

# alvernia

magazine

## LOOKING TOWARD A NEW HORIZON

Reading Scholars Program points the  
way forward for the City of Reading



Summer 2018

# alvernia

magazine

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Senior Josh Harmes '18.



THEO ANDERSON





# Dissolving Barriers Leads to Success

I learned the nearby public high school of low-income Polish and Irish kids sent less than 20 percent to any college. It was a lesson I never forgot.



Thomas F. Flynn, Ph.D.  
President

Those of us who grew up in multigenerational homes have unique memories. My mother was an award-winning fourth-grade teacher, so it was my grandmother who welcomed me home daily from elementary school at Mt. Alvernia Academy. (Yes, I was fated to find my way to the other Alvernia in 2005!) My mother lovingly filled all the usual parental roles, yet I was fortunate to have in my grandfather a devoted mentor to provide life lessons and the invaluable security of a safety net.

As a “scholarship boy” at a top-ranked Jesuit high school, I took for granted that all seniors attended a four-year college. A memorable conversation with my grandfather set me straight: I learned the nearby public high school of low-income Polish and Irish kids sent less than 20 percent to any college. It was a lesson I never forgot.

As a young academic dean in the late 1980s, I had the opportunity to be included in an exciting national initiative encouraging college leaders to open up access to “underrepresented” groups seldom found in the nation’s universities. Some wealthy prestigious schools soon boasted about their successful recruitment efforts, but few could report happy endings. Periodically, the national media would document distressing stories of students who dropped out, having felt isolated, even helpless, despite their scholarships and their talent.

There have been noble attempts locally to expand collegiate opportunities for inner-city students. These, too, while well-intentioned, have had

disappointing results. Many did not make it past first year; very few earned undergraduate degrees.

There was an essential lesson in this devastating national and local story of lost potential: it was not enough for colleges to admit low-income, first-generation students and provide scholarships; we needed to address the multiple barriers they face and support them as they take the steps to graduate!

This is the key lesson that has made possible the early success of Alvernia’s Reading Collegiate Scholars Program: *money is essential, but it is not sufficient.*

Make no mistake: the 34 Reading Scholars at Alvernia would not be in college if not for four-year, full-tuition scholarships, funded half by Alvernia’s budget and half by a generous donor or local business.

But unlike other such programs, Alvernia’s Reading Scholars have benefited from college readiness programs held during 10th and 11th grades and a special senior-year program targeting

the college search process. Also important has been an intense, multidimensional mentoring program and a safety net woven by the entire university community. Sometimes, it does take a village!

These students have responsibilities that take your breath away. Many are working, not to afford college but to pay the family’s household bills; some are the only family members who speak English or drive a car. Most are helping raise younger siblings and caring for grandparents.

We borrowed a concept from the national Posse Program and created intentional cohorts of students each year. They proceed through college together. A pre-college summer bridge program orients them to college and to Alvernia. Faculty mentors serve each group of students in addition to their regular faculty advisors. Impressive community mentors are assigned to (and adopt) each student.

Perhaps most valuable is the support provided by the students themselves. They know best the barriers faced and the burdens carried by fellow students. They know best the pressure to succeed and make their families proud. So they are best able to judge when a peer needs a soft shoulder or a tough-minded challenge.

There is another, perhaps most important, factor in the success of these scholars. They are as talented as they are deserving. They have stronger high school records and higher test scores than our typical freshmen. They ARE college material; they just need the opportunity and support so THEY can make this happen.

And they have succeeded impressively: 100 percent of the first cohort of scholars will graduate with a cumulative average of B+ and resumes already filled with important contributions to Alvernia and their local community.

Overall, 34 of the 38 current Reading Collegiate Scholars are still enrolled at Alvernia. Many are modeling the Franciscan call to be “brother and sister to all.” They are already paying it forward to their community by mentoring younger peers at Reading High where hundreds more students are being helped by our Holleran Center Student Fellows.

As you enjoy learning in this magazine about some of these special young people, let us reflect on the mentors who have made a difference in our lives, on those who — like my grandfather — provided invaluable life lessons and a safety net to help us succeed. And let us thank the many who are helping our Reading Scholars succeed!

Peace and all good,

Tom Flynn

LEFT: ED KOPICKI  
TOP: THEO ANDERSON



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Go to [alvernia.edu/realworldlearning](https://alvernia.edu/realworldlearning) for more.



ANGELS IN THE ATTIC

The United Way of Berks County has approved a \$10,000 Rapid Response Grant for Alvernia University’s Angels in the Attic program. The funds aim to assist with purchasing fresh vegetables, fruit, dairy products and personal items for students in need, as well as training materials for a mentor program that pairs students with faculty or staff.

Angels in the Attic is a need-based program for Alvernia University students who have difficulty paying for basic-living items. Food, clothing, shoes, bedding, books and class supplies are purchased with funds from university faculty and staff, and other items are collected when students empty out dorm rooms at the end of each semester.

“End-of-semester Lighten your Load collections bring in gently used rugs, sweepers, dishes and other basic-living items,” explains program founder Sharon Blair, executive assistant to the provost at Alvernia. Last fall, a faculty member who won a special Alvernia/United Way campaign incentive for one meal each day for the rest of the year donated her prize to Angels in the Attic.

“Faculty and staff can sometimes tell that a student is struggling,” says Blair. “Alvernia is so strong helping the community, and this is a way to help our Alvernia community.”

INAUGURAL FOOTBALL SCHEDULE INCLUDES GRIDIRON CLASSIC

Beginning this fall, Saturday afternoons from September through mid-November will offer Golden Wolves football action. Highlights include a home opener against Gallaudet University on Sept. 1, Homecoming against King’s College on Oct. 13, and a Gridiron Classic matchup against Wilkes University at FirstEnergy Stadium — home of the Reading Fightin Phils — on Sept. 29.

Returning to the City of Reading after a 36-year hiatus, the Baseball Gridiron Classic featured high school football games at the baseball park from 1951 through 1982. Alvernia’s game will cap the three-week event.

On Campus  
Breaking new ground for the PLEX



Breaking ground, left to right, are Doug Smith, Chris Wise, Michael Fromm, Kathy Herbein, Chloe Gletow, Angel Helm, President Tom Flynn, Helen Flynn, Kevin St. Cyr, Bill Stiles and John McCloskey.

Ortega Named Boscov Scholar

Presented each spring to the top graduating senior of Alvernia’s Reading Collegiate Scholars Program, the annual Albert Boscov Community Engagement Award honors the late Albert Boscov — whose early financial backing helped to launch the full-scholarship program.

The inaugural award was presented to psychology senior Syanashailyn Ortega (pictured right with President Flynn) who will continue to live and work in the Reading area after graduation.

“It’s our hope that the Albert Boscov

Community Engagement Award will give us an annual opportunity to remember and honor one of Reading’s finest citizens,” said President Tom Flynn.

Among other impressive achievements, Albert Boscov founded Our City Reading to restore abandoned houses in downtown Reading, opened the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, the GoggleWorks apartments, and a five-star hotel — all designed to bring people back into the city he loved.



TOP: TIM CRONAN RIGHT: THEO ANDERSON

For more news, visit [alvernia.edu/news](http://alvernia.edu/news)

HOT CLUB OF PHILLY

The acoustic ensemble Hot Club of Philadelphia presented its brand of “gypsy jazz” music at Alvernia this March in partnership with Boscov’s Berks Jazz Fest.



SIPLING NAMED VOLLEYBALL MAC SCHOLAR

Senior Kristen Sipling was named Women’s Volleyball Senior Scholar by the Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) office in January. The award recognizes one student per sport who has combined academic and athletic success over his or her college career. Sipling is the 10th Alvernia student-athlete to be recognized as a MAC Senior Scholar since Alvernia joined the conference in 2008.

Sipling had an All-American year in her final season, earning First Team All-Region honors, First Team All-ECAC and honorable mention All-America. She broke the Alvernia record for career kills and ranked second in the nation in kills-per-set. Sipling surpassed Alvernia’s single season kills record and finished her career with 1,321 career kills.

#ALLINFORALVERNIA

Beginning May 4 and culminating with MargaritaVern, 534 people — nearly 30 percent more than last year — showed their support for Alvernia by donating \$42,937 in just two days.



WEITZMAN AWARD

Alvernia University's Seniors College presented the 2018 Rabbi Alan Weitzman Award for Community Service to retired Reading Eagle Editor Harry J. Deitz Jr. In honor of the late Rabbi's remarkable lifelong commitment to addressing the needs of others, as well as his service as the longtime director of the Alvernia Seniors College, the Rabbi Alan Weitzman Award recognizes civic-mindedness and those who inspire others through exceptional service to the community. Following his father into the newspaper business, Deitz joined the Reading Eagle as a sportswriter in 1978 and retired this year after serving for a decade as Editor-in-Chief. In addition to serving in leadership roles with numerous community and church groups, Deitz impacted the community through columns that shared personal experiences, faith, and opinions on community and social issues. And he created an investigative reporting team that led statewide coverage of unsolved murders, the death penalty, the heroin crisis, suicides, lead contamination and the quality of nursing home care.

AUTHOR JAMIE FORD TO HEADLINE FALL LECTURE SERIES

On Nov. 8, author Jamie Ford will visit Alvernia as the 2018 First Year Seminar lecturer. Ford's novel "Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet" is a wartime-era Chinese-Japanese variation on Romeo and Juliet. It explores age-old conflicts between father and son, the beauty and sadness of what happened to Japanese Americans during World War II, the tribulations of Asian people during that time, and the depths and longing of deep-heart love across racial barriers. All Alvernia incoming Class of 2022 students will read Ford's book and attend the author's lecture as part of their First Year Seminar course.

On Campus

Remembering Rabbi Weitzman

Several Alvernia community members will fondly remember Rabbi Alan Weitzman, who went to God on March 26. His legacy as founder of the Alvernia Seniors College and Berks Food Bank will help people to remember a man who was also a voice for interfaith cooperation in the community. Susan Rohn, former Alvernia colleague, described him as tenacious. "When he had an idea in his head," she recalled, "he would be in your office until you agreed to take action or else threw him out. Some might describe him as a pit bull, but he was caring and a dear friend." Alvernia Board Chair Michael Fromm met Weitzman during his early childhood. "Rabbi was a champion for social justice causes before such activism was fashionable. He took controversial positions, regardless of the risk of unpopularity, precisely because he was a true activist," Fromm remembered. "He was ahead of his time." Trustee Elsayed Elmarzouky enjoyed the memory of Rabbi gleefully describing the two of them as "the Imam and Rabbi road show," when they would together explain their religious traditions throughout the community. But Elmarzouky also remembers that Weitzman was the first to call him on 9/11 and offer his unconditional support for what he knew would be difficult days ahead. "Rabbi was a prophetic voice for inclusion and justice but was also a dear, dear man, much loved by many," said President Flynn. "It is customary to say rest in peace. But I dare say, Alan will never completely rest. And we can be sure that heaven will never be the same again."



For more news, visit [alvernia.edu/news](http://alvernia.edu/news)

REAL-WORLD ADVANTAGE

Fifty Alvernia students earned competitive awards to explore unique real-world learning experiences this year. Funds are provided through the university's Real-World Experience Award program, geared to expand students' access to experiential learning opportunities in all academic areas. Students applying for Real-World Experience Awards receive up to \$2,000 to support participation in a variety of opportunities, including Alvernia's Washington Center program, undergraduate research, studying abroad, distance internships, alternative break experiences and service-learning. Importantly, the awards do not reduce the amount of any financial aid students already receive.

ALVERNIA OFFERS MASTER'S DEGREES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Adults in Montgomery County can now earn fully accredited Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Education degrees from Alvernia University at a new location on Montgomery County Community College's West Campus, in Pottstown. Alvernia's ethics-driven MBA program can be completed in as little as one year at regional locations in Reading, Pottsville and now in Pottstown. Students can also pursue Alvernia Master in Education degrees with certification in either English as a Second Language (ESL) or Special Education (PK-8 or 7-12) in Pottstown.

NEW ALVERNIA.EDU WEBSITE LAUNCH

After undergoing a major overhaul, Alvernia.edu will launch anew early this summer. The new site features video and highlights transformational success of the university's students, faculty and alumni.

The John Wayne of Alvernia

A retired FBI agent, licensed attorney and decorated Air Force pilot, Professor Emeritus Edgar J. Hartung, JD, was a cornerstone in Alvernia's community for nearly 15 years. On Dec. 11, 2017, Hartung passed away only a few days after hosting his last legendary Grand Final Scenario for criminal justice crisis management students. Although Hartung originally planned to teach history to high school students, it would be many years before he stepped to the head of a classroom. As a man who loved his country, Hartung chose to join the Air Force after college during a war in Southeast Asia. Over the next five years, he successfully completed 87 aerial combat missions as an Air Force pilot in Vietnam. He later received several service medals for his bravery and dedication to his country. After Vietnam, Hartung worked as a corporate

pilot before joining the Federal Bureau of Investigation. An impressive 27 years later, he retired as a supervisory special agent in charge of a special operations group. At Alvernia, Hartung brought together his remarkable career and passion for teaching to influence a new generation of criminal justice professionals. He was a devoted teacher with a reputation for offering impactful moments, intermixed with humor and thoughtful advice. "After a brief conversation with [Hartung] on the first day I visited Alvernia, it was no longer a question of where I wanted to call my home away from home for the next few years," said senior Sara Hayes, a student in Hartung's last crisis management class who fondly remembered her professor's 21 pushups requirement for peers who came late to class. "He didn't just teach us what we needed to know for the course; he taught us life lessons and shared his personal experiences." A vibrant figure, whether in a bomber jacket and cap or trench coat and fedora, Ed

lived life to the fullest. He was the loving husband of Psychology Department Chair Peggy Bowen-Hartung, Ph.D., CTS, with whom he enjoyed many scholarly pursuits, in-between regular cross-country motorcycle trips and energetic discussions about Alvernia basketball games. During a memorial attended by many Alvernia community members, basketball alumni fondly recalled professors Hartung and Bowen-Hartung's persistent presence in the top row of the "faculty and friends" section of the court. "Both carried on a lively commentary, equal to that of many sportscasters," said President Tom Flynn. "Ed knew his hoop. And, no surprise, he took it seriously." As the spring semester wound to a close, graduating criminal justice senior James Wyatt wrote and performed a song in honor of Hartung during the annual spring concert at Alvernia. "He was the John Wayne of Alvernia," said Wyatt.

TOP: STEVE WOLT LEFT: THEO ANDERSON





FIRST DPT CLASS GRADUATES

Nearly 30 students graduated in May as members of Alvernia’s first Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) class. DPT is a clinical, post-graduate doctoral degree offered in two formats at Alvernia: a 4+3 year curricular format and a 3+3 year accelerated format. Students who are admitted as undergraduate freshmen to study biochemistry, biology, healthcare science or psychology can begin the professional phase of the DPT curriculum in their senior years, completing their undergraduate training and doctoral degrees within six years. According to U.S. News and World Report, physical therapy jobs are expected to increase 40 percent by 2020.

PHILADELPHIA SOCIAL WORK SEMINAR

Each year, undergraduate Philadelphia Center social work students offer a professional seminar pinpointing current topics in the field. This year’s all-day seminar tackled the difficult topic of rebuilding lives after domestic violence. Experts, survivors and community leaders were onhand to help social workers understand their role in helping domestic violence survivors.

GRANT SUPPORTS LANCASTER-AREA NURSING STUDENTS

CHI St. Joseph Children’s Health and the Elizabeth Tillman Musser Foundation have granted more than \$188,000 for Lancaster residents pursuing any of Alvernia’s full-time nursing degrees. A part of Catholic Health Initiatives, CHI St. Joseph Children’s Health is a community-based organization dedicated to the health and well-being of children and families in the Lancaster community. The new grant supports scholarships for students demonstrating financial need and academic accomplishment in Alvernia’s Bachelor of Science in Nursing, RN-BSN, Master of Science in Nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice programs.

On Campus

Commencement milestones

More than 640 students earned associate, bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees from Alvernia this May. Among them were nearly 30 inaugural graduates of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program and the first cohort of Reading Collegiate Scholars. Bishop Alfred A. Schlert, fifth bishop of Allentown, led Baccalaureate Mass and offered a Commencement blessing after becoming an official member of the university’s Class of 2018 as one of two honorary degree recipients. Also receiving an honorary degree was Commencement speaker John Hope Bryant, entrepreneur, author and founder of Operation HOPE, Inc. An advisor to the last three sitting U.S. presidents, Bryant was appointed by President Obama to serve on an advisory council for financial capability for young Americans and to chair the Underserved and Community Empowerment subcommittee. Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree graduate Cynthia Truscott offered student remarks, and several members of the Class of 1968 were recognized for their 50th anniversary.



For more news, visit [alvernia.edu/news](http://alvernia.edu/news)

NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOW

Reading Collegiate Scholar Lucero Orozco has become the seventh Alvernia student to be named a Newman Civic Fellow since 2012. A graduate of Reading High, Orozco is a junior studying healthcare science. Tutoring at Reading High through Alvernia’s Holleran Center for Community and Global Engagement for the last two years, Orozco has discovered a calling in helping students develop key academic skills and successfully graduate from high school. She also helps students navigate application and aid processes to pursue further education at colleges and universities around the country. “Especially impressive is Lucy’s ability to serve as a role model for students with a skill and grace seldom encountered in a young woman of her age,” said President Tom Flynn. “Ms. Orozco has emerged as an inspirational leader for her fellow college students who participate in the program, as well as a mentor to those high school students who themselves aspire to be college-bound graduates of Reading High School — just like her.”

Spotlighting Seniors



**Internship ignites career:**  
**Sara Hayes ’18**  
Working as a non-profit case manager/group facilitator, criminal justice graduate Sara Hayes ’18 spends her days teaching life and employment skills to juveniles who are on

probation or parole. “The support system and bonds I developed with my professors will always hold a special place in my heart,” reflects Hayes. “I think a majority of my time I lived inside the Criminal Justice office more than I did in my dorm room, always popping my head into Professor McFee or Professor Harvey’s office to talk to them about anything. Whatever the case was,

they always welcomed me even if they were extremely busy.” Though she completed two internships in the criminal justice field, Hayes finished her degree in less than four years. “Most fields of study at Alvernia require you to do some type of internship or fieldwork, which I believe is so important,” said Hayes. “I am very fortunate to say that two months before I graduated, I was offered a full-time position with one of my internships, which I gladly accepted. I am going to miss Alvernia, but I am super excited to continue this new chapter of my life.”

**Fit for special needs:**  
**Tara Simmons ’16, M’18**  
While working in schools with special needs children, Tara Simmons ’16, M’18 found there was no fitness center in the Berks area that fulfilled the students’ needs



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on a daily basis. So as an Alvernia healthcare science graduate, she engaged community partners to start her own adapted fitness gym as her Master of Arts in Leadership degree focus. Simmons founded the All Abilities Fitness Center to provide a safe and inclusive environment for people with any disability to feel comfortable and empowered to improve physical fitness. Certified in personal training for special populations and CPR and first aid certified for both adults and infants, Simmons is a strong advocate for the special needs community and takes pride in being the voice for those who need assistance. “Meeting people and listening to how

they have overcome difficulties and being a small, tiny part of their lives continues to shape the person I am,” said Simmons. “Being able to help other people is at the base of everything I do, from volunteering to sitting on a nonprofit board to now being a business owner of a much-needed facility. I genuinely feel like God has given me a mission to pursue these successes in order to put me in a position to give back. It is a beautiful feeling.” **Confidently moving forward:**  
**Stephanie Berlin ’18**  
Pushed well outside of her comfort zone at Alvernia, graduate Stephanie Berlin ’18 took on an impressive number of leadership roles, two jobs and an internship on her way to earning a behavioral health degree this May. She has already begun her career as a counselor’s assistant at Caron Treatment Centers and says she’s more than ready to take on an Alvernia master’s degree



in clinical counseling in the fall. “Before coming into Alvernia, I had very low self-esteem a negative self-image, and little to no self-worth,” remembers Berlin. “Alvernia has given me a sense of confidence that I did not have before, and it is because of the people I have met, because of the opportunities I have been given and because of the things that I have accomplished that I am the person you see before you today.”



## NEW BOARD CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR ELECTED

Michael Fromm, CEO of Fromm Electric Supply Corp., has been elected chair of the board of trustees at Alvernia University. In addition, Gregory J. Shemanski, president and CEO of Custom Processing Services, Inc., has been named vice chair of the board.

A prominent civic leader for more than 25 years, Fromm is a third-generation owner of Fromm Electric, a leading distributor of electrical products for regional, national and international customers. He has served on the boards of Our City Reading, Wyomissing Foundation, Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Fulton Bank and was a former board chair of the Greater Reading Economic Partnership, Olivet Boys and Girls Club, and the Jewish Federation of Reading. With his wife, Susan, Fromm established the Fromm Interfaith Award at Alvernia and is co-chair of the 2018 Richard J. Caron Award of Excellence Dinner.

Fromm holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from New York University and has been an Alvernia trustee for more than 10 years. His father, Bernie Fromm, also served on Alvernia's board and as chair in the early 1990s.

Vice Chair Shemanski has been a member of Alvernia's board of trustees since June 2014. As president and CEO of Custom Processing Services, he was involved in the award-winning company's formation and growth that now includes

# On Campus



## Holleran Center celebrates 10th anniversary

The Alvernia community gathered to celebrate the Holleran Center for Community and Global Engagement's 10th anniversary during a special all-day event this March with founders Jerry and Carolyn Holleran.

Several prominent alumni returned to join current students in looking back at some incredible local community work made possible by the Holleran Center. They discussed the impact of Holleran programs like the South Reading Youth

Initiative, the Bog Turtle Creek Farm, the Fromm Interfaith Award and the Reading Collegiate Scholars College Readiness program.

"We've impacted thousands of lives through the center's after-school programs, campus and community initiatives," said Jay Worrall, director of the Holleran Center. "Without the foresight of Jerry and Carolyn Holleran, much of that would never have been possible."

two locations and 130 employees. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business management from Lehigh University.

Shemanski serves as board chairman for Berks Catholic High School and Immaculate Conception Academy.

He and his wife, Becky, are part of the Diocesan Council of Stewards and prominent supporters of Catholic Charities of the Diocese as well as the John Paul II Center for Special Education. The pair sponsored the Bishop's

Annual Appeal for Berks Deanery, and Shemanski was tapped as a lay leader by the Diocese of Allentown Bishop's Commission for Catholic Schools, which was instrumental in reversing a decline in school enrollment.

# Periscope

Alvernia's faculty making a difference



**Travis A. Berger, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor of Business

Berger was recruited to write several guest columns on leadership for the Reading Eagle Business Weekly this year. Headlines include "How to add value as a high-performing follower" and "How servant leaders are powerful." In addition, he was recognized this spring for excellence and innovation in teaching among faculty at Alvernia.

**Rosemarie Chinni, Ph.D.**  
Chair of Mathematics and Sciences, Professor of Forensic Science

Chinni was the recipient of the 2018 Lindback Foundation Award for excellence in teaching. Recipients are tenured faculty members with at least 10 years of full-time teaching at Alvernia who display excellent performance in teaching, service, and scholarship or research.



**Mark Kaufman, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor of English

Kaufman is currently working on a book titled "Spyography: Modernism, Espionage, and the Militant Aesthetic State," examining the problematic recruitment of writers into the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) through literary texts, memoirs and declassified government documents housed in the UK National Archives. In addition, Kaufman has been named Junior Neag Professor for 2018-2020.

**Kevin Donnelly, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor of History

Donnelly has been named Senior Neag Professor for 2018-2020. Neag Professorships are awarded to faculty members who have demonstrated excellence in scholarly work and distinction in teaching, whether in undergraduate liberal arts education or in graduate and professional education.

**Adrean Turner**  
Instructor of Business

Turner penned "F.I.T. For Success," published by Sound Wisdom in January. The FIT (Fearless, Inspired, Transformed) formula is designed to help readers reach their full career potential.



**Donna Yarri, Ph.D.**  
Professor of Theology

Yarri received the Sr. Mary Donatilla Faculty Award at the 2018 Honors Convocation for long service to the university in teaching, advising, service and support.



**Mary B. Schreiner, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor of Education

The Holleran Center for Community and Global Engagement honored Schreiner with a Faculty Award for Exemplary Service-Learning this spring, recognizing Schreiner's excellence for incorporating service-learning into her curriculum.



**Marybeth DeMeo, M.A.T.**  
Chair of English and Communication, Associate Professor of English

A member of Alvernia's faculty for more than 36 years, Marybeth DeMeo has volunteered to teach Alvernia Seniors College courses since the organization's founding in 1998. This spring, she was presented with the Saint Bonaventure Award in Teaching for her long-standing Seniors College commitment.



# MOVING FROM ACCESS TO SUCCESS

BY  
Susan  
Shelly

*Launched in 2013, Alvernia's Reading Collegiate Scholars Program provides up to 10 full, four-year scholarships to promising Reading-area students each year while also providing tutoring, mentoring and college application assistance to hundreds more in the inner-city school district. But the program is about much more than access to college. From the first moment that Reading Scholars visit the university's campus, they are fully supported by a cadre of faculty, staff and community mentors, with an end goal always in sight: to succeed and graduate with a life-changing degree.*

*Graduating Reading Scholar Melisa Rivera looks ahead as a defunct Reading factory is torn down behind her.*

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*“Of about 400 students from the Reading High Class of 2012 who went on to college, only 13 percent graduated in four years.”*

*— Eric Turman '97, M'03*



**A**lvernia President Tom Flynn calls it the university’s signature “access to success” program. Faculty members call it a mission-centered miracle. But to the first students benefiting from the Reading Collegiate Scholars Program, it’s a transformative journey that’s nearly complete.

With an almost perfect grade point average, Reading Scholar Syanashailyn Ortega is excited and has already launched her career with an internship-turned-permanent position in human resources

at C.H. Briggs. Ortega’s mother, inspired by her daughter’s success, is putting the finishing touches on a degree at Reading Area Community College.

Ortega’s early days at Alvernia, however, were a different story.

“I was much less confident about myself when I first started here,” she said. “I felt like an outsider.”

Ortega never struggled academically at Alvernia, but adjusting socially was a challenge. It’s an issue that affects many first-generation college students, and one that often leads to early dropout.

“I didn’t really share experiences with a lot of the other students, so sometimes even conversations were difficult,” she said.

It took awhile, but gradually, Ortega learned to ask for help. She sought advice from community and faculty mentors with whom she was paired. She put to work the skills she’d learned during a two-week summer bridge program prior to the start of her freshman year.

“Looking back, I’m very appreciative for that strong support system,” she said. “Whenever I needed anything, there was somebody there to help me.”

With her undergraduate degree in hand, Ortega encouraged younger Reading Collegiate Scholars not to go it alone.

“We all have obligations and problems, and college can be hard,” she said. “I tell them to take advantage of the support systems that are in place.”

Datnilza Metz is a freshman who has faced an uphill struggle as she balances a rigorous academic schedule with family obligations and a work schedule that ranges from 35 to 45 hours a week.

Without help from advisors and faculty members, she feels that her first year may not have been successful.

“I hope that faculty members and staff know how

*(continued on page 16)*



Reading Scholar **Syanashailyn Ortega** offered remarks during the Berks County Community Foundation’s dinner to celebrate Thun Award winners, Carl and Kathleen Herbein, this spring. The award includes a \$5,000 grant to support an organization of the awardees’ choice. The Herbeins chose to award the 2018 Thun grant to Alvernia’s Reading Collegiate Scholars Program.

## In Her Words

“Good evening everyone. I am honored to be here today representing the Reading Collegiate Scholars Program and accepting this award on its behalf.

For those of you who are not familiar with this program, I get to give you a little bit of insight into how it is changing the narrative for us ‘Reading kids.’ Oftentimes when people speak about the city of Reading or the Reading School District, there is a negative connotation, whether they are referencing the poverty rate, rising teenage pregnancy or the percentage of students dropping out of high school. The odds are against us from day one simply because of the environment we are exposed to, and for some kids, that’s all they need to quit the fight.

I can tell you though, my story and the story of many others is quite different. I was raised in a single-parent household where making ends meet was almost always a struggle. There were school years where there was no money to buy clothes or sneakers, but as kids, we never really noticed. My mom made it her mission to shield us from what was going on and always said, ‘School is all you need to focus on.’

I share all of this with you so that it is easier to understand why receiving this scholarship was so monumental. I had the right work ethic, but like many students, it was the finances that gave me trouble. Our narrative at the end of high school would go one of two ways: we’d find a full-time job and be stuck in a cycle of trying to make ends meet, or we’d ‘get lucky.’

My narrative went a little differently: I was blessed with an opportunity thanks to Alvernia. Alvernia said to me, ‘We believe in you; so here is the pen, you get control of where this story goes, and we can’t wait to read it when it’s done.’ Thankfully though, whenever I or any of my fellow scholars started to lose faith in how great our story could be or whenever we struggled to keep writing, we had a network of Alvernia’s right there to help us pick that pen back up.

I am the first person in my family to graduate college, and as my mom has put it ‘Someone from our bloodline is going to change our socioeconomic status, and that didn’t happen by accident.’ She is right; it happened because Alvernia took a look at me and said, ‘I believe in you.’

So I want to say thank you to Dr. Flynn and the Alvernia community, and I have always awaited the day where I could say thank you to the most important woman in my life, my hero and my best friend, my mom: thank you, and I love you.”

LEFT: THEO ANDERSON RIGHT: JEREMY DREY



Reading Scholar Juan Paula '18.



*"I could not be more proud of this program, of participating in it, or of the kids who are working hard every day to succeed in it."*

— Angel Helm, community mentor



much of an impact they have on us," said Metz, who plans to open her own business after graduating.

Senior Reading Scholar Melisa Rivera, majoring in psychology and healthcare science, agreed with Metz.

"The faculty here have done everything they can to help me, and as a result, I've been able to participate in service trips and campus ministry while still working and keeping up with my classes and school work," she said.

Providing the best support possible for Reading Collegiate Scholars is a priority, said David Myers, director of Alvernia's O'Pake Institute for Ethics, Leadership and Public Service, which oversees the college success component of the Reading Scholars program. It's a lesson from which Myers and Reading High School Principal Eric Turman '97, M'03 hope other colleges can learn.

Turman, an Alvernia alumnus who has been principal of Reading High since 2011-12, described a wake-up call that came when he learned that of about 400 students from the Reading High Class of 2012 who went on to college, only 13 percent graduated in four years.

"I sort of got hit with reality then," he said. "I had to look in the mirror and say, 'You failed these kids.'"

It's an issue mirrored around the country: awarding scholarships to deserving first-generation seniors is not enough, Myers said. While the scholarships enable them to enroll, much-needed support must be in place, or many of these students will fail. Balancing obstacles including extensive work schedules, financial concerns and family-dynamic issues with demanding academic schedules prove to be overwhelming for many of them.

"So we considered how we could effect change," Myers said. "We deeply researched ideas that we could model and successful programs at other institutions."

## READING SCHOLARS — BY THE NUMBERS



Of the 38 Reading Collegiate Scholars, 34 are still pursuing Alvernia degrees. 100% of the first cohort graduated this spring.



Reading Scholars have a combined cumulative GPA of 3.25 — higher than the overall student population GPA.



91% of the Reading Collegiate Scholars are first-generation college students. Most have at least one parent who did not graduate from high school.



Hundreds of Reading High School students receive tutoring and mentoring through the Scholars program each year.



Alvernia funds about half of the Reading Collegiate scholarships and program expenses. The other half is supported by community donors.

Five years later, Alvernia's program includes faculty, community and peer mentoring; the two-week summer bridge program; involvement with students' families; goal setting and journaling for students; and other backings.

"It's a huge network of support," Myers said. "Clearly, it sometimes does take a village."

Though the program will continue to evolve over time, Myers says it's ready to serve as a model for other colleges.

At the request of Principal Turman, Alvernia hosted a forum — the first of several offered to peer institutions — exploring problems that first-generation, low-income college students face, and addressing ways of helping them overcome those obstacles.

Angel Helm, a community mentor and a graduate of Reading High School who also sits on the Alvernia board of trustees, said the program's drive to transform as many lives as possible is at the heart of Alvernia's mission.

"I could not be more proud of this program, of participating in it, or of the kids who are working hard every day to succeed in it," Helm said.

Cynthia Rothenberger added that mentoring Reading Scholars has greatly increased her understanding of the difficulties they face and has made her far more sympathetic to obstacles

encountered by all students. As an assistant professor of nursing and faculty mentor to the second cohort of Reading Collegiate Scholars, Rothenberger has become an unofficial mentor and advisor to all Scholars pursuing healthcare degrees.

"We don't always see these things as faculty members, but there are a lot of students who are struggling and could really use support," said Rothenberger.

For Juan Paula, a senior who will commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps upon graduating, the scholarship and support he received as a Reading Scholar helped him remain on his career course.

"This has been an important chapter in my life," Paula said. It's a chapter that began with access and is closing with success. **A**

*"I didn't really share experiences with a lot of the other students, so sometimes even conversations were difficult."*

— Syanashailyn Ortega, Reading Scholar

THEO ANDERSON



Junior Reading Scholar Emily Zanyas (left) with freshman Reading Scholar Datnilza Metz answer questions at the Reading High Forum held at Alvernia.



# Standing Up to Therapy

BY  
Susan  
Shelly

Doug Nemeth, 61, watched from his seat in Lincoln Financial Field as his beloved Philadelphia Eagles dominated the Minnesota Vikings in the NFC Championship Game this January. Though he holds season tickets, a 12-year battle with Parkinson's disease had kept him at home for the last six years.

But just as the Eagles began their difficult journey to the Super Bowl in early fall, Nemeth started a new one of his own — as one of 14 patients in Alvernia's pro-bono, physical therapy advanced treatment clinic.







*Doug Nemeth works with his student therapist, Madison Litwin '18, as she takes him through various exercises to gain strength, mobility and confidence.*



*Nemeth and Litwin demonstrate repetitive tasks that help patients with memory as well as agility.*



“I didn’t go for a long time because I was afraid, but this gave me the confidence to just go and do it.”

— Doug Nemeth, patient

Through an intense, eight-week program, Nemeth’s self-confidence increased while his balance and other issues improved. Eventually, he was able to reconnect with friends and get reacquainted with his space at Lincoln Financial Field.

“I didn’t go for a long time because I was afraid,” he said. “But this gave me the confidence to just go and do it.”

The clinic, operating within the university’s Physical Therapy Department, was staffed by six third-year doctoral students and supervised by Dr. Marcia Thompson, assistant professor of physical therapy, as part of coursework for Advanced Neurologic Physical Therapy Practice. Launched in 2017, the course will be offered each fall. It is the university’s very first graduate-level service-learning class, designed to serve the community through action and self-reflection.

The experience gives students opportunities to work one-on-one with patients, said Thompson, and to employ creative treatments that focus on the functional needs as well as the goals and lifestyle of each person. Like Nemeth, all of the patients received highly individualized treatment plans.

“We spend an inordinate amount of time teaching students to not look at a patient as a diagnosis, but as an individual,” Thompson said.

It was with this in mind that Nemeth’s innovative student-therapist, Madison Litwin, incorporated a weighted NERF gun into a second patient’s treatment, enabling that patient to be more excited about therapy by simulating trap shooting — an activity that he very much enjoyed and missed.

Patient conditions ranged from quadriplegia and wheelchair

confinement to traumatic brain injury, stroke and Parkinson’s disease. In every case, Thompson said, patients saw significant improvement.

Perhaps most inspiring, one patient who had spent years in a wheelchair was able to eventually get out of the chair and walk.

But even small victories are sometimes hard fought.

After discovering her patient had spent years in an ill-fitting wheelchair because of a language barrier with caretakers, student-therapist Dani Rosenzweig advocated successfully for her to get a new chair.

A patient with quadriplegia, who formerly relied on family members to lift him out of bed and get him into his wheelchair every morning, was able to become strong enough to complete the task nearly entirely on his own, reported Gregory Schmehl, the patient’s student-therapist.

“Over the course of eight weeks, we broke down every single task of rolling over, sitting up and transferring over to the wheelchair,” said Schmehl. “We started with the most basic tasks and slowly progressed through the sequencing of events, until by the end of the eight weeks, the patient was able to do this with modified independence.”

Another of Schmehl’s patients, Jo Ann Gabriel, who suffers from a form of Parkinson’s disease, benefited from wearing a weighted vest to improve posture and balance, working out on a treadmill and playing a form of racquetball to challenge her balance control and fall risk.

“It was strenuous but fun for all of us,” Gabriel said. “The

“The therapists were encouraging, and the workouts really promoted my self-confidence.”

— Jo Ann Gabriel, patient

THEO ANDERSON





*Building a rapport between therapists and patients is critical to offering the best individual care.*



*Dr. Marcia Thompson and Doug Nemeth (center) are surrounded by student therapists who are part of the inaugural DPT class graduating this spring: (left to right) Kathryn Farney, Kathryn Springer, Greg Schmehl, Nicole Lundberg, Madison Litwin and Danielle Rosenzweig.*

“We built relationships that have changed my outlook on this profession.”

— *Madison Litwin '18, student therapist*

therapists were encouraging, and the workouts really promoted my self-confidence. It was a rewarding experience, and I would encourage anyone in need to take advantage of the opportunity.”

Thompson said that the student-therapists’ knowledge, dedication and resourcefulness attributed greatly to their patients’ outcomes.

“The students were shocked that in every case, their patients substantially progressed within the eight weeks,” said Thompson. “These are highly motivated students who went above and beyond the call. Without a doubt, the competency of the therapists played a major role in the improvement of the patients.”

For Litwin, the clinic was an opportunity to see and recognize the impact that physical therapy can have on a person’s life. And, she said, through working with patients, she came to fully understand the importance of building trust and rapport.

“I was only able to spend about three hours a week with each patient, but we built relationships that have changed my outlook on this profession,” Litwin said. “Had those relationships not been formed, the treatment planning based on function wouldn’t have been able to be implemented.”

She also believes that getting to know her patients on a deeper level gave her the ability to quickly realize when one was experiencing a severe medical problem.

THEO ANDERSON


Litwin immediately noticed that one of her patients, a 71-year-old suffering from a complex diagnosis complicated by a stroke, was not himself when he arrived at the clinic one day with his wife.

Deeply concerned, she devised a plan to help his wife recognize high-risk medical symptoms and to know when to call for emergency services, if necessary. Two days later, the patient was admitted to the hospital with a diagnosis of a subdural hematoma, a life-threatening condition.

“It was absolutely horrifying to think about, but I believe that had I not known the regular behaviors of my patient, this could have been missed,” Litwin said. “And I’d rather not discuss what could have come from that.”

Schmehl and Litwin also noted that the experience of the clinic taught them the value of collaboration and working together to solve problems and come up with innovative treatment plans for patients.

Students frequently met together for an hour or two before the clinic opened to discuss their cases and how they could best help their patients.

“It taught me the value and importance of a strong network,” Schmehl said. “We constantly gave each other advice and problem solved everything together. This experience of working together and treating patients on this level confirmed that physical therapy is my calling in life. It is truly my passion.” 

*“This experience of working together and treating patients on this level confirmed that physical therapy is my calling in life. It is truly my passion.”*

— *Gregory Schmehl '18, student therapist*

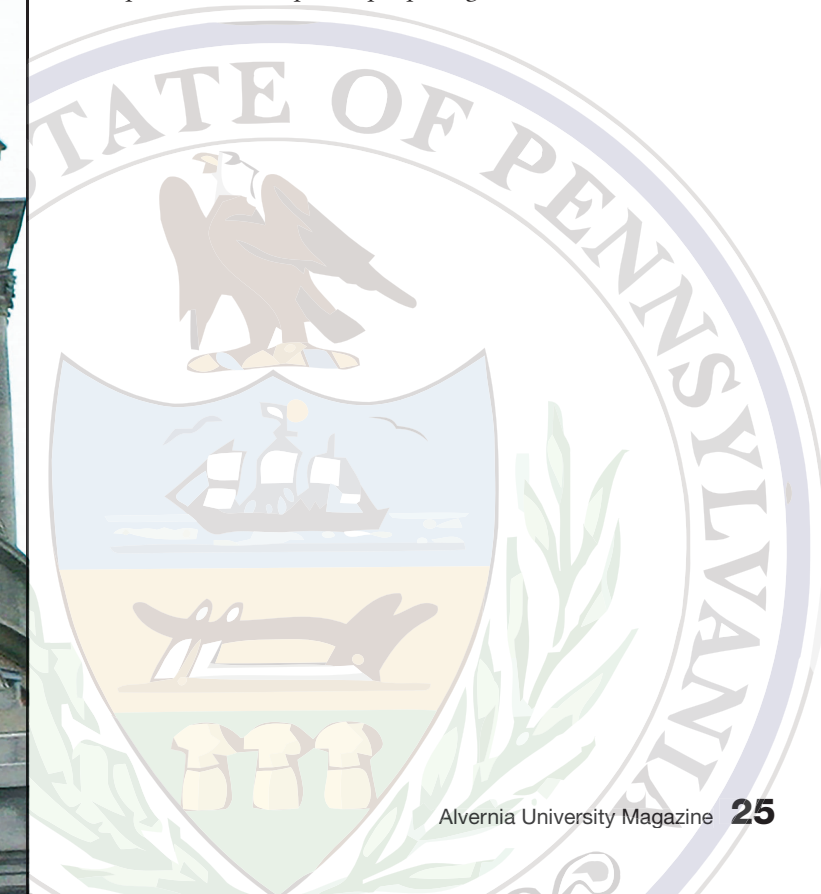


# Developing Leaders in State Government

BY  
Ernest  
Beck

**A**s deputy secretary of Community Affairs and Development in the Pennsylvania state government, Rick Vilello helps oversee an agency with around 300 employees and a \$300 million budget. So when Vilello, a former mayor of the city of Lock Haven and a small-business owner, was offered a place last year in a new leadership development program for senior state managers, sponsored by Alvernia University's O'Pake Institute for Ethics, Leadership and Public Service, he quickly agreed.

"Being mayor was the best internship for what I am doing now, but I still needed to learn more," Vilello, 52, said about the 14-week program, which took place at Harrisburg University with Alvernia and Harrisburg faculty. "It gave me more concrete skills," he added, "and any opportunity to listen to a professor and pick up tips is good."





The program reflects Alvernia’s educational mission to “foster ethical leaders with moral courage” and the O’Pake Institute’s mandate to support that effort in the school’s curriculum and the broader community. David Myers, director of the O’Pake Institute, says he decided to focus the leadership program on senior state managers after recognizing their unique challenges.

“Strong leaders need to set a vision, explaining not only what needs to be done but why and how, in order to motivate, enable and empower people. And this is particularly important in these [state agency] positions,” Myers explained.

While many senior state managers — whether political appointees or long-standing agency employees — have strong professional credentials, they don’t always have experience in leadership and, more specifically, in government.

For outsiders who are new to the job, managing a state bureaucracy and understanding the culture of a state agency can be tricky. Senior managers at state agencies are in the difficult position of translating the goals and objectives of people at the top — from the governor’s office — while representing the interests and concerns of agency staff and also interacting with the public.

**“Be proactive, reach out to people, and anticipate problems before they happen.”**

— Laura Slaymaker

In all of these cases, Myers figures, “There is a need for managers to better understand how to work more efficiently and effectively and to know the difference between management and leadership.” It’s the kind of training that state agencies cannot provide due to budgetary constraints but that Alvernia can fulfill.

For the inaugural program, 14 senior managers — among them a lawyer and a CPA — were chosen from nominations submitted by officials at state agencies. Courses were built around case studies, team projects, role-playing and scenario planning, as well as coaching and mentoring. Classes were designed to



**“Strong leaders need to set a vision, explaining not only what needs to be done but why and how, in order to motivate, enable and empower people, and this is particularly important in these [state agency] positions.”**

— David Myers



be supportive “safe spaces” where participants could discuss workplace issues and also promote interagency collaboration, which is often lacking in state government.

In one workshop, participants were asked to critique an agency’s website from a consumer’s point of view, to illustrate the kind of “citizen-centric service” that state agencies should strive for. The website in question was perceived as written more for agency insiders than the public, prompting a discussion about better ways to communicate with a target audience, whether internal or external.

Jodi Radosh, an associate professor of English and communications at Alvernia, spoke to participants about communications strategies and how to integrate storytelling, video, customized messaging and humor into both traditional media and social media channels. The goal, she told the managers, should be to make the voice of the state agency “more authentic and less sterile and to increase the flow of information to the public.”

Other areas of study included data-driven decision-making, understanding the culture of state government and what managers need to know about working with next-generation employees — specifically, millennials, those aged 18 to 35 who now comprise the largest living generation in the U.S.

Laura Slaymaker, a 50-year-old lawyer who is now deputy insurance commissioner in the Pennsylvania Insurance Department, was particularly interested in improving her strategic planning skills. Working with a mentor, she learned about how to be “proactive, reach out to people and anticipate problems before they happen,” Slaymaker said. As a result, she has started a strategic planning committee with representatives from the three bureaus in her agency to see if planning processes can be improved.

Vilello, the former mayor, was interested in networking with other senior managers and also learning how to become a better negotiator, as part of his agency’s work to attract corporate investment in Pennsylvania and promote low-income housing and access to technology. “I’ve done a lot of negotiating in my lifetime, but this gave me an entirely different perspective,” he said. “There’s more of a science to it than I expected.”

Myers plans to launch a 2018 leadership program, which will have a greater focus on citizen-centric problem-solving. “State agencies can persist with weak leadership, but they won’t thrive,” he believes. “Understanding the challenges that state managers face and giving them tools to be successful strengthens the agencies. And getting managers to envision solutions strengthens them as leaders.”

RIGHT: THEO ANDERSON



# REFLECTIONS

***“Profiting from the sale of drugs and addictive activities such as gambling seems like an odd way for the state to fulfill its most basic duty — protecting and promoting the common good.”***

RIGHT: THEO ANDERSON

Thomas Aquinas argues that all of our wants and desires are fundamentally directed toward a relationship with God. But they are also misdirected due to original sin. The human soul is different from the sensitive/animal soul in that it possesses the powers of reason and will. Through the application of reason, we can determine the proper way to navigate our affections and desires so that we can achieve our ultimate good — true friendship with God.

The difficulty is that while humans possess reason and will, we determine what is reasonable by the knowledge we gain through our senses and our experiences. Hence, when something “feels good,” reason must determine if that good feeling is reasonable and directed toward our natural end of friendship with God or if it is a temporary and false good. The calm produced by prayer or a hug from a loved one can be authentically good, while the calm produced by smoking a cigarette or from ingesting marijuana are fleeting and false goods. But when reason misperceives a false good for a real good, a feedback loop is created and a habitus (to use Aquinas’ original Latin terminology) is created. The problem with a negative habitus is that it takes root in the soul. In the case of an addiction, we may be considering a habitus that actually breaks the human soul. When reason finally rights itself and perceives the ingestion of the drug or the addictive activity to be wrong, the will is too broken to stop.

Before directly commenting on sin taxes, I must concede that I am a cradle Catholic. When we have a parish festival, the games of chance are often adjacent to the beer tent. While I am not arguing for the prohibition of any particular substance or activity, I do find it problematic that the state has created an economic circumstance where it benefits from people engaging in or becoming addicted to morally questionable substances or activities.

Sin taxes are most commonly excise taxes placed on the manufacturing, sales or profits from morally questionable substances or activities. In the pursuit of raising revenues, governing bodies have become increasingly reliant on levying higher taxes on currently legal drugs like alcohol, legalizing and taxing activities such as gambling, or considering the legalization and taxation of currently illegal drugs like marijuana. These taxes are regressive and exploit the pain of those most in need of society’s help. Legalizing an activity or substance does increase the raw number of users. Users are more profitable when they use more. Users are most profitable when they cannot stop using. Profiting from the sale of drugs and addictive activities such as gambling seems like an odd way for the state to fulfill its most basic duty — protecting and promoting the common good.

Addiction can be understood as a breaking of the human soul. Whatever good, service or tax cut the state is promising to provide, the destruction of human souls is too high of a price to pay. [A](#)



## **(Sin) Taxing the Human Soul**

**Corey Harris, Ph.D.**

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
OF THEOLOGY

AUTHOR: “THE SOUL, ADDICTION, AND SIN TAXES”



# Joining Love & Knowledge, BY Elizabeth Shimer-Bowers

## ESL

Elena Lawrick, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Education  
Director of Multilingual Student Support Services

**M**uch like the rest of the country, the City of Reading is becoming more culturally diverse. And with increased diversity comes an increasing need to help people learn English. “Over 18 percent of students in the Reading School District are English language learners; this means their English proficiency ranges from zero to emerging,” says Dr. Elena Lawrick, associate professor of education and director of the Office for Multilingual Student Success at Alvernia. “These students come from 28 different countries, which creates an unprecedented challenge for the district.”

To meet the increasing demand, Reading needs more teachers certified to teach English as a second language (ESL).

Enter the partnership with neighboring Alvernia University. To help teachers do their jobs most efficiently, Lawrick is working with the Reading School District to certify teachers in ESL.

“The goal is to help the district equip teachers with the knowledge and tools necessary to provide equitable education to English learning students,” explains Lawrick. “This partnership is Alvernia’s contribution to what is currently one of the greatest challenges in our community — to educate a diverse population. Reading School District is at the epicenter of this challenge.”

The partnership works like this: Teachers in the district enroll in the K-12 ESL program to get their ESL Specialist Certifications. The

program consists of five courses offered on Alvernia’s campus at convenient times for teachers.

“The courses provide a well-rounded and practical knowledge base every teacher needs to teach English learning students,” Lawrick says. Those who want to advance their education further can take additional courses that lead to a master’s degree in education.

So far, the program has been a success. Two cohorts of teachers have earned certifications, and the third is already underway. Several teachers who have completed the program are moving forward with master’s degrees. “After the third cohort, more than 40 teachers in the Reading School District will be certified to help ESL students learn English and subject content, as well as to engage parents of these students in a culturally sensitive and responsive way,” says Lawrick.

Dr. Lawrick joined Alvernia University in 2016. She brings more than 20 years of experience teaching ESL to various student populations and training ESL teachers. “Being an ESL professional, I deeply share Alvernia’s ideal of ‘knowledge joined with love.’ It resonates with my core values and my teaching philosophy,” she explains.

Moving forward, Lawrick says she hopes other school districts will partner with Alvernia on ESL education. “I want Alvernia to become a model and leader in educating diverse students,” she says. **A**

“More than 40 teachers in the Reading School District will be certified to help ESL students learn English and subject content, as well as to engage parents of these students in a culturally sensitive and responsive way.”

THEO ANDERSON



# Finding Faith

Alyssa Keifer, B.A. Theology '18

**A**s a freshman from Sunbury, Pa., Alyssa Keifer had early plans to earn a degree in psychology and pursue work in a school setting. But an Alvernia University alternative break trip to Los Tres Brazos, Dominican Republic, helped Keifer to feel stronger in her faith and set her on a new path toward a degree in theology and a vocation in ministry and social justice.

"I've always had in mind that whatever I ended up doing, I wanted to be helping others," said Keifer. "I've been very fortunate in my life, so to be able to give back and serve is very important to me."

The trip, taken during her junior year at Alvernia, allowed Keifer and fellow travelers to teach children and adults at the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters' school in the Los Tres Brazos barrio.


"Seeing the positive outlook the Dominicans have on life and how much faith they have despite the fact that they were living with essentially nothing, or very minimally compared to how we live here, was really moving. If they can live like that and have so much faith, then why are we so focused on material things?" asked Keifer.

After her trip, Keifer took on a new role as a student-leader in campus ministry. The role led her to apply for a Fromm Interfaith Scholarship, which she used to plan impactful events, designed to raise awareness for the plight of refugees.

She planned a heavily attended interactive simulation that helped campus members experience life as a refugee. The event was so popular that a few months later, Keifer worked with Campus Ministry to bring a refugee family to campus to share their personal accounts of fleeing Turkey.

"I'm not trying to change anyone's opinion," said Keifer. "I just want people to be more informed. I feel like that's a part of our liberal arts education — leaving with the ability to think critically and understand bigger meanings."

Fully embracing Alvernia's Franciscan values, Keifer is a self-described "eclectic Christian," who plans to pursue a Master of Arts degree in theology and ministry at Drew University after completing her bachelor's degree at Alvernia.

"We all believe in a higher power regardless of what we call that higher power or how we practice it," said Keifer. "There's a bigger being in our lives. If we can come from a point of understanding, I think we could solve a lot more of our problems." 

*"I'm not trying to change anyone's opinion.  
I just want people to be more informed."*

BY  
**Ambre  
Juryea-Amole**



THEO ANDERSON





# Striking the right chord

*"I could not have asked for any better place to figure out life."*

Ephraim Njuguna '19  
Behavioral Health

BY  
Jill  
Schoenger

Ephraim Njuguna '19 is musical, adept at playing several instruments and a wide range of genres. "Music," he says, "is dear to my heart." He moves easily from the drums to the saxophone to the ukulele and from classical to jazz to reggae.

The ability to adapt has helped Njuguna, who grew up in Kenya, fall into step with his new life in the United States. "My family was privileged to be able to come to the United States. After my parents came in 2009, my siblings and I followed in 2012," he explains. "They wanted to better our living standards. Having the opportunity here to do anything you want to do regarding your dreams was a huge step for us."

Settling first in the Boston area, they moved to Lebanon County, Pa., where Njuguna finished high school and the family now lives.

Coming to the States so Njuguna and his two sisters could go to college was a big reason his parents emigrated. Their children have taken that to heart. "I always knew I needed to go to college, but I didn't know what I was going to study. But my mom and my sister are nurses, and nursing is an ideal course of study for people living in countries like Kenya."

Njuguna majored in nursing his first semester. But as he was exposed to a wider variety of classes, he decided to major in behavioral health. "It covers mental illnesses and some psychology and counseling. All the areas within my major have had a huge impact on me," he says. "The faculty and the staff are such friendly, warm-hearted people. I've had a lot of professors who have been a big help in directing me in a way that will better my success."

College hasn't always been easy, he admits. In the classroom, he continues to master American English (he grew up with British English in Kenya) and is sometimes puzzled by American spelling and idioms. Culturally, college was a big shift: "Where I came from, we are more of a traditional culture," he explains. "It's looser here and not as strict in what you can do."

The comfortable atmosphere at Alvernia was key for him. "The school is not huge. You're not overwhelmed, and you feel like you get to know a lot of people in a short period of time," he says. That helped him settle down and relax so he could focus on his studies.

"I could not have asked for any better place to figure out life," Njuguna says. "The challenges have made me who I am now." And now he is a confident young man with a song in his heart and his eyes on the future. [A](#)





# REFLECTIONS



THEO ANDERSON

## My Avocation and Vocation

**Marybeth DeMeo, M.A.T.**

CHAIR OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

*A member of Alvernia's faculty for more than 36 years, Marybeth DeMeo has volunteered to teach Alvernia Seniors College courses since the organization's founding in 1998. This spring, she was presented with the Saint Bonaventure Award in Teaching for her long-standing Seniors College commitment. The following is an excerpt of her acceptance remarks.*

**A**t a time when the liberal arts are criticized by some as outdated and unproductive, I want to talk about their relevance. When a poem I am reading in class makes allusions to Selma and Saigon, then I'll get blank looks. When a study published last week reports that more than one-fifth of millennials haven't heard of, or aren't sure if they've heard of, the Holocaust and 66 percent cannot say what Auschwitz was, then we as a democracy are in trouble. Such stories are too common.


Recently, the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point proposed dropping 13 liberal arts majors — including American Studies, Art, History, English, Geography, Philosophy, Political Science, Geoscience, Sociology, French and Spanish. Gov. Scott Walker also recommended changing the university's mission statement goals "Search for truth" and "Improve the human condition" to "Meet the state's workplace needs." The students have staged a major protest in response and have written their own proposals, so perhaps this will lead to a larger debate.

On the other hand, the online magazine Quartz ran a recent article titled "STEM May Be the Future — but Liberal Arts Are Timeless," noting that many tech leaders actually have degrees in literature and philosophy; that professional requirements change so rapidly that what is learned as a college freshman may be outdated before graduation; that a skillset based on informal and experiential learning plus a broad-based education is the best preparation for careers; and that "those in STEM

fields may be studying how to create technology, but the people in the liberal arts are learning HOW to live with it."

Literature forces us to slow down, to pay attention, to savor the moment. In creating a fictional world, literature teaches us about this one as well. We learn social justice reading Dickens, Hugo, Steinbeck and Morrison. We study ethics with Joseph Heller, Dostoevsky, Camus, Ellison. And as for leadership studies? How better than to read the master, Shakespeare — Henry IV on how to control rival groups; Marc Antony on persuasive speaking; Macbeth on the danger of losing your soul in the quest for power; Coriolanus on the difficulty of moving from the military to the political; Othello on becoming sidetracked by domestic affairs; Henry V on the loneliness of command as he moves among his soldiers the night before a battle he expects to lose; and Henry on the day of that battle when he inspires them to be a band of brothers and to triumph, which they do.

Did you know that reading fiction makes you empathetic, creative and open-minded? That 30 minutes of reading a day results in improved vocabulary, critical thinking and concentration? Did you know that reading may also prolong your life? According to a Yale research study, people over 50 who read 30 minutes a day live an average of 23 months longer than nonreaders.

I have been blessed. What I love to do (my avocation) is what I do for my living (my vocation). Thank you for being readers with me. 



# The Quest to Build a Better Game

BY  
Kristen  
Evans

*Jim Aloye '01 plans to use advances in geolocation tech to change the face of role-playing video games — and how businesses in cities like Reading advertise.*

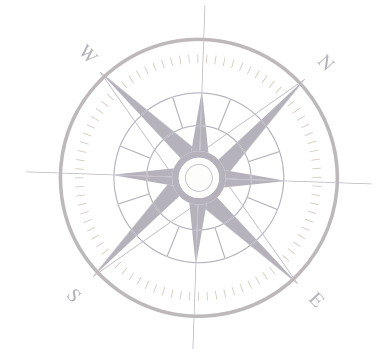
When gamers pound the pavement to nab burly Bulbasaur and fiery Charmanders in “Pokémon Go,” they sometimes wander into traffic to catch their creatures. That’s because Nintendo’s revolutionary location-based video game requires players to search for Pokémon in the real world using their phones, something popular console games were never designed to do.

The runaway commercial success of “Pokémon Go” inspired Jim Aloye, a longtime gamer and software developer, to put his own spin on the technology. By next year, Reading-area residents can begin their own adventures in Aloye’s “Eternal

Conquest: The Great War,” a new app that mixes the appeal of old-school quest titles like “Zelda” with the geolocation tech that powers “Pokémon Go.”

“When I was a kid, I always liked Japanese-style role-playing games because my hand-eye coordination wasn’t all that great,” Aloye deadpans. But Aloye always felt these games lacked a certain something — either the ending was a letdown or the game wasn’t challenging enough. His solution was “Eternal Conquest.”

“There came a point where I thought, ‘I write software — why not solve that problem?’” says Aloye, who majored in computer information systems and worked in



Alvernia’s Information Technology (IT) department.

“I was fortunate enough to work with (assistant professor) Polly Mathys as IT infrastructure was growing at Alvernia,” explains Aloye. “I would have never gotten that level of education anywhere else.” His unique experience at Alvernia gave him the confidence to strike out on his own after graduation and eventually to develop a project like “Eternal Conquest.”

So far, Aloye’s app idea has generated plenty of buzz. Location-based content makes the game more challenging for avid players — but it benefits local businesses, too. “Say you’re inside the Santander Arena,” Aloye offers. “If Santander signs up for a geo-partnership, then exclusive in-game content will become available if you’re physically playing in that location.”

By sponsoring content, local “geopartners” can become part of the game and generate interest in their own goods and services. Two geopartners, Inner Healing Chiropractic in Bally, Pa., and Suburban Tavern & Cigar Lounge in Mount Penn have already signed on, bolstering Aloye’s fundraising efforts.

In total, Aloye hopes to crowdfund \$100,000 to finish developing the game and attract venture capital that will launch the app to commercial success. So far, he has raised more than \$10,000 and is preparing to release a prequel game to market in the coming months, all while working a separate full-time job.

And his dedication to “Eternal Conquest” shows. “I mean my wife can tell you,” Aloye says with a laugh. “I come home from work, and I’ll swallow some food, and — immediately — I’m on it.”



A scene from Aloye’s “Eternal Conquest: The Great War” game is shown above on an iPhone.

THEO ANDERSON





# Playing your cards right

BY  
Lini S.  
Kadaba

When talk at a recent criminal justice alumni dinner turned to “Pacelli’s boys,” Susan W. Green ’76 had a few words to add.

“Not all of the students were boys,” Green told the table. At 62, she is an executive director at Ally Bank — an online, digital bank.

In 1974, the late Sister M. Pacelli Staskiel, OSF, founded Alvernia’s Criminal Justice Department, becoming the first woman in the country to lead such a program. The inaugural class of 48 students became known as “Pacelli’s boys.”

But as it turns out, the moniker was a slight misnomer.

Two students were women, and Green was one of them.

“I’m living proof,” she says. “I’m one of Sister Pacelli’s girls.” Joanne (Piraneo) Cook was the other.

Like Sister Pacelli — who Green describes as both caring and “a bit before her time as a female leader and role model” — Green made a name for herself in male-dominated fields, starting with her course of study.

“I went to high school in the early seventies,” she says. “It was all about women’s rights — hear us roar.” Rather than the typical female careers of teaching or nursing, “I wanted to do something different. I wanted to forge new ground.”

At Alvernia, the male criminal justice students — who turned the campus co-ed practically overnight — were “very protective of their two little sisters,” says Green, who was recruited for the grueling program following an associate degree from Delaware Technical Community College.

“Those were exciting days at Alvernia. I did an internship with the Reading Police Department and when the ‘boys in blue’ returned me to the dorm after midnight, guess who had to unlock the front door for me? Yep, Sister Pacelli,” laughs Green.

Armed with her bachelor’s degree, Green joined credit bureau Equifax’s investigative unit, working with banks on background checks for loans and rising to office manager.


While she had originally planned to go into law, Green had found her niche in financial services. She spent 25 years in a variety of management roles in credit card services, pioneering new card technologies and earning patents for unique manufacturing techniques, including “lenticular,” with images that move across cards, cards that changed colors, and biodegradable cards. She also worked on early EMV chip advances and was certified as an expert on card standards by the American National Standard Institute. She even helped establish international standards that are still being used to manufacture today’s credit cards.

Green spent the majority of her career at former credit card giants MBNA and Bank of America and lived in Europe for two years for MBNA Europe. She joined Ally Bank almost 10 years ago and continued to grow her expertise in the U.S. and Canada deposit business. She now leads the company’s payment card industry (PCI) compliance oversight team and lives in Fair Hill, Md., with her husband, Earl.

Green also finds fulfillment in mentoring other rising women as chair of Ally Mid-Atlantic’s Women’s Leadership group. “Women are gaining ground fast in the banking world,” she says. “And it’s refreshing to see Ally place such a great focus on diversity and inclusion activities.”

It may seem as if she has strayed from her criminal justice roots. But Green disagrees. She says she is always “pulling the string that’s poking out.” By that, she means she investigates, whether it’s a gap in employment when doing a background check or figuring out why credit cards in Florida and Arizona deteriorate faster (the sand wears at the magnetic stripe and chip).

“It’s about pulling the string and finding out why,” she says, sounding the detective. “It’s all about the details and connecting the dots.”

“All of that,” she continues, “goes back to the whole criminal justice mentality and back to my days at Alvernia. I guess it was always in the cards for me to forge this path.” 



“It’s all about the details and connecting the dots.”

— Susan Green ’76,  
Executive Director of  
Operations and Customer  
Relations, Ally Bank





RYAN SMITH

## RYAN SMITH '13 IS HEALING IN HAWAII

BY  
Anne  
Heck '17

Life's twists and turns define who a person becomes. Sometimes both exciting and challenging, life can often feel like a wave of ups and downs. Just ask Ryan Smith '13, a nonprofit outpatient addictions counselor who starts most days paddling in the ocean surrounding Maui, Hawaii.

Growing up in the Reading area, Smith often found passion in serving others. In high school, he volunteered as a firefighter. Later, an interest in dogs led him to run a Labrador Retriever rescue. Perhaps most impactful, he followed his father and grandfather's path of service into the military.

Several years as an Airman in the Air Force helped Smith to travel the world and develop values to which he remains committed. "Air Force core values include integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do," explains Smith. "We studied them, followed them and encouraged others to do the same."

Transitioning back to civilian life as a veteran, Smith used GI Bill benefits to begin working toward a junior college degree in atmospheric science. But his focus waned, and after a few semesters, he dropped out and began to struggle

with addiction — a struggle, that according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, is shared by over seven million Americans across the country.

Ready to make a change, Smith checked in to Caron Treatment Centers. But only two weeks into his detox treatment for benzodiazepine, the 29-year-old suffered a heart attack, and his world changed.

"I saw many things in a new light, had much more gratitude and tried not to take things for granted," says Smith.

With his treatment complete, Smith turned his attention to finalizing his education. Influenced by his traumatic struggle, he enrolled in Alvernia's addictions studies program in 2010. "I had the opportunity to learn not just about the theories and science behind addiction, but to learn more about myself and my own struggles with addiction," says Smith, who cites instructors David Reyher and George Vogel as making an impact on him. "They both had recent real-world experience in the field, and they both displayed a passion in their teachings," Smith says.

These days, Smith continues to extend his professional training while finding motivation in helping up to 20 clients at a time — without losing focus on himself. "I have to remember to never become complacent and never forget that this is a lifelong issue I must work on," he says. "I work on remaining open-minded, humble and honest. My job allows me to focus on helping others and make a difference in their lives — and that is meaningful to me." **A**





**Loretta (Kopacz) Wenger '63** passed away on March 16, 2017.

**Sylvia (Damron) McCoy '66** passed away on Jan. 6, 2017.

**Valetta (Painter) Eshbach '68** volunteers by tutoring mathematics for GED students at the Mother Veronica Resource Center located in Reading. She was recently featured in the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters' newsletter "Foot Notes."

**Mary C. Murphy '69** was profiled in a special Reading Eagle section called Faces of Faith.

1960s

**Sr. Rose Babula '71** passed away on Jan. 1, 2018.

**Sr. Mercita Glowacki '75** passed away on Nov. 26, 2017.

**Charles Venable '76** passed away on Jan. 26, 2017.

**William Hall Jr. '77** passed away on Jan. 23, 2018.

**Tim Reiver '78** passed away on Feb. 8, 2018.

**Catherine A. Dewald '78** passed away on March 23, 2013.

**The Honorable Thomas Gauby Sr. '78** retired Jan. 1, 2018, after 26 years of service. He will maintain senior judge status until 2027.

**Timothy Daley '79** was featured in a Reading Eagle Business Weekly section called The Conversation for his role as executive director of Habitat for Humanity.

1970s

**Alicia (Whitford) Gamber '79** passed away on Dec. 30, 2017.

**Patricia M. Fulmer '83** passed away on Sept. 2, 2014.

**Diane Fillman '84** passed away on Oct. 8, 2017.

**Scott Miller '85** passed away on Jan. 20, 2018.

**Lori (Kaupp) Specht '92, M'06** passed away on May 29, 2017.

**William J. Hahner '99, '00** passed away on July 2, 2017.

**Joshua Smith '00** married Esther Miller on Nov. 6, 2016. The couple is expecting a baby this spring, and Joshua has two other children, Peter and Adam.

1980s

1990s

**Margaret (Higgins) Butcavage '01** passed away on Nov. 10, 2017.

**Dr. Pamela Ellenberger '01**, founder of Berks Plastic Surgery, was recently acknowledged in the Reading Eagle's Business Spotlight for the business's 25th anniversary. Ellenberger founded Berks Plastic Surgery in 2001 and sold the business in 2010.

**Dr. Kelley Crozier '04** was awarded the first Everyday Hero Award from the Penn Medical Society and was featured in a Reading Eagle article.

**Renee (Aulenbach) Tobias '05** passed away on Oct. 27, 2015.

2000s

**Kevin Burns '06** and **Brandi Loga '14** were married on Sept. 16, 2017.

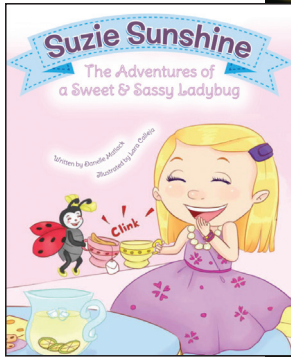
**Beth Angstadt '06** passed away on Dec. 8, 2017.

**Marie Dunham '06, M'08** has written a book, "Yeah, Though I Walk."

**Dorthea Isley '06, M'08** passed away.

**Mary Beth Uczynski '06** is engaged to Neil Fronheiser and is currently pursuing a doctorate of nursing practice. She is employed by Tower Health.

**John Gill '07** passed away on June 21, 2015.



Danelle Kressirer Matlack, M'09 is shown with her recently published book, "Suzie Sunshine: The Adventures of a Sweet & Sassy Ladybug."

**John Albanese '09** earned the New Jersey Physician Assistant of the Year Award in Nov. 2017.

**Melisa Brightbill '09** graduated with her master's degree in education in the area of curriculum and instruction: autism studies at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell.

**Danelle Kressirer Matlack, M'09** recently published her second children's book titled "Suzie Sunshine: The Adventures of a Sweet & Sassy Ladybug." A portion of the book's proceeds will be donated to Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation. Her first book, "Alfie the Allergic Alligator Goes to School" was published in 2014.

**Alison (Dautrich) Johnson M'10** was featured in the Reading Eagle's In Our Schools section for her work as a second-grade teacher at Richmond Elementary in the Fleetwood School District.

**Amanda (Brown) Bailey '11** gave birth to Wyatt David Bailey on Feb. 9, 2018, at eight pounds, five ounces, and 20 inches long.



Wyatt David Bailey, newborn son of Amanda (Brown) Baily '11.

**Courtney (Renshaw) Christman '11** and her husband Joshua are expecting a baby girl in April 2018.

**Jason Kline '11** married Kiersten Field of Lititz in Florida on May 18, 2018.

**Tanisha Giddens Beatty Hall of Fame Class of 2012** was recently featured in the sports section of the Reading Eagle for her role as the head coach for girls' basketball at Reading High School.

**Keely Schlegel '13** is engaged to marry Gary Verna on Oct. 12, 2019.

**Cindy Levengood '14** earned her master's degree in nursing from Neumann University in May 2017 in the area of adult gerontology

primary care nurse practitioner.

**Craig Mellinger '15** and **Jacquelyn Strange '15** became engaged Nov. 5, 2017.

**Ben Sawyer '15** is a senior laboratory technician at Symrise AG, in Laguna Beach, Calif.

**Josh Wollaston '15** and **Jamie Swaboski '15** became engaged Dec. 9, 2017.

Alvernia baseball alum **Cameron Coons '17** has signed to play with the Birmingham-Bloomfield Beavers (NY) of the United Shore Professional Baseball League.

**Michelle (Maurer) Billups, M'17** passed away on Nov. 4, 2017.

**Nicole Wetzel '17** married Andrew Rickard on April 28, 2018.

2010s

## Calendar

**August 23**  
New Student Orientation  
Volunteer to greet or move in the Class of 2022!

**August 24**  
Orientation Day of Service  
Join the Class of 2022 for community service!

**September 1**  
Inaugural Golden Wolves Football Game

**October 12-13**  
Homecoming and Family Weekend

**November 5**  
First Year Seminar Lecture with Jamie Ford, author of "Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet"





## Alumni Did You Know?

In addition to attending regional gatherings, alumni athletic events, MargaritaVern and Homecoming & Family Weekend, there are a number of ways alumni can stay involved with Alvernia University.

### Alumni Council

Want an inside look or more voice on Alvernia endeavors? The Alumni Council is the advisory, governing body of the university's Alumni Association. Composed of 26 elected graduates of varying class years, occupations and life experiences, the council speaks for the alumni body and provides overarching guidance for the Alumni Association.

### Recruit

Help us reach a new generation! Sharing your experience is the strongest recruiting tool we can ask of our alumni. Help us by writing letters to welcome incoming students or volunteer to staff a college fair near you.

### New Alvernia University Women's Council

Want to educate and inspire women to pursue or grow in leadership roles? Join this group of alumni, students, faculty and university friends to strengthen connections and foster personal and

professional development of Alvernia students and graduates. Contact Ashley Mikulsky for more information at [ashley.mikulsky@alvernia.edu](mailto:ashley.mikulsky@alvernia.edu).

### Young Alumni Committee

Are you a recent graduate? The Young Alumni Committee seeks to actively involve alumni who have graduated in the last 10 years. For more information on how to get involved, contact Ryan Shannon '16 at [ryan.shannon@alvernia.edu](mailto:ryan.shannon@alvernia.edu).

### More Alumni Committees

Become more involved in our students' transitions from college to career or investigate new opportunities for admissions and alumni-to-student engagement events like Homecoming through one of several alumni committees. View the full committee list online at [alumni.alvernia.edu](http://alumni.alvernia.edu). Don't live near campus? No problem. Participation on the committees is conducted by email, teleconference or, from time to time, on campus.



## Memorial Prayer Garden and Columbarium



Alvernia will soon be home to a beautiful and consecrated Memorial Prayer Garden and Columbarium. Located just down the hill from historic Francis Hall, not far from the St. Joseph Villa, the tranquil location offers families a spiritual setting.

The Franciscan ethos of inclusivity welcomes family members of all denominations to be interred in the Alvernia Columbarium.

Recently, the Vatican approved cremation as an appropriate direction for families mourning the loss of a loved one. The Catholic Church strongly recommends that the resting place for these final ashes should be a sacred place, such as a columbarium — a consecrated area reserved for the interment of cremated remains.

The Alvernia Columbarium provides a limited number of economical and environmentally friendly niches to help family members eternally rest in peace.

Each niche can hold up to two urns. Twelve of the 51 niches have already been reserved.

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For more information, please contact Marlene Schutz in the Department of Institutional Advancement at [marlene.schutz@alvernia.edu](mailto:marlene.schutz@alvernia.edu) or 610.796.8259.



# LEADERS ARE NOT BORN THEY'RE MADE

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magazine

Alvernia Magazine is published by Alvernia University twice per year in summer and winter to share news and information about the institution with alumni, friends and the community. Opinions expressed in the magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the university. Please share your feedback as we work to continuously enhance the publication:  
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## President Flynn to end 14-year journey at helm of Alvernia University

Leads transformation of small, local college into  
comprehensive, regional university

After 14 years of transformational leadership, the extraordinary journey of Thomas F. Flynn as president of Alvernia University will end June 2019. During his tenure as the longest-serving president in Alvernia's history, guided by its inclusive Franciscan core values, the university became a comprehensive, regional university, now recognized as a national leader in community service and civic engagement.

"Tom has been unwavering in his commitment to our Franciscan mission, our identity as a Catholic university and the living legacy of our sponsors, the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters," said Kevin St. Cyr, chair of the board of trustees. "He has significantly raised Alvernia's visibility and reputation nationally, even as he has responded admirably to the board's mandate back in 2005 that he be actively engaged in the local community."

Under Flynn's leadership, Alvernia transitioned from a small, local college to a thriving comprehensive regional university, combining the benefits of a liberal arts college with many of the opportunities of a large university.

"The time is right for new leadership, as we successfully complete the strategic and campus master plans that have guided our progress between 2008 and 2018, and as we continue to shape Alvernia's future in ways not envisioned a decade ago," said Flynn. "I am grateful for the continual inspiration provided by our wonderful students and for the relationships on campus and in the community that have made this service so rewarding."

Major milestones since Flynn's arrival in 2005 include:

- Alvernia's emergence as a national model for civic engagement and interfaith dialogue, led by two endowed centers — the Holleran Center for Community and Global Engagement and the O'Pake Institute for Ethics, Leadership and Public Service — that jointly sponsor the Reading Collegiate Scholars Program.

- Numerous partnerships both locally and internationally that have expanded the university's



presence and positive impact while ensuring 100 percent of Alvernia's undergraduates complete one or more real-world learning opportunities.


- The doubling of the endowment and 13 years of all-inclusive, balanced budgets and financial stability amidst a turbulent environment.

- Transformation of the campus, with a new entrance; Founder's Village and the Campus Commons; upgraded facilities for teaching and learning, fine arts, and athletics; and

a 100,000-square-foot Recreation, Wellness and Health Sciences Complex — Alvernia's most ambitious project ever.

"For all of the significant contributions Tom has made to Alvernia's success and prosperity during his tenure, perhaps his greatest legacy will be the stability he has created by building a talented and effective management team and deepening a mutually respectful relationship with the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters," said Michael Fromm, CEO of Fromm Electric Supply Corp. and chair of Alvernia's board of trustees. "And because he worked closely with board leaders to plan for this transition, we have already hired a national search firm. Alvernia is well positioned to select a president who will lead the university to even greater levels of achievement."

"I will not be leaving Alvernia behind," said Flynn, 65, reflecting on the next stage of his life, including almost 20 years served as a college president. "I will continue to rejoice in the achievements of our students and alums and be a passionate advocate for Alvernia."

Flynn, who said he is looking forward to "living life differently," has been invited to become a part-time Senior Fellow, after departing Alvernia, for both the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities and the Association of Governing Boards, helping mentor the next generation of leaders and strengthening shared governance for private universities. He and his wife, Helen, will remain in the area, making a new home in Reading. 





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## COMMENCEMENT COVERAGE

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