read," she said. "Many of your professors will tell you the same thing: It feels good to have a paper or book published. It feels even better to see your student's name in print."

Student speaker Yousry, a public health major with a minor in anthropology, addressed the Class of 2023: "As we graduate





# e Class of 2023

From top: Stephanie Anderson (foreground) and other members of the Class of 2023 applaud; President Kathleen Harring shakes hands with Bianca Bolt; Jose Maldonado acknowledges the crowd

today from Muhlenberg, we enter the world more informed and more ready than ever before to create actionable solutions and impactful strategies for the world's biggest crises," she said. "These are the multi-faceted problems that ask for productive and ambitious leaders who embrace a commitment to take on the challenges of our time."

Christian Johansson, senior speaker for the School of Continuing Studies, told of the difficulty of being his mother's sole caregiver as she struggled with disability, and how hard it was to return to school. However, Johansson, a computer science major and chemistry minor, said, "I encourage those of you adults here today, with aspirations of higher education, to not doubt yourself. For I, too, had fears about not knowing enough to start, being in classes with those younger than myself, the inability to find class times that worked, and financing my education. But none of those things have been further from the truth, and — for that — I say thank you Muhlenberg College, and especially the Muhlenberg College School of Continuing Studies."

Six members of the Class of 2023 were co-valedictorians: Francois D'Elia, Elizabeth Gershater, Liam Safran, Amanda Sodl, Isabella van der Weide and Cydney Wilson. Louis Cocco and Maryn Pryor received 2023 Future Alumni Leader Awards. James Bloom, professor of English, was awarded with the Paul C. Empie '29 Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching.

In her own address, President Harring spoke of an affinity with the Class of 2023: "In the fall of 2019, you started your college career and I began serving as interim and then permanent president of our beloved College. We have been through a lot together and I take very special pride in your achievements as individuals and as a class."

She spoke of the power of community: "Your lives will be all the more meaningful because of what we experienced here together over the past four years. They will be all the more consequential because of what we have learned together. You will have more power because we did it together."

—Katherine Dickey '22



# Muhlenberg Receives \$15M GIFT from the Robertson Family

The gift, from the estate of Edward '42 and Lois Robertson, is the largest from an individual or family in the College's history.

At the College's 175th anniversary celebration gala, President Kathleen Harring announced another milestone: Thanks to the generosity of Edward '42 and Lois Robertson, the College is receiving its largest ever gift from an individual or family, more than \$15 million.

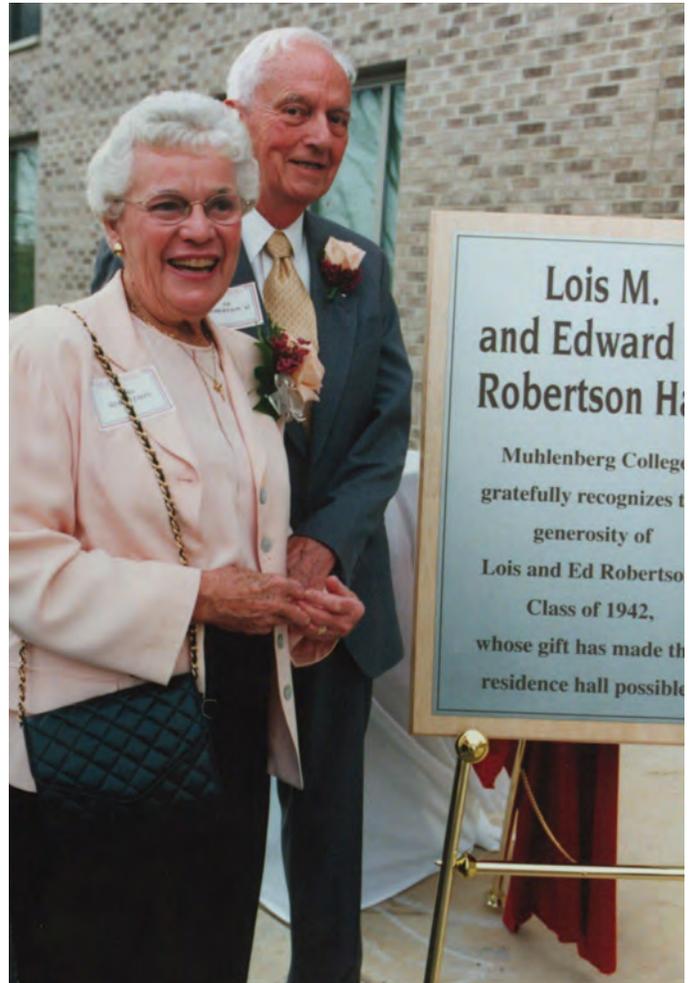
Harring spoke fondly of the Robertsons' dedication to the causes they cared about, including the success of Muhlenberg and its students. "There is no way to adequately measure their devotion to the people and causes they loved," she said, adding later, "They were family — warm, generous people who cared about making Muhlenberg and the world a better place."

Edward, a member of the Class of 1942, was an economics major and business administration minor at Muhlenberg. After graduating, he joined the U.S. Navy and served as a lieutenant during World War II. He went on to earn an MBA from Columbia University and to join the accounting firm Price Waterhouse in 1947. He became a partner in 1959 and retired in 1981. After retiring, he taught accounting at the University of Central Florida until 1997. He died in 2007.

Lois graduated from Montclair State University's Teacher Education Program and went on to teach at Hawthorne High School in New Jersey. She was full of energy and always smiling, even as she aged into her late 90s. Lois died on February 15, 2023, 43 days shy of her 100th birthday.

Edward and Lois married in 1947. They were passionate about supporting music, education and young people. Together, they established the Lois and Edward Robertson Foundation, which provided annual scholarships to seniors at the high school near their home in Florida who were pursuing higher education in the performing arts.

They were also generous in their support for Muhlenberg. Edward served as a trustee of the College from 1971 through 1981 and was elected a life trustee in 1982. In 2001, the Robertsons made a \$5 million commitment to the College to support the construction of Robertson Hall, which opened



*Lois and Edward '42 Robertson at the dedication of Robertson Hall*

in 2002. The couple contributed an additional \$1.5 million to the College over the years for a variety of purposes. This latest gift is a reflection of the special place Muhlenberg had in Edward's heart and Lois's commitment to seeing that his provisions for Muhlenberg students would be fulfilled.

"Ed and Lois lived each day to the fullest — they were vibrant, passionate and dedicated — and that is also how they engaged with Muhlenberg," says Vice President for Advancement Rebekkah Brown '99. "Their giving over the decades, and now with this exceptional estate gift, always supported the College's most needed priorities, and their Muhlenberg legacy will be felt for generations to come."

—*Meghan Kita*



PHOTO BY TOM AMICO



PHOTO BY PAUL PEARSON

Clockwise from above: Debra A. P'20 and James R. '66 P'20 Lentz, Lentz Professor in Dance Karen Dearborn, Lentz Professor in Theatre Jim Peck

## Muhlenberg Receives \$4M Gift to Establish Endowed Professorships in Theatre and Dance

The generous contribution from James R. Lentz '66 P'20 and his wife, Debra A. Lentz P'20, dedicated supporters of the performing arts at Muhlenberg, will allow Muhlenberg to establish The James R. '66 P'20 and Debra A. P'20 Lentz Professorship in Theatre and the James R. '66 P'20 and Debra A. P'20 Lentz Professorship in Dance. Endowed professorships are one of the seven key priorities of *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg*, which began its public phase in November 2021.

"Theatre and dance are a critical part of the vibrant arts culture on campus," says President Kathleen Harring. "These programs are primary examples of how students put theory into practice in a direct and tangible way, allowing them to transfer skills to their postgraduate endeavors. Jim and Deb really have changed the game for a lot of students, and I couldn't be more grateful."

Jim, president and owner at Thermal Technologies, Inc., and Deb, secretary/corporate administrator at Thermal Technologies, Inc., are longtime supporters of the performing arts, in general and at Muhlenberg. In 2012, the Lentzes, who reside in South Carolina, established The James R. Lentz '66 and Debra A. Lentz Scholarship in Theatre and Dance. They attended Summer Music Theatre productions throughout the series' nearly 40-year run.

"Just because of the fact that we enjoy the arts, we thought this was a way to give back," says Jim. "Of course, Muhlenberg has a great reputation [for theatre and dance]. Both of them support one another."

The inaugural Lentz Endowed Professor in Theatre will be Jim Peck, who joined Muhlenberg in 1999 and currently serves as chair and professor of theatre. He teaches courses in directing, performance studies and theatre history. He is a past recipient of the Class of '32 Research Professorship, the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching, the Williams Award for Research by a Junior Faculty Member and the First-Year Advising Award.

The inaugural Lentz Endowed Professor in Dance will be Karen Dearborn, who joined Muhlenberg in 1993 to become the founding director of the Dance Program (she's now chair and professor of dance). She teaches courses that blend the theory and practice of dance, including dance composition, dance history, ballet technique and advanced research in dance. She was named the Spira Honoree for Distinguished Teaching in 2010 and earned the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching in 2003. —MK

# Neural Connections

Assistant Professor of Neuroscience Leah Wilson strives to show students how what happens in the brain affects what happens in the body and how that is relevant across species, across academic disciplines and to just about every facet of students' lives.

**A**ssistant Professor of Neuroscience Leah Wilson took one — and only one — neuroscience course as an undergrad: “I did not care for it very much,” she says.

At the time, she couldn't see the connection to the fieldwork she knew she enjoyed. Wilson, a biology major at Oberlin College, conducted disease ecology research with a faculty member interested in the spread of West Nile virus. She spent her summers tracking birds and taking blood samples. She graduated and became a field assistant, the outdoor equivalent of a lab tech, working in Australia and New Hampshire.

“The projects were focused on [birds'] behavior, so there was a lot of behavioral observation, which is basically sitting quietly in the forest with a pair of binoculars,” she says. “We put plastic bands on their legs so that when you look at them from afar, you can tell the individual identity of a bird. This allows you to observe who's hanging out with whom, who's got a nest and the number of offspring, which opens the door to all sorts of questions about what determines reproductive success. It's a huge concept in biology to think about what sorts of behaviors are adaptive and which are not adaptive.”

She went on to earn a master's in behavioral ecology and a Ph.D. in evolution, ecology and behavior. In both programs, she studied birds, but as a doctoral student, she joined a lab focused on the brain. Her advisor, a neuroscientist, studied how birds' neurochemical systems regulate whether they live in groups or not. Wilson's dissertation explored whether those systems are seasonably variable: “Many birds flock in the winter but are territorial in the summer when they're breeding,” she says. “That was my entry point into the chemical systems of the brain.” Her research found that these variations seem to revolve around how the animals respond to stressors: In the winter, when it's cold and food is scarce, it may be adaptive to band together with other birds to stay warm and share the responsibility of finding food.

After completing her Ph.D., Wilson spent a few years as a visiting assistant professor at a college in Maine: “It's there that I picked up some fish skills,” she says. A colleague had a research program centered around goldfish, and Wilson knew a fish-centric program would be more feasible than a bird-centric program at a small liberal arts school, which is where she hoped to land.

*Assistant Professor of Neuroscience Leah Wilson teaching the course Neurons and Networks*



**“Teaching at a place like Muhlenberg affords the opportunity to always make explicit how the content of my course is connected to other things that students are experiencing in their lives and in their other courses.”**

—LEAH WILSON (NEUROSCIENCE)

PHOTOS BY LISA HELFERT



When Wilson joined Muhlenberg in 2019, she set up her lab to study the behavior of zebrafish, a social species whose neurochemical systems parallel those of other social animals, including humans. One line of questioning she and her students are investigating involves “social buffering,” or how much social experiences decrease the intensity of a stress response. The lab explores this by exposing fish to stressors when they’re alone in the tank and when they’re able to see other fish and recording how often they exhibit behaviors that correlate with high levels of stress hormones (freezing, going to the bottom of the tank, moving erratically). Students in Wilson’s lab are able to assist with ongoing projects like these or propose their own.

“We have weekly lab meetings. We talk about each other’s projects,” says Wilson. “In some ways this is my expectation, but it’s also a testament to the students who have ended up in my lab that everyone really wants to support everybody else ... So much of what I enjoy about lab science is the lab culture and the chance to learn from other people’s projects.”

In the classroom, Wilson shares her specific realm of expertise through a pair of neuroscience electives: *Hormones and Behavior*, which explores the relationship between the brain and the body, and *Sex, Gender and the Brain*, which she describes as “one of my very favorite courses.”

“The conceit of the course is that neuroscience is often invoked in popular and scientific discourse

as the ultimate authority on what sex is and what sexual categories are and where we draw the boundaries around them,” Wilson says. “Despite that, as a discipline, neuroscience has really ignored sex and gender at a very fundamental level. We don’t have a working definition of what sex is, how to define the sex of an individual animal. And at a larger level, we often exclude female animals from our experiments altogether ... In this class, we start by unpacking how biology and neuroscience have come to think about sex and gender.”

One of the things Wilson enjoys about teaching this course is the diversity of the students who take it: scientists and nonscientists, first-year students and seniors, all bringing unique perspectives to an interdisciplinary conversation. And one of the things she enjoys about teaching at Muhlenberg in general is that it allows her to teach neuroscience in a way that might have resonated for her as an undergraduate.

“Teaching at a place like Muhlenberg affords the opportunity to always make explicit how the content of my course is connected to other things that students are experiencing in their lives and in their other courses,” Wilson says. “The liberal arts promise puts me in the mindset and has my students in the mindset of trying to see the connections between what they’re doing in my class and in other classes, and to me, that’s the most rewarding and engaging way to think about science.” —MK



PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON



PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON

# LIVING THE 'BERG LIFE

Clockwise from top left: Campus celebrates Holi; Jefferson Elementary School students enjoy the 32nd Jefferson Field Day; Gospel Workshop Weekend returns to Egner Chapel; soon-to-be graduates party at Senior Ball



PHOTO BY KRISTI MORRIS, LITTLEWING STUDIO

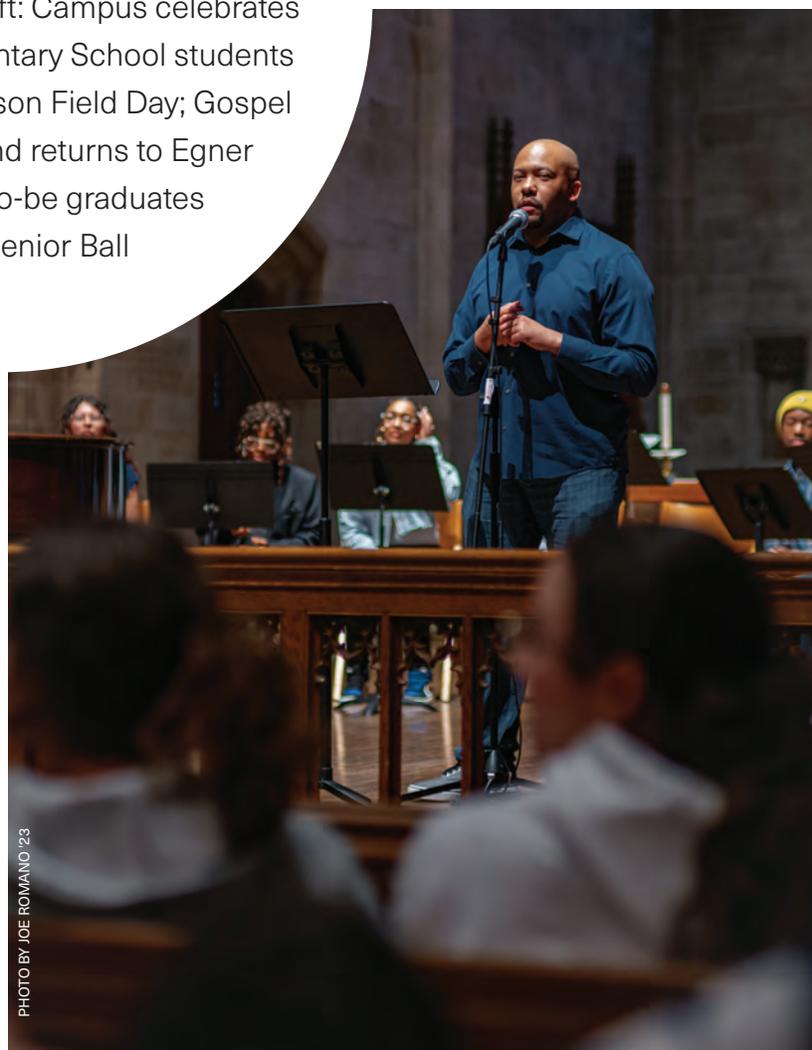


PHOTO BY JOE ROMANO '23

PHOTO BY KRISTI MORRIS, LITTLEWING STUDIO



*Kenya Albert, Ph.D., the former partner of Diane M. Williams '72, and President Kathleen Harring, Ph.D., reveal a plaque dedicating a Chew Street residence in Williams' memory.*

## Muhlenberg Celebrates Dedication of Diane M. Williams '72 House

On April 22, students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends gathered to celebrate the legacy of one of the College's most prolific activists with a panel discussion and the dedication of a residence for members of the Black Students Association (BSA).

It was an event more than 50 years in the making: As a student, Diane M. Williams '72 was an activist and writer. Her byline appeared frequently in *The Muhlenberg Weekly*, giving voice to the experiences of the few Black students on campus at that time. In 1971, she and other members of the Association for Black Collegians (a precursor to today's BSA) demanded a dedicated space on campus; the group was given a basement rec room that, a few years later, would be taken from them as the building was renovated.

This April's events began with a panel discussion that served partly as a tribute to Williams, who died in 2014: Over the summer, Giovanni Merrifield '23 conducted research on her life and legacy that's now published on the Muhlenberg Memories Project microsite, *Toward Diversity*. He and Hailey Petrus '23, who also conducted research for *Toward Diversity*, spoke on a panel with Carl Evans '72, Natalie Jackson '73, Assistant Professor of English and Africana Studies and Director of

Africana Studies Emanuela Kucik, Ph.D., and Lecturer Emerita in Media & Communication and Africana Studies and former Director of Africana Studies Roberta Meek. The panel discussed the *Toward Diversity* research, the experiences of Black students at Muhlenberg through the years and how the College's Africana Studies Program has evolved.

Then, a group gathered on the front lawn of the Chew Street residence that now houses four members of the BSA for the dedication of the Diane M. Williams '72 House. President Kathleen Harring, Ph.D., spoke, and then, Williams's former partner Kenya Albert, Ph.D., gave her remarks.

Before Harring and Albert revealed the plaque that will hang inside the residence, current BSA President Bianca Bolt '23 delivered a speech, which concluded: "This house has created a space where Black students can forge a shared experience in a way that wasn't possible before. In *Emerging Leaders* we have a saying, 'On the shoulders of those before us we emerge'. Because of the work of everyone before us, the Black community has been able to emerge on campus in unimaginable ways. So thank you." —MK



PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON

“Inside” student Jason Hein speaks with Director of Community Engagement Beth Halpern during the Inside-Out Poster Presentation.

## Inside-Out Course Holds Poster Presentation and Closing Ceremony

On April 27, the Lehigh County Jail in downtown Allentown hosted so many visitors it nearly ran out of locker space for their belongings. Some had been coming every Thursday for the entire semester as part of the College’s Inside-Out course, which brings together 15 Muhlenberg (“outside”) students and 15 “inside” students who are incarcerated. Many others — including members of the Muhlenberg and Lehigh Valley communities and the media — came to see the students’ group presentations and the class’s closing ceremony, held in the jail’s visiting area.

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, which was started by a formerly incarcerated man and a Temple University professor in 1995, is a pedagogical model meant to bring outside and inside students together for sustained conversations working toward the goal of education. Muhlenberg’s course, which is co-facilitated by Professor of Psychology Kate Richmond ’00 and Community Engagement Librarian Jess Denke, deals specifically with mass incarceration in the United States. This semester was the fourth time the pair taught the class and the first time since the start of the pandemic.

The five groups, each a mix of inside and outside students, presented posters detailing problems and proposed solutions related to mass incarceration. A critical part of the process for

all the groups was researching the ongoing work surrounding these issues that’s taking place in the Lehigh Valley and engaging with agents of change within the local community. “The real benefit of community-engaged classes comes when we can further the work of our community while expanding our idea of who belongs in that community,” Denke says.

A closing ceremony followed the poster presentations. In her remarks, Richmond reflected on the importance of opportunities to build bridges between those who are incarcerated and those who are not, between those who work inside the mass incarceration system and those who are working to dismantle it and between the College and residents of Allentown and the Lehigh Valley: “If we stay siloed, we’ll never have the community we want,” she said at the event. “We need everyone in the room to have the information and the language to talk across difference.”

A \$231,000 federal grant the College received last year will allow additional faculty to go through Inside-Out training. Nine, including faculty in disciplines as diverse as neuroscience, political science and dance, will do so this summer. The goal is to be able to offer two Inside-Out courses per semester by Spring 2024, with a wider variety of topics reflective of the faculty’s disciplinary interests. —MK

## Kevan Shah '22 Named Knight-Hennessy Scholar at Stanford University



This fall, Kevan Shah '22 will be trading one coastal city for another, halfway around the world. He spent this academic year in Beijing through the Schwarzman Scholars program, earning his one-year master's in global affairs degree at Tsinghua University. Shah was the first Muhlenberg student to receive the award, which is one of the most prestigious in the world.

He is also now the first Muhlenberg student — and one of only 85 students from 29 countries this year — to be awarded a Knight-Hennessy Scholarship.

In addition to leadership development, scholars receive full funding for one of Stanford University's seven graduate schools. Shah will be pursuing a master's degree in community health and prevention research at the Stanford School of Medicine before he matriculates in medical school.

Shah says he's looking for greater depth in his field. "I'm looking to deepen my passion for health and my ability to innovate and problem-solve on the issues that I care about most, which are based in community health and medicine," he says.

Shah graduated from Muhlenberg with a bachelor's degree in public health in 2022. While on campus, he founded End Overdose Together, a nonprofit that recruits, trains and mobilizes students to lead workshops on overdose prevention, and he still serves as its executive director. —*Kristine Yahna Todaro '84*

## Mathematics Professor Earns Teaching Award

Truman Koehler Professor of Mathematics Linda McGuire was honored by the regional section of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) that serves eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware with the James P. Crawford EPaDel Section Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching. The award is named in memory of a Lafayette College mathematics professor who died in 2003. Nominees, according to the MAA website, should be widely recognized as extraordinarily successful in their teaching, have teaching effectiveness that can be documented, have had influence in their teaching beyond their own institution and foster curiosity and generate excitement about mathematics in their students. McGuire is the first Muhlenberg professor to earn the EPaDel section award since Emeritus Truman Koehler Professor of Mathematics William Dunham won it in 1994.

## Theatre Faculty Member Receives Prestigious Award

You-Shin Chen, assistant professor of theatre, has received the 2023 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Scenic Design for her design for Hansol Jung's *Wolf Play* at the Off-Broadway MCC Theater. Given annually, the prestigious Lucille Lortel Awards recognize outstanding achievements in off-Broadway theatre. Chen joined the Muhlenberg theatre faculty in Fall 2021 as assistant professor of scenic design. A Taiwanese designer committed to diversity and humanity, she centers the human experience in the process of creating a three-dimensional space. Chen is the recipient of the 2019 Daryl Roth Creative Spirit Award at The Lilly Awards, as well as another Lucille Lortel Award in 2020 for her work on *Mrs. Murray's Menagerie*. Her work has appeared in productions across the continental United States and Europe.



**Marc D. Johnson Jr. '19**  
*Burning Sage*  
 Ibis Books, 53 pages

Johnson's fourth volume published by Ibis Books, *Burning Sage* is a short book of poetry touching

on themes such as loss, healing, growth and love.



**Nisha Sharma '07**  
*The Karma Map*  
 Skyscape, 256 pages

In this young-adult novel, a youth group's temple road trip through India

is a liberating escape for

a former mean girl and sunshine boy to explore their past and their feelings for each other. Sharma will release another book, the rom-com *Tastes Like Shakkar*, in August.

# Turning Up the Heat

This summer, Timothy Janovsky '19 will publish his third novel in less than two years. Janovsky, who writes LGBTQ+ romantic comedies, released his debut, *Never Been Kissed*, with the publisher Sourcebooks Casablanca in May 2022. A Christmas rom-com, *You're a Mean One, Matthew Prince*, came out last October, and *New Adult*, an ode to the 2004 Jennifer Garner movie *13 Going on 30*, will be released August 15. Meanwhile, a second publisher — the famous romance outlet Harlequin — approached Janovsky about producing a series of more explicit novels with queer characters that will debut in 2024. Here, the prolific author, who was a theatre and dance double major at Muhlenberg, explains his writing process and his career journey.

**Muhlenberg Magazine** How does your background in the performing arts translate to your writing?

**Timothy Janovsky '19** I write mostly in the first-person present tense, which is a lot like when we would do journals as our characters in acting classes at Muhlenberg. I put myself in the shoes of the character and I say, "What's the character's objective? What obstacles are in the way of achieving that objective? What tactics do they have in their tool bag?" I think becoming an author was my little trick to getting to play all the roles that don't exist in the world or that I would never be cast in.

**MM** How did your existing books come about?

**TJ** During and after Muhlenberg, I'd put writing on the back burner. I was teaching dance when the pandemic hit, and I lost that job. Auditions weren't happening, so I had a lot of time. I wrote what became *You're a Mean One, Matthew Prince* during COVID. I wanted a comfort project to write, something that would be warm and fuzzy. I worked with a literary agent who found a publisher who wanted to buy it. They said, "We don't think your debut novel should be a holiday story because that won't reach as many readers. What else do you want to write about?" I was quarantining with my partner in Pennsylvania and we'd just been to Shankweiler's [Drive-In Theatre]. I wrote *Never Been Kissed*, which is set at a drive-in, on contract.

**MM** How has your work opened doors for your future projects?

**NF** After writing *Never Been Kissed*, I was approached by Harlequin — they're known to a lot of people for their bodice-ripper covers. They were like, "We love that you're reaching a younger audience. Would you be interested in writing 'high heat' stories for us? We think younger queer readers really deserve stories like that." What I'm writing currently is more "closed door" — anything spicy happens behind the scenes. With my agent, we worked out a deal. In 2024, I'll be launching another series of novels that will have higher heat and pretty wacky premises: The first one, *The (Fake) Dating Game*, is a male-male romance that takes place on the set of a *Supermarket Sweep*-style reality show. I get to expand my voice and my audience. They'll also be mass-market novels, which are the tiny ones you stick in your beach bag. It'll be fun to play around with a different format.



# Muhlenberg Recognized for **Transformative Leadership** in College Access and Success

Muhlenberg was recognized in May by Bloomberg Philanthropies as an American Talent Initiative (ATI) High-Flier, a group of 28 high-graduation-rate institutions nationwide named as leaders in college access and success for lower-income students.

The College received the distinction for its steady gains in lower-income student enrollment since 2015-16, its growing share of Pell Grant recipients (awarded only to undergraduate students who display exceptional financial need) and innovative recruitment, enrollment and retention practices.

ATI was formed in December 2016 with a goal to attract, enroll and graduate an additional 50,000 lower-income students at the 341 colleges and universities that consistently graduate at least 70 percent of their students in six years.

The 28 ATI High-Flier institutions include Brown University, Princeton University, University of Chicago, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, University of Texas-Austin, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Yale University. Gettysburg College is the only other Pennsylvania institution to receive this recognition.

Muhlenberg's Pell Grant recipient graduate rate has been consistently above 80 percent since joining ATI, with a 92 percent graduation rate within six years for first-year students in 2016. The College has also made significant gains in Pell shares among its 137 peers during that time. Muhlenberg has achieved that progress through comprehensive and coordinated academic, social and financial support.

This progress has been particularly evident in the two years since Muhlenberg reaffirmed its commitment to this work through ATI's Accelerating Opportunity campaign. Along with their fellow ATI members, Muhlenberg set public, aspirational lower-income student enrollment goals for the first time to help combat the lingering impacts of the pandemic. In 2019, the College was at a 17 percent Pell share. Two years

later, in Fall 2021, that percentage had increased to 21 percent and Muhlenberg has met (and continues to exceed) its Accelerating Opportunity goal of a 20 percent Pell share since.

"It's an honor for Muhlenberg College to be recognized by the American Talent Initiative," says President Kathleen Harring, who is a member of the national ATI Steering Committee. "We've been successful in meeting our ATI objectives in part because Muhlenberg's and ATI's goals are aligned; they come from shared values. At Muhlenberg, we take immense pride in our challenging, supportive community. We are committed to enrolling talented students from diverse populations and ensuring that they are able to access transformative experiences that allow them to thrive and succeed." —KYT

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The College is named an American Talent Initiative High-Flier, **one of just 28 national leaders in lower-income student enrollment**, serving as a model for colleges and universities across the country.

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# Chief Business Officer & Treasurer Kent Dyer to Retire After 36 Years



PHOTO BY PAUL PEARSON

When Chief Business Officer & Treasurer Kent Dyer joined Muhlenberg in 1987 as the assistant treasurer/director of budget, “Trexler Library was just a hole in the ground,” he says. Over the last three-and-a-half decades, Dyer has watched the campus evolve and modernize — and, since capital projects were added to his responsibilities in the year 2000, he has had a direct role in overseeing many of these changes.

Before joining Muhlenberg, Dyer worked at an accounting firm in Philadelphia, where the College was one of his clients. There, he had a busy season lasting from January through June. He traveled frequently and recalls rushing home from New York City when his wife went into labor with his first son. (“I got home in time,” he adds.)

Trying to balance parenting with work travel and long hours wore on Dyer, and he decided to make the move to Muhlenberg. The 45-mile commute each way from his home in Glenside,

Pennsylvania, was still preferable to the alternative, and “it seemed like a great place,” he says.

His impressions were correct, and he stayed at Muhlenberg, earning a promotion to his current role in 1998. As part of senior staff, he oversaw the business office, the mail room, the print shop and the technology office (which was under his purview until the first chief information officer was hired in 2015). After the December 1999 retirement of then-Vice President James Steffy, Dyer began overseeing facilities and capital projects. In the summer of 2002, Dyer briefly served as the College’s acting president during a leadership transition. In 2004, he began overseeing human resources, and in 2015 he picked up the ‘Berg Bookshop as well.

Dyer says that the last few years have been the most challenging of his long career due to the pandemic and its effects on the College. He didn’t like working from home and was back on campus as soon as he was allowed: “Our facilities people, during Covid, they had to be here every day, and I felt I should be here with them too.”

Both of Dyer’s sons graduated from Muhlenberg (John in 2007, Joseph in 2010), as did his now daughter-in-law Cecilia de Souza-Dyer ’10. Dyer’s primary goal for retirement is to spend more time with his three grandchildren, an 8-year-old and two 4-year-olds. He will remain at Muhlenberg until mid-July to assist with the transition.

When Dyer reflects on what kept him at Muhlenberg for so long, it wasn’t the tuition benefits for his kids nor the gym he frequented on his lunch breaks, though both were nice perks. It was his coworkers: “You’re going to work with people you like,” he says. “It’s been a blast. It’s been a great ride.” —MK

## Curtis Topper Named Chief Financial Officer

President Kathleen Harring has appointed veteran executive Curtis Topper chief financial officer of Muhlenberg. “Curt is a tremendous addition to our leadership team,” Harring says. “He brings a wealth of high-level experience, by all accounts is a steady and accomplished leader and perhaps most importantly shares our values and sense of mission.”

Topper, most recently vice president for finance and administration at Delaware Valley University, previously served as a member of Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf’s cabinet. Topper earned an A.B. in political science from Brown University and a Master of Philosophy in public policy and management from Carnegie Mellon University.

“Colleges like Muhlenberg have a vital role to play in shaping our future, training students to confront increasingly complex challenges with integrated solutions that draw from multiple disciplines,” Topper says. “I look forward to helping Muhlenberg continue its long record of financial success and operational excellence in support of this mission.”



# A Log of Muhlenberg's History

Muhlenberg College celebrated its 175th birthday this spring, and for as long as it has existed, students, faculty and staff have been preserving its history. The College archives hold ephemera dating to the first announcement of the Allentown Seminary (Muhlenberg's original name) in 1848, handwritten student report cards from 1867 and the first official Muhlenberg College Commencement program from 1868. Photographs show us our roots at Trout Hall in downtown Allentown in the 19th century, the cornerstone-laying celebrations on Chew Street at the turn of the 20th and beloved student traditions that have lasted into the 21st.

The physical campus has a story to tell as well, and in honor of the College's 175th anniversary, Muhlenberg's archivist, Susan Falciani Maldonado, and Department of Theatre & Dance Technical Director Eric Covell collaborated to create an exhibit that showcased 175 years of College history.

Falciani Maldonado created a timeline illustrated with materials from the archives and displayed on finely crafted wood panels. Covell, a talented woodworker who is responsible for many pieces of furniture in Fahy Commons (see page 37 to learn more), polished a salvaged cross-section of a Norway maple that had been cut down from along Chew Street; the tree had been original to the new campus, dating to around 1905. By counting the growth rings, Covell was able to pinpoint particular events from the timeline with corresponding markers.

*If you have any items of interest to the Muhlenberg archives, please contact [susanfalciani@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:susanfalciani@muhlenberg.edu).*

# Q&A

## 10 Questions With ... Eric Hildenbrand '00

Chief strategy officer at McLane, Temple, Texas

3

**If you hadn't been a lawyer, what would you have been?**

A stage manager (hopefully on Broadway)

4

**What three songs best describe you?**

"Right Now" by Van Halen

"Don't Stop Believin'" by Journey

"I Don't Want to Be" by Gavin DeGraw

6

**What are you secretly good at?**

Party planning and negotiating with car dealers for friends and family

8

**What is your greatest fear?**

Not having options

9

**What question should we have asked you?**

Wait, isn't it your job to ask the questions?

1

**Describe what you do in five words or less.**

Focus on the future.

2

**When did you know you wanted to be a lawyer?**

When I was 7 and I watched a court show called *The Judge* on TV. After two episodes, I told my parents I was going to be a lawyer. I got distracted a few times, but ultimately followed through.

5

**What quality in others do you most admire?**

The conviction to do the right thing even when it seems impossible (and hopefully doing it with a good sense of humor)

7

**What's the best piece of advice you have received and who said it?**

My dad: "Just do your best at whatever you are being asked to do; the rest will take care of itself."

10

**What's the answer?**

I am pretty sure it is.



## President Kathleen Harring Receives Honorary Degree

Franklin & Marshall College, Harring's alma mater, presented her with an honorary doctorate of humane letters at its May 13 commencement. Harring was named president of Muhlenberg College in June 2020 after serving as interim president for a year. She is the College's 13th president and the first woman to lead the College. Harring is one of six college presidents who sit on the national steering committee of the American Talent

Initiative, which is committed to higher-education access for lower-income students. Harring has led the growth and expansion of graduate and continuing education degree programs, and she and her leadership team have forged new partnerships with area community colleges to provide guaranteed pathways for students to a bachelor's degree at Muhlenberg. Since joining the faculty in 1984, Harring has held several leadership positions, most recently as provost.

### Why I Study ... composition and music theory Associate Professor of Music Andrew Ardizzoia



My parents loved the music they grew up with and had a big record collection. I don't think either of them could read

music, but they tried to start me on piano when I was about four. That didn't take, but I liked making sounds with the piano. My mom later said it wasn't like most little kids where they just bang on the keys: "You would pick out notes and make little melodies."

I grew up when music was still commonplace in the classroom. I joined fifth-grade band, playing the French horn, and I fell in love with it. In high school, I started to get more serious with lessons. It helped me get through college because the French horn is an instrument that not a lot of people play. I had a decent scholarship to the University of the Pacific, and because it was a small program, you played in the orchestra, the band, the pit orchestra, and you got to know the music you were playing really well. I

learned a lot about orchestration and instrumentation and how to write for different instruments just by sitting in those groups. I was always composing on the side.

After college, I worked in community theatre, directed a youth orchestra and had a day job in retail. They closed the store [where] I worked. I also inherited some money. Those two things said, "You need to make the most of this time and these resources and you need to pursue what you're passionate about." I had a friend from college who had been to Arizona State University for a master's program already. I visited, applied and got in. That was a big move — my whole family is in northern California.

I took a year after finishing my master's to get my portfolio together for my doctorate. This was right after the worst of the financial crash, and everyone was going to grad school. I didn't even get into my backup schools. I applied to The Hartt School [in Hartford, Connecticut] on a whim, not really thinking that I would go. I got in and had a really good experience there. If you're going to grad

school for composition, you're going there to learn but you're also building a network of people who are going to be cheerleaders for your music. I'm really lucky that I met people who, to this day, are still interested in what I'm doing.

I write music for anything and everything: band music, orchestra music, choral music, solo vocal music, chamber music. Sometimes it's a personal project that I'm interested in, and sometimes it's commissions. Making a full-time living as a composer is really difficult. There's a ton of hustle there. I have friends that do that, but I don't envy them. I like being around people, and if I were a full-time composer, it'd be a lot of me sitting at home by myself.

And, I really like teaching. I was talking to students recently about what I do and I said, "Imagine having a job where you get to hang out with people who love to geek out about the exact same things that you geek out about, and you get paid to do it." I have great students and I enjoy helping them figure out who they are as composers and exposing them to new ideas. It is deeply rewarding.

# Personally Speaking...



# Summer Whitley '24

Studio art and computer science double major and art history minor, Hazleton, Pennsylvania

## **She knew (most of) what she wanted to study when she came to Muhlenberg.**

"Most people draw when they're young, but I've been consistently drawing since I was young. I've always liked all sorts of media, like sculpting and painting, so it was a given [for me] that I was going to major in studio art. I also knew that I wanted to get into video games, and I had learned some programming in high school. I'm a math person and I find that computer programming is just like math with words. I had to take a couple of art history classes for the studio art major. I remember talking to my friends and my partner about all the wild stuff that happens in art history, and I was like, 'Oh, I think I actually want to look more into this.'"

## **She studied abroad in Tokyo this spring ...**

"I was reading manga at four years old. From there, I got really invested in learning about Japanese culture. My early art was all based on Japanese cartoon art styles. I'm not studying it at Muhlenberg because I can't fit it in, but I'm also really interested in theology, and Japan's combination of Shinto and Buddhism is really interesting. They're not diametrically opposed, but they're not the same, and yet they influence each other and coexist in the same spaces. I wanted to see how that was playing out in temples and areas of worship. And Japan is one of the best places to go if you're into video games. I didn't really want to go to a European country because I didn't feel like my worldview was going to be challenged enough."

## **... and experienced a lot of growth during her time in Japan.**

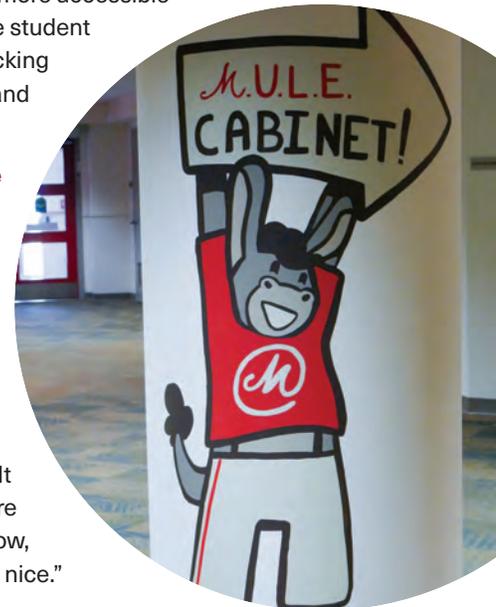
"I went through Temple University — they have a campus in Tokyo. All of their dorm buildings are really far from campus, so I had an hour-long commute every day. I had to take a train and transfer and then I was walking like 20 minutes. I really got to experience Tokyo from the very beginning of my time there. My time abroad in general showed me that I can be resilient, independent and competent. I lived by myself all semester. Nobody was holding my hand, so I learned a lot more about Japan from locals rather than Temple. There wasn't a meal plan, so I had to grocery shop and cook. It was the first time I had to do that. It was a lot to manage on top of classes, and it showed me I can manage all that."

## **On campus, she is the student director of the Muhlenberg Useful Living Essentials (M.U.L.E.) Community Cabinet ...**

"I started working at the M.U.L.E. Cabinet as a student worker the first month I was at Muhlenberg, in August 2020. There were a lot of different work-study jobs I could've picked, but I wanted to do that one because I feel very strongly about accessibility. The M.U.L.E. Cabinet makes the college experience just a tiny bit more accessible by providing the essentials if you can't leave campus or afford to buy those things. The student director still does all the jobs a student worker does — keeping track of inventory, stocking shelves, opening the cabinet, taking appointments — but also organizes fundraisers and works with other people across campus to grow the cabinet."

## **... and she painted a mural on the lower level of Seegers Union to direct people to the cabinet.**

"There was a discussion group of different student leaders at Muhlenberg to figure out how we could work together regarding sustainability and combating hunger. I think Jess Rosen '24 was the one who suggested there should be something downstairs to draw people into the cabinet, because it is hiding in a corner. I think she mentioned a mural. I really liked that idea and I brought it to [Chaplain and M.U.L.E. Cabinet Advisor] Janelle [Neubauer]. She also really liked it. I had to go to [Director of Seegers Union & Student Experience] Ellen Lentine to get it approved. She was also super into it. I did the design and told her what colors of paint I needed. It was much bigger [than anything I'd painted before]. There was also a bit more pressure because it's a longer-term thing, but I knew it was going to be good for the cabinet. Now, when you go downstairs in Seegers, you know that [the cabinet] exists, which is really nice."



# SPRING SPEAKERS & EVENTS



**Ruha Benjamin**  
Benjamin, a professor of African American studies at Princeton University who has a Ph.D. in sociology, discussed her 2022 book *Viral Justice: How We Grow the World We Want* as she delivered the College's Black History Month keynote address.

**Richard Ben-Veniste '64**  
*Navigating the Potomac from Watergate to the January 6 Attack on the Capitol*

Ben-Veniste, whose extensive government service includes work as one of the lead prosecutors on the Watergate Special Prosecution Task Force, has most recently served as a legal analyst for CNN.



**Manoj Doss**  
*A Critical Perspective on the Acute and Enduring Effects of Psychedelics on Brain Function and Cognition*

Doss, who was invited to campus by the Shankweiler Scholars medical humanities honors program, completed his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago researching distortions in episodic memory with a focus on the effects of psychoactive drugs such as MDMA, THC and alcohol.



**Mohsin Hamid**  
Hamid, author of *Exit West*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and, most recently, *The Last White Man*, visited campus for a public lecture and also hosted a Q&A with creative writing students.



**Wayne Koestenbaum**  
*On Dreams, Diaries, Disguise and Improvisation*  
Koestenbaum, the author of 22 books and a distinguished professor of English, French and comparative literature at the City University of New York Graduate Center, delivered the 34th annual J.D.M. Brown Lecture.



**Chris Liang**  
*In Search of a Psychology With a Greater Purpose*  
Liang, a professor of counseling psychology at Lehigh University, wove his personal narrative of growing up as a racial minority in an immigrant family with a critical view of psychology to create space for hope and healing for more communities as the annual Rosenberg Speaker.

**Danielle J. Lindemann**  
Lindemann, associate professor of sociology at Lehigh University, discussed her book *True Story: What Reality TV Says About Us* as she delivered this year's Sue Curry Jansen Honors Lecture.

**Eric Nuzum**  
*The Future of Podcasting*  
Nuzum is the author of *Make Noise: A Creator's Guide to Podcasting and Great Audio Storytelling*; the co-founder of Magnificent Noise, a consulting company based in New York City; and the former vice president of programming and audience development at NPR.

**Ruth Santiago**  
Santiago, a community and environmental attorney and member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council, joined students, faculty and staff for a 'lunch and learn' discussion.

**Ganesh Sitaraman**  
*The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Era*  
Sitaraman, who holds the New York Alumni Chancellor's Chair in Law at Vanderbilt Law School, discussed the rise of the neoliberal era in the 1970s and 1980s, its dominance in the 1990s and 2000s, its decline in the 2010s and the possibility of a coming revolution in political economy.



**Bhaskar Sunkara**  
*Socialism for a Skeptical Age*  
American political writer Sunkara examined the past, present and future of democratic socialism and why it deserves a new hearing amid social and economic turmoil in the 21st century.

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## Muhlenberg in the Media

**President Kathleen Haring appeared on the WURD Radio program “The Source” to discuss Muhlenberg’s involvement with the American Talent Initiative (ATI).**

The College was recently honored by ATI, a consortium of high-graduation-rate institutions committed to expanding higher education access for lower-income students (more on page 15). Philadelphia-based WURD is the only Black-owned talk radio station in Pennsylvania.

**The new Fahy Commons for Public Engagement and Innovation received local and national coverage.**

An op-ed about the building by President Kathleen Haring ran in *The Morning Call*, and a *LehighValleyNews.com* writer came to campus to report on Fahy’s sustainability features. The building also received coverage from BridgeTower Media, one of the country’s leading business-to-business media companies with more than 40 print and digital publications in more than 25 U.S. markets.

**Christopher Borick (political science) was quoted by the Associated Press and U.S. News & World Report.**

Borick’s comments appeared in the Associated Press stories “Election-denying lawmakers hold key election oversight roles” and “2024 Republican hopefuls rush to defend Marine who put NYC subway rider in fatal chokehold” as well as the *U.S. News & World Report* stories “The Critics Are Coming! The Critics Are Coming!” and “The Democrats’ Comeback Tour.”

**The New York Times published a response to a guest essay on remote work by Kate Richmond ’00 (psychology).**

Richmond wrote, “The second shift continues to be ignored, and if [essay author] Steven Rattner understood the demands placed on working moms, he wouldn’t be so quick to ask, ‘Has America gone soft?’”

**Sean Schofield (career services) and the Career Center staff were covered by local and national media.**

The *Inside Higher Ed* article “Data-Based Decision Tip: Disaggregate Data to Spot Underserved Populations” explained how the Career Center uses data to drive its work, and *The Morning Call* article “The pandemic disrupted their freshman year. It may also have prepared the Class of 2023 for the job market” featured quotes from Schofield and Muhlenberg students.

**Daniel Klem (biology) promoted his research on bird-window collisions.**

Klem was quoted in *Birding* magazine’s “A Song of Hope to End Bird-Glass Collision,” and he co-authored an op-ed, “5 surprising things that could prevent your backyard from serving as a wildlife sanctuary,” that appeared in several news outlets.

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## Muhlenberg Dining to Unveil Allergen-Friendly Station

Muhlenberg College Dining, which consistently earns accolades for its campus food, has announced the addition of an allergen-friendly dining station available to all Muhlenberg students, faculty, staff and guests for the Fall 2023 semester. Simple Servings is a dedicated food station absent of gluten and eight of the nine most common allergens that collectively represent approximately 90 percent of all food allergies. All preparation, food storage and cooking equipment at the Simple Servings location will always be entirely allergen-free.

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## Muhlenberg Announces New Academic Partnership With Villanova Nursing

Prehealth students at Muhlenberg now can transition seamlessly to Villanova’s Second Degree Accelerated BSN Program for college graduates. This academic partnership presents a direct route to the nursing profession and new opportunities for students seeking careers in health care. Villanova has agreed to accept at least five Muhlenberg students each year. The College now offers 16 academic partnership programs in the fields of health, public health, business and finance, engineering, law and more.

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## Muhlenberg Launches Corporate Affiliates Program

Building on a long history of partnership with regional businesses, the goal of the Corporate Affiliates Program is to develop and provide educational opportunities for partner organizations’ employees and their spouses, partners or children. Other benefits include scholarships and other resources that can make a difference when enrolling in master’s degree, accelerated-degree completion or traditional undergraduate programs. Since launching the program late in 2022, Muhlenberg has welcomed five new partners: St. Luke’s University Health Network, B Braun Medical Inc., Just Born Quality Confections, Hospital Central Services and Affiliates, Inc./Miller-Keystone Blood Center and Lehigh Valley Health Network.

# Legal Options

Reneé Garrick '12, vice president of business and legal affairs at the public relations software company Muck Rack, has found ways to meld her career with her interests in sports and media.

**W**hen Reneé Garrick '12 started her legal career, she gravitated toward an area that had always been a passion for her: sports. She interned with the New York Mets, the Brooklyn Nets and the NBA. Her first long-term position after graduating from Harvard Law School, at the New York City-based firm Debevoise & Plimpton, included intellectual property work for several professional sports leagues.

"It made the work more fun, to do it in a space I already enjoy as a recreational activity," says Garrick, who's currently the vice president of business and legal affairs at the public relations software company Muck Rack. "I decided to step away because there came a point where it was very difficult for me to compartmentalize and enjoy sports. I would be watching a game and instead of seeing the game, I'm seeing everything around the game. As you get more experience, you know what's a fire and what's not, and you know what you need to be worried about and what you don't. I feel confident that if I want to re-enter the sports or media space I will be able to do it and have fun with it."

Garrick, who was a prelaw political science major at Muhlenberg, came into College confident in her future career path: "I felt very, very sure that I wanted to go to law school," she says. "However, I knew a lot of people who thought they were sure and then [when they got to law school] they weren't so sure."

Professor Emeritus of Political Science Alton Slane helped Garrick connect to a local law firm, where she interned the fall of her junior year. It was exactly what she hoped it would be, and the next spring, she participated in the Lutheran College Washington Semester Program and interned with the D.C. Office of the Attorney General.

She began studying for the LSATs and polishing her law school application with help from political science faculty, and during her

senior year she was accepted into Harvard Law School. She describes the Harvard experience as "the polar opposite" of her time in Muhlenberg's small, liberal arts environment, but she knew Harvard's reputation would keep her options open and connect her to a range of opportunities. (And, "I'm obsessed with the Obamas, so I had to go there," she jokes.)

For four years after Harvard, Garrick's work focused on sports. When she needed a change, she moved toward her other primary area of interest: journalism. A position opened at Dow Jones, working primarily with *The Wall Street Journal*, and she made the move in January 2019.

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***"I've spent time in a lot of different environments professionally. I have experience that I think is valuable to younger employees trying to figure things out ... I've had some really fantastic mentors over my career so far. I don't know where I'd be if people hadn't made time for me in that way."***

—RENEÉ GARRICK '12, VICE PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS AT MUCK RACK

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*René Garrick '12  
photographed near her  
home in Long Island,  
New York*

“My decision at that point was a result of the current events at the time,” she says. “It was one of those pivotal moments in the country’s history, an unprecedented time in terms of how we see the news, how we see journalism and how we treat journalists. Being a part of trying to uphold and protect that was a really important place for me to be at that time.”

Her work still involved protection of intellectual property, as well as prepublication review of sensitive stories and ensuring that journalists entering unfriendly territory were conducting their work in a way that wouldn’t put them at risk. Work was steadily busy throughout her first year. And then, 2020 happened.

“The pace ticked up just a little bit more,” she recalls. “It was a constant go-go-go. The days were definitely a bit longer. Where it might have looked more similar to a traditional 9-to-5 when things were a little bit calmer in the world, it did become closer to an on-call situation. Things could happen at any time.”

Garrick spent about two-and-a-half years with Dow Jones. As she considered her career goals, she envisioned herself in a position that would give her more freedom to grow and shape the company. Muck Rack, a company that was founded in 2009, was looking to hire a full-time lawyer for the first time. It was journalism adjacent, and it would allow her the growth potential she’d been seeking, so she made the move.

“It’s not uncommon for a lawyer to be one of the last hires when a company is in a growth phase. They don’t want to spend the money if they don’t have to,” she says. But that meant, when she started, there was a lot to do. Garrick drafted templates and paperwork for the company’s sales team and trained the team on what was negotiable and non-negotiable. She worked on data privacy, ensuring there were policies and plans in case of a hacking incident. She helped the fully remote company ensure its hiring practices and employee handbook were in line with the regulations in the variety of jurisdictions where employees are located. And, eventually, she hired a second lawyer to work with her.



PHOTO BY BROOKE SLEZAK

Garrick has also served as a mentor in Muck Rack’s mentorship program, a rewarding part of her work life that she finds a way to fit into her busy schedule: “I’ve spent time in a lot of different environments professionally. I have experience that I think is valuable to younger employees trying to figure things out,” she says. “I’ve had some really fantastic mentors over my career so far. I don’t know where I’d be if people hadn’t made time for me in that way.” —MK



# Men's Lacrosse Enjoys Big Turnaround

The team, which won only two games in 2017, was nationally ranked and tied the school record for wins in a season.

After turning into a perennial winner, it was a loss, ironically, that finally put the Muhlenberg men's lacrosse program into the national rankings.

The Mules, who had received votes in the national poll in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2022, hit the top 20 for the first time after opening the 2023 season by losing to two-time defending national champion RIT in triple overtime.

Muhlenberg would remain in or just outside the top 20 all season, finishing with an 11-6 record to tie the school record for wins in a season.

The Mules went 5-3 in the Centennial Conference, qualifying for the CC playoffs for the second straight year and hosting a CC playoff game for the first time ever. Muhlenberg compiled an impressive 4-3 record against teams that earned NCAA Tournament bids, including an 11-10 win against eventual CC champion Dickinson.

The rise of the Muhlenberg program under Head Coach Jake Plunket might not have seemed likely after the team won only two games and went winless in the CC for the third straight season in 2017. Nor did it seem likely that one player would be on the team for all six years it took for the team to achieve a national ranking. But both of those things happened.

*Ethan Grossman '21*

Ethan Grossman '21 played his first season in 2018 and took full advantage when the NCAA ruled that spring athletes would not lose a year of eligibility in either the 2020 or 2021 seasons, which were shortened by the pandemic. So Grossman continued his career as a Mule after graduating, playing two more seasons while pursuing a master's in organizational leadership in Muhlenberg's School of Graduate Studies.

Grossman ended his career as the Mules' all-time leader in points (294; the old record was 123), goals (160) and assists (134). On the CC all-time lists, he finished second in assists and third in points.

And while Grossman chose to stay at Muhlenberg, three members of the Class of 2023 planned to use their extra eligibility at Division I programs: midfielder and three-time All-American James Dalimonte at Penn State, defensive midfielder Connor Riebling at Monmouth and three-time All-CC goalie Max May at Hofstra. —Mike Falk



James Dalimonte '23

## MULE ROUND-UP

**MEN'S WRESTLING** crowned two All-Americans in the same season for the first time ever as Joey Lamparelli '24 and Anson Dewar '25 placed eighth at 125 and 174, respectively, at the NCAA Championships. Brandon Bowles '25 also qualified for nationals at 157 ... John Panny '23 was named Most Outstanding Performer for field events at the Centennial Conference Indoor **TRACK & FIELD** Championships after winning the long jump and the triple jump. Gold medalists at the CC outdoor meet were Avery McNulty '26 (pictured) in the women's high jump, Noel House '24 in the men's javelin and the men's 4x100-meter relay team of Trevor Hitchcock '24, Joshua Castro '25, James Nye '23 and Russell Neuwirth '23. House went on to qualify for the NCAA Championships, where he finished 14th ... **WOMEN'S LACROSSE** went 11-6 to earn its first CC playoff berth since 2017. The Mules set a school record for longest winning streak (nine) and scored 248 goals, the second-most in a season in program history ... Although the **BASEBALL** team missed the last CC playoff spot on a tiebreaker, the Mules had a program-record six All-CC selections. Jake Swerdloff '23 was named Scholar-Athlete of the Year and Jonathan Toth '24 became the program's first Gold Glove of the Year ... Charlie Kerprich '26 made history in the second round of the CC **MEN'S GOLF** Championships by shooting a 69, a school record for the CC meet and just one stroke over the school record for any round.



# The Most Important Toxic Exposure of Our Generation

The Environmental Protection Agency is proposing rules to mitigate a group of dangerous chemicals that can be found throughout the environment, including in our drinking water.

By Michael Petriello '10

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In March, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed the first regulations on the concentration of certain per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water. I am a toxicologist who studies the cardiovascular effects of exposure to PFAS, and I believe that this is the most important toxic exposure our generation is experiencing. Studies show that 98 percent of us, if not more, are exposed to some of these PFAS. They are ubiquitous in the environment.

PFAS are a class of thousands of different compounds that share a similar purpose: They're good at keeping things from sticking to different materials. They're used in the Teflon coatings on pans, to make fabric waterproof or stain-proof and in food packaging (like sandwich wrappers and microwave popcorn bags). Ingestion is the most common way these chemicals get into the human body, including through our drinking water. PFAS get into drinking water partly because this class of compounds — especially the ones that became widespread starting in the 1950s and have since been discontinued — are so resilient in the environment that we don't even know how long it will take for them to break down. This is why PFAS are sometimes called "forever chemicals." And unfortunately, typical home water filters are not very good at removing PFAS.

Once they're in the human body, PFAS can circulate at a very high level. In our blood, PFAS concentration can be measured at parts per billion. Many other pollutants that people study are in the parts per trillion. Some of our own hormones aren't even at the parts-per-billion level in our blood.

It is hard to study the cumulative risk of PFAS because there are so many of them. It's even

harder to know how different PFAS might interact with one another inside the human body to possibly increase toxicity. But if you look at epidemiological studies of PFAS, a few effects keep popping up. PFAS definitely impact the immune system. PFAS definitely increase cholesterol. There are definitely links between PFAS and certain types of cancers. Part of my lab is also looking at maternal exposures to PFAS, because they can cross the placenta and pass through breastmilk. We've exposed adult mice to PFAS and we see a strong perturbation of the gut microbiome, which is really important for child and adult health outcomes. When you keep looking at different disease endpoints, you see some effect of PFAS.

The proposed EPA regulations would fall under the Safe Drinking Water Act and require municipalities to monitor for six of the most common PFAS, including four that are no longer being produced in the United States. For the two most common of those, they're setting a proposed Maximum Contaminant Level at four parts per trillion. That's very, very low. PFAS may be one of those things, like with lead, that we never find a true "safe level," but starting at four parts per trillion is great. The EPA could have set a higher threshold that would've been easier for municipalities to meet, but they used data from scientific studies to arrive at this level they thought would be safe. Like with other pollutants, these regulations will require public water systems to monitor for six PFAS, make the measured levels of these PFAS available to the public and reduce the levels of these PFAS if thresholds are exceeded. This may be scaring some municipalities right now — PFAS contamination can be very expensive

to remediate. Thankfully, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law earmarks between \$2 billion and \$5 billion to help, but reaching these low levels across the country will likely require additional investment.

The EPA regulations aren't expected to be finalized until the end of this year. People always ask me what they can do to mitigate their risk other than reducing their exposure (throwing out their nonstick pans when they get scratched, for example, or avoiding clothing or packaging made with PFAS). There is no FDA-approved therapy to decrease your PFAS levels, but there are people out there, including those in my lab, who are actively looking at interventions beyond decreasing exposure.

What's interesting about these compounds is they circulate in our blood very readily by binding to proteins and lipids in our blood. We just put out a paper where we looked at PFAS levels in an intervention study in Kentucky. The participants were trying to lower their cardiovascular risk through diet and exercise. What we saw is that they lowered their cholesterol, so the intervention worked, but their PFAS levels also went down. There's also some evidence that fiber intake might decrease PFAS. Irrespective of the exact mechanism, having a healthy lifestyle will probably buffer against a lot of the toxic effects of PFAS. It's amazing that these regulations are in process at the government level, but we always want to be able to tell people what they can do personally, as well.

*Michael Petriello '10, who was an environmental science and biology double major at Muhlenberg, is an assistant professor in the Institute of Environmental Health Sciences at Wayne State University in Detroit.*



ILLUSTRATION BY ISTOCK.COM/BLABLO101

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There is no FDA-approved therapy to decrease your PFAS levels, but there are people out there, including those in my lab, who are actively looking at interventions beyond decreasing exposure.

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*Muhlenberg*



# BOLD AMBITION, BOLD INVESTMENT



Muhlenberg celebrates its  
175th anniversary and looks  
ahead toward a boundless future.

By Meghan Kita

**MUHLENBERG'S 175TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION** brought alumni, friends of the College, faculty, staff and students together for a weekend-long series of gatherings, including a gala in the Wood Dining Commons, the dedication of The Fahy Commons for Public Engagement and Innovation and other events open to the campus and local communities.

In her remarks at the gala, President Kathleen Harring referred to the History of Muhlenberg exhibition, detailed on page 17, that was on display in the Light Lounge: "It's easy to forget that, leading up to each one of these moments [in Muhlenberg's history], there were days, weeks, months, sometimes years when the people of this College were striving, sometimes struggling, to make these things happen — together," Harring said. "Let's focus on the 'together' part for a moment. It is the foundation of our 175 years of excellence and achievement ... Our community-driven excellence defines us. It differentiates us. It gives us an advantage. It's one of our superpowers."

Also at the gala, the co-chairs for *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg* announced that its goal would be increased from \$111 million to \$125 million. At the dedication, attendees could tour the new Fahy Commons and learn more about its groundbreaking sustainability features. Here, take a deeper dive into these pivotal developments that will lead the College into its next 175 years.



## A Boundless Vision for Continued Success

The culminating moment of Muhlenberg's 175th anniversary gala on Friday, April 28, came when Mark Paris '80 P'16 took the podium. Paris was the third of three co-chairs of the Boundless campaign to speak. The first, Doug Peebles '87, provided a refresher course on the campaign's history and its seven priorities, including student financial aid, endowed professorships and capital projects. Then, Tammy Bormann '83 P'16 recognized the campaign's volunteers and donors who've made leadership gifts, including \$7.5 million from Gerald P. Fahy '79 and Cathleen A. Fahy for The Fahy Commons for Public Engagement and Innovation and \$4 million from James R. Lentz '66 P'20 and Debra A. Lentz P'20 for endowed professorships in theatre and dance (more details on page 7).

Paris began his remarks with the lessons the co-chairs have learned so far from the campaign, which launched publicly in November 2021. First, student need is greater than expected, largely due to ripple effects from the pandemic. Second, the skills and capacities students build at Muhlenberg are increasingly valuable, as the working world rapidly transforms. And third, donors have responded to the campaign's priorities with immense generosity.

"But we all know that this story isn't over. There is more work to be done," Paris said. "Our ambitions and hopes for Muhlenberg to be transformational, aspirational and innovative are real. President [Kathleen] Harring has said many times: 'Bold ambition requires bold investment.' I believe that right now is the perfect time to elevate what the campaign is and what it will do for our College. It's time to show the rest of the world that Muhlenberg is bold."

As he announced the new campaign goal — \$125 million, an increase from \$111 million — red and blue confetti fell from the balconies and the crowd applauded.

The campaign goal was increased for the three reasons Paris shared in his gala remarks, says Vice President for Advancement Rebekkah Brown '99. At press time, \$98,600,000 had been raised to date, or nearly 80 percent of the campaign's revised goal.

"The Boundless campaign comes at a pivotal moment for Muhlenberg, and its success will help ensure the quality Muhlenberg education we have come to know and expect will be provided for generations to come," Brown says. "The Muhlenberg community has stepped up to show unprecedented support of the College."

Five of the campaign's seven goals increased, including those for student financial aid, the Muhlenberg Annual Fund, integrative learning and high-impact practices, The Muhlenberg Network and the Seegers Union expansion. An architect has been secured for that expansion, which is to include classroom and gathering spaces, a relocated Office of Alumni Affairs, a major events space and an enhanced Career Center.

"Like Muhlenberg College itself, philanthropy is a collective effort," says Harring. "It creates a whole that's greater than the sum of its parts. We aim ever higher as an institution, and it's so rewarding to know that our community continues to support our aspirations to reach new levels of community-driven excellence."

**“OUR COMMUNITY-DRIVEN EXCELLENCE  
DEFINES US. IT DIFFERENTIATES US.  
IT GIVES US AN ADVANTAGE. IT’S ONE  
OF OUR SUPERPOWERS.”**

**— PRESIDENT KATHLEEN HARRING**



MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

1848 2023

ANNIVERSARY

Top to bottom, left to right: President Kathleen Haring with the Haight family (David E. Haight Jr. P'92, David E. Haight III '92 and his wife, Susan L. Haight), who named the Office of Community Engagement space in the Fahy Commons; Linda M. Cenci '75 P'06 and her husband, Victor S. Cenci P'06, who named the Fahy vestibule; Gerald P. Fahy '79 and Cathleen A. Fahy inside the building that bears their name; Lentz Professor in Dance Karen Dearborn and Elmer Moore '99 before the gala; higher education innovator Leo Lambert, whose keynote address was called "Relationship-Rich Muhlenberg: How Human Connections Drive Success in College"; Lee '59 P'85 GP'21 and Barbara P'85 GP'21 Kreidler at the gala; Ilene Wood and her guest, Ray Starner, before the gala





## A Space With an Innovative Spirit

During Muhlenberg's 175th anniversary celebration, on a cold, rainy, windy afternoon, the College and Lehigh Valley communities gathered under a tent in front of The Fahy Commons for Public Engagement and Innovation for its dedication. In her remarks, President Kathleen Harring joked that the rainy weather was a positive thing — the building, constructed to the highest standards of sustainability, collects rainwater that is used to flush the toilets.

One of the speakers was Allentown Mayor Matt Tuerk, who reflected on the many partnerships between Muhlenberg and the city of Allentown — the students conducting watershed testing in city parks, for example, and the alumni now working in local government — and how they related to the opening of this unique building: “This milestone is emblematic of the innovative spirit that embodies the Muhlenberg College I’ve come to know,” he said.

Next, Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Lance R. Bruck '89 P'21 spoke about the Boundless campaign goals and successes so far: “How will we equip our students, faculty, staff and community members with the on-campus resources and spaces they need to succeed? Behind me is a 20,000-square-foot answer to that question,” he said. “Welcome to the Fahy Commons. This building demonstrates to the Muhlenberg community the impacts of boundless generosity.”

Bruck, Gerald P. Fahy '79, Cathleen A. Fahy, Harring, Tuerk and Vice President for Advancement Rebekkah Brown '99 used giant scissors to cut a symbolic ribbon in front of the building, which has been open to the campus community since the start of the spring semester. Guests were able to tour the building following the dedication — and you can, too, at [muhlenberg.edu/fahycommons](http://muhlenberg.edu/fahycommons). Here are a handful of highlights.



“THIS MILESTONE IS EMBLEMATIC  
OF THE INNOVATIVE SPIRIT THAT  
EMBODIES THE MUHLENBERG  
COLLEGE I’VE COME TO KNOW.”

— Allentown Mayor Matt Tuerk





## From Trees to Tables

When construction began on Fahy, Department of Theatre & Dance Technical Director Eric Covell met with the arborist charged with removing the trees within the building's planned footprint. They collaborated to ensure the trees were taken down in a way that would maximize the yield of wood. Covell constructed one countertop, five benches and six tables (including this one) from the black walnut, sycamore, pine and maple trees that once stood where Fahy is now. The furniture can be found inside and in front of Fahy.

## Clearly Safer for Birds

Fahy's expansive windows are made with bird-safe glass, which is covered in small, translucent circles spaced in a grid that enable birds to see (and avoid flying into) the windows. The grid pattern is based on research conducted by Professor of Ornithology and Conservation Biology Daniel Klem about how to reduce bird-window collisions. The glass itself was manufactured by Mike McGrory '93, a former student of Klem's. The building's smaller windows, like those in the offices, have a feather-friendly film that Klem helped develop laminated to the exterior pane of glass.



## A Place to Create

The Makerspace inside Fahy Commons contains technology including 3D printers, a laser cutter, a computer numerical control (CNC) machine, heat presses and sewing machines. While the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Program is now housed in Fahy (and INE students are likely to need some of these technologies as they complete their coursework), the Makerspace is open to all students.

## The Signs Are Alive

The building's architects worked with design firm Cloud Gehshan on Fahy's signage. The firm recommended these living moss signs for each of Fahy's major "tenants" to help tie together the biophilic elements of the building. They were manufactured by a third party signage company and need minimal care. 

PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON



# Inspiring Action

By Meghan Kita

**Daniela Quiroz '10** is a film editor committed to telling stories that advance social justice and spotlight diverse experiences and perspectives, with a special passion for joyful stories about Latinx culture. Her work on one of those projects, a documentary about a competitive scholastic mariachi team from South Texas, earned her the Jonathan Oppenheim Editing Award at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LOCCISANO/GETTY IMAGES



Sundance  
Film Festival  
2023

**THE 2023 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL** held its awards ceremony more than a week after the festival began, on January 27, inside the 500-seat Ray Theatre in Park City, Utah. By that time, most of the few dozen cast and crew who had come for the January 22 world premiere of the documentary they'd worked on, *Going Varsity in Mariachi*, had gone home. The group had worn matching blue and gold sequined varsity jackets on the red carpet. The name of the film, which tells the story of a competitive scholastic mariachi team from South Texas, was emblazoned on the back.

"We were pretty prominent in the streets of Park City," says Daniela Quiroz '10, who was *Going Varsity's* editor. "It was so cold. The jackets were not warm enough. But it was an amazing experience."

Quiroz stayed for the awards ceremony along with the film's directors, Sam Osborn and Alejandra Vasquez, and producer Julia Pontecorvo. They sat near the back of the venue — its stadium seating meant everyone had a good view, and they weren't counting on winning anything. It was an honor just to be selected for the festival, which receives thousands of submissions each year and chooses just 99 films to screen.

The juror who presented the Jonathan Oppenheim Editing Award, which is named after the late editor of the 1990 documentary *Paris Is Burning*, took the stage to introduce the winner, describing the winning film as "a joyful edit that carries the heart of the characters while still exploring difficult and sensitive issues in a delicate and beautiful way. We deeply care for our heroes and the spirit of life on the border."

"The juror mentioned 'life on the border,' and that second, I felt Julia squeeze my hand, and we realized that this was our film, and we were being recognized specifically for editing," Quiroz recalls. "Any chance I had of keeping composure was out the window. I immediately started crying."

Quiroz made her way down, down, down to the stage and arrived out of breath. She used her speech not only to thank her team but to advocate for her fellow editors and their profession. For example, the *Going Varsity* producers adhered to scheduling guidelines proposed by the Alliance of Documentary Editors to ensure ample time for post-production work to occur: "That's one of the things I mentioned, that this is something that should be a trend moving forward for any documentary film, so that you don't burn out your editors." She also promoted the use of resources like BIPOCDocEditors.com that work to diversify the overwhelmingly white and male field of documentary editing.

"I was like, 'I can't be up here in a room full of filmmakers and not tell them about the things that I care about,'" Quiroz says. "To have a mic in front of a group of influential people like that is very rare."



## Finding Her Way to Film

Perhaps it is rare for Quiroz herself to have such a platform, but the focus of her career has been working on films that uplift the voices of advocates for social justice and individuals with diverse perspectives. Quiroz, who grew up in New York City, had an interest in social justice from a young age. One of the reasons she chose Muhlenberg was because she could tell during her visit that the College had a politically active student body. ("And, the food was good," she adds.)

At Muhlenberg, she studied both media & communication and Spanish. Her family is from Peru, and Spanish was her first language. In college, she chose the Spanish major because she wanted to read the Spanish literature she would've read in high school if she'd grown up in a Spanish-speaking country. She also hoped to study abroad, and she did, during her junior year: "I went to Málaga and loved it and really had that immersive experience that was pivotal for reaching a new level of understanding of ... I don't want to say my heritage, because my family didn't come from Spain, but to have the privilege to immerse myself in another culture has stuck with me to this day because of how unique an experience I was afforded."



I was like, 'I can't be up here in a room full of filmmakers and **not** tell them about the things that I care about. To have a mic in front of a group of influential people like that is very rare.'



Daniela Quiroz '10  
with Going Varsity  
Music Producer Camilo Lara  
and Associate Editor  
Anna LaRoche



Now, I edit very long-form pieces, but if you do shorter things, then every time you start a new project, you're building off of what you learned in the previous project."

She chose media & communication because she wanted to do something creative, something that could make a difference in her community and in society, either journalism or photojournalism. She was not interested in pursuing film; several of her older cousins worked in the industry, and she wanted to do something different. But, when she was a senior, she took her first film production class with Professor of Media & Communication Paul McEwan. She was part of a group that wrote, directed, filmed and edited a short film.

"I fell in love with the process," she says. "I loved every aspect of it, but I literally lost [track of] time in the editing."

When she graduated, she knew she wanted to continue editing, but she needed to amass experience: "It's a high risk to hire a first-time editor," she says. "I kind of just went and put in my time."

She worked as a personal assistant at the documentary production house Gabriel Films and was able to shadow the editor working there. Eventually, she was able to try her hand at cutting some scenes. After her time there, she assisted a few editors on projects they were working on and cut films made by New York City-based college students on a freelance basis.

"That's how I got the majority of my experience — taking a lot of short-term projects," she says. "Now, I edit very long-form pieces, but if you do shorter things, then every time you start a new project, you're building off of what you learned in the previous project. I took on as many projects as possible so I could keep building that base."

## Employed as an Editor

Quiroz's first full-time editing job was with Skylight, which focuses on human rights documentaries. It was a relief to have a steady paycheck after a couple years of freelancing, and she was able to learn the specific style and point of view the nonprofit organization brought to its films. At Skylight, she served as a co-editor on *Rebel Citizen*, a film about the political documentaries by Academy Award-winning cinematographer Haskell Wexler. It was her first feature-length editor credit.

In September 2015, Quiroz left Skylight for Vice Media Group. She was interested in learning more about editing for television, and learn she did: "I was thrown in at the deep end," she says. "It was so fast-paced compared to what it was like at Skylight. I went from a crew of six people to, I think ... 100 people [in production and post-production] in the basement of the Vice building in Williamsburg, [Brooklyn]. It was a lot for me to wrap my head around, but I learned so much."

At Vice, she learned how to stay organized as she worked on multiple projects at once. When she started, she was primarily cutting promos that would run online ahead of new episodes of *VICE on HBO*. After a couple years, she started cutting longer-form pieces, including 30-minute episodes of the show (most were broken into two 15-minute segments). She'd work on each project for about two months. The one she remembers most fondly was called "Trans in Texas." It expanded on a story from a previous season about a trans girl fighting for the right to use the bathroom of her choosing in Texas.

"The next year, the producers followed up with her and took it to a broader level: What is happening around Texas for other trans folks? What is the battle for folks in that state specifically? I worked on that follow-up piece and I was super proud of that," she says. "It was with an associate producer who started around the same time I did. We had grown in the company together and this was both of our first opportunities to take on a solo project the company was trusting us with. It was a great bonding experience for us, but also, the story was just really close to my heart."



Above, a still from *The Last Out*;  
below right, a still from *Going Varsity in Mariachi*

## Freelance Freedom

In early 2019, Vice laid off 10 percent of its staff, and Quiroz was among those affected. At the time, she was upset — she liked the people she worked with and had learned a lot at the company — but in retrospect, she says, it was a positive thing. She'd built a huge network at Vice, and her colleagues helped get her name and resume in front of their networks. She was able to resume freelancing but in a way that felt more secure and less feast-or-famine than it had when she was less experienced.

"The more people you work with, the more yeses you get. It grows exponentially as long as people enjoy working with you and you do good work," she says. "When I was 21, I would just say yes to everything. I would spend weeks working on multiple projects, burning myself out, and then I would spend weeks having nothing to do. Now, I can pick and choose projects a little bit more."

Quiroz worked on two episodes of a PBS series before she connected with the production team of *The Last Out*, a feature-length documentary about three young Cuban baseball players training for Major League Baseball. In late 2019 and early 2020, she and another editor worked to take the film's rough cut and turn it into a polished product that would be selected to premiere at the 2020 Tribeca Film Festival. The pandemic canceled the festival, but the film's selection alone gave Quiroz confidence that she was on the right path.



The aim is to inspire folks to take action and either educate them on something they've never heard about before or ignite a passion inside them so that they put pressure on their political officials to actually enact change."

In 2020, Quiroz worked on an hour-long project for PBS called *Latino Vote: Dispatches from the Battleground*. She and the director, Bernardo Ruiz, had to rethink its formatting — the idea had been to capture grassroots organizing during the 2020 election, but pandemic restrictions on travel forced them to get creative. Ruiz hired local videographers to film interviews that he conducted via Zoom. It would be Quiroz's first solo editing credit.

"We had nine months to get the film going and broadcast ahead of the election. That project meant a lot to me in terms of finding creative solutions and having my first solo credit, but also because it was a story about my culture and my community," she says. "The message ultimately was that the Latinx community isn't a monolith and that no political figure should take our vote for granted. Just because we're all part of the same community does not mean we'll all vote the same way."



## To Sundance and Beyond

Quiroz got connected with the *Going Varsity* team through one of the directors of *The Last Out*. She remembers her interview with the *Going Varsity* directors well: "I had no idea whether or not they liked me, but I really loved the story. I really wanted to be a part of it," she recalls. "They were so composed — who knows, maybe they had a long shoot day — but normally, I'm the person who's a little bit more cool and level-headed. I was like, 'Oh my God, am I just too thirsty right now?' Later on, I found out I was their top choice. They really wanted to work with me as well, because of my passion."

The directors were wrapping up filming in Texas for the first few months Quiroz was on the project, in early 2022. She met with the rest of the group, first virtually and then in person, a couple times a week. Together, they determined what the story could be, what scenes might be missing and whether they needed additional footage of a specific character or a specific setting.

She deeply enjoyed the collaborative process and having a large role in the film's creative development.



A still from *Latino Vote: Dispatches from the Battleground*

In October 2022, the group submitted a rough cut of the film for consideration in a variety of festivals, including Sundance. Within another month or two, Quiroz completed her cut and the team began working on things like color correction and audio mixing — the finishing touches. One day during that period, while the team was together and working through a tough problem, Vasquez, one of the directors, missed a call. She told the group to take a five-minute break and called the number back. When she returned, she announced that the call she had missed was from Sundance — they'd gotten in.

"Immediately we were elated," Quiroz says. "We never thought it was going to be possible ... We were jumping up and down for joy, freaking out. We called the executive producer. And then there was a moment of quiet, and we were like, 'We still need to finish the film ... People are actually going to see this.'"

At Sundance, *Going Varsity* received a glowing reception from audiences and jurors alike. The experience provided validation that there's an appetite and a market for exactly the kinds of joyful stories about Latinx culture that Quiroz has a passion for telling. She's since begun work on a very different project that aligns with her interest in the intersection of storytelling and social justice: a documentary that deals with solitary confinement in California, focusing on a few formerly incarcerated people who staged a hunger strike in prison to protest the state's practices.

With projects like this one, "the aim is to inspire folks to take action and either educate them on something they've never heard about before or ignite a passion inside them so that they put pressure on their political officials to actually enact change," Quiroz says. "A lot of documentaries take a deep dive into social issues that are hopefully interesting to folks and will inspire them to leave the theater with a sense of purpose." 🎬





PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON

*New Alumni Board President Kaitie Burger '12 with the past two presidents, Stephen Hart '76 and Carol Ekizian Papazian '79*

## Carol Ekizian Papazian '79 Ends Tenure as Alumni Board President

Papazian, who began her term in 2019, led the board through an extremely challenging period in the College's history.

Carol Ekizian Papazian '79, whose term as Alumni Board president ended June 30, began her four years as president less than a year before the start of the pandemic. Papazian, who joined the Alumni Board in 2009, presided over three in-person meetings in 2019 and early 2020. During that period, board members participated in the Class of 2023's Orientation Weekend, had a strong presence at Alumni Weekend, reached 100 percent participation during Mulementum, collected supplies for the Muhlenberg Useful Living Essentials (M.U.L.E.) Community Cabinet and continued a "Why I Give" campaign to inspire alumni philanthropy.

Then, the pandemic hit. The first virtual Alumni Board meeting was held in April of 2020, at a time when no one knew when in-person gatherings could safely resume.

The board had to start thinking about ways to connect alumni with each other and with students that could take place completely virtually.

"I can't talk about the past four years without talking about how committed the Alumni Board members were to their roles during the pandemic," Papazian says. "At the outset, honestly I was skeptical and a little worried about promoting alumni engagement via Alumni Board Zoom meetings after work hours and on Saturday mornings. The energy everyone brought to the meetings and to their work really showed in the accomplishments they achieved."

In 2020, the Alumni Board created a thank-you video for alumni first responders and a welcome video for the Class of 2024, selected students to receive stipends for underpaid

or unpaid summer internships and chose Alumni Achievement Award winners. Members participated in virtual Alumni Week, Mumentum and, the following January, virtual THAW.

In 2021, the Alumni Board focused on understanding the College's institutional priorities related to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) and how they were being implemented on campus. Papazian worked with each of the board's committees to identify DEIB initiatives they could incorporate into their processes.

That fall also brought the inauguration of President Kathleen Haring and the public launch of *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg*. Papazian hosted sessions for Haring's virtual presidential welcome tour, and each Alumni Board member made a five-year commitment to the campaign. Additionally, the Alumni Board allocated money from the Alumni Trust Fund to support the creation of the large entrance lobby in the future Seegers Union expansion, and the board's development committee collaborated with College staff to promote alumni giving.

The Alumni Board held a hybrid meeting in April 2022; it now holds two in-person and two virtual meetings each year to encourage alumni who live far away a chance to be involved and make fewer trips to campus than was required pre-pandemic. Now that Muhlenberg can host events with fewer restrictions, the Alumni Board launched its own tailgate table at Alumni Weekend and began sending engagement committee representatives to graduation weekend events. Board members have spoken at career panels on campus and supported job shadowing opportunities through the Career Center. This past academic year, the board was able to provide feedback on the College's new DEIB statement. It increased funds for the internship stipend program and received a record number of applicants for the program.

During her tenure, Papazian expanded the Alumni Board leadership team from just the officers to include the chairs and co-chairs of the board's five committees to foster accountability and smooth transitions as board members join and depart. She also built a stronger relationship with the Board of Trustees.

Papazian believed it was her job to understand what was happening at Muhlenberg and then to ensure all Alumni Board members were aligned in supporting and communicating that work to fellow alumni: "We have seven decades of alumni serving on the Alumni Board, all with different reference points to the College, and I found that it was critical to listen to everyone's point of view and understand their needs and the skill sets they could bring to help us succeed," she says. "The fact that each Alumni Board member spent four years at the same place creates a unique bond despite our other differences."

As she steps away from the board, Papazian looks back fondly on the tumultuous but productive term she spent serving the College: "I feel enriched by having connections to so many alumni, staff and the administration. I've said many times that these have been my 'bonus college years' and I will miss seeing everyone on a regular basis." —*Meghan Kita and Grace Oddo '22*



## Kaitie Burger '12 Begins Term as Alumni Board President

Kaitie Burger '12, who joined the Alumni Board in 2020, began her tenure as president on July 1.

"I'm really excited and honored to be taking on the role," she says. "Carol [Papazian '79] and the outgoing executive team have laid such great groundwork and momentum for the organization that will help us continue to move forward."

Burger, who was a media & communication major and dance minor, knew she wanted to stay involved with Muhlenberg after graduating. In 2013, she joined the Young Alumni Council, a group whose mission is to serve as enthusiastic liaisons between the College and graduates from the last decade. She joined the Alumni Board in 2020 and was a member of the nominations and governance committee during her first year, moving on to chair the committee from 2021 to 2023.

Burger looks forward to continuing the board's mission and vision: "There is much momentum already in place," she says. "This is an exciting time in Muhlenberg's history, especially in regards to *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg*. There are also many new developments on the horizon, and I'm excited to support my fellow Alumni Board members through involvement in all of these initiatives." —*GO*

# I Found a Love for Creative Writing in Retirement

I've taken 23 classes in the last 12 years, and I feel younger than I did when I was a Muhlenberg student.

BY HARVEY SCHWARTZ '70, AS TOLD TO MEGHAN KITA

*Harvey Schwartz '70, a natural science major at Muhlenberg, had a 25-year career as a chiropractor. Since retiring in 2004, he has taken 23 creative writing courses at Western Washington University. Here, this lifelong learner recounts his unconventional educational journey.*

**I**n high school, I knew I stood the risk of getting drafted into the Vietnam War if I didn't continue my education. My dad was a dentist, so I planned to attend dental school. The draft lottery took place in December of my senior year at Muhlenberg. The second I heard my number — it was high, meaning I likely wouldn't be drafted — all desire to be a dentist disappeared.

I'd already been accepted at Temple Dental, so I thought I'd give it a try. It quickly became evident it wasn't a good fit. I didn't plan on quitting the day that I did. It was like my feet could not walk up the steps to my classroom. I dropped out to join a hippie commune in Philadelphia.

After hitchhiking across the country, I spent time teaching in Washington state before I began chiropractic school. Being a chiropractor was a perfect match for me. The mix of physical work, mental analysis and creative problem solving was perfect. When I retired, I missed the creativity.

So, I joined an improv group. It was really fun, but since I'm not a particularly fast thinker, it was also stressful. Writing ended up being perfect for me because I could take my time.

I didn't plan on starting writing classes the day that I did. I went to campus for a lecture a friend told me she was giving on The Beatles. I got there and the room was empty. I went to the front office and asked, "Isn't Marie giving a lecture now?" They said, "That was yesterday."

It happened to be the first day of a new quarter, and the office had a list of classes. I saw that my friend was teaching a poetry class, and I asked, "When is that?" They said, "In 10 minutes." So I went. My friend let me sit in. She gave us a prompt for a poem and, after 20 minutes, we went around and read them. I did way better than I thought I would. I ended up registering for her class and another that day. I've taken 21 more since.

If my younger self could see me now, somewhere in his consciousness, he would not be surprised. Back then, the visionary part of my brain was atrophied from lack of use. I was grappling between the side of myself that said, "You should be a dentist — you'll make a good living, set your own hours, be your own boss," and the side that realized I had no desire to live that life. This sounds crazy because I'm 75, but I feel younger today than I did when I was going to Muhlenberg.



*Schwartz at a 2018 release party for Hampden Road, a book of his poetry*

# ALUMNI WEEKEND IS FOR EVERYONE

SEPTEMBER 8-10

Everyone is invited back to campus to celebrate and reconnect with classmates, faculty, staff and students.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

 IN-PERSON  HYBRID *All times are Eastern and subject to change.*

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

-  10 a.m.  
ALUMNI GOLF OUTING  
Hosted by the Athletics Department
-  10 a.m.  
50TH REUNION TOUR
-  11 a.m.  
50TH REUNION BRUNCH
-  12:30 p.m.  
STATE OF THE COLLEGE ADDRESS  
President Kathleen Harring
-  1:45 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.  
CLASSES WITHOUT QUIZZES
-  2 p.m.  
CREATIVE CORNER
-  5:15 p.m.  
ALUMNI AND FACULTY MIXER
-  6:30 p.m.  
SHABBAT DINNER
-  6:30 p.m.  
AN EVENING OF DISTINCTION

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

-  7:45 a.m.  
BIRD WATCHING EXPEDITION
-  10 a.m.  
CAMPUS TOUR
-  11 a.m.  
FAHY COMMONS BUILDING TOURS
-  11 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
ALUMNI TAILGATE
-  12 p.m. – 3 p.m.  
HOMECOMING FAIR
-  12 p.m.  
FOOTBALL VS. SALISBURY
-  12:30 p.m.  
FAHY COMMONS BUILDING TOURS
-  2 p.m.  
ALUMNI AUTHOR RECEPTION
-  3 p.m.  
BUG DISCOVERY WALK
-  3:30 p.m.  
WMUH PANEL DISCUSSION

-  4 p.m.  
CAMPUS TOUR
-  6:30 p.m. – 11 p.m.  
'BERG BASH: CHEERS  
TO THE YEARS

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

-  10 a.m.  
CHAPEL SERVICE
-  10 a.m.  
BRUNCH THROUGH THE LINE
-  10:30 a.m.  
HILLEL BAGEL BRUNCH

 **CHECK  
IT OUT!** 

Visit the Alumni Art Show in Seegers Union, which will be displayed throughout the entire weekend!



For full schedule details, updates and registration, scan the code to visit [muhlenbergconnect.com/alumniweekend](https://muhlenbergconnect.com/alumniweekend) or call 800-464-2374.

**Class years ending in 3 and 8 will celebrate milestone reunions!**



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**So Much to Celebrate**

At Muhlenberg's 175th anniversary gala, the co-chairs of *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg* announced an increase in the campaign goal. To learn more about this and the weekend's other exciting events, turn to **p. 30**.