2015–16 HONOR ROLL
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JULY 1, 2015 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2016
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Loyalty Society

Members of this group have given to WCSU for at least five consecutive years, regardless of the amount. We count on these loyal donors who heartily believe in the university and do tremendous good through the simple act of contributing annually.
This edition of the Cupola, as usual, features many Western Connecticut State University success stories.

As an alumnus and active member of the WCSU Foundation board of directors, news about the university’s notable professors, such as Neeta Connally on Page 24, and the announcement of a Nobel Peace Prize winner visiting campus on Page 10, makes me extremely proud.

Everyone associated with WestConn should be proud, too. As a member of the community, whether you attended WCSU or not, we invite you to campus for our lectures, performances and events. If you want to learn more about the research of Dr. Connally or any of our professors or students, contact us. And tell all your friends and acquaintances who haven’t yet heard about the great things going on at WestConn.

The university continues to grow and thrive in western Connecticut because of its engaged students, top-flight professors, hard-working administrators — and the community. Please support WestConn in any way you are able.

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Mario Mesi’s association with WestConn came about as the result of “serendipity,” he said in a 2012 interview. The Woodbury resident became a member of the Connecticut Choral Society’s Scholarship Committee, which provided music scholarships to assist area high school students interested in pursuing music studies in college. When the committee later began to explore options to transfer the fund to a college with a strong undergraduate music program, Mesi and members of the committee came to WCSU to meet with staff in the Office of Institutional Advancement.

That meeting, held in 2005, led to the creation of the Schoolmasters Special Scholarship program, providing need-based grants to recognize WCSU music and music education students who show exemplary academic achievement and uncommon voice or instrumental talent. The program was founded in memory of Joel Kannengeiser, a member of the Connecticut Choral Society.

A retired educator, Mesi sought to support student achievement and preparation for careers in the performing arts and health care professions. His donations financed the annual awards of the Schoolmasters Scholarships to undergraduate majors in music or music education, and the New Beginnings Scholarships to students in the bachelor’s and master’s programs of the WCSU nursing department.

The New Beginnings Scholarship programs provided a fitting testament in honor of his late sister, Millicent Ratta, and her daughter, Janice Ratta Bynes, both of whom had nursing careers. More recently, Mesi established the Sabbaday Student Scholarship and Sabbaday Leadership Award to promote gender expression and service to the LGBT community.

Mesi passed away in late 2016, and as word spread through the university community, many came forward to express how his generosity had affected them.

Dr. Joan Palladino, chair of the Department of Nursing, said, “Mario Mesi will always be remembered for his generous spirit and commitment to the education of nurses. He recognized the need for nursing education at all levels to ensure that people would receive the best care possible. His kindness and enthusiasm for nursing were evident whenever I had the chance to visit with him. The chance for education he gave our nursing students is invaluable.”
Professor of Nursing Dr. Barbara Piscopo agreed, “He was very gracious and interested in helping our students. His first concern was for students in the generic B.S. program; however, after we met, he understood the need to help the RN-B.S. students also. I believe the connection to nursing was through his sister who became a nurse, but was a nontraditional student. This is the loss of a very nice and generous human being.”

Assistant Professors of Nursing Eileen Campbell, Monica Sousa and Diane Bennett also remembered Mesi fondly.

“I am saddened to hear of Mr. Mesi’s passing,” Campbell said. “His philanthropy toward nursing and particularly WCSU helped many students. When I was in the master’s program, I was a recipient of the Mesi New Beginnings Scholarship. It certainly helped me further my education and started me on the path to full-time teaching.”

Sousa added, “He provided the New Beginnings Scholarships for the B.S.N., M.S.N. and Ed.D programs. These scholarships have helped many of our students continue their dreams to become nurses with fewer financial burdens. I had the pleasure of meeting him when he was deciding about the development of the New Beginnings Scholarship for the Ed.D program. He has strong nursing ties and truly values the role of the nurse at the bedside and the impact they have on their patients’ lives. He was a very nice person and great to talk to.”

Bennett was a recipient of the New Beginnings scholarship as she entered the Ed.D. program “and it was very much appreciated,” she said. “I remember meeting him at the social for scholarship recipients — he was joyful and had a real heart for nursing and education. He just sparkled with enthusiasm as he spoke to me and the others at the table.”

During his 2012 interview, Mesi echoed these sentiments. “I like my affiliation with the university because it’s like an extended family,” he said. “My greatest reward is meeting the student recipients — I always manage to get more out of it than they realize, because it is such a positive experience. You reach a point in your life when you should reach out and help the next generation, do all that you can. It’s payback for all that has been given to you.”
Farooq Kathwari, second from left, CEO of Ethan Allen Inc., speaking with Dr. Chris Kukk and students in the Kathwari honors program.
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David Nurnberger ’72, left, a WCSU Foundation Board member and donor.
Donors Earland Hagman, left, and President of Savings Bank of Danbury, Martin Morgado enjoying a Foundation event.

In Honor/Memory

In honor of Ann Rothstein
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Class of 1965
Judith Lee ’65  

In honor of Deb Fuller
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Dr. Frank Dye
Drs. Ann Mauks and Uwe Koepke  

In honor of Dr. Herbert Janick, Professor Emeritus
Barbara ’59 and Carl Susnitzky  

In honor of Dr. Mel Goldstein
David M. Plews ’78  

In honor of Dr. Robert McWilliam
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Elaine Dinto
Josephine Hamer  

In honor of Gordon Shannonhouse
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Hal Wylie
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Harold B. Schramm
Danbury Westerners’ Baseball Club  
Charles F. Fenwick ’82  
Charles P. and Mary C. Mullaney  
Verizon Foundation **  

In honor of Herndon Dowling
Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program ***  
Theodora Pinou and John Psaltos  

In honor of Jane Heilman
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Jeric Beltrano
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Jimmy Greene
Michael and Holly Garavel  

In honor of John A. Murphy
John and Linda Coords  

In honor of Josie Hamer
Elaine J. Dinto ’74  

In honor of Julio Lopez
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Marlene T. Moore-Collands
James Russell  

In honor of Michael Ishizawa
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Ray Kelly
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Robert Ludwig
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Ron Weitendorf
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Ruth Gyure
Thomas and Patrice Boyle  
Neeta and Brian Connolly  
Joshua Cordeira  
Dr. Frank J. Dye ’63 and  
Dr. Kathleen S. Mauks-Dye ’65  
Jean D. Kreizinger  
Susan Maskel  
Theodora Pinou and John Psaltos  
Rachel Prunier  
George R. Rogers ’02  
Howard and Christine Russock  
Stephen and Rita Wagener  
Edwin and Millagros Wong  

In honor of Sharon and Doug Cheney
Mario A. Mesi **  

In honor of Stephen Roberts
Carole Lemoine  
Mary Schlichtig  

In honor of the 1969 football team
Murray L., Jr. ’74 and Linda M. ’90 Penn  

In honor of Wesly Rouse
Mario A. Mesi **  

In memory of Ana Marquez-Greene
Lisa Abrams  
Jennifer Belcolore-Arguello  
Deidra Bish  
Meg Bloom  
Patricia Chaffin  
Carol Dories  
Richard A. Telman Family  
Marianne Federici  
Marylin Figueroa  
Michael Funderburke  
Sharon B. Girard ’76  
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Irene Hakem  
Faith Haleem  
Jane Herzig  
Michael and Karen Koza  
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Mary H. Silverberg  
William Strouse  
Sarah Turechek  
Susan Wentzell  

In memory of Angela Rossi Zurowski
International Institute of Connecticut, Inc.  
Donald Kendall  
Regina Priest  

In memory of Ann Geriak
Estate of Theodore Geriak  

In memory of Anthony J. Merante, Jr.
Frances Smolski’s Merante ’59  

In memory of Ruth Gyure
Thomas and Patrice Boyle  
Neeta and Brian Connolly  
Joshua Cordeira  
Dr. Frank J. Dye ’63 and  
Dr. Kathleen S. Mauks-Dye ’65  
Jean D. Kreizinger  
Susan Maskel  
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International Institute of Connecticut, Inc.  
Donald Kendall  
Regina Priest  

In memory of Ann Geriak
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Frances Smolski’s Merante ’59  

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In memory of Dr. Joseph B. Cherry
The Cherry Family Foundation

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In memory of Elizabeth Stratford
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In memory of Joseph D. Masterson
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In memory of Judy Grandahl
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Alumni Association Golf Outing

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