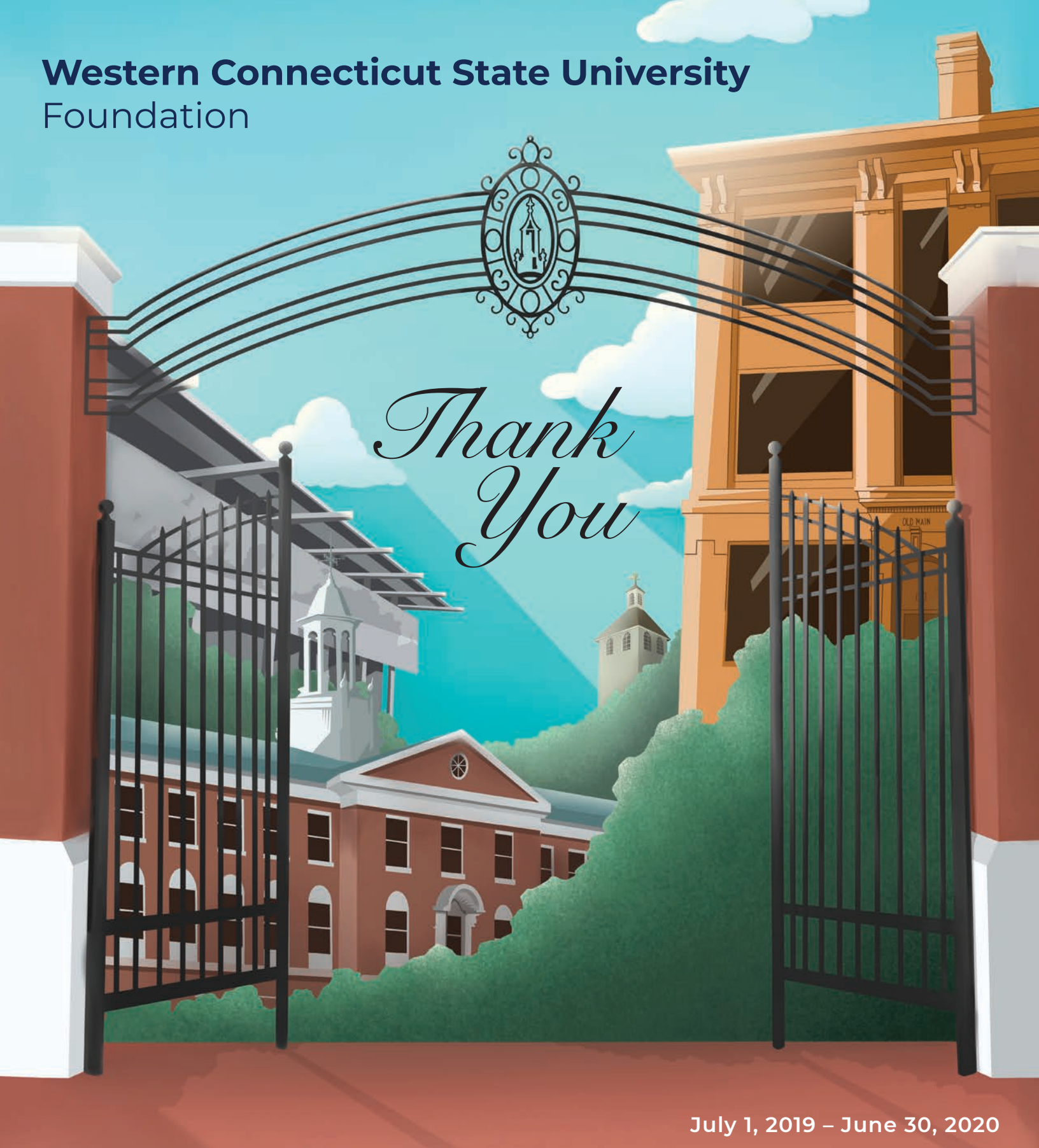


Western Connecticut State University
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July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

2019-20

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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.

ON THE COVER



Ryan Ames, '21 MFA in Illustration

The cover artwork is by Ryan Ames, a Newtown, Connecticut-based illustrator in both digital and traditional mediums. He received his BA degree and recent MFA in Illustration from WCSU. He has worked everywhere from a corporate setting in California to a classroom in Connecticut. Ryan taught Digital Art this fall at WCSU.

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DONOR HONOR ROLL

July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Dear Friends,



John Trentacosta

To say this past year presented us with numerous challenges would be an understatement. As with every aspect of life, many of our planned efforts were upended, although I know both the university and Foundation have come through the storm ready to move forward.

That is a credit to you, the friends and alumni of Western Connecticut State University, as well as the administration, faculty, staff – and of course the students. Some days were more difficult than others, and I was a witness to the hard work and determination of everyone to persevere and succeed.

The May 2021 commencement ceremonies – masked and socially distanced – gave testimony to the relief and happiness that students and their families felt as they rejoiced with tears and smiles. It was a wonderful weekend of joy and celebration.

Since then, faculty and staff have welcomed in the class of 2026. The Foundation board has re-engaged with the university and is ready to demonstrate to the community how this institution of higher education continues to grow and benefit an even greater number of students.

The 2019-20 Honor Roll listed in this publication recognizes the generosity of donors like you whose investment allows us to support WCSU students. Our graduates become productive citizens – as business people, artists and professionals who are helping to create and shape the future of the region. We are grateful for your decision to contribute to the WCSU Foundation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John F. Trentacosta".

John Trentacosta
Chairman
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(l-r): Isaac Jean-Pierre and Bakhtawar Izzat, WCSU's 2021 Henry Barnard Scholars.



Ellen Hancock offers STEM leadership to WCSU students

By Paul Steinmetz

Many descriptions fit Ellen Hancock: History maker, leader in business and higher education, motorcycle rider (retired) and philanthropist.

Hancock has brought her interests and talents together with a new scholarship for Western Connecticut State University students who major in the STEM disciplines and plan careers in science, technology, engineering or math.

Hancock herself took that path — becoming the first woman to be named a senior vice president at IBM — and is hoping to make the journey a little easier for women studying now.

"Every pioneer who blazes a trail experiences difficulties that those coming later don't have to face," said Dr. Michelle Brown, dean of the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences. "With her latest gift, Ellen Hancock will relieve the worries of students who may not otherwise have the financial resources to fulfill their potential. And with Ellen opening the door to the tech industry for women, the next generation of WCSU-scientists, mathematicians and technologists will be able to focus on different challenges in their careers."

Hancock and her husband, W. Jason Hancock, have been longtime and substantial supporters of WCSU students. They endowed their first scholarships in 2000 and have engaged in efforts to expand opportunities for the university's students ever since, along with continued financial gifts to the WCSU Foundation.

Their contributions have funded the Hancock Student Leadership Program as well as hundreds of need-based scholarships over the past two decades.

Ellen Hancock grew up in Westchester County, New York, graduated from the College of New Rochelle with a degree in mathematics, and earned a master's in the same discipline from Fordham University.

In addition to her business career, she served several years as chair of the board of trustees of Marist College and additionally sat on the board of Santa Clara College in California.

Hancock spent 29 years at IBM, starting as a junior programmer. When she left, she was in charge of 15,000 employees as senior vice president and general manager of the networking hardware and software divisions. She was also a member of the IBM Corporate Executive Committee and the IBM

Worldwide Management Council. Hancock's name is listed on the IBM website as one of a handful of leaders (and the only woman) who brought to life an important precursor of the internet called NSFNET.

After IBM, Hancock worked for National Semiconductor as executive vice president and chief operating officer, followed by a stint as chief technology officer at Apple. She later became the CEO and chairman of Exodus Communications, a manager of data centers.

Hancock no longer rides motorcycles. "That's about the only experience she is not offering scholarships in," Brown said. "Otherwise, Ellen is helping students learn leadership skills as well as giving them access to all the STEM areas so that they can try to have a career as wonderful as she has had. It's a terrific legacy."

For more information about starting a scholarship fund to assist WCSU students on their higher education journey, please contact Nancy Barton, Coordinator of Institutional Advancement, at bartonn@wcsu.edu or Lynne LeBarron, Interim Vice President of Institutional Advancement, at lebarronl@wcsu.edu, or call the Office of Institutional Advancement at (203) 837-9820. Creating a scholarship is a meaningful way to give back to WCSU and/or honor a loved one.

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CREATE YOUR LEGACY AT WCSU

The WCSU Foundation proudly welcomed the following new members to the Legacy Society from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

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Jody Rajcula and Maura P. Keenan MBA '97
Richard Lundwall**
Nazy Rajabzadeh
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For more than a century, WCSU students have benefitted from the generosity of those who know the importance of a college education.

Western Connecticut State University educates more than 5,000 students each year — many of whom cannot afford their college education without the support of caring alumni and friends of the university. Including a charitable bequest in your will is a simple way to help our students succeed, while meeting your own personal, estate-planning and philanthropic goals.

The Western Connecticut State University Office of Institutional Advancement is here to work with you and your advisers. **For more information, please contact Julie Pryor-Bennett, Major Gifts Officer, at (203) 837-8111 or pryorbennettj@wcsu.edu; or Lynne LeBarron, Interim Vice President of Institutional Advancement, at (203) 837-8188 or lebarronl@wcsu.edu.**

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George and Linnea Takacs create a legacy to change lives

By Paul Steinmetz

George Takacs didn't have plans after leaving the Marines, but he ended up attending Danbury State College. Linnea Takacs knew she wanted an education but put it off to raise their children. She attended Western Connecticut State College while in her 30s.



They are thankful for the start that the local public college offered them, and they have included Western Connecticut State University as a beneficiary in their wills, with the intention of funding scholarships for education students in the School of Professional Studies as well as nontraditional undergraduate students in the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences.

George was working as a manual laborer when he first met Linnea at a local softball game. At around that time, his father asked him what he planned to do with his life. Both of George's parents had immigrated from Europe and indicated they intended for their son to do something meaningful.

To please them, he scheduled an appointment with the Head of Admissions at the college up the road, who also had a military background. George immediately felt encouraged that he had found a place where he belonged.

"I was surprised because college wasn't on the radar for me, but that started the chain of events to pursuing higher education, and changing my life," George said. "I entered the general education program for an associate degree." As he neared completion, the college announced a new program for secondary education teachers. About 20 students enrolled, including George.

Linnea followed a different path.

"When our oldest son was 18 months old, I tried to make a go of taking classes, but I just wasn't able to juggle everything and I had to give up," she said. The family traveled internationally for George's career and "in the process I began to realize the one thing really missing in my life was the kind of education I wanted. I was missing the intellectual environment."

The turning point came at "a dinner party where I was the only one who didn't know what 'aversive control' in the classroom was. Afterwards I said to George, 'I am never going to be in that position again.' The winter semester of 1977, I signed up for Introduction to Psychology."

Their children were 9 and 12 and Linnea took night courses for the first two years while George, a middle school principal at the time, took over evening parenting duties. She completed a double major in English and history, and was also an editor of "Clio," the school's literary journal.

Following graduation, both continued their educations, with George earning a Ph.D. in Educational Administration at the University of Connecticut and Linnea earning a Ph.D. in English at Fordham University.

Today they live in New Milford and have decided to leave a financial legacy

to the institutions that were meaningful in their lives, including WCSU. With proceeds of the couple's estate, the university will create scholarships for nontraditional students, in Linnea's name, and for education majors, in George's name.

"We've talked about it an awful lot," George said. "I can't say enough about the quality of people we had as professors. It was the human part, and more than anything there was an ethical soundness to the education, which I later recognized at other universities. It gave me a sense of bearing. It has even impacted both our sons and our daughter tremendously. We lived it, and this is our way of trying to preserve and carry on the best of the things we have known in education."

The relationships and experiences that Linnea developed while at WCSU also contributed to their decision to make the gift.

"I just think that what I learned, not only as the editor of 'Clio,' but also through several independent studies, helped me discover there was no limit to what I could do," Linnea said. "It gave us both the confidence and courage to take on things we never dreamed of doing. The foundation that WCSU gave me is something I want to propagate."



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