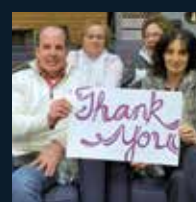


# the Cupola

Spring 15

A magazine for alumni and friends of  
Western Connecticut State University



So many thanks ...

# Closing a decade of service



As I complete my 11th — and final — year of service at Western Connecticut State University, I look back with pride at what the university has accomplished during this time. Certainly our physical infrastructure has been improved and expanded with renovations to Fairfield Hall, Higgins Hall and the Old Main Admissions suite as well as the award-winning Science Building, Centennial Hall, the Westside Campus Center, Midtown Parking Garage and the spectacular new home of the School of Visual and Performing Arts. Yet these impressive structures are really only vehicles to help us accomplish our larger, more important mission — creating the future of the region, state, nation and world through the education of our students.

Throughout its 111-year history, Western has been in the business of changing lives. I declared that in my inaugural address a decade ago. Today, I believe even more strongly that is what our university community does — in every class meeting, every day, every semester and every year. And everyone here — faculty, coaches,

staff, students, alumni and external partners — are important contributors to that work.

More than anything else, I'll remember the manifestation of that work in the lives and careers of our graduates. Among them are Amanda Peterson and Melissa Teel, who now apply the lessons they learned in student leadership and intercollegiate athletics as teachers and role models in the Danbury Public Schools; Kevin Gaughan, whose academic path has led from Western to a Fulbright Fellowship in Estonia to doctoral study at Northwestern University's Kellogg School; Mike Frasier, who is applying the lessons he learned as a student member of the Connecticut Board of Regents to his graduate work at Syracuse; Jonathan Soares, who as an undergraduate launched his career as a serial entrepreneur by founding a barbecue sauce company and now leads another kind of enterprise, Agency Labs; and Ally Greenwood, who is translating the dedication and energy she demonstrated as an all-conference point guard to

WCSU's Academic Advising team. Watching young people like these conceive and realize their dreams is why one chooses to work in higher education. For the past 38 years, and especially for the last 11 here, I've been blessed and privileged to be able to do so.

In today's knowledge-based economy and complicated technological world, the role of regional comprehensive universities like Western has never been more important. They not only build an educated citizenry and prepare the workforce, but also provide a route to the middle class for immigrants and those seeking a second chance at higher education. In its early days, the university welcomed such students with Italian, Greek and Lebanese surnames; today they are Brazilian, Ecuadorian and South Asian. Yet the purpose of changing lives endures, as I know it will in the years and decades ahead. I wish all in the Western community achievement and joy in that continuing journey. ■

*James W. Altmuth*



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# the Cupola

A magazine for alumni and friends of Western Connecticut State University

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The Cupola is an official bulletin of Western Connecticut State University and is published annually by Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, CT 06810. The magazine is distributed free of charge to alumni, friends, faculty and staff. Periodical postage paid at Danbury, Conn., and additional mailing offices.

Change of address: Send change of address to Office of Institutional Advancement, WCSU, 181 White Street, Danbury, CT 06810, or e-mail [leonardov@wcsu.edu](mailto:leonardov@wcsu.edu). For duplicate mailings, send both mailing labels to the address above.

Contents: ©2015 Western Connecticut State University. Opinions expressed in The Cupola are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of its editors or policies of Western Connecticut State University.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to Office of Institutional Advancement, WCSU, 181 White St., Danbury, CT 06810

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# Kathwari's journey benefits Honors Program with \$1 million endowment



Farooq Kathwari, chairman, CEO and president of Ethan Allen, has a long relationship with WCSU. He and his family recently donated \$1 million to endow the Kathwari Honors Program.

By Paul Steinmetz

Farooq Kathwari is infused with the entrepreneurial spirit.

His outlook helped him when he arrived in New York as a college student, impressed several business leaders as he progressed in corporate settings, and finally as he assumed the position of chairman, CEO and president of Ethan Allen, a leading home furnishings brand that still makes most of its products in North America and retails them across the world.

Kathwari and his family have shared their success with Western Connecticut State University, announcing a \$1 million gift to endow the Kathwari Honors Program at WCSU.

Kathwari's start in business began when, as a graduate student at New York University's MBA program, his grandfather sent him several wicker baskets filled with crafts from his home in Kashmir, with instructions to sell them. Kathwari remembered a field trip one of his classes had taken to Bloomingdale's, where the legendary department store chairman Marvin Traub had addressed students. Kathwari telephoned Traub, who invited him back to discuss his grandfather's goods.

"Bloomingdale's became my first customer," Kathwari said.

He is quick to give credit to others for his success.

"While there was a lot of hard work, there were also elements of luck," Kathwari said humbly. "First of all, it was a miracle I got admitted to NYU." Although he held a bachelor's in English literature and political science from Kashmir University, Kathwari said that during his undergraduate years, "I mostly played cricket — often as captain of the team."

And his position at Ethan Allen, Kathwari said, would not have been possible without the support of Nathan Ancell, the founder of the company.

"I was fortunate to meet Nat Ancell," Kathwari said. "He had the courage to hand over the leadership of Ethan Allen, an iconic American brand, to a young person named Farooq."

As unusual as Ancell's choice may have seemed, Kathwari said he never talked to his mentor about the decision.

"I did not think of myself as anything different and at the time I didn't think he did anything special," Kathwari said. "Later on I realized it took courage to give me that responsibility. I used to think, 'Why did he do it when there were so many talented people with much more experience?' Now when I look at the capabilities of people — that spirit of entrepreneurship, of adventure — that Nat Ancell saw in me, I better understand, because I am looking for people like that."

When Kathwari arrived in New York, he attended evening classes at NYU and worked days in a print shop with a supportive boss.

"I learned a lot about business I learned in that four-person shop," Kathwari said. As he approached graduation, his boss told him to look into a job as a financial analyst. "I asked, 'What does a financial analyst do?' He said, 'You'll learn.'"

Kathwari accepted the advice and determined that he could find a job in finance on Wall Street. He started at No. 1 Wall Street and began introducing himself to businesses, starting on the first floor. On the 16th floor, he met the human resources director for Bear Stearns, who saw that in his application, Kathwari listed mountain climbing as a pastime. The HR director liked mountain climbing too, and hired him. "The mountains got me the job," Kathwari said.

Not long after, Rothschild Inc. contacted him and offered him a job helping to manage an investment fund. By the time he turned 27, he was chief financial officer. An associate at Rothschild knew Ancell, who asked Kathwari to a meeting. Ancell mentioned that fabric Ethan Allen was importing from Kashmir had quality issues and never arrived on time. He asked whether Kathwari could help. "I said yes," Kathwari said. "But I had no idea what I would do." He solved the problem, though, and after a year Ancell asked him to help with the importing of rugs from India and Romania.

"I said yes. But again, I had no idea what I was going to do. I didn't know where Romania was," Kathwari was able to address that issue, too, and the Indian rug maker, along with several others, continues to supply products to Ethan Allen today. "Incidentally, about a year back, we opened an Ethan Allen Design Center in Romania," Kathwari said.

Ancell soon asked Kathwari to join Ethan Allen. At first, Kathwari demurred. He did, after all, have an excellent position at Rothschild. But as they discussed the situation further, Kathwari suggested that he and Ethan Allen become partners. Ancell was surprised at his audacity, Kathwari said, but he ended up agreeing. They created a company called KEA (for Kathwari Ethan Allen) that imported goods from many countries, including Italy, India, Germany, and other European countries, and China.

"For seven years I traveled all over the world," Kathwari said.

When Ethan Allen merged with St. Louis-based InterCorp in 1980, Ancell offered Kathwari the opportunity to head marketing at Ethan Allen headquarters.

"I told Nat that I didn't want to come here because if I did, I would have to take his job," Kathwari related with a chuckle. "He almost fell off his chair." Again, however, Ancell agreed, and a succession plan was developed. Kathwari has been chairman, CEO and president since 1988.

Kathwari and his wife, Farida, have donated to Western in the past, starting with a scholarship fund to help education students who were interested in teaching in inner-city schools. Ancell had also supported the university financially; he is the namesake of the Ancell School of Business.

"Since Ethan Allen moved into Connecticut about 40 years ago, Western has been part of our environment here," said Kathwari, who sits on the WCSU Foundation Board of Directors. "I appreciate Western because it focuses on students who are not necessarily coming from well-to-do families. They are serious and they want to do something to make a good career. Helping them, to me, is important."

Kathwari's gift will support student scholarships and expansion of the Kathwari Honors Program. The building that will house the program, formerly Alumni Hall, will be named the Irfan Kathwari Honors House, in memory of the Kathwaris' son.

Alumni functions will be relocated to another building on campus.

Kathwari praised the Honors Program, which serves more than 200 high-performing students with extra instruction and service opportunities. With this gift, the program is expected to grow to 500 students.

"The Honors Program is also very important as those are students who perform well and sometimes need the extra help in their education and careers," Kathwari said. "I believe these students will make a difference."

Kathwari has invested much of his time as a peace advocate and is internationally known for his work with several organizations. He is chairman emeritus of Refugees International, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a member of Board of Overseers of the International Rescue Committee, a member of the advisory board of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and a member of International Advisory Council of the United States Institute of Peace. He also founded and chairs the Kashmir Study Group and was on a presidential advisory commission on Asian American and Pacific Islanders from 2010 to 2014. In addition to being inducted into the American Furniture Hall of Fame and receiving the National Retail Federation's Gold Medal, he was recognized with the Outstanding American by Choice award from the U.S. government, the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal, the

National Human Relations Award from the American Jewish Committee, the International First Freedom Award from the Council for America's First Freedom, and the Anti-Defamation League's Humanitarian Award.

He said his plans for the future are two-fold: to further develop the entrepreneurial spirit at Ethan Allen by growing the enterprise and maintaining and increasing manufacturing in the U.S., and also to try to continue to address humanitarian issues, although many seem intractable.

"Helping those who need help is the objective, whether you are a refugee or impacted by conflict," Kathwari said. "These are different opportunities to help, but the objective is the same. How much difference one can make is hard to determine, but I think it's important to try." ■



Kathwari discusses leadership with students at a recent CEO Forum.



Kathwari Honors students gathered for a celebration of the Kathwari family's gift to create an endowment for the program.

# Long-time WCSU supporter donates \$1.25 million to scholarship fund

By Robin Provey

Erland Hagman has a strong affinity for Western Connecticut State University. He has an even greater affinity for helping students who are working hard and need a hand.

Last spring, Hagman and his wife, Irene, donated \$1.25 million to a scholarship fund in memory of his daughter, Veronica, who died unexpectedly in 2005. In December 2014, just a few months after the unveiling of the WCSU School of Visual and Performing Arts Center, the university held the naming ceremony for the Veronica Hagman Concert Hall in honor of Hagman and his family.

Veronica, the older of his two daughters, attended Western after leaving another college because she wasn't comfortable there. A psychology major, she came to Western to continue her studies.

"She fell in love with Western," Hagman said. "It was the small classes, the sincere interest from professors and the warmth from people who really cared. She truly blossomed here."

Following his daughter's death, Hagman was approached by WCSU President James Schmotter and, through sadness and sorrow, met many others at Western who expressed their genuine care and concern.

"I saw a commonality through all of them," Hagman said. "Now I understand what my daughter was talking about. If I didn't believe in Western and its future, my wife and I wouldn't be making the contribution we did."

Hagman said there was an instant chemistry between him and the university, and he started to become more involved.

"I wanted to see what WCSU was all about," he said. "Today I'm totally sold on Western."

His daughter, Melissa, now 25, graduated from Western. Her degree is in biochemistry and she worked at Boehringer Ingelheim for two years after graduation.

Over the past nine years, Hagman has seen an enormous transformation at



Erland Hagman, Irene Hagman and James W. Schmotter

Western. Among the changes he has witnessed are the construction of the Science Building on the Middtown campus and the Visual and Performing Arts Center on the Westside campus, which he calls "a dream come true."

Hagman said his first impression of the VPAC was "wow." His background in science and technology gave him a great sense of appreciation for the building from the architectural features and acoustics to the state-of-the-art equipment.

"It's optimized for stage and sound quality," Hagman said. "This state-of-the-art facility will help students tremendously. Students have been given the room to excel."

His experiences with Western, coupled with the experiences of his daughters and the incredible growth of the university are what prompted Hagman and his wife to become involved with the campus community and help students achieve their goals.

"Western is unique in that it's a univer-



Erland Hagman addresses the audience at the premiere performance in the Veronica Hagman Concert Hall.

6 [flickr](https://www.wcsu.edu/flickr) To see more photos, visit [wcsu.edu/flickr](https://www.wcsu.edu/flickr).

For giving opportunities at Western, visit [wcsu.edu/onlinegiving](https://www.wcsu.edu/onlinegiving).

sity, but it feels like a small school. It's also in a location that attracts many students who are the first in their families to seek a college education. Many students have to balance work, school and family issues," he said. "These are young people who work hard."

The founder and owner of Ergotech Inc., a producer of ergonomically beneficial equipment in Danbury, Hagman knows what hard work is all about. He came to the U.S. from Sweden when he was 28 and worked long and hard to earn his education: an engineering degree from Lund University in his native Sweden, an MBA from Pace University and a Ph.D. from Northeastern University.

"I came from nothing," Hagman said. "If I didn't have people helping me, I wouldn't be where I am today. I am the result of hard work and help along the way."

His own struggles were a deciding factor in making Western the place he could make a positive impact on young lives and keep his daughter's memory alive. He is also a member of the WCSU Foundation board of directors and serves as chair of the campaign committee.

In the footsteps of her father, Veronica Hagman also rooted for the underdog and always wanted to help people. Hagman said the scholarship fund and the naming of the concert hall were perfect vehicles to honor her as a humanitarian and musician.

"Veronica was an old soul," Hagman said. "She was shy, but music gave her a way to express her inner self. She had an unbelievable voice and was an accomplished singer with a broad repertoire from classical to Broadway. She was comfortable on stage; music transformed her. The naming of the concert hall will continue her legacy and give back, helping many bright minds get an education they might not otherwise be able to get." ■



Melissa Hagman with her father, Erland Hagman

## Scholarship Reception

On November 16, 2014, we held our annual scholarship reception. This event brings together donors, scholarship recipients, family members, and university faculty and staff to celebrate the accomplishments of our students and thank the generosity of our donors.



Peter M. Stewart Memorial Endowed Scholarship recipient Darion Sprueill enjoying the event with his proud mother.



Mediassociates "Better Thinking" Scholarship recipient Jill Caprio-Scalera (left) chatting with Mediassociates Inc. owner Scott Brunjes.



Long-time donor Mario Mesi poses with many of the student scholarship recipients who have enjoyed his generosity through his nursing, music and music education, and leadership in the LGBT community scholarships this year.



# A generational belief in education leads to sustained support for WCSU students



Steve, "Deno" and Marie Macricostas

By Paul Steinmetz

The Macricostas family, which in 2014 pledged a \$3 million gift to Western, the largest in the university's history, owes much of its success to a man who was never given the opportunity to learn to read or write.

Constantine "Deno" Macricostas' father, Stefanos, was not successful in the sense of education or financial stability, but he was driven to work hard and make life better for his children. He imparted that drive to his son, who founded Photronics, one of the largest manufacturers of photomasks in the world, and who in turn educated his own sons about the value of hard work.

In 1922 when Stefanos was nine, he and his family became refugees when they

were driven out of what is now Izmir, Turkey, during a government-sponsored ethnic cleansing, known today as the "Burning of Smyrna." For three days, until British troops arrived, the family took refuge in a French convent with high walls. With none of their possessions, they were relocated by Greek fishing boats to a refugee camp near the Greek port city of Piraeus, near Athens.

"My dad was my idol," said Deno Macricostas. "He went to work when he was 10 years old in a slaughterhouse where he was paid with a goat's stomach or goats' feet, which were undesirable. On his way home he would collect coal that had dropped from locomotives and bring it home to his mother so she could cook the family dinner."

When he was 12, Stefanos bought a nanny goat. He slowly built a herd of more than 130 goats and sold their milk throughout the city from the back of a mule.

"Although my father was not literate, he was very street-smart," Deno said.

Deno was able to immigrate to the United States as a teenager, and he became the family's first to graduate from college.

"Education opens horizons and opportunities," Deno said. "That's when my journey

started. It was a wonderful journey."

With the family's gift, which will support student research, scholarships and a lecture series, WCSU has named the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences in their honor.

After graduating and a stint in the U.S. Army, Deno arrived in Danbury in 1960. He worked as an equipment design engineer at National Semiconductor and later at Qualitron, while working weekends as a short-order cook at Durkin's Diner on White Street. The extra money allowed him to build a modest home without a mortgage and also leave Qualitron to start a photomask business with five partners.

His former coworkers predicted he would fail, said Deno's son, Steve.

Deno admits that he wasn't the image of the quintessential businessman — he spoke English with a thick Greek accent, his demeanor was unassuming instead of commanding.

But those deficiencies didn't stop him.

"I had full confidence in myself," Deno said, quietly. "It was a gift from my father."

That drive, Macricostas said, which was learned during difficult times in his home country, might be a reason that immigrants have been successful in America.



Deno Macricostas surrounded by the faculty of the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences.

"Most of the people who come here are looking for the journey, the making themselves better, to take the risk. The hunger to succeed. You can make more of a difference here."

"People leave a country, they are more active, they have dreams, they are not content with the status quo," Macricostas said. "And America is the land of dreams." Photronics took time to grow, because, as Macricostas said, "the company was always undercapitalized. We mortgaged our home, made a profit, and reinvested it back into the business. It took a long time."

"My dad was always willing to take a risk," Steve added.

Photronics, with sales of \$455 million in 2014, is one of four companies that sell photomasks globally with nine manufacturing plants in Europe, Asia and the U.S., including Brookfield. Photomasks are high-precision quartz plates that contain microscopic images of electronic circuits that are transferred onto silicon wafers. Photomasks are a key element in the manufacture of semiconductors and flat panel displays.

Photronics went public on the NASDAQ in 1987 and bought two publicly traded competitors over the years. Macricostas has received many awards from business groups, including the National Blue Chip Award, the High Tech Entrepreneur of the Year, the Eli Whitney Award for Excellence in Small Business Management and the prestigious Entrepreneurial Success Award from the Small Business Administration.



"Hellenic Melodies: A Journey from Classical to Contemporary," was hosted by the WCSU Center for Culture and Values, supported by a grant from Deno Macricostas and his wife Marie.



John Royce, left, and Thomas Montague, center, receive congratulations from Connecticut Rep. David Scribner at the Entrepreneur of the Year Award (EOY) Luncheon. Royce and Montague were recognized for their business achievements as owners of catering and wedding facilities The Fox Hill Inn, The Candlewood Inn, The Waterview and The Riverview. The EOY program is supported by the contributions of the Macricostas Family Foundation.

"I never thought the company would grow as big as it has," Macricostas said. "When we grew to \$5 million, that's how big I thought it would stay. We succeeded because we offered better price, better quality. Better, quicker, cheaper. The company is service, service, service. Quality is not negotiable. It's a given."

"I'm very competitive," he added. "By winning, the corporation grew. The money came by default."

That drive showed itself at home, too.

"We had a big yard and a garden," Steve recalled. "In 1975 we moved from downtown Danbury to a modest old home on the west side of town where we had some acreage, and Dad had us out there mowing and trimming the lawn and weeding the garden. My brother, George, was five so he couldn't reach the pedals, so I got to ride the mower since I was 10. It still took us three to four hours — on a riding mower — to do it all. You couldn't stop for a second! As soon as my brother could drive the tractor, I was on push mower duty."

Deno added, "If I saw that they stopped, I'd come out and say 'Hey, what's going on!'" Looking back, it was a great life experience," Steve said. "He has really established a tremendous work ethic in us." George has followed in his father's footsteps. George managed Photronics' global IT infrastructure before starting RagingWire Data Centers, a data center co-location company, in 2000. RagingWire, with sales of approximately \$100 million in 2014, has facilities in

Ashburn, Virginia, and Sacramento, California. RagingWire provides "cloud" and other data intensive companies with the physical data centers with which to operate their equipment. George recently sold 80 percent of the company to NTT Communications but retains the title of chairman, CEO and founder.

George also possesses the confidence of his father. "My dad came to America in 1954 with \$25 and knew about 50 words of English, so I don't see what I accomplished at RagingWire as such a big deal, having started with several millions of dollars of capital," he said. "I feel like I had it really easy compared to my great-grandparents, grandparents and parents. I will never forget where we came from, and God willing, I hope my children will also appreciate the sacrifices of our ancestors and tremendous opportunities that America offers for individuals willing to persevere in the pursuit of their dreams."

"This is our home town, our roots are here, and we want to give back to our community that has given us so much," George said. Both sons graduated from Western and praise the faculty and course offerings.

"WestConn supplies the intellectual and academic foundation to the local community," Deno said. "It not only helps its students, but its students in turn help other local residents and that synergy multiplies. A part of Danbury's success is due to the strength and quality of the university. Education opens our horizons and opportunities." ■

# WCSU recognized as a good value that yields opportunity in two recent studies

by Sherri Hill

Western recently found itself ranked No. 1 in Connecticut and No. 11 in the nation on a Social Mobility Index report, and No. 2 on a list of the state's public colleges and universities on a Return-on-Investment report. That's good news for current and future students' bottom lines.

A list released recently by the financial site Payscale ranked 1,300 U.S. colleges and universities by their return-on-investment (ROI). The list calculated 20-year net ROI by comparing the total cost of attendance to the earnings of each school's graduates.

Western is ranked number two on the list of all in-state public colleges and universities in Connecticut, and number seven of the 19 public and private institutions that offer degrees in the state. WCSU also falls within the top quarter of all in-state public universities in the nation in terms of ROI.

How do these statistics translate to reality? Ancell School of Business 2007 graduate Juliana Marques can explain.

"My experience is that I probably didn't spend more than \$20,000 on my education at WCSU and I make about 10 times that now," Marques said. "In fact, I was making three times what I spent on my education at my first job after graduating."

Since 2012, Marques has worked for Baker & McKenzie, ranked by U.S. News & World Report as 2014 Law Firm of the Year for Tax in the United States. Marques is involved in international and corporate tax strategy matters and said, "My work is really tied to what I learned at WCSU. Some attorneys may resist dealing with numbers or lack the business background. I started to become comfortable with numbers, accounting and tax concepts in the financial accounting program at Western. Not only did my WCSU degree get me my first job, but it also allows me to converse with clients and colleagues on a practical level on a daily basis. It's a differentiating factor and something I use on many of the projects that I work on."

More recently, Science magazine published a special issue about "Haves and Have-Nots: The Science of Inequality." One of the key points raised — that the gap between rich and poor in the United States is growing — caught the attention of CollegeNET and PayScale, which combined efforts to create a social mobility index (SMI) to "comparatively assess the role of our higher education system in providing a conduit for economic and social advancement."

The SMI survey measured five factors

relating to higher education: cost of tuition, opportunities provided to low-income students, graduation rate, early career salary for graduates, and the status of the university's endowment. More than 530 colleges and universities were compared based on these criteria.

The results placed Western No. 1 in Connecticut and No. 11 nationwide.

At No. 11, WCSU was one of only three universities located in the New England states to break the Top 100 on the national list (the others, located in Massachusetts, came in at No. 96 and No. 98). And Western's presence at the top of the list for Connecticut was by a sizable margin: the second-highest ranked Connecticut institution came in at a distant No. 143 on the national list. ■



Juliana Marques '07



WCSU President James W. Schmotter presented the Henry Barnard Distinguished Student Award to two exemplary seniors, Jessica Lin and Timothy Nott. Lin was a political science major who looks forward to earning a graduate degree in either public health or public administration. Nott, who served as president of the WCSU Education Club, has wanted to be a teacher since second grade.

## WCSU theatre arts program named one of 10 best in 2015

OnStage, a Connecticut-based blog dedicated to "promoting theatre from Broadway to your hometown," announced that Western's Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts program is one of the 10 best in the country in 2015.

## New York Times mentions Visual and Performing Arts Center

In a late October article about the migration from New York to Danbury, "Affordability in Danbury, Conn., Just Over the Border," the New York Times mentioned Western's new Visual and Performing Arts Center as one of the draws to the area.

## Visual and Performing Arts Center named one of 25 Most Amazing Campus Arts Centers

Collegedegreesearch.net named Western's Visual and Performing

Arts Center No. 9 on its list of the 25 Most Amazing Campus Arts Centers. Western's facility is listed in the top 10 along with arts centers at California Polytechnic State University, Emerson College, Sonoma State University, the University of North Texas, Emory University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Lynn University, Soka University and the University of Northern Iowa. Farther down the list are large, private institutions that include the University of Notre Dame, Syracuse University, DePaul University and New York University.

## Women's volleyball team earns American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic Award

The WCSU Volleyball team won the Little East Championship and made it to the NCAA tournament, but it also earned the American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic Award. The student-athletes had a total team GPA of 3.38.

## WCSU teaching programs 100 percent nationally recognized

After receiving full accreditation for its education unit last fall from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), Western is now nationally recognized for its entire inventory of initial and advanced programs leading to educator certification. All 12 certification programs — from Elementary Education to Spanish — are nationally recognized by specialty professional associations.

## WCSU recognized on National Honor Roll for Community Service for second year in a row

Western was named for the second year in a row to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The 2014 designation recognizes the university's commitment to volunteering, service-learning and civic engagement.

## WCSU student named Bachelor of Social Work Student of the Year

WCSU student Matthew Cole was named Bachelor of Social Work Student of the Year by the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

## 'Election Connection' wins national broadcast award

The student crew who produced and directed Western's "Election Connection" live broadcast of results and analysis of the November 2014 state and congressional elections has received first-place honors in the nationwide collegiate competition conducted by the Broadcast Education Association (BEA) for its 2015 Festival of Media Arts. The WCSU broadcast prevailed in one of seven Student Video categories judged in the festival and was among 1,352 entries overall that were submitted by students and faculty at universities and colleges across the United States.



Bill Imada, left, founder of IW Group, Gail Hill Williams '87, president and CEO of Alegre Communications Inc., and WCSU alumnus and inventor Michael Carpanzano '13, right, judged the "Your Big Idea" competition won by Megan Driscoll, a Marketing and Spanish major.

## Student-inventor wins WCSU Marketing Week competition

According to Greek philosopher Plato, "Necessity is the mother of invention." Western Connecticut State University student Megan Driscoll, winner of this year's "Your Big Idea" competition sponsored by the Ansell School of Business, would most likely agree.

Driscoll, a sophomore from Brookfield who is double-majoring in Marketing and Spanish, entered the annual WCSU Marketing Club's "Your Big Idea" competition that offers a \$500 prize because of her strong belief in her invention, an Insulin Pump Holder. Diagnosed two years ago with Type I Diabetes, Driscoll found she quickly tired of being asked, "What's that?" when people caught a glimpse of her insulin pump mounted on the waist-band of her pants.

"I'm a diabetic, and I was always look-

ing for ways to hide my insulin pump," Driscoll said. Most often, she said, pumps are worn at the waist and are easy to spot. They also are not waterproof, which limits participation in water sports and activities.

After conducting research on existing insulin pump holder options, Driscoll set out to invent a better product.

Driscoll said the idea for her product came to her during a car-ride home from an appointment with her doctor. She did the research, came up with a plan, entered the competition and was selected as one of eight finalists to present their concepts to a panel of judges in early October.

Each contestant was allotted five minutes for his or her presentation and five minutes to respond to questions from the judges. The judges included

Bill Imada, founder, chairman and chief collaboration officer of IW Group, a minority-owned and operated agency focusing on growing multicultural markets; WCSU alumnus Michael Carpanzano, inventor of NuPlug; and Gail Hill Williams, president and CEO of Alegre Communications Inc.

"I was very confident about my idea and excited to present it to the judges and the audience," Driscoll said. "Some of the other ideas were really interesting, but I felt strongly about what I was talking about and my invention was important to me."

Driscoll said the \$500 prize will help her on the way to developing her product. What's also important about the competition, she said, is the "real-world experience that you can't get in a classroom."

— Sherri Hill



## WCSU to help first-year students transition to college life

The first year of college can be difficult. Students at Western Connecticut State University are faced with choosing the right courses, learning new study habits and balancing time between school, work and family. To help ease this transition, the university is developing a First Year Experience (FYE) program.

The university recently received a grant to help develop, implement and assess the program. The three-year \$174,331 grant is from the Davis Educational Foundation established by Stanton and Elisabeth Davis after Stanton Davis's retirement as chairman of Shaw's Supermarkets Inc.

The grant coincides with the creation of a new general education framework that will include a required FYE experience component. WCSU Dean of the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences Dr. Missy Alexander said the grant enables the university to build on FYE programs that have been previously implemented. In part, the funding allows for a greater level of assessment to help evaluate the success of the program.

Dr. Kelli Custer, an assistant professor in the Department of Writing, Linguistics and Creative Process and coordinator of the FYE Program, explained an integral part of the program will be using videos on a variety of topics such as exploring the campus, planning course selections and utilizing the various campus resources from the Office of Student Affairs to the campus libraries. These videos are being written and produced by WCSU student interns, guided by faculty.

Alexander explained that, as a part of general education curriculum, these videos may be used in FYE-designated courses. When the program is implemented in the fall of 2015, material will be embedded in current courses so that the work will always be tied to an academic subject. A national expert on FYE programs will conduct a seminar with faculty to help guide the courses toward the needs of WCSU students.

"The hope is that this makes the adjustment for students smoother," Alexander said. "The three-year grant allows us to support our students in a way we haven't been able to before."

— Robin Provey



Tom Lindberg, the president and co-founder of Sir Grout, a grout and tile cleaning franchise, was one of many businesspeople who have spoken at a program called The Entrepreneurship Arc, which the Ansell School of Business hosts several times a year. Entrepreneurs explain to students and community members what obstacles they overcame in building their businesses.

# Our Donors



Ronald Pugliese  
Chair  
WCSU Foundation, Inc.

This edition of The Cupola features three special supporters of the WCSU Foundation: Constantine "Deno" Macricostas, Erland Hagman and Farooq Kathwari. They all recently made generous gifts to the Foundation in support of Western Connecticut State University and its students.

They all happen to be immigrants, men who were tested by making a home in a new land, and who learned from the journey. They identify with WCSU students, young men and women who often benefit from scholarships that allow them to stay in class.

Here is what our friends said:

Deno Macricostas: People who leave their home country are active, they have dreams, and America is the land of dreams. Most of the people who come here are looking for the journey, making themselves better, to take the risk. The hunger to succeed. You can make more of a difference here.

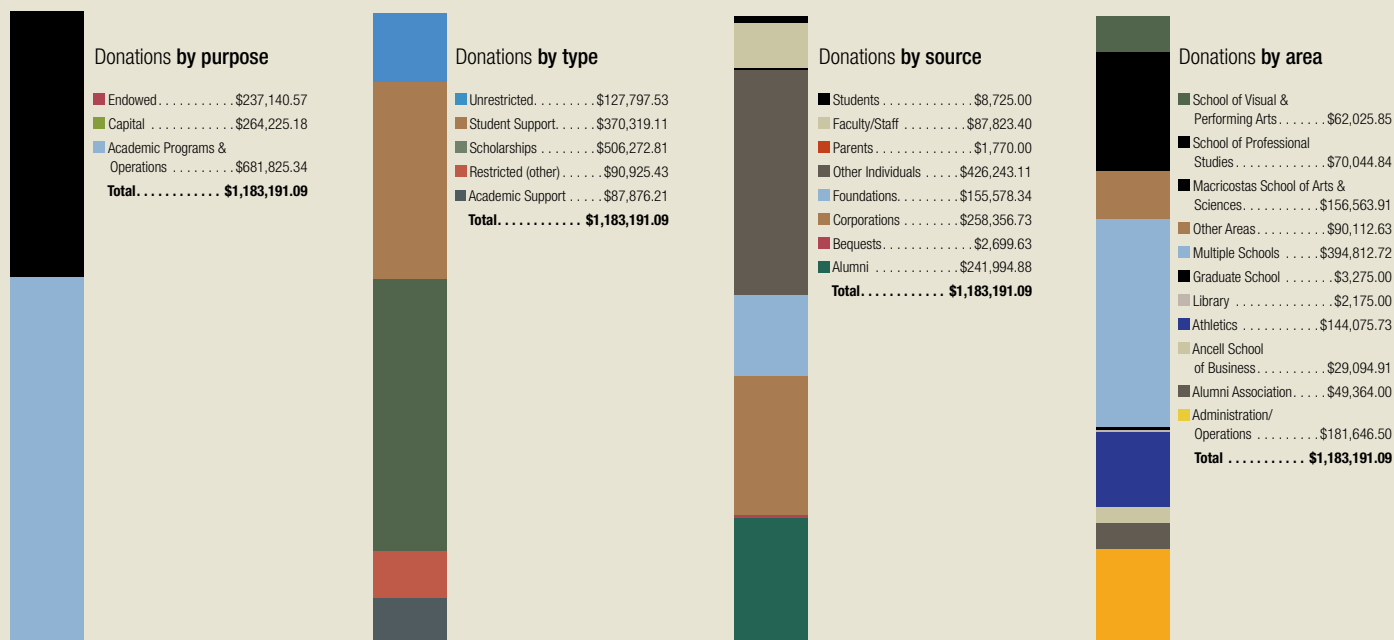
Erland Hagman: I came from nothing. If I didn't have people helping me, I wouldn't be where I am today. I am the result of hard work and help along the way.

Farooq Kathwari: People who come from other societies appreciate the benefit of America, despite the issues. America is an extremely special place for people to work very hard, create capital and give it away. That is not usual in the rest of the world. It's a unique American experience. ■

A large, stylized handwritten signature in brown ink, which appears to be "R. Pugliese", is superimposed over the sky in the background image.



## 2013-14 Total Gifts



# Leave a legacy for Western

Including a charitable bequest in your will is a simple way to make a lasting gift to Western. For over a century, students at Western have benefitted from the generosity of those who knew the importance of a college education. Indeed, what better role models than the graduates of a former teachers college to highlight the significance of higher education to our society?

Today, Western Connecticut State University educates more than 6,000 students a year, many of whom cannot

afford a college education without the support of our alumni and friends. In fact, some of the largest support Western receives comes in the form of charitable bequests.

A bequest, a gift through a will or other estate planning vehicle, affords the donor both the flexibility and ability to benefit future generations of Western students and faculty. Our Office of Institutional Advancement is available to work with you and your advisers to provide suggested language for bequests, and to help craft a legacy that satisfies both your philanthropic and estate planning goals.

For more information, please contact Robert A. Schlesinger, JD, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, at (203) 837-8111 or [SchlesingerR@wcsu.edu](mailto:SchlesingerR@wcsu.edu). Thank you for your continuing support of Western. ■



## P President's Club (\$1,000+)

Members of this group have made an annual financial commitment of at least \$1,000 to the WCSU Foundation without placing restrictions on the purpose of their gifts. These donations are allocated to the university's greatest needs as determined by the president. President's Club donors have placed their trust in the WCSU mission and remain some of our most faithful advocates.

## F Fairfield Hall Society (\$500-\$999)

With their support, these members enhance our students' collegiate experience and invest in our faculty's ever-evolving needs.

## W WestConn Society (\$250-\$499)

The earliest established giving arm of the WCSU Foundation, this group has for decades supported innovative programs, outreach opportunities and enrichment initiatives.

## C Century Club (\$100-\$249)

By far the largest participating giving group, these alumni, parents and friends provide an invaluable endorsement of a Western education.

## Library 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.

The Office of Institutional Advancement has taken great care to ensure that the information contained in this Honor Roll is accurate and complete. However, errors do occur occasionally. If you were a contributor to WCSU between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014, and did not receive any goods or services for your contribution, but find your name missing, misspelled, listed under the wrong heading or not in the format that you requested, please accept our sincere apologies. Please note that in the alumni section, alumni are listed without spouses unless the spouse is an alumnus/a also, in which case he/she appears alone in his/her graduation year as well. Also, the total donation amount includes only those donations to the WCSU Foundation and Alumni Association that were tax-deductible. Please help us correct our records by contacting Lynne LeBarron at (203) 837-8188 or [lebarron@wcsu.edu](mailto:lebarron@wcsu.edu). A correction will be printed in next year's report.



The WCSU Foundation honored businesswoman MaryJean Rizzo-Rebeiro, the president of NY-CONN Corporation, with the Community Service Award presented at the annual WestConn Society Luncheon. Rebeiro, third from right, was joined by former winners, from left, Robert Yamin, Dianne Yamin, David Nurnberger, Nancy Nurnberger and Tom Devine. President Schmotter joined them for the celebration.

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The following represents giving from July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014.

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Please note that total giving includes donations to the WCSU Foundation and Alumni Association that were tax-deductible.

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WCSU Alumni Association  
Dr. Laurie Weinstein



President Schmotter presents the Community Service Award to MaryJean Rizzo-Rebeiro.

## FOUNDATIONS & CORPORATIONS

Many companies offer a matching gift program for their employees as an incentive to contribute to nonprofit organizations, such as the WCSU Foundation. Please remember to ask your human resources department if your company offers a matching gift program. For more information and a list of matching gift companies, please visit <http://matching-gifts.com/wcsu/>, call (203) 837-8832 or email [development@wcsu.edu](mailto:development@wcsu.edu).

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## LEGACY SOCIETY

This giving group was established to recognize those individuals who have made a charitable provision for WCSU in their estate plans. By joining the Legacy Society, you can make a significant contribution to benefit generations to come at the university. Please contact the Development Office at (203) 837-8111 to learn more about joining this group.

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Meteorology experts in the public and private sectors, academia and broadcasting shared their professional insights into significant weather phenomena shaping the climate regionally, nationally and globally at the Fifth Tri-State Weather Conference. Organized by the meteorology program in Western's Department of Physics, Astronomy and Meteorology, the conference featured presentations by weather analysts, climate researchers, TV weathercasters and storm trackers on a wide range of topics from recent major weather events to developments in forecasting technology.

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## Montefusco attends elite FBI National Academy

Campus safety is something the WCSU Police Department takes seriously, and one way to keep crime at bay is to make sure the university's officers are trained in the most current crime-prevention techniques. That's why a rare opportunity to attend the FBI National Academy was something Sgt. Richard ("Monte") Montefusco couldn't pass up.

Once nominated for participation in the FBI National Academy by the WCSU Police Department, Montefusco underwent an extensive background check and interview process. Only one-half of one percent of all law enforcement personnel in the world are invited by the director of the FBI to attend the intensive, 10-week training at Quantico, Virginia.

During the program, Montefusco took courses in civil law, civil liability, social media, communication strategies and labor law. He also received intensive behavioral training on the

human psyche, anti-social and psycho-social behavior, and how people think.

Montefusco, one of Western's firearms instructors, studied less-lethal munitions at the academy — focusing on the use of alternatives to guns such as batons, gas and "everything in the FBI's arsenal." Relying on less lethal options for crowd control, Montefusco said, will allow university police to neutralize a situation in seconds without having to wait for special teams to arrive on campus.

He also participated in the FBI's "VIRTSIM," which fabricates active shooter scenarios through the use of avatars. "They can produce any situation you can imagine," Montefusco said, "and the avatars are so real that it really gets your adrenaline going."

Fifty percent of the academy curriculum was based on physical training, which included a 6.1-mile Marine Corps run-and-obstacle

course called the Yellow Brick Road. "It was some of the most grueling physical training I've ever gone through in my career," Montefusco said. "They change your life when it comes to working out."

Joining Montefusco at Quantico were police officers from 17 countries and 48 states. Montefusco was one of only three officers representing the hundreds of law enforcement agencies in Connecticut.

"The Academy gave me the opportunity to take a look at myself and my opportunities as a police officer, how to mold other officers and all aspects of leadership," Montefusco said.

"Overall, this rounds you out as a police officer and brought together everything I've learned in my 21-year career.

"It has also given me the confidence that any future issues can be solved."

— Sherri Hill

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A recent graduate of the Educational Doctorate program in Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University, Dr. Helena Nitowski is the principal of Western Connecticut Academy of International Studies, which was recognized as "Elementary School of the Year" for 2014-15.



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Ron Pugliese, center, chairman of the WCSU Foundation board of directors, greets Richard Longo and Theresa Eberhard Asch '64 at a wine-tasting event held in the Science Building atrium.

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More than 100 alumni from the Department of Music performed in "WCSU Music Alumni Night" a chance for many of them to perform or for the first time in the newly minted Visual and Performing Arts Center. Alumni performed in three ensembles – choir, jazz and band.



Students heard from victims and legal experts during a forum on domestic violence coordinated by Dr. Casey Jordan, pictured below right.

# WCSU hosts panel discussion on 'Wives with Knives'

By Robin Provey

Some fought back after years of abuse; others were motivated by greed or jealousy. But "Wives with Knives" all have something in common: they committed crimes and reveal on TV the traumatic events that led to their assaults.

On Oct. 15, WCSU Professor of Justice and Law Administration Dr. Casey Jordan, the host-interviewer for the Investigation Discovery documentary series "Wives with Knives," led a panel discussion, "Wives with Knives and Self-Defense Versus Assault in Domestic Violence Cases," on the university's Westside campus. Joining Jordan on the panel was "Wives with Knives" producer Carl Shick, a local expert on domestic violence, Family Violence Victim Advocate/Danbury Superior Court Advocate Lynn Nichols; Danbury Women's Center Program Manager of Counseling and Advocacy Services Nicole Sabel; and Donna Cobb and Jameelah Jones, who had their stories profiled on the television show.

According to the show's website, "Wives with Knives" features gripping stories of

women who fight back at close range. Some women endured years of sexual, emotional and physical abuse before fighting back. Others were motivated by greed and jealousy. Some of the victims died and others lived to testify against their attackers. Through personal accounts from the women who committed the crimes, as well as the victims, each episode reveals the traumatic events that led to the pair's disturbing demise."

Jordan is a frequent guest speaker at criminology associations, forensic conferences and justice forums, including annual presentations at Danbury Hospital's Pediatrics Conference and the Exploration Program at Yale University. She appeared in TruTV's reality show "Unsolved Murder Unit," where she teamed with a forensic pathologist and police detective to reprocess evidence and develop leads in unsolved homicide cases. She currently offers case analysis for Investigation Discovery's series "I (Almost) Got Away With It" and "Scorned: Love Kills," as well as "Wives with Knives." ■



## WCSU professors honored for Best Paper at international conference

Western Connecticut State University faculty members Dr. Paul Nugent and Dr. Emilio Collar were honored as recipients of the 2014 Best Academic Paper Award presented at the Fifth International Conference on Complex Systems Design and Management (CSD&M) in Paris, France.

Nugent and Collar are co-authors of the paper, "The Hidden Perils of Addressing Complexity with Formal Process: A Philosophical and Empirical Analysis," submitted to the CSD&M conference sponsored by the Paris-based Center of Excellence on Systems Architecture, Management, Economy and Strategy. Nugent traveled to France in November to present the paper and accept the award, which carried a prize stipend of 1,000 euros, from conference chairman Daniel Krob.

Nugent, an associate professor of management information systems (MIS) at Western, served as principal investigator for the research paper. Collar, who serves as assistant dean of the Ansell School of Business and an associate professor of MIS, provided support in reviewing the professional literature that set the scholarly foundations for research inquiry.

In framing his research questions, Nugent drew extensively from his professional experience as a lead systems engineer and lead information assurance engineer at General Dynamics, focusing on the implementation since the mid-1990s of a process for quality control known as Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI). Departing from the heavily quantitative and data-driven approach that most engineers take in research studies, Nugent's paper provided a qualitative analysis of what interviews conducted with engineers during and after the introduction of CMMI suggested about the human dimensions of formalizing processes for quality control.

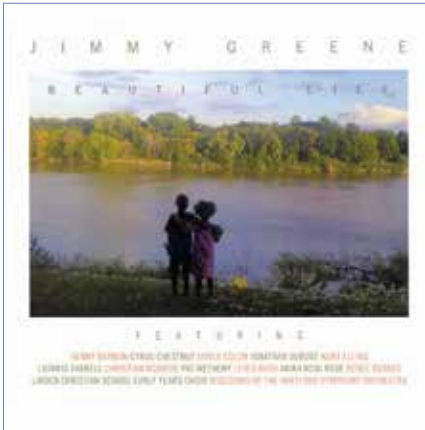
"As an engineer and a sociologist, I am interested in how new technologies are being used in the workplace," he remarked. He noted that the paper approached the introduction of CMMI "from the human side, getting beneath the surface to a deeper level of analysis that you cannot achieve simply through surveys or managers' observations. This study looks at the implementation of a formal process in a business organization, and the consequences for the engineers and their work when the social consequences of that process are not understood."

The paper's comparison of employee interviews about CMMI at the start of its implementation, and again five years into its implementation, found that formalization of the quality control process in an organization tended to discourage engineers from working collaboratively to tackle product design issues. At the same time, the study revealed a shift in the perceived responsibility for product quality from the individual worker to the CMMI process itself, and engineers' personal commitment was further eroded by reassignments from one role to another. "Through time, this transformed the culture to one of less commitment to organizational outcomes and less identification with one's product for success or failure," the paper said.

"While formal processes are adopted by organizations to grapple with increasing levels of complexity, they nonetheless make strong assumptions about the nature of work and the nature of the worker, leading to unintended consequences," the paper noted. "We conclude that formal processes tend to ignore the social dynamics of the production process, resulting in systemic quality problems."

— Robert Taylor

# Jimmy Greene dedicates new jazz album to 'Beautiful Life' of Ana



By Robert Taylor

Jazz saxophonist, composer and bandleader Jimmy Greene's conviction that tragedy must not silence the joyous music of his daughter Ana Grace Marquez-Greene's brief life has provided the inspiration for the Western Connecticut State University faculty member's release of his new album, "Beautiful Life," and performance in concert on Dec. 5 with the Jimmy Greene Quartet at WCSU.

The album, which was released Nov. 24 on Mack Avenue Records, offers an intensely personal journey of remembrance and celebration of Ana's life

through a diverse collection of original compositions and arrangements by Greene, as well as fresh interpretations of spiritual songs and Broadway musical classics. The voice of Ana, who was among the first-grade victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on Dec. 14, 2012, provides a powerful opening to the album in a home recording of her singing of the traditional Latin American Christmas melody "Saludos," made during a holiday visit in Puerto Rico with the family of her mother, Nelba Marquez-Greene.

Selections from the album were featured in the program for the sold-out gala concert on Dec. 5 that marked the opening of the Veronica Hagman Concert Hall at the Visual and Performing Arts Center (VPAC) on the university's Westside campus. Greene, assistant professor of music and co-coordinator of jazz studies at WCSU, was joined for the evening's featured set by an elite group of artists rounding out his jazz quartet including Renee Rosnes on piano, John Patitucci on bass and Jeff "Tain" Watts on drums. The concert began with a set performed by Western student jazz combos in collaboration with members of the quartet. "We incorporated a lot of different elements in the concert, and had some special invited guests at the end," Greene remarked.

"It was an honor to perform for the formal dedication of this Concert Hall and celebrate all the hard work and achievements of everyone who contributed to the construction of this building," he said. "The Visual and Performing Arts Center will become a hub for artistic activity in the state and the region."

The "Beautiful Life" album features recordings by a dozen leading jazz artists, orchestra and choir whose performances provide richly evocative and varied perspectives on the personal and musical journey of Greene's family. "Everything was chosen for a very specific reason related to our family, and all of the musicians on this album have a personal connection with me and my family," he observed.

Greene's decision to write lyrics for several new compositions and to introduce vocals for several selections from his earlier work represented a departure from his previous albums, which have featured exclusively instrumental jazz tracks. "I knew that in making music that was inspired by my daughter and her life, I would have to write songs with lyrics because she so loved to sing and dance," he said.

The album's expression through music of the enduring power of youthful joy



Jimmy Greene, center, joined by John Patitucci on bass and Jeff "Tain" Watts on drums.

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For giving opportunities at Western, visit [wcsu.edu/onlinegiving](http://wcsu.edu/onlinegiving).



A children's choir performed with college musicians.

and innocence is captured by the quietly moving cover photograph of Ana and her brother Isaiah taken in the backyard of their home on the Red River in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where the family lived prior to moving to Newtown in 2012. "The kids are looking out at the river," Greene recalled. "Isaiah has one arm around his sister and in his other hand, he holds a yellow whiffle ball bat. I would pitch crabbles that fell from a tree in the backyard and the children would bat them into the river. One day while we were out there, my wife said to Isaiah and Ana, 'Why don't you turn your backs to me and I'll take your picture?'"

That photograph finds musical expression on the album in "Last Summer," a quartet piece composed as a reflection on his children's image. Greene draws similar inspiration from Ana's life in the new composition "Little Voices," which includes a soliloquy recited by Tony Award-winning actress Anika Noni Rose. Rose, who attended Bloomfield High School with Greene, won his daughter's heart as the voice of Princess Tiana in one of Ana's favorite animated films, "The Princess and the Frog."

Greene reworked several of his earlier instrumental compositions to write new vocal arrangements for the album, including "When I Come Home" featuring "The Voice" 2011 winner Javier Colon and "Ana's Way" featuring jazz vocalist and composer Kurt Elling with the Early Years Choir of the Linden Christian School in Winnipeg. "All the children who sing on the album were classmates of my son and my daughter when they attended the Linden School," he said. Latanya Farrell, who like Colon was a classmate of Greene's at the Hartt School at the University of Hartford, sings Greene's arrangement of the text of the Lord's Prayer in "Prayer," which also features Cyrus Chestnut on piano.

Greene called upon pianist Kenny Barron, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Lewis Nash – legendary jazz artists who supported Greene as his rhythm section for his breakthrough performance at age 21 in the 1996 Thelonious Monk competition – to reunite with him in fresh takes on the Broadway songs "Where is Love?" from "Oliver" and "Maybe" from "Annie." The selection of "Where Is Love?" harks back to Greene's introduction to that melody as an improvisation assignment from his instructor and mentor at the Artists Collective in Hartford, Jackie McLean.

"Maybe" seemed ideally suited for an album inspired by his daughter, he noted: "Ana loved all the songs from 'Annie' and sang them a capella."

The album also renewed collaborations with other artists including Rosnes, guitar legend Pat Metheny and a string ensemble from the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Metheny joined Greene in an instrumental performance of "Come Thou Almighty King," which segues into a home recording of Isaiah playing the same piece from his school songbook while Ana sings the hymn.

Greene expressed special gratitude to Norman and David Chesky of Chesky Records and HD Tracks, who reached out to him in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook tragedy to offer donation of studio facilities, production and administrative support for recording of the album.

A portion of the proceeds from sales of "Beautiful Life" will benefit the Ana Grace Project of Klingberg Family Centers in New Britain and the Artists Collective in Hartford. The Ana Grace Project was founded in October 2013 in a collaboration between the Greene family and the Klingberg Family Centers to promote love, community and connection for every child and family through research, professional development and public policy aimed at building community efforts to prevent violence and foster recovery. The Artists Collective, founded by McLean in 1970, is an interdisciplinary arts and cultural institution that has served the Greater Hartford area for more than four decades, providing what Greene described as "world-class training" as well as a profound appreciation of his African American heritage and his place in the rich legacy of jazz musicians. More information on these nonprofit organizations is available online at <http://anagraceproject.org> and <http://artistscollective.org>. ■



Molly Sayles



Evan Gray

## Students perform with region's top college jazz musicians

Two Western Connecticut State University students were selected to join top college musicians from across the East Coast in the 2015 Mid-Atlantic Collegiate Jazz Orchestra on January 5 in performance at the Dizzy's Club Coca Cola in the Jazz at Lincoln Center venue in Midtown Manhattan.

Music education majors Molly Sayles, with a concentration in percussion, and Evan Gray, with a concentration in trombone, were among 28 students chosen from elite jazz music programs at colleges and conservatories spanning the Eastern seaboard from Virginia to Massachusetts to form this year's orchestra. Sayles, of Quaker Hill, is one of two members of the orchestra chosen to perform on the drum set in the rhythm section; Gray, of Southington, was featured in the orchestra's solo trombone role.

Performers comprising the orchestra were selected by a committee of the Cumberland (Maryland) Jazz Society, which sponsors the arts initiative, from a pool of applicants nominated by instructors at their respective music programs. Since its founding in 2009, the orchestra has earned a reputation as an organization dedicated to celebrating and advancing the development of promising collegiate jazz musicians throughout the region.

"The Mid-Atlantic Collegiate Jazz Orchestra has established itself as the premier collegiate all-star big band on the East Coast," the society website for the orchestra observed. "With past performances in New Orleans, New York and Washington, D.C., the band's members are among the finest up-and-coming jazz musicians and have represented more than 30 college and university jazz programs over the years."

Jamie Began, chair of the WCSU Department of Music and co-coordinator of jazz studies, has worked extensively with both students throughout their undergraduate education at Western.

"You will not find two more dedicated, talented and thoughtful students than Molly and Evan," Began remarked. "Their musicianship, attention to detail, and creative thinking are great examples of the type of music students we seek to cultivate at Western."

"We have sent many musicians to the Mid-Atlantic Collegiate Jazz Orchestra in the past, and I know the bar keeps getting higher for acceptance," he added. "The fact that both Molly and Evan represented our program this year gives me great pride in their work here and confidence in their promising future careers as musicians and music educators."

The orchestra's performance at Dizzy's Club Coca Cola featured two sets conducted by jazz trumpeter, composer and educator Sean Jones.



Schmutter was a frequent visitor to sporting events on campus, underscoring his belief that athletics are an important component of university life.



Schmutter presided at 20 WCSU commencements, both undergraduate and graduate, before his retirement and graduated more than 14,000 students during his tenure – as many or more than any of Western's presidents.



Western connects with several community organizations to support projects and ideas. Here, Schmutter meets with Lew Wallace, president of the Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut, and Executive Director Lisa Scails.

Dr. James W. Schmutter has served as president of Western Connecticut State University with distinction since August 1, 2004.

# So many that

2004

2006

2008

2010



Schmutter has overseen a 30 percent increase in the number of students seeking majors in biology and chemistry.



Schmutter promoted a wide range of community-building events and lectures on campus, including a speech by Tibetan Prime Minister Lobsang Sangay, in advance of the two-day appearance by the Dalai Lama.



Schmottor persuaded the Connecticut legislature in 2006 to approve creation of the School of Visual and Performing Arts, the first in the Connecticut State University system.

Schmottor elicited support from two governors to allocate funding for construction of the Visual and Performing Arts Center, which was completed in 2014 and was named one of the top 25 "Most Amazing Campus Arts Centers."



The Math Emporium, designed to ensure that all students could succeed in their mathematics courses, with additional support from professors and mentors, was one of the innovations that Schmottor fostered.



Katie Marsan, Western's fourth Fulbright Scholar in five years, credited the individual attention, small classes and the Kathwari Honors Program with helping her to make the most of her university journey, which culminated with a degree in music education with honors.



Dr. Daphne Jameson, Schmottor's wife, is professor emerita at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, but she was often at his side at campus events.

Schmottor fostered relationships with many supporters, including Constantine "Deno" Macricostas.



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10 2012

2014

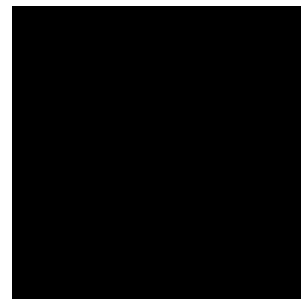
2015



Schmottor hosted His Holiness The Dalai Lama for two days of lectures and celebrations at Western in 2012, leading to the creation of the WCSU Center for Compassion, Creativity and Innovation.



Schmottor has spearheaded development efforts that have secured in excess of \$16 million in philanthropic funds for the campus foundation during his tenure and the endowment of the Foundation has grown from \$7.4 million to over \$15 million.



# A garden grows at WCSU

By Robin Provey

A permaculture garden has planted roots on the Midtown campus of Western Connecticut State University and is expected to produce a bounty of flowering herbs and vegetables. The garden is also growing interest in the community with organizations and school children volunteering to help.

The creation of WCSU Professor of Anthropology Dr. Laurie Weinstein, the garden is a grassroots effort that will serve as an interdisciplinary “classroom” in addition to forging community ties.

“I see this as a huge movement,” Weinstein said. “This gives people hope that they can change the world by planting and creating gardens. We are getting the campus and the community involved. I want kids to get unplugged from technology and learn about where their food comes from.”

In early May, Dr. Beth Morrison, an anthropology professor who is on the garden committee, and several students, traveled to the Western Connecticut Academy for International Studies, a Danbury elementary school, to help 30 second-grade students plant seedlings. The children planted basil, nasturtium and cilantro; in June, they will transfer the seedlings to the university’s garden. A large contingent of volunteers, including students, faculty and community members have offered their time to help spread compost, get the

plants and trees in the soil and lay pavers along the outer edges. Local businesses, such as Trader Joe’s, Whole Food Market Danbury, New England Compost, Sodexo and Dom’s Nursery stepped up with numerous donations.

After much planning and preparation, the garden plants finally went into the ground in late April and the 900-square-foot garden is full of herbs, flowers, kale, arugula, garlic, chives, onions and several types of berries. There are also a couple of Asian pear trees and soon an entire section will feature Native American companion plants: corn, squash and beans.

The garden project has been cultivated by a steering committee that includes WCSU faculty members and administrators and two consultants who worked on the nationally acclaimed permaculture garden at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. That garden, which received accolades from President Barack Obama, was started by then-UMass student Ryan Harb. Now a certified permaculture designer, Harb and green planning coach Bill Bean are helping the WCSU garden committee with its implementation and design. The UMass garden earned eight national awards in its first 18 months and has been a tremendous drawing point for the school.

In fall, 2014, Adjunct Professor of Biology

Dr. Andrew Oguma had his students come up with garden designs that were evaluated by Harb, as well as Jono Nieger of Regenerative Designs, Greenfield, Massachusetts.

Nieger and Harb said ideally the garden will include symbiotic plants that over time nourish the soil to the point that it is producing more and more each season. The variety of plants attracts bees and other insects so that it is its own ecological system — in essence building a growing educational story.

The garden is being built with support from the university’s Jane Goodall Center club, “Roots & Shoots class,” founded by internationally known environmentalist Jane Goodall. The Roots & Shoots program is about making positive change happen for communities, animals and the environment. The university also offers a senior-level “Sociology 400 – Roots & Shoots,” which can also focus on the garden environs. The university’s food services provider, Sodexo, has also expressed interest in using the food.

The main garden is in the wide open space outside the Science Building, and there are plans to maintain large permanent planters around campus that can be filled with a combination of flora and edible plants, such as black-eyed Susan and variegated kale. ■

# WCSU earns 2015 Green Award from Morris Media Group



The new Visual and Performing Arts Center

By Sherri Hill

Western Connecticut State University was one of three winners of 2015 Green Awards announced by Morris Media Group in January 2015. According to a Morris Media Group press release, the awards recognize businesses, nonprofits and individuals that are leading the local fight to protect the environment while also creating a sustainable social and economic community.

"The awards salute those who are making a difference, and they bring awareness

to their good work," said publisher Geoffrey Morris.

Nominations were open to the public and were accepted in three categories.

1. Businesses or nonprofit organizations whose primary focus is producing or selling innovative green products, providing innovative green services, and/or promoting a green lifestyle.
2. Businesses or nonprofit organizations, though not a producer or seller of green products or services, that have significantly incorporated green practices into their culture and operations.
3. Individuals who are actively promoting and living a green lifestyle.

WCSU was selected in Category 2 for the university's extensive investment and efforts to employ smart-building technology. Western invested more than \$450,000 in the university's largest residence hall, resulting in dramatic reduction in energy use. Other efforts included the installation of four EV charging stations, and the achievement of LEED Silver status on the newly constructed Visual and Performing Arts Center.

According to WCSU President James W. Schmotter, "This recognition delights the

Western community. It's a further testimony to the university's commitment to environmental responsibility. Our faculty, staff and students not only advocate green practices. They implement them every day, week, month and semester."

WCSU Interim Associate Vice President for Facilities Luigi Marcone concurred.

"Western's innovative efforts to reduce our environmental footprint have added value to our role as a community partner and a responsible neighbor. Creating an infrastructure of intelligent buildings and introducing technological solutions where human interaction had been required in the past has allowed us to continue to make improvements to our campus and reduce operating costs."

Three independent judges sifted through the 85 nominees to determine the three category winners and Honorable Mention winners. The judges for the 2015 Green Awards represent the three counties (Fairfield, Litchfield and Westchester) that make up the geographical region of the nominees.

The 2015 Green Award ceremony was on March 12 at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield. Marcone accepted the award on behalf of the university. ■



(l-r): Michael Spremulli, Luigi Marcone and Paul Basso of Environmental and Facilities Services, proudly display WCSU's Green Award.

# WCSU debaters prove double trouble for tournament competition



Colleen and Nicole Mair

By Robert Taylor

Twin sisters Colleen and Nicole Mair entered Western in 2012 with distinctly different tastes for competition, but this year their paths have converged on the field of ideas and intercollegiate debate — with immediate success that exemplifies the strong tradition they have inherited in the WCSU Roger Sherman Debate Society.

The Mairs, of Milford, parted ways as Nicole entered the Western rugby program while Colleen joined the debate society during their freshman year. But Nicole heard about Colleen's rising fortunes as a sophomore debater and volunteered for the support staff at the Hat City Debate Tournament at Western in February 2014. In the corridors while a round was in progress, she recalled, a participant in the tournament approached her with surprise and, mistaking her for Colleen, asked, "Why aren't you in there debating?"

That serendipitous invitation has been embraced by Nicole as she underwent a summer program of intensive training in argumentation fundamentals at the Arizona Debate Institute held at Arizona State University in Tempe, preparing her to team up with Colleen in debate competitions for the 2014-15 academic year. They entered their first competition as a junior varsity team at the Rutgers Newark Debate Tournament in late September, emerging from the qualifying round to achieve impressive victories in the quarterfinals and semifinals — the latter

over the top-seeded team from Liberty University — before falling in the finals. Colleen achieved an impressive third place in the Rutgers Debate Speaker Awards, with Nicole placing ninth. "That was an unheard-of achievement for their very first tournament together," said Renan Max Hamoy, WCSU debate director and Information Technology and Innovation Web content specialist.

During the WCSU debate society's cross-country winter break trip to California in early January to participate in two debate tournaments, the Mair twins again reached the finals and achieved another second-place showing in junior varsity team competition in the Kathryn Klassic at California State University at Fullerton. Their individual placements in the tournament were even more impressive: Colleen captured the overall Top Speaker prize in the JV field, while Nicole finished close behind in third place.

Western renewed its claim as a premier destination for intercollegiate debate competition as host to the annual Hat City Debate Tournament, on Feb. 21 and 22, on the university's Midtown campus. The 2015 tournament attracted about 400 participants from some 20 colleges and universities in the Eastern United States for regional competitions to qualify for the Cross Examination Debate Association Championship and the National Debate Tournament, as well as a regional event in the Parliamentary/Worlds debate format. Representing WCSU were the Mair sisters; Stephon Adams and Devonte Escoffery, both of Brooklyn, New York; Claire Boettcher, of Middlebury; Sydney Feeney, of New Haven; Michael Hajzer, of Sandy Hook; Ceejay Joseph, of Stratford; Tashika Milford, of West Haven; and Dimitris Sfakios, of Willimantic.

Success has been a familiar outcome for Roger Sherman Debate Society members who have faced off during the past decade against students from major colleges across the Eastern seaboard and nationwide.

The Mair sisters, now in their senior year, have arrived at their passion for debate from different academic backgrounds

and career interests. Colleen, who double majors in justice and law administration and psychology, was persuaded by a cousin who debated at Northwestern University that participating in intercollegiate debate offers an opportunity to develop presentation skills that will prove invaluable to her pursuit of a career in law or public policy. Nicole, a major in economics, finds that the rigorous requirements of researching complex subjects and drafting policy positions have motivated her to explore economic issues more deeply, leading her to consider a future career in the nonprofit sector focusing on the alleviation of poverty and social inequity.

Both Colleen and Nicole relish the challenge of rapidly formulating counterarguments under pressure and delving into the social and historical context of their debate topics to discover fresh perspectives on contemporary issues.

In preparing to debate the pros and cons of legalizing prostitution, one of the social issues addressed in the CEDA debate question for 2014-15, Nicole observed that the team's argument "focused on the implications that legalizing or criminalizing prostitution has for specific individuals, and on the roots of prostitution in the history of slavery and the treatment of people as commodities." Colleen noted that "lasting solutions to problems like this will come only when you consider how different people are affected by law and policy changes."

The Mair sisters have found that their participation in the WCSU Honors Program, which promotes an interdisciplinary approach to academic inquiry, provides an excellent foundation for tackling a debate topic from many angles. "The format of the Honors Program is very valuable because it gives us the framework to learn from many disciplines," Colleen said. In Nicole's view, "many of the subjects we discuss in debate are very relevant to the classes I am taking," she said, "and much of my class work is relevant to understanding how everything is connected." ■

# Alumnus returns to join chemistry faculty

By Robert Taylor

Dr. Forest Robertson has come a long way in the seven years since he earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry from Western — and he brought all his academic achievements and experience home this fall with his full-time appointment to join the university's chemistry faculty.

"The Chemistry Department at Western is wonderful," Robertson remarked in a recent interview as he revisited the journey that has brought him back as an assistant professor of chemistry. "My life has been influenced by so many faculty members at Western, and as a professor here I will be able to continue the work that they began in me. I hope to be the same kind of professor and provide inspiration to the next generation of chemists."

Recipient in 2012 of a Ph.D. in chemistry from Dartmouth College, Robertson has gained recognition in his field for groundbreaking research work that promises to provide more efficient laboratory tools to support the synthesis and identification of biologically active compounds of potential usefulness in treating a wide range of diseases. Working under the mentorship of Dartmouth Professor of Chemistry Dr. Jimmy Wu, he completed his dissertation in 2012 investigating chemical processes that describe the formation of carbon-sulfur and related carbon bonds commonly found in pharmaceutical agents. His research with Wu yielded important

findings including successful development of a streamlined two-step reaction using readily available chemicals that can be completed within a few hours, compared with the more complex process in widespread laboratory use at present that requires several days under harsh conditions to complete.

Robertson gained considerable experience as an instructor during his doctoral studies at Dartmouth as a teaching assistant for four terms of organic chemistry lab, as well as one lab term for the general chemistry course. "I became a better teacher and a better chemist because I had to fully understand the complex topics and techniques so that I could write and present my lectures," he said. Since receiving his doctorate, Robertson has taught part-time as an adjunct professor in the WCSU Chemistry Department while serving as senior scientist and project manager for Global Biomedical Technologies, where he has worked with development of polymers designed to act as adhesive switches used in surgical dressings and other medical applications.

Robertson observed that Western's instructional and research programs in chemistry benefit significantly from the state-of-the-art instrumentation provided in the university's Science Building laboratories, which offer the capacity to conduct investigations central to chemical research

including nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, infrared spectroscopy and gas chromatography.

At the same time, he anticipates that the relatively small class size of about 16 students for each lab session will encourage student-teacher interaction. "You get to know all the students by name, and they don't feel embarrassed to ask a question," he said. "It helps me to teach more effectively when I can call upon students to ask for their feedback on what we're discussing in class. And I am definitely looking forward to helping my students choose their courses and plan for their future as their academic adviser."

Robertson's hope is that he will share some of the passion that inspired him to pursue a career in chemistry with his students, even those who expect to follow different interests when they enter the workforce.

"Chemistry is ubiquitous," he remarked. "Legislation is being passed that involves chemistry; the press and the evening news report regularly on topics that deal with chemistry. If you do not have the basic scientific knowledge necessary to understand simple chemistry, you may believe almost anything that anyone tells you about these important subjects. Knowledge of chemistry enables you to be well informed, and to reach an informed opinion." ■



Dr. Forest Robertson with a student in a Chemistry lab.

# Social work grad puts lessons to work for his community

By Robert Taylor

For Newtown resident Matthew Cole, the education that led to his graduation last year at Western Connecticut State University with a bachelor's degree in social work provided both the foundations and the inspiration to continue to build on what he has done for most of his young life — serving the community he cherishes and working to bring about policy change for the common good of society.

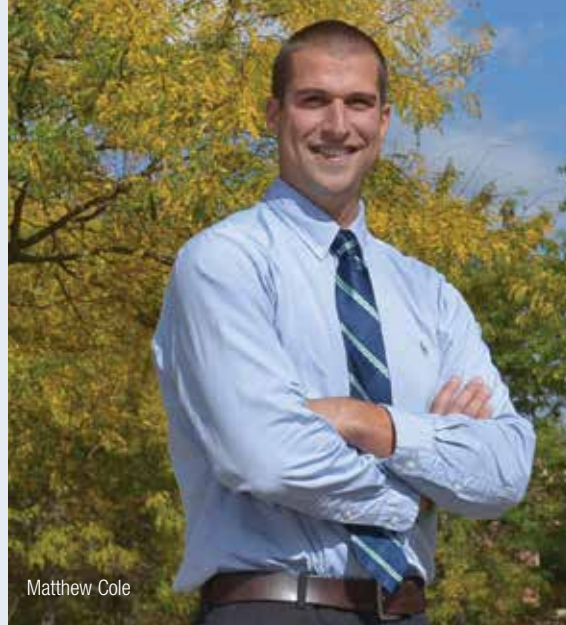
Cole, who has volunteered during the past 12 years in more than two dozen service projects to renovate homes from western Connecticut to Appalachia and Mississippi, took a bold step into the political arena as the Democratic nominee for the state House of Representatives seat for the 106th District. Although he was defeated by Republican Rep. Mitch Bolinsky, he affirmed that he remains passionate in his pursuit of a public policy career.

Cole's youth at 26 years of age belies a remarkable wealth of experience in public affairs gained during two Western internship assignments that took him to the state capitol in Hartford to perform

diverse tasks as a legislative aide, policy analyst and communications specialist. His exemplary academic and field work at Western was recognized when he received the Bachelor of Social Work Student of the Year Award from the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). In introducing her former student at the chapter's executive board meeting in Cromwell, Department of Social Work Chair Patricia Ivry observed that his interest in pursuing a career devoted to social change and public policy set him apart from his peers.

"Every once in a while, a student comes along who has a passion for helping people by contributing to bringing about change in the community and in society," Ivry remarked. "Matt Cole was just such a student."

Two years before he entered the political fray as a candidate, Cole was taking a crash course in the legislative process and constituent representation as part of his first WCSU social work field assignment as an intern in the office of Rep. Christopher Lyddy, then in his final



Matthew Cole

year as House member. Cole drafted testimony for hearings, researched pending legislation, tracked bills, responded to constituent inquiries, and provided other support to management of the legislative office.

"I had a cynical attitude toward government before then, but seeing how he combined government and social work convinced me that government can be a force for good if you are serving the people you represent," Cole said. "Seeing how he ran his office and what he did for his constituents made me think more critically about the work that a politician does. Local government really does have more impact on your everyday life than many people realize." ■

## UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS



Alumni Day Trip:

### The Boston Experience

Saturday, Jun. 6

Day long trip to Boston, by yourself or as a group. First Option - this year you can go off on your own, creating an exciting day in Boston with family or friends (\$35 each). Second Option - arrive in Boston in time to enjoy a Duck Tour, a guided tour of historical sites of the city, with a ride into the Charles River in an amphibious vehicle.... seeing many of Boston's most famous sights along the way. After an exciting tour, head to Quincy Market for some shopping and lunch. After lunch, we will have another treat ... a tour of the Sam Adams Brewery complete with a tasting. (\$70 each). All alumni welcome. Call (203) 837-8298 to RSVP.



Alumni Day Trip:

### Alumni Family Day at Lake Compounce

Saturday, Aug. 1

Spend a fun-filled day with your family and fellow alumni at Lake Compounce in Bristol, Conn. Cost is \$38/person (children 3 & under are free). Price includes admission, parking, all-you-can-eat lunch buffet, unlimited free soda, unlimited use of rides, shows and attractions (except the Skycoaster), unlimited access to Crocodile Cove and a complimentary return visit ticket. Call (203) 837-8298 to RSVP or email alumni@wcsu.edu.



### The Neil Wagner WCSU Alumni Association Golf Tournament 30th Year Anniversary

Monday, Sept. 28

10 a.m. shotgun start (scramble format)

Richter Park, 100 Aunt Hack Road, Danbury

The Alumni Association is proud to host this 30th annual event in support of WCSU student scholarships. All players are welcome to join us for a great day of golf. Sponsorship opportunities are also available and appreciated. For more information or to make a reservation, call the Alumni Office at (203) 837-8298 or email alumni@wcsu.edu.

# ALUMNI



## Memories



**flickr**

To find more photo memories of Homecoming 2014 and Athletic Hall of Fame 2013, visit [wcsu.edu/flickr](http://wcsu.edu/flickr).

## Friday, Oct. 16, 2015

- **2015 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Dinner**

6 p.m., Amber Room Colonnade in Danbury

## Saturday, Oct. 17, 2015

WCSU alumni, students and families are invited to a multitude of events taking place on Homecoming Day. Events begin at 2 p.m. on the university's Westside campus

- **Alumni Hospitality Tent**
- **Golden Circle Luncheon**
- **Street Fair**
- **Food Trucks**
- **Class of 1965 50th Reunion Dinner**
- **Homecoming Football Game**

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- Strengthen WCSU's community partnerships resulting in additional student internships and jobs

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