



THE MAGAZINE OF **CENTENARY UNIVERSITY**

SUMMER 2023

# CENTENARIAN

*Historic  
Moment*



**Inside** Congratulations Graduates!



A mysterious illness sent Jason Calderon Fajardo '23 to the hospital in late April. Left in a coma, Fajardo thought he would miss commencement. Prayers and determination got him through the crisis, and he joined the Class of 2023 in triumphantly walking across the stage to receive his diploma.

## WELCOME



My first few weeks as Centenary University's 15th president have been a whirlwind. I've visited every office on campus, spoken with students, alumni, and donors, attended a conference at Harvard University for new university presidents, and taken the first steps to develop the strategic vision that will shape a new era. Every morning, I'm energized by the great potential of this University.

Today is a new day at Centenary University. Building on the great leadership of Centenary's 14th president, Bruce Murphy, Ed.D., I am determined that Centenary will one day take its place among the world's great universities. That may sound like a tall order, but if you're going to do a movement—or a university—you have to be aspirational. I know a little something about that, since my father marched with Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights Movement, which was a very aspirational time in our nation's history.

To accomplish this, we have to dream big. So, here at Centenary University, we are building a vibrant campus culture that thrives on empowerment and innovation to leverage our collective strengths as we chart a course for the future. Already, we are setting the groundwork to provide the framework within untapped markets for degree opportunities for international students, working adults, and those who started college, but never finished.

A personal priority for me is to strengthen community ties by positioning Centenary as an incubator for entrepreneurship. Through my work with urban communities, I've learned that the only way to turn around poverty in this country is through education and entrepreneurship. We want to be the University that caters to people where they are now, no matter what challenges they face. Through the expertise of our faculty and students, like those involved with our competitive business program, Enactus, we can work with folks in the community to help them become job-ready and build more robust small businesses.

Soon after my appointment in February, I began to think about Centenary's brand: What distinguishes this University from others? Are there things we provide to students that larger, well-known universities can't? The answer is a resounding yes. The very foundation of our brand, established with our founding as a Methodist institution, is caring. As a small liberal arts institution, Centenary provides the personalized attention and support that is impossible to achieve at larger universities.

Our "secret sauce" is a deep dedication to emotional well-being, which is so critical to career readiness. It's about resilience and mindfulness, having the ability to focus and the confidence to envision the future and the roadmap to get there. That approach translates into extraordinary opportunities. In this issue, you'll read about Centenary students who attended a national leadership conference, provided volunteer mental health services in Sri Lanka, presented research at a national symposium in Texas, and emerged as a finalist in a statewide entrepreneurship competition.

As we move forward on this bold journey, I promise you two things: First, there will be challenges. And second, we will overcome each one, secure in the knowledge that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. This is a time of bringing people together, and I look forward to meeting everyone in the Centenary community. Together, we can do so much good, for our students and for our local community.

Dale Caldwell, Ed.D.  
President

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Dale Caldwell, Ed.D.  
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# Women Lead



Three Centenary University students were awarded full scholarships to attend the national leadership conference of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), which was held last spring at the University of Maryland in College Park. The students—Onoshope Itunoya-Musa '24, Jasmine Sampong '26, and Angelica Torres '25—each received scholarships for the full cost of conference attendance from the AAUW's New Jersey chapter. Since the scholarships didn't cover transportation, the University provided funds for transportation expenses through the Wallbank-Rowland Endowment Scholarship, which supports extraordinary non-classroom experiences for Centenary students.

The three students were instrumental in the launch of a Centenary University chapter of the AAUW. Once in Maryland, the trio interacted with students from around the nation and attended workshops designed to empower young women in their professional and personal lives, including personal finance and healthy relationships. "We got to listen to and meet a lot of women in leadership positions," recalled Sampong. "One woman spoke

about empowerment in the workplace, especially in terms of Black women and women of color. She talked about the challenges Black women face in the corporate world and how young women can gain leadership positions."

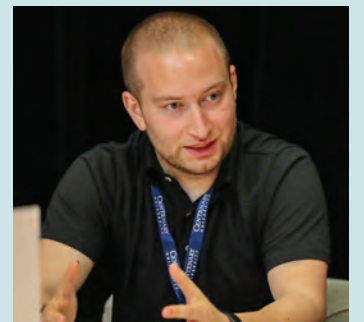
A key takeaway from the conference for Itunoya-Musa was the importance of women developing a voice: "It's important to find your unique voice and stand on it. You should challenge yourself to become educated and be confident to be yourself when you go out in the world. You have to stay true to yourself."

Now, the Centenary University chapter of the AAUW is growing. Since the conference, more young women have inquired about joining and plans for guest speakers and other AAUW activities are taking shape for the fall semester. "The one thing I wanted our students to take away from this conference is confidence," said Kathleen Greco, community engagement coordinator. "As a university, it is our responsibility to help lift students to new levels and to help them grow. People at Centenary are starting to get excited about this organization."



## All-Star Lineup

This year's Centenary University Sports and Entertainment Management Conference brought an impressive list of industry professionals to campus on April 14. Organized by Centenary students, the 12th annual event featured career development panels with representatives from professional sports organizations including the NBA, U.S. Golf Association, Brooklyn Nets, New York Red Bulls, New York City Football Club, Sussex County Miners, Madison Square Garden, Harris Blitzer Sports Entertainment, and many others. This year's event sponsor was Enterprise Holdings.





## Centenary University Introduces Two New Degrees

Two new degree programs—a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership and an Accelerated Bachelor of Arts in Psychology—offer Centenary University students faster degree completion and career success.

The 30-credit Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership set to launch this fall provides the knowledge and skills for graduates to excel in an increasingly complex global business landscape. It is relevant to a variety of fields, including business, healthcare, public administration, and nonprofit organizations, and can be completed online in one year via asynchronous or synchronous learning—or a combination of both.

Cheryl Veronda, dean of the School of Business, Media, and Writing, said, “Developing leadership and management skills has a profound effect on organizations, as well as career trajectory.” Jeffrey Carter, Ph.D., director of the new Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership, added: “Many organizations today are no longer willing or equipped to provide leadership training. Entering the workforce with these skills positions Centenary graduates ahead of others without these skills and makes them more appealing hires.”

### Support for At-risk Students

Two grants from the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) will enable Centenary University to expand campus mental health offerings and address food insecurity on campus. During the spring semester, the University was awarded more than \$100,000 through a Mental Health in Higher Education: Community Provider Partnerships and Professional Development grant, and another \$19,500 through a Hunger-Free Campus grant.

To improve mental health on campus, the first grant will dedicate \$81,655 to enhance mental health services and \$20,709 for professional development training for Centenary staff. Specific initiatives will include supporting a case manager, increasing access to psychiatric services and evidence-based treatments, enhancing support for underrepresented populations, creating space for wellness, and increasing engagement in mental health support services.

Community partnerships will allow Centenary to offer LGBTQIA support groups and gender inclusivity trainings, as well as psychoeducation and support for BIPOC student mental health. Mikolaya Nynka, director of the Centenary University Counseling Center, said, “We are grateful that the State of New Jersey has

The Accelerated Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, which had a preliminary rollout last year, combines the flexibility of online learning with optional on-campus benefits, including the opportunity for in-person faculty mentoring and research collaboration. A unique strength of the program is an optional weekly in-person check-in with faculty members. The asynchronous class model makes it possible for students who have already earned an associate degree to complete a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in just 18 months and creates a smooth pathway for graduates to enroll in the Master of Arts in Counseling, Master of Arts in Clinical Counseling, and Master of Arts in School Counseling at Centenary.

“A big benefit to this program is that the accelerated format makes it possible for students to complete their bachelor’s degree a full semester earlier than traditional on-ground psychology programs,” said Christine Floether, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology and director of the accelerated program. “That saves both time and money, which are big concerns for students today.”

prioritized mental health and wellbeing on college campuses through this grant funding.”

Centenary will use the Hunger-Free Campus grant to further the mission of the University’s Hunger-Free Task Force. Existing campus resources include a food pantry, swipe out program, and food drives, as well as local resources such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The grant will support the food pantry by enabling the purchase of a new refrigerator for appropriate food storage, as well as increasing transportation options so students can access SNAP benefits at local stores.

According to multiple studies, student food insecurity is an issue on college campuses across the United States, with approximately 20-50 percent of college students experiencing food insecurity. “Supporting Centenary students with their most basic and essential needs is vital to their success and wellbeing,” said Kerry Mullins, vice president for student life and dean of students. “Through the generosity and support of the state, Centenary will be able to take an extensive look at the services currently provided and determine what is further needed to best support our student population.”

## Making An Impact

From undergraduate research to entrepreneurship and service abroad, Centenary University students make their mark—in the state, across the nation, and around the world.



Ciara Rodriguez '24 has impressive credentials to add to her graduate school applications. The psychology major was a mental health volunteer with children and adults in Sri Lanka in May, and then went straight to West Virginia University to conduct behavioral health research funded by the National Science Foundation this summer.

Rodriguez has set her sights on a combined master’s/doctoral degree in behavior analysis. With only seven accredited programs in the country, the competition is fierce, but she is confident: A Dean’s List student, Rodriguez is active with student organizations and volunteers as a crisis counselor with suicide and crisis hotlines. She is motivated to help others: “Sri Lanka has one of the highest suicide rates in the world. I really wanted to give back to a country in need.”



Three years ago, Centenary University student Nicoletta Ciccio '23 picked up some beeswax and a few candle wicks at a thrift store. The hobby she intended to start has bloomed into a thriving business producing homemade soy wax candles and other sustainably produced items.

With more than 4,000 in-person and website sales to date, Ciccio was one of

six finalists from across New Jersey at this year’s EO Global Student Entrepreneur Award (GSEA) competition sponsored by the Entrepreneurs Organization (EO). The business major says, “Sustainability is such an important part of everyday life. I’m proud I could accomplish this vision, not only for myself, but for other people trying to find more conscious ways to alter their daily lives to become just a little more sustainable.”



For Hailey Armstrong '24, presenting her undergraduate research project at the annual Equine Science Society Symposium sponsored by Texas A&M University in June was an important steppingstone to veterinary school. Over two academic years, the animal health major worked closely with Centenary faculty to plan, conduct research, and

analyze data for the project, which measured the effects of diet on fecal pH in horses.

A member of the University’s Honors Program, Armstrong has also bolstered her veterinary school applications through involvement with lots of campus organizations, as well as working at two veterinary clinics. She says, “It was a great opportunity to present at the conference and connect with professors from veterinary schools and equine food representatives. I met professors from several veterinary schools, including Ohio State—one of my top choices.”



### Road to Success

Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, actor, and writer G. Riley Mills presented the spring Gates-Ferry Distinguished Visiting Lecture on April 10 in the Sitnik Theater. In his lecture, *The Four Revelations*, Mills shared a simple roadmap for personal and professional success to pursue life and career goals.

### Simply the Best

Centenary University has earned a four-star rating on *Money’s Best Schools* list, designating the University among America’s best institutions of higher learning. The list focused on 24 factors in three main categories—quality of education, affordability, and alumni outcomes.

Specific data points used to compile the rankings included graduation rates, net price of a degree, debt incurred, ability to repay debt, and alumni earnings. In addition, the magazine considered earning and employment data, as well as economic mobility of low- and moderate-income students.



# Celebrating the Class of 2023

Centenary University awarded degrees to 350 graduates at its 148<sup>th</sup> commencement during four ceremonies on campus. Bachelor's and associate degree candidates received their degrees on May 6, while master's and doctoral degree recipients were celebrated three days earlier. In addition, the University held a special commencement for the Centenary softball team, which missed the undergraduate ceremonies due to a playoff game.

Internationally-renowned expert on happiness studies Tal Ben-Shahar, Ph.D., who is director of the Master of Arts in Happiness Studies at Centenary, delivered the undergraduate commencement addresses and was presented with a Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*. He told the graduates, "Being grateful triggers a positive spiral of growth and wellbeing. When you take stock of something positive in your life, you feel better and as a result, bring more positivity to your environment."

Associate Professor of History Noah Haiduc-Dale, Ph.D., was recognized as Centenary University's Distinguished Teacher of the Year, while Janet Zatta, an adjunct writing instructor, received the Joel K. Koberg Adjunct Teacher of the Year award. In addition, at the hooding ceremony/commencement for master's and doctoral graduates, Jessica L. Garcia Torres, Ed.D. '23 earned the University's prestigious Alyce Hunter Dissertation Award.



## Perseverance Pays Off

This year's valedictorian, Skyle R. Verry '21/23, graduated with a perfect 4.0 grade point average, earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration: Management and Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice with a minor in law and government. He spoke at both undergraduate commencement ceremonies on May 6.

During his address, Verry recalled the early days of the pandemic, when classes moved online and in-person student activities were halted. Urging his fellow graduates to embrace the lessons learned through those experiences, he said, "As we move forward, let us carry the spirit of Centenary University with us. Let us be inspired by the values of perseverance, resilience, and excellence that this institution has instilled in us. Let us remember the lessons we have learned, the friendships we have made, and the memories we have created. Let us use the skills we have acquired to positively impact the world, pursue our passions with vigor, and achieve our dreams with determination."

A Dean's List student, during his years at Centenary Verry was presented with the University's award for Outstanding Achievement in Business, as well as certificates of merit from the Criminal Justice and Business, Writing, and Media departments. Verry also holds an Associate in Liberal Arts from Centenary. He is currently a paralegal with Gray Law Group in Lake Hopatcong, N.J., and plans to attend law school in fall 2024.



# MEET THE GRADUATES



## A Career That Rocks

For as long as she can remember, Nicolle Fekete '23 has been drawn to science. Now, with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from Centenary University under her belt, she has launched a career with the United States Geological Survey. Several weeks after commencement on May 6, Fekete began working as an ecology field technician with the United States Geological Survey collecting and studying plant and soil data in Montana, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

After enrolling at Centenary, Fekete quickly became immersed in her environmental science major. Many of her courses were held at the University's Environmental Science Center, which was expanded in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife, to provide a modern experiential learning and research facility for students and faculty. There, Fekete participated in hands-on field work, supplementing classroom studies with real-world experience.

Last summer, Fekete had the opportunity to design and conduct independent research on the social habits of two species of fiddler crabs in Sandy Hook and Tuckerton, N.J. Working one-on-one with a Centenary faculty member, Fekete's study measured the social interactions of male and female fiddler crabs across several lunar cycles.

"I was interested in tracking similarities and differences in behavior between the two species," she explained. "We saw that the lunar cycle played a big role in how many crabs we saw and the effects of the breeding cycle on female crabs."

Growing up, the Byram Township resident became aware of Centenary's strength in the sciences when she started her college search: "After learning about the opportunities here, especially the chance to participate in undergraduate research, I knew that Centenary was the best choice for me. I'm pretty confident that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to participate in research if I had chosen a larger college. Centenary's science programs definitely prepare you for any career direction you want to take."

## Inspired to Succeed



Gregory Somjen '23 almost didn't graduate from high school. Delinquency, poor grades, and other issues precluded any thoughts about attending a four-year college. Somjen decided to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps, excelling before anxiety and stress ended his military career.

Twelve years later, Somjen graduated from Centenary University on May 6 with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice, earning a perfect 4.0 grade point average and the Red Knot Award for the graduating transfer student with the highest grade point average. Somjen said, "My presence before you now is proof that the mistakes we make, traumas we suffer, or other influential experiences we have may shape who we become, but they do not define us."

After leaving the military, Somjen had no plan for the rest of his life. He drifted toward jobs requiring minimal responsibility and neglected meaningful relationships. But then, the desire to change his life began to build. With the support of family and friends, Somjen enrolled at Centenary: "I began my scholarship at Centenary University thinking I did not belong here as a 30-something veteran. I can tell you today that I was wrong. Everyone at Centenary was incredibly supportive and welcoming."

## Springboard to Vet School



Brianna Soule '23 has leveraged a Centenary University degree—and an undergraduate research opportunity—to gain acceptance to a selective veterinary school. The Bushkill, Penn., native earned a Bachelor of Science in Animal Health: Equine Pre-Vet with a minor in biology and will attend Midwestern University's College of Veterinary Medicine in September.

Soule's research focused on possible ways to prevent colic, which can be deadly in horses. Working closely with faculty and the University's resident veterinarian, Jesslyn Bryk-Lucy, DVM, she studied the effects of flavored water on fluid intake of hydrated, non-hospitalized horses. A member of the University's Honors Program, Soule presented her findings to several professional societies, as well as at the Centenary University Academic Symposium.

The research proved to be a springboard into veterinary school for Soule: "I think this research definitely set my application apart. A lot of students at larger universities don't have the opportunity to do undergraduate research. When you're applying to vet school, everyone has good academics and participates in extracurricular activities. Not a lot of students get to design and carry out their own research study."

## Paying It Forward



Ray Salerno '23 is thankful to those who provided support as they faced some personal mental health struggles growing up. Those experiences have inspired the recent Centenary University graduate to take the first steps toward a career in counseling. The recipient of a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in theater, they plan to someday open a private counseling practice dedicated to adolescents and young adults.

Salerno has accepted a position after graduation facilitating group therapies and creating treatment plans at a residential psychiatric program for people with chronic and lifelong mental illness. This fall, the Wayne, N.J., resident will also begin a Master of Arts in Clinical and Counseling Psychology at William Paterson University, a precursor to opening a private counseling practice.

While Salerno had trouble fitting in as a youngster, they made friends and got involved in activities quickly in college: "At Centenary, I was able to introduce myself and who I am without any pretense. The environment here is very friendly and everyone is so nice. I found my family—I found my people. Now, I'm really excited about having the opportunity to help others. Centenary definitely prepared me for that."

## Hitting His Stride



Jason Toledo '23 flew under the radar in high school. "Academics weren't a big thing for me," the lacrosse player says. "I was just the guy who flew by high school." That changed when Toledo enrolled at Centenary University, where he developed into a superstar student leader. At commencement, a host of stoles and cords—recognition for all he's accomplished—decorated Toledo's graduation gown.

The recipient of a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Toledo was a member of the University's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and held multiple leadership positions on campus, including captain of Centenary's lacrosse team and president of Omega Rho Fraternity. Once a week, Toledo demonstrated his commitment to service by volunteering at Hackettstown's United Methodist Church unloading trucks with food pantry donations.

Now, Toledo has a full-time job as a residence life coordinator at Seton Hall University and is working toward a master's degree and a career in sports psychology. He says, "I don't think I would be the person I am if it wasn't for Centenary. People here really pushed me in the right direction and advocated for me. They saw my potential."

# Historic Moment

The first African American president of Centenary University, Dale Caldwell, Ed.D., hit the ground running when he assumed his new post on July 1. His goal: To bring new prominence to the University across the nation—and the world.

“*One of the things I’m excited about is that Centenary can be a place that takes folks from economic challenge to intellectual brilliance.*”

A rich tapestry of experiences defines Dale Caldwell, Ed.D., the University’s newly-appointed 15th president and one of New Jersey’s most prominent leaders in higher education. Spend just a few minutes with Dr. Caldwell and you quickly realize that his mind never stops. He is both analytical and aspirational, a supportive disruptor seeking to challenge the status quo while encouraging others to aim ever higher.

A former business consultant, Dr. Caldwell explains, “As a consultant, you’re always working and thinking. So my mind is already at it before I’m fully awake in the morning thinking about all kinds of ideas. I’m kind of a mad scientist who loves working in variety. At Centenary University, I see incredible potential—probably more than any other school in New Jersey. It’s very exciting.”

Dr. Caldwell grew up in a family that fostered a strong work ethic and commitment to community, as well as racial and economic justice. His mother was a longtime teacher, and his father, a Methodist minister, knew and marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Raised in largely Black communities, yet attending private schools enrolling predominantly White students, helped him early on to see the commonality in all people, regardless of race or economic status.

As a young adult, Dr. Caldwell was keenly aware that he enjoyed privileges that others did not. “I think that my dad marching with Dr. King has made me so passionate about the forgotten, the people who have been overlooked,” he says. “As a country and as a world, there are so many brilliant people who are economically challenged and don’t have opportunities. That hurts all of us. One of the things I’m excited about is that Centenary can be a place that takes folks from economic challenge to intellectual brilliance.”

After graduating from Hopkins High School in Massachusetts—one of only three African American men in his class of 100—Dr. Caldwell went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Princeton University, a Master of Business Administration: Finance from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and a Doctor of Education Administration from Seton Hall University. He began his career at Deloitte Consulting, where he was promoted to senior manager, later entering the public sector as the deputy commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. Most recently, Dr. Caldwell has served as executive director of the Rothman Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Fairleigh Dickinson University, where he also chaired the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Council, and as president of the board of the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey.

Dr. Caldwell feels a deep sense of responsibility to urban communities. He was the founding executive director of the Newark Alliance, a nonprofit focused on the education and revitalization of Newark, N.J. Now a resident of New Brunswick, N.J.,



Dr. Caldwell is a longtime member and current president of the city's Board of Education, and has followed his father into the ministry, with an appointment as pastor of Covenant United Methodist Church in New Brunswick two years ago.

A former member of the Centenary University Board of Trustees, Dr. Caldwell set out to meet with every member of the University community, as well as municipal leaders, soon after his appointment as president. "Traditionally, universities have been so insular. The professor becomes the dean, who becomes the provost, who becomes the president," he notes. "And in times when universities are doing well, that model works well. But these are challenging times, and now it's all about innovation. This field needs folks who understand higher education, but also know that there are opportunities out there. Everyone I've met here loves Centenary. There's the potential to do some really great things in every department."

At smaller private universities across the nation, budgets have tightened over a number of years, the result of rising costs, cuts in federal and state aid, and a declining pool of traditional college-aged prospects. Financial challenges have also sparked belt tightening, and sometimes, deferred plans for future growth across campuses. Yet, those hurdles have also caused institutions like Centenary to respond with new, market-driven degree programs that bode well for the future, attracting a broader pool of students and creating stronger community partnerships.

Dr. Caldwell praised his predecessor, recently-retired

President Bruce Murphy, Ed.D., and the University's executive team with providing stability during difficult times, especially the recent pandemic. "Bruce and his team did an amazing job, and I'm grateful to him for allowing me access to meet everyone before July 1," Dr. Caldwell says. "With the foundation that has been set, we're now in a different time and place to begin thinking about the next iteration in the evolution of Centenary."

***"My goal is like winning the Super Bowl: I want to make Centenary the best in the world at what we do."***

His enthusiasm for building Centenary's brand and extending its reach into new markets is infectious. Despite the financial challenges that continue to face small private colleges, he encourages faculty, administrators, and staff at the University to dream big. He has also hit the ground running to enhance fundraising, reaching out to current and potential donors to share his vision. "When you're managing by expenses—rather than vision—it stifles innovation," Dr. Caldwell explains. "To break through that, I'll be a very hands-on president sitting with lots of people on campus to say, 'What's your dream? What will it cost and how do we get there?' Working in management consulting, I've learned to break problems down into component parts. First, you have to learn what the issues

and challenges are, and then come up with solutions."

In that regard, Dr. Caldwell practices what he preaches. A standout tennis player, he is a certified United States Professional Tennis Association pro, founder of the Black Tennis Hall of Fame, and a member of the United States Tennis Association National Board. His personal dream: To start NCAA DIII men's and women's tennis teams at Centenary. It's a long-term plan, currently deferred because it would require significant funding, but he knows it's a goal worth working toward.

Looking forward, Dr. Caldwell envisions Centenary partnering with community leaders to form entrepreneur zones that provide consulting services and job training for small businesses and their employees. He is also exploring a new brand identity that defines the profile of a Centenary University graduate.

As he settles into his new role, Dr. Caldwell looks to inspire excellence in his team: "When football teams start the season, they don't say, 'We're going to win three games.' They say, 'We're going to win the Super Bowl!' They celebrate diversity because creating a team of all Tom Bradys would be the worst team in the NFL. They develop every player, just as Centenary provides opportunities for every student. So my goal is like winning the Super Bowl: I want to make Centenary the best in the world at what we do."

## Seasoned Management

Centenary University is welcoming longtime faculty member and administrator Amy D'Olivo, Ph.D., back to campus as vice president for academic affairs effective July 1. The role directs all aspects of academic affairs, including oversight and planning for undergraduate and graduate programs.

During the rigorous search process, Dr. D'Olivo's track record at Centenary—including her previous tenure as vice president for academic affairs—emerged as a deciding factor in her re-appointment. "Dr. D'Olivo's extensive leadership experience will be instrumental to the executive team as we chart a course for the next chapter in Centenary University's history," said President Dale Caldwell, Ed.D., who provided input to the search.

Dr. D'Olivo has more than 25 years of experience in higher education, including 13 years in leadership positions. She joined the Centenary faculty in 1998 as an assistant professor of sociology, gradually assuming administrative roles at the University, including chair of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Department and associate provost.

As vice president for academic affairs, Dr. D'Olivo facilitated the launch of new academic programs, including the new RN to BSN and the world's first Master of Arts in Happiness Studies. She also established a host of strategic partnerships to strengthen the University's admissions pool with more than 10 area high schools, five community colleges, and several nonprofits. A partnership with the Lower Cost Models for Independent Colleges (LCMC) Consortium led to the introduction of additional new programs, including the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, with minimal investment from Centenary.





# Golden Gala

Centenary University recognized three leaders with the Gold Dome Award—Centenary’s most prestigious honor—at CU in the Lab, the University’s annual scholarship fundraising event. Held at Perona Farms on June 8, the event raised more than \$100,000 in scholarship funding and honored Robert Weinstein, Ph.D., CEO and president of Robertet North America, outgoing Centenary University President Bruce Murphy, Ed.D., and late Centenary First Lady Jeanne Murphy.

Dr. Weinstein has worked in the flavor and fragrance industry since 1986, serving as president of the Global Ingredients Division at Firmenich before joining Robertet North America as president in 2012. The Robertet Group is the world’s leader in natural raw materials used in flavors, fragrances, and health and beauty. Dr. Weinstein earned a doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an undergraduate degree from

Kalamazoo College, with additional studies at the University of Strasbourg, France. He has been a dedicated supporter of Centenary University’s academic programs and students.

Dr. Murphy and his late wife, Jeanne, have also been generous supporters of the University, including an estate gift to the George H. Whitney Society. Dr. Murphy began his tenure as the 14th president of Centenary University on Jan. 1, 2020. A retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel, Dr. Murphy led the University with a steady hand during the pandemic and a subsequent expansion of academic programs. He retired from the presidency on June 30.

First Lady of Centenary for three years, Jeanne Murphy was a retired U.S. Army Colonel with many accomplishments in the military and with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee. Read more about Colonel Murphy on page 24.

# Championship Season



ANRC Team



Morgan Munz '23 (center)

Centenary University's ANRC team brought home the National Collegiate Reserve Championship Team and the National Collegiate Individual Reserve Championship at the 44th ANRC National Equitation Championships held this spring in Aiken, S.C., and sponsored by the American National Riding Commission (ANRC), which promotes the American System of Forward Riding.

Centenary was named National Collegiate Reserve Champions, with Morgan Munz '23, Benjamin Hoban '24, and Caroline Mancini '25 combining to top the competitive field. Centenary was led by Munz, who emerged as National Collegiate Reserve Champion. Munz claimed the top spot in the written phase of the competition, as well as second in both the program ride and medal round.

"We couldn't be prouder of our National Collegiate Team being Reserve National Champions," said Kelly Munz, chair of the Equine Studies Department and mother to Morgan Munz. "It was a competitive weekend and our students rode very well. This speaks to the depth of Centenary's program, the dedication of our riders, and the skill of our coaches."

Earlier in the season, Centenary's IHSA (Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association) team rode to the Zone 3 championship, with Munz named Zone 3 Cacchione Cup Champion. The first place finish qualified Munz to compete for the prestigious Cacchione Cup at the IHSA National Championship Horse Show in Lexington, Ky., several weeks later, where she placed third. In addition, the University's IDA (Intercollegiate Dressage Association) team won Regional Reserve Champions this year at Region C Finals.



Xavier Pena '24

Danny Haws '26

## Wrestling Represents at Nationals

Two Cyclone wrestlers punched their tickets to the 2023 NCAA National Championships in Roanoke, Va., on March 10 and 11. Leading the way was Xavier Pena '24, this year's Mid-East Regional champion at 141 lbs. Danny Haws '26 scored a blood round win to place third at 133 lbs., with the Cyclones placing fourth of 21 teams at regionals. Several other players also came close to qualifying.

"I'm really proud of these guys," said Coach John Garriques. "They came to wrestle. It was a very tough regional, and to place fourth is a good showing. Of course, my heart goes out to the guys who were so close, but it's important to understand that it's not always about winning and losing. It's about the journey, and what you learn through the process."

## Newest Sport: Female Flag Football

Centenary University will introduce female flag football as an intramural sport next spring, the first step in a multi-year plan to eventually establish the sport as an NCAA DIII offering. The University's move is part of a broader initiative with the Atlantic East Conference (AEC), which has partnered with NFL/RCX Sports with support from the Philadelphia Eagles. With a projected launch in 2025, the AEC would be the first NCAA conference to offer women's flag football as a varsity sport.



Centenary is one of five institutions that will offer club level opportunities and weekend tournaments for the upcoming academic year. The first season will also include Cabrini, Immaculata, Marymount University, and Neumann. AEC Commissioner Jessica Huntley said, "Establishing women's flag football has been a great honor for us and I am so excited to provide this opportunity for female athletes around the country. The ever-growing high school ranks make this a valuable step for our schools and the commitment to future growth with our athletic programs and women's sports."

According to the National Federation of State High School Associations, there were over 11,000 participants in flag football in 2018-19. Fifty-two teams across Pennsylvania and New Jersey participated in the 2023 Eagles Girls Flag League presented by Gatorade, Hilco, and Planet Fitness this spring, while seven states—Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, and New York—sponsor the sport statewide. More than 1,000 NFL flag teams for athletes ages 8 to 17 are expected to take the field in 2023.

From left, Maggie Lenahan '23, Sandra Cosenzo '23, Dara Murphy '23, Jenna Glinko '23, Rhiannon Ginnetti '23, and Chloe Wright '23



# Double Play Weekend

When the Cyclone softball team qualified for the Atlantic East Conference (AEC) Tournament, six graduating seniors faced a tough choice—attend commencement or play in that day's scheduled doubleheader with Marywood University. Deciding that no student-athlete should miss walking at commencement, the University hosted a special ceremony for the players and their families a day earlier. The team split the doubleheader, staging a late comeback to force a second contest and bring them just two wins away from the AEC Championship round. While they dropped the second game, the Cyclones finished the season ranked fifth in the AEC and four players were named to the All-Atlantic East first and second teams: Madison Passanante '25, first team, designated player; Sierra Kaye '25, first team, catcher; Julia Campen '24, second team, at large; and Ashley Romano '24, second team, at large.

## Message Maker

As Patricia Nowack Thompson '53/83 contemplates her recent 90th birthday, she can't help but feel proud of her successful career in media and public relations. At a time when doors were just beginning to open for women in the field, Thompson became an award-winning public relations professional and educator—while raising six children.



A longtime resident of California, Thompson graduated from Centenary in 1953 with an Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts, returning 30 years later to add a Bachelor of Arts in Communication. After earning an associate degree, she worked at a New York radio station and held several other jobs before relocating to the West Coast.

Through the years, Thompson held a host of positions in Los Angeles County, including developing public relations campaigns for the Los Angeles Police Department, as well as the Los Angeles County Probation Department, Transportation Commission, and Department of Public Works. She also worked on a \$12 million project for the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., and was a writing and public relations instructor at California State University. Along the way, she interfaced with local and national media and was recognized with numerous awards for excellence in public relations.

Thompson, who is a widow, built a home in the Tehachapi Mountains in Southern California, at an elevation of 5,500 feet. These days, she is enjoying retirement there with her life partner, Edwin Milavitch, a former military pilot and FBI agent.

## Let us know what's new!

Send us your news and keep up to date with classmates: [alumni@centenaryuniversity.edu](mailto:alumni@centenaryuniversity.edu). Class News and Notes are edited to reflect Centenary's guidelines.

### 1949

**Florence Austermuhl Larson** writes: "I have two great-grandsons who are so fun to play with and watch them run their trucks. There will be another great-grandchild in October. I spent time in the hospital and skilled nursing with fluid in my left lung. I am home now, have recuperated, and am back into my activities. "Carol Brown Robinson is enjoying doing nothing and glad she doesn't have to keep up with a schedule. She enjoys whatever comes up in her retirement home and likes having lunch with the group. She has had problems with her lower back, but it is what it is. Her daughter grocery shops for her and once in a while they go to lunch."

**Betty Poppele Barrett** writes: "My three great-grandsons are growing so quickly; they are ages 5, 3, and 6 months. They keep me amused and brighten my days. My granddaughter keeps me up to date, sending pictures of their activities. In September, I had gall bladder surgery and recuperated nicely. My daughter stayed with me to help with meals, etc. Then, April landed me in the hospital again for an emergency complicated hernia operation. I am home recuperating and once again my daughter is staying with me. I am feeling much better and the doctor has given me good reports."

### 1967

**Trish Houts Reeves** writes: "It has been a while. I hope my Centenary classmates are thriving. After Centenary, I followed a career in writing that ultimately led to receiving fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Yaddo, Keck, and the Kansas Arts Commission. My first book, *Returning the Question*, won the Cleveland State University Poetry Center Prize. My most recent book, *The Receipt*, was published by Cynren Press in April 2023. My poems have been anthologized and published

in numerous journals, including *Ploughshares*, *New Letters*, *Women's Review of Books*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Leon Literary Review*. I've also published short fiction. For 21 years, I taught English and creative writing at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan., where my teaching honors included the American Indian College Fund Faculty of the Year and the Haskell Teaching Excellence Award. For 22 years, I led Changing Lives Through Literature for Johnson County Kansas Corrections, and remain a Humanities Kansas Scholar in literature. After Centenary, I received a Bachelor of Journalism from the University of Missouri and a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from Warren Wilson College. More information is available at [trishreevespoetry.com](http://trishreevespoetry.com).

### 1997

**Lorraine McKiniry** is an international journalist, spokesperson, and television personality. She hosted 39 episodes of *What's My Car Worth?* on Discovery.

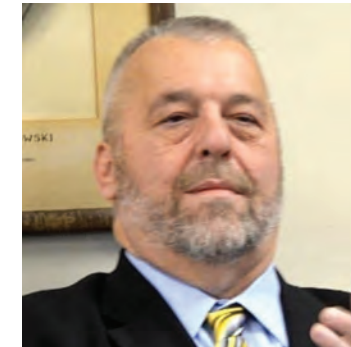
### 2006

**Michael J. Thompson** was sworn in as a detective with the Morris County Prosecutor's Office in February. He has been assigned to the sex crimes/child endangerment unit within the tactical division. Thompson was previously a patrol officer with the Washington Township Police Department.



### 2011

Sayreville has appointed **Glenn Skarzynski** to the position of municipal business administrator running the day-to-day operations of the borough. He earned a Master of Leadership and Public Administration from Centenary and previously served as business administrator of South Amboy.



### 2015

The Centenary University Sports and Entertainment Management Program inducted **Natalia Ortega**, a box office representative with the New York Red Bulls, and **Sal Manzella**, manager of operations for the Brooklyn Nets, into its Alumni Hall of Fame.

**Denise Scairpon, Ed.D. '15/21** published her dissertation on the effects of screen time on the social and emotional development, as well as sleep, of 4- and 5-year-olds. Dr. Scairpon found that excessive use of digital devices may damage developing brains and affect school success. An adjunct professor at Centenary, Dr. Scairpon is director of special education and related services at Washington Township Schools.

### 2016

The New York City Football Club has promoted **Gabriel Gimenez** to the position of premium service manager.

**Abi Lawal** has accepted a position as manager of premium partnerships with the New Jersey Devils and the Prudential Center for Harris Blitzer Sports & Entertainment.

### 2017

**Avery Patrick '17/23** has published his first book, *Kimmy and Timmy Penny Savvy* (Authorhouse, March 2023), which coaches kids about finance through play and practice activities, while teaching parents to raise financially literate children. Patrick recently earned a Master of Business Administration: Public Health from Centenary.



### 2018

**Samantha Frosch, DVM**, graduated from North Carolina State College of Veterinary Medicine last year and has passed the veterinary board exam. She is working for a veterinary practice in Raleigh, N.C.

**Luis Santiago** has been promoted to manager of membership sales for the New York City Football Club, a professional soccer club in the Eastern Conference of Major League Soccer.

### 2019

**Victor Marte** is working as a chemist with a pharmaceutical company in North Carolina. A forensic science major at Centenary, he joined the U.S. Army immediately after graduation.

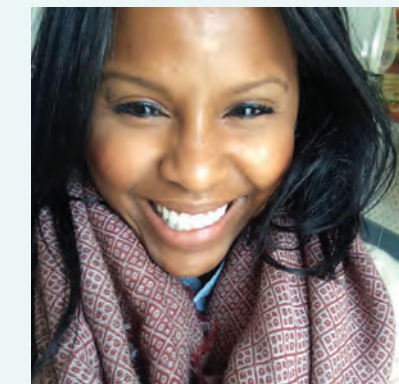
### 2021

**Brittany Adams** has been accepted into the graduate program in speech pathology at Emerson College.

The Washington Township Police Department has promoted **Mike Hade** to lieutenant. Hade has been a member of the department since 2002. Initially assigned to the patrol division, he most recently served in the traffic bureau. Hade is also an assistant element leader with the Hunterdon County Regional SWAT team.

**Kaleigh Miller** recently earned a Master of Medical Science from the University of Vermont and has been accepted to the Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine at Boston University.

## From Hackettstown to Harlem



An article in *The New York Times* earlier this year highlighted a Centenary University graduate's search for the perfect home in Harlem. After earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts: Fashion Design with minors in marketing and business manage-

ment, **Tiffany Rothwell '05** relocated to New York City to launch a career in the fashion industry. She worked for Macy's for five years before joining Ross Stores, where she is director of product development—direct imports.

**“There was an influx of young, Black corporate people who were making Harlem home, and I wanted to be a part of that renaissance...short-term sacrifice was part of my long-term goal.”**

In her interview with *The New York Times*, Rothwell shared that she lived below her means for years while renting in Harlem, first with roommates and then in an East Harlem studio. Her goal: To save enough money to purchase a property in the neighborhood. Rothwell told the reporter, "There was an influx of young, Black corporate people who were making Harlem home, and I wanted to be a part of that renaissance... short-term sacrifice was part of my long-term goal."

Rothwell considered several apartments in the area, ultimately selecting a one-bedroom in a new building with expansive views of New York, including Billionaire's Row and Morningside Park. Reflecting on her journey, she told the reporter, "The big thing for me is the view. I can see the city from my couch. How did this happen for me? I feel privileged to live in this home I created for myself."

## Excellence in Teaching

Centenary University is a leader for teacher training in northwestern New Jersey—and the accomplishments of our graduates prove it. Recipients of the Governor's Educator of the Year Award for Warren County include the following Centenary graduates:

### Master of Education

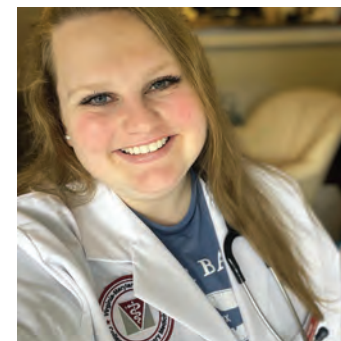
- Stacy Ackerman '17, Franklin Township
- Danielle Carbone '23, Hackettstown
- Amie DeFeo '22, Washington Township
- Stacy Dreschel '23, Oxford
- Nicola Hall '17, Hope Township
- Jennifer Nelson '18, Phillipsburg
- Michele Sucigan '18, Belvidere
- Rich Van Dien '20, Mansfield Township

### Bachelor of Arts in Education

- Jessica Milstrey '16, Greenwich
- Joseph Wotasek '13, Great Meadows

**Andrew Marchese** is working as an inside sales representative for the New York Mets.

**Abigail Reilly '22** recently completed her first year at Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine for a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM). She says of her Centenary experience, "Centenary definitely prepared me for vet school. All the hands on experience I got from working with Dr. Jesslyn Bryk-Lucy taught me a lot about the veterinary aspect of the equine industry. The classes prepared me well—I knew close to all of the anatomy we learned in the first two weeks because of the classes I took at Centenary. I also knew a lot of the equine material already from working with the horses at the equine center and with Dr. Bryk-Lucy."



MBA program at Centenary University, and will earn a Master of Business Administration from the University in 2024.

**Willo Roche** has accepted a position on the athletics staff at Centenary University.

**Kyle Szuskowski** is working as an operations team member at GOAT Farm Sports—U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

An article by **Sophia Strain**, "Intercollegiate Riding Has More Benefits Than You Think," was recently published in *The Plaid Horse*, a national publication that covers the hunter/jumper/breeding disciplines. She graduated from Centenary in May with a Bachelor of Science in Equine Studies: Communication for the Equine Industry.

**Adrianna Strait** will attend the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine this September. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Animal Health: Pre-Veterinary from Centenary in May.

## 2023

The New York Nets have hired **Chelsea Estacio** as an operations assistant.

**Jacob Korzo** is pursuing his master's degree at Centenary University.

**Madison Miller** has been accepted to Lasell University to pursue a master's degree in sports analytics.

**Erin Nappi** is working in athletics media relations for Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck.

**Josh Nicol** is enrolled in the 4+1

## 2022

The Sussex County Miners baseball team has drafted catcher **Nick Grifone**. In 50 games as a Cyclone, Grifone hit .291 with two homeruns and 30 RBIs.



**Katie Zack** has earned a Master of Arts in Climate and Society from Columbia University.



# MAKE AN IMPACT

## with a gift to The Centenary Fund

Want to make a meaningful gift this year? Your contribution to The Centenary Fund provides immediate, flexible resources that make a big impact on the lives of our students:

- ✓ Scholarships and financial assistance
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**It's easy to send your gift—just scan the QR code or go to [centenaryuniversity.edu/givenow](https://centenaryuniversity.edu/givenow).**



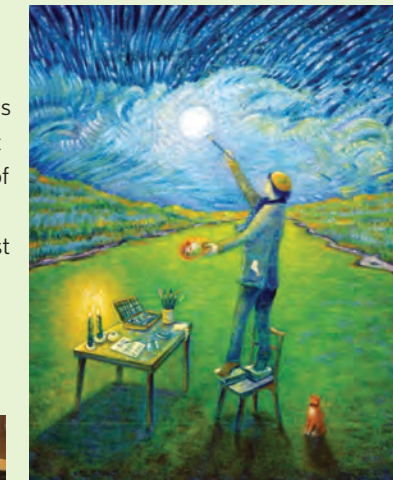
### Giving made easy!

Open the camera on your phone and hover over the code, click the link that pops up on top, and give right from your phone!

## Man of the Moon



Adjunct Instructor in Fine Arts Joseph Coco this year presented eight rotating installations of paintings in the Taylor Memorial Library at Centenary University. The exhibition is part of his "I Paint the Moon" series, which features artwork of the full moon created over the past 50 years. Coco explained his artistic process and the history of his full moon series during a reception at the library, which has included Coco's book, *I Paint the Moon* (LuLu, 2023), in its permanent collection.



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Angela Rodriguez Moore '90/22 HA

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**  
Jenna Glinko '23  
Onoshope Itunoya-Musa '24

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### Best Wishes

Centenary University President Emerita **Barbara-Jayne Lewthwaite, Ed.D., '96 HA** retired this spring. She served the University for 38 years, leading a period of growth that culminated in Centenary's designation as a university in 2016. Since stepping down as president, Dr. Lewthwaite has shared her knowledge with Centenary students as a professor of business.

Dr. Lewthwaite began her Centenary career in 1985, serving on the faculty and as chief academic officer before her appointment as the University's 12th president in 2009. During her tenure, the University completed construction of the David and Carol Lackland Center, renovated science labs, launched new academic programs, opened a Health and Wellness Center, and built a new Environmental Science Center at the Charles O. Hayford Fish Hatchery.

Forty-five days before her retirement, Dr. Lewthwaite announced at the 2015 commencement that Centenary had been granted university status by the New Jersey secretary of higher education. At the time, Dr. Lewthwaite said, "I was very determined that this goal came to fruition before I completed my tenure as Centenary president. Centenary has been functioning as a university for many years. The state's approval has made this designation official. Being re-named Centenary University is reflective of Centenary's continued progress and excellence."

### Celebrate Summer!



The Centenary University Young Alumni Association kicked off summer at Bar Anticipation in Lake Como, N.J., on June 30. At the Young Alumni Shore Event, recent Centenary graduates enjoyed a barbecue with music and outdoor games, while reconnecting and sharing memories with classmates.

### A Gala Evening



Centenary University alumni turned out on June 8 to support CU in the Lab, the annual scholarship gala. The event raised more than \$100,000 to provide scholarships for deserving Centenary students. Pictured are Enactus alumni, from left, **Amanda Garris '17/20, Courtney Weingarten '20, Halle Cannon '20, Linda Poisseroux, Ph.D., Enactus director, Ashleigh LaManna '18, and Nancy Jara Vargas '19.**



### Looking Forward

"Kindness, I've discovered, is everything in life."

Those words, written by the Noble Prize winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer, perfectly describe how I feel about Centenary University. Over the spring semester, as I said goodbye to my late wife, Jeanne, and prepared to retire, this community has responded with an outpouring of kindness that has touched my heart and soul. Truly, Centenary University is a very special place.

After serving as Centenary's 14th president over the past three-and-a-half years, I'm proud of all we've accomplished on behalf of this University and its students. Together, we responded with resilience to a worldwide pandemic, added new academic programs and athletic teams, and strengthened relationships with strategic partners and our community, establishing Centenary as the intellectual, economic, and cultural heart of the Skylands Region.

As I look to Centenary's future, I have great confidence in incoming President Dale Caldwell, Ed.D. However, the future doesn't rest on Dr. Caldwell's shoulders alone. Each of us plays an important role in shaping the destiny of this great University. Our collective support is crucial in making Dr. Caldwell's vision a reality, with the knowledge that Centenary's future belongs to our students—the hardworking young men and women who will be the leaders of tomorrow.

As I look to my own future, this isn't the retirement I envisioned last fall. Jeanne and I had planned to embark on an African safari together this summer, a trip that I will now take in her memory. It should surprise no one that I will pack several cameras to take photos of the wildlife and beautiful landscape there. Then, I'll spend time with my family, including my great-grandson, before deciding what to do next.

I'd like to thank everyone who welcomed Jeanne and me to Centenary three years ago, and for your support following her passing in January. Truly, your kindness has meant everything to me. I promise you that this isn't goodbye—because Centenary University will always be in my heart.

Dr. Bruce Murphy  
14th President  
Centenary University

***"Truly, your kindness has meant everything to me. I promise you that this isn't goodbye—because Centenary University will always be in my heart."***



Photo credit: U.S. Army photos by Elizabeth Fraser, Arlington National Cemetery

# With Dignity and Honor

U.S. Army Colonel and former Centenary University First Lady Jeanne Picariello Murphy was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery on April 12 alongside her parents and grandparents, who are also interred there. Colonel Murphy was accorded full military honors, reflecting her 30 years of distinguished service. The wife of recently retired Centenary President Bruce Murphy, Ed.D., Colonel Murphy passed away on Jan. 8 of injuries suffered as the victim of a hit-and-run accident a day earlier while on her morning walk near home.

Colonel Murphy's years of service were decorated with many medals, including the Legion of Merit (awarded three times),

Defense Meritorious Service Medal (awarded two times), and the Army Meritorious Service Medal (awarded three times). During her military career, she served with distinction in many leadership posts spanning the United States and abroad, including Europe, Latin America, South Korea, and the Middle East. An Army nurse, Colonel Murphy was the chief of health promotion for the U.S. Southern Command in Panama and spearheaded Army health, wellness, and support programs in Germany and Virginia, as well as at the Pentagon and the Army War College. During and after the Gulf War, Colonel Murphy worked with combat troops in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq.

Before retiring from the military in 2001, Colonel Murphy was given oversight of the military's program for world-class athletes, a task that placed her on the U.S. Olympic Committee's Board of Directors and as chair of the USOC Multi-Sport Organizations Council for 10 years. For the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, she was designated Chef de Mission for the U.S. Paralympic Team.

Later that week, Captain John J. McNally Jr., husband of **Gail Dawson McNally '57**, was also laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. A graduate of the United States Naval Academy, Captain McNally was a decorated naval aviator who retired from the military after 34 years of service.

## Dedications

Late Centenary University First Lady Jeanne Murphy, a retired U.S. Army Colonel, was remembered during two dedication ceremonies in late spring. The University community gathered in June to dedicate a bench in Colonel Murphy's honor on campus, directly across the street from the President's House.

On Memorial Day weekend, the 2023 Memorial Remembrance Day Ceremony at the All-Veterans Memorial (AVM) in Budd Lake honored Colonel Murphy's memory. Veterans and members of the local and Centenary communities recalled the service of fallen soldiers and Colonel Murphy, who was the keynote speaker at the same event a year earlier—the first female combat speaker at the AVM.

During the ceremony, Colonel Murphy's husband, recently-retired Centenary University President Bruce Murphy, Ed.D., laid a memorial wreath at the base of a tree planted in Colonel Murphy's memory. Members of the University's Alumni Association also joined seven U.S. Army representatives in placing long stem roses into combat boots. AVM founder Charlie Uhrmann told attendees, "Jeanne dedicated her life to helping others realize and achieve their dreams. Jeanne understood the many struggles our warriors faced while transitioning from military to civilian life. Through her love, she gave them strength and guidance."



Tucker

Barbie

## Hoofprints on the Heart

The TRAC (Therapeutic Riding At Centenary) program lost two beloved equine staff members this spring. Each horse touched the lives of people at the Centenary University Equestrian Center, especially participants of the University's accredited adaptive riding program. TRAC provides children and adults with equestrian experiences that can result in physical, social-emotional, and cognitive benefits, while enhancing goals such as balance, strength, and sensory integration.

Tucker lived 14 of his 21 years at the Centenary University Equestrian Center. Karen Brittle, assistant professor of equine studies and director of TRAC, said, "Countless people got their first canter on this horse, and just as many found a solace they never expected to feel while in his presence. When Tucker slowly turned his big beautiful head in your direction, you felt seen. It has been an honor to know him, and he will be forever in our hearts and minds." A ceremony marking Tucker's passing was held at the center.

Barbie was donated to the TRAC program two years ago by an anonymous donor. In addition to TRAC riders, Barbie interacted with visitors to the center's ground activities, such as female veterans through Operation Sisterhood or seniors from Heath Village Retirement Community. "Barbie was not a big horse, and she was sadly not with us long, but she had a giant influence on the TRAC program," Brittle recalled. "With her beautiful flaxen mane and tail and expressive face, Barbie was a horse that many felt instantly drawn toward."

## In Memoriam

- Nancy Bechert Cross '55 ..... 12/17/2022
- Linnea Ogren Donahower '58 ..... 5/17/2023
- Alice MacLea Hobbs '57 ..... 6/18/2023
- Virginia George Hook '44 ..... 12/23/2022
- Jeanne Picariello Murphy ..... 1/8/2023
- Elizabeth Stedman Russell '52 ..... 7/12/2022
- Gail Bergenback Vigna '57 ..... 1/3/2023
- Judith Vaughn West '58 ..... 6/12/2023

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## Questions? Contact:

*Program Director:* **Dr. Jeffrey Carter**  
Jeffrey.Carter@CentenaryUniversity.edu  
(908) 852-1400 ext. 5065

*Sr. Enrollment Counselor:* **Dawn Homer**  
Dawn.Homer@CentenaryUniversity.edu  
(908) 852-1400 ext. 5035

