

Bridgewater

STATE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2026



TRANSFORMING Criminal Justice

INSIDE: Not All Heroes Wear Capes | On the Front Lines Without a Badge | Pawlice Academy | Making it Matter
Putting True Crime on the Map | A Closer Look Behind the Bars

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



For Caroline Levy, '26, service isn't just a family tradition – it's a path she's actively walking as a student police cadet with the Bridgewater State University Police Department.

The commitment to helping others runs in her blood. Her father, Thomas Levy, worked for the Bridgewater Fire Department for 36 years, rising to chief in 2016 before retiring in 2020. Meanwhile, her also now-retired mother, Lorraine Levy, worked as a Massachusetts state trooper. It was she who encouraged Levy to consider a career in law enforcement.

"At first, I didn't think I wanted to pursue it. I was going to go into nursing," she revealed.

That all changed when the Raynham native was still in high school, and an opportunity arose to take a college-level criminal justice course which gave her a new perspective.

Today, she's discovering that law enforcement is more than a family legacy – it may be her calling.

How are things going this year at BSU?

This year has been incredibly busy but also rewarding with balancing my senior coursework, my role as a student police cadet and wrapping up my time in leadership with Phi Sigma Sigma.

What has it been like serving as a student police cadet at BSU?

It's given me hands-on knowledge of policing, allowed me to work closely with sworn police officers, and has directed me to better understand the responsibility that comes with serving a community. I'm especially grateful for the strong leadership and mentorship provided by Chief (Glen) Anderson, his command staff, all officers, dispatchers and staff, whose support and professionalism have made a lasting impact on me.

What are your future goals in terms of law enforcement?

After graduation, I will be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps, where I'll continue training and developing my leadership skills while serving our country. My long-term goal is to take my experiences and pursue a career in law enforcement.

What role has BSU played in helping you?

My criminal justice major allowed me the experience of taking a course within a correctional facility and allowed me the opportunity to be a student police cadet. My Spanish minor influenced me to study abroad in Barcelona. Through Phi Sigma Sigma, I've been able to participate in meaningful philanthropies and continue to develop leadership through my roles as Greek Unity chairman, vice president and president. BSU has played a huge role in preparing me for my future, as all of these opportunities have helped me grow academically and personally.

Do you have any closing remarks?

One of the best pieces of advice I can give to anyone attending college is to say "yes" to opportunities that excite you, even if they push you outside your comfort zone. College is one of the few times where you can explore different paths and figure out what truly motivates you. It's okay if your goals change or look different from the people around you. I hope my BSU journey encourages other students to take on challenges, seek leadership opportunities and believe in your ability to succeed.

Interview by Heather Harris Michonski, G'26

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Bridgewater keeps alumni, faculty, students and their families, staff and friends of Bridgewater State University informed about the university community and its impact on the region.

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For up-to-date university news, activities and events, and to view past issues of the magazine, visit bridgew.edu/news-events.

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Bridgewater

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Officer Joseph Locke trains a black Labrador puppy named Arby to become a guide dog for people with visual impairments.

Photo by Ashley McCabe

BACK COVER AD DESIGN

Nicholas J. Williams, '21



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

PRESIDENT FREDERICK W. CLARK JR., ESQ., '83

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines "justice" in part as "the principle or ideal of fair treatment or right action." Here at Bridgewater State University, we have strong values of equality, compassion and intellectual rigor that guide us in doing what is right and just.

BSU is unrelentingly focused on the success of every student – one student at a time – without exception. We remain committed to providing a high-quality education while serving those who would otherwise be unable to afford to attend college. This is why we are proud to have maintained the Bridgewater Commitment for a second consecutive year. The commitment covers the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for full-time, in-state undergraduates from families earning \$125,000 or less. Additionally, for the third straight year, *The Wall Street Journal* ranked BSU as one of America's Best Colleges, highlighting the strong return on investment of a Bridgewater degree.

Our commitment to justice extends to every corner of the university. The EXCEL Program fully integrates dozens of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who would otherwise be unable to experience college. They live in our residence halls, attend classes, and participate in numerous clubs and social events. Students like Declan Burns (pictured at the top right with me in a dining hall) share the same goal as all of our Bears – to receive a great education that leads to meaningful employment.

Additionally, we have significantly increased our ability to provide one-on-one support. Navigators identify and connect with students who are facing barriers to success and require extra care to ensure they remain on track with their education. The Academic Achievement Center provides coaching and tutoring services for thousands of students every semester. And, Student Accessibility Services works with approximately 14 percent of students, ensuring that they have the accommodations necessary to be successful.

We are also advancing new academic programs aligned with market needs and workforce demands. Over the past several years, BSU launched bachelor's and master's degrees in cybersecurity. In this issue, Aaliyah Oliveira, '26, offers a first-person perspective on her personal and academic growth through innovative internships, thought-provoking undergraduate research and meaningful opportunities to mentor fellow students. She writes, "I came here hoping to learn cybersecurity. I'm leaving prepared to help shape its future."



Elsewhere on campus, we are growing our health professions and AI/business learning offerings. We signed an MOU with the MGH Institute of Health Professions that promises increased access to graduate degrees and pathways to employment. We are piloting a certificate program in data analytics and launched the Center for Artificial Intelligence to foster human-centered, equitable and responsible AI use.

The true impact of a university is visible in its alumni, and Bridgewater graduates are ready to lead from the moment they cross the commencement stage. In the pages that follow, we introduce you to alumni who are transforming criminal justice. You will meet a sheriff with a people-focused view of corrections, a social worker bringing a new perspective to emergencies and a police chief focused on building trust within her community. Their stories – like those of so many other Bridgewater graduates – are connected by an innate desire to do what is right and just.

At BSU, "justice" is not just a buzz word. It is embedded in our values, programs and everything we do to support the approximately 10,000 students who are proud to call themselves Bears.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frederick W. Clark Jr.".

President Frederick W. Clark Jr.

Chief Tillinghast, center, is surrounded by dignitaries from BSU as well as nearby law enforcement and district attorney's offices at the dedication of the BSU police station.

CAMPUS CONNECTION

NEWS AND NEWSMAKERS



University Names Police Station After David Tillinghast

Among his many accomplishments as police chief, David Tillinghast helped design BSU's first modern police station.

Now that station will bear his name.

In a recent ceremony, the university named the station after Tillinghast, who served for more than 30 years before retiring in 2024. True to what many remember as his humble leadership style, Tillinghast was quick to pass the praise on to his former fellow officers and President Frederick W. Clark Jr.

"I am truly honored and grateful that he chose this way to mark my career at BSU," Tillinghast said. "I accept this tribute on the part of a lot of partners and friends, both present and past."

Despite becoming chief at just 29, Tillinghast led initiatives that put BSU ahead of its peers across the state and around the country. Those included developing a racially just policing policy and installing publicly accessible defibrillators and Narcan. He also enhanced the department's technology, built effective mutual aid partnerships and maintained a strong working relationship with his officers.

Clark praised Tillinghast as a trusted colleague who adeptly guided the university through a multitude of challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic to the occasional tragedy. He brought a "very quiet but very effective" leadership style, Clark recalled.

"He has made his mark on this university and region and he has kept this campus safe for more than 30 years," Clark said.

BSU was ranked the third safest campus in the United States during his tenure, an honor that doesn't surprise Plymouth County Sheriff Joseph McDonald Jr.

"There is no better law enforcement agency anywhere in the country than the police department here at BSU," McDonald said in praising Tillinghast's leadership.

Current BSU Chief Glen Anderson added: "This dedication will stand as a remembrance of Chief Tillinghast's legacy, a legacy of integrity, professionalism and compassion."

BY BRIAN BENSON, G'23

Students in an English class on grant writing work with their professor, Dr. Lisa Litterio.



CUBEs Initiative Brings Hands-on Experience to More Than 1,500 Students

When Kara McManus, G'26, pursues a career as a government or nonprofit administrator, she will inevitably partner with various consultants. Thanks to an innovative BSU initiative, she'll do so with lots of firsthand experience.

This academic year, Kara and her classmates in a nonprofit administration course helped SouthCoast Community Foundation build a database of nonprofits in the region.

"This was my first time working on a client-based project," said Kara, who noted the broad scope was initially overwhelming. "This was the first experience I had trying to ask the right questions on how we can narrow this down but still provide a service that is going to be beneficial."

Their project, which is part of BSU's Collaborative University Business Experiences (CUBEs) program, will help the foundation assess the philanthropic needs in the region and better distribute funding.

Launched in 2020 by the Ricciardi College of Business, CUBEs pairs classes with organizations for semester-long projects. The initiative has expanded across the university, having now involved more than 1,500 students and more than 100 projects.

"We've seen growth in skills that help students in the job market, and they are more engaged in the classroom,"

said Dr. Stephanie Jacobsen, an associate professor of marketing and a CUBEs coordinator. "They don't just show up, watch a lecture and go home. They know they have a hands-on, real project."

The program benefits both businesses and nonprofits who receive assistance with a project they may not be able to complete in-house.

"It definitely connects to Bridgewater's commitment to the community as well as our commitment to our students," said Dr. Seth Meyer, an associate professor of political science and a CUBEs coordinator. "It's not a zero-sum game."

CUBEs projects provide a safe space where students can take risks and learn from mistakes, said Meyer, who teaches the nonprofit administration class.

Meyer's students said this style of learning is emblematic of the public administration program, where professors challenge students to connect academic theories to practical applications.

"In every single course, you have to take the analytical and textbook material and go into your career and apply them in ways that are beneficial," Kara said. "I think the MPA program in general does a really good job of that."

BY BRIAN BENSON, G'23

President Clark and Dr. Paula Milone-Nuzzo, the then-president of MGH Institute of Health Professions, sign an agreement as Dr. Marci Swede, dean of BSU's College of Education and Health Professions, and Dr. Kevin Finn, IHP's associate provost for student affairs and dean of students, look on.

CAMPUS CONNECTION

NEWS AND NEWSMAKERS



Partnership Helps BSU Students Pursue Health Care Careers

With more than 13,000 vacant positions in Massachusetts hospitals, the Bay State faces a significant shortage of qualified health care professionals. To help meet that need, Bridgewater State University is offering a streamlined pathway for students to pursue these critical careers.

BSU recently signed an agreement with Massachusetts General Hospital's Institute of Health Professions (IHP), which offers degrees that complement a Bridgewater education.

"This is a very, very exciting moment for Bridgewater State University," BSU President Frederick W. Clark Jr., '83, said.

"It's a great opportunity for our students and I think it's a great opportunity for not just the hospital but the commonwealth as well."

The five-year pact provides qualified BSU students with guaranteed admission to designated IHP programs, including nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, audiology, health administration, health sciences and health care data analytics. Students can also qualify for application fee waivers, tuition reduction/scholarships and personalized academic advising.

While the health care industry has made staffing progress, gaps remain in nursing and other patient-facing occupations, according to a recent report from the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association that identified 13,600 vacancies in key hospital roles.

"This is a very, very exciting moment for Bridgewater State University. It's a great opportunity for our students and I think it's a great opportunity for not just the hospital but the commonwealth as well."

PRESIDENT FREDERICK W. CLARK JR., '83

"We know how critical the health professions shortage is right now. It's only going to get worse with the aging of the population," said Dr. Paula Milone-Nuzzo, the then-president of IHP. "We are doing an immense service for the communities that we serve. I am so thrilled that we can do this together."

BSU and IHP share values of inclusivity, innovation and a focus on transforming lives, Milone-Nuzzo said.

With a liberal arts background, Bridgewater students bring intangible skills that are essential to building strong relationships between patients and health care providers, Dr. Marci Swede, dean of the College of Education and Health Professions, said of another synergy between the two institutions.

"This partnership strengthens our longstanding commitment to student opportunity and to preparing the region's future health care professionals," Clark said.

BY BRIAN BENSON, G'23

CAMPUS CONNECTION

NEWS AND NEWSMAKERS



Major Grant Expands BSU Photonics Program

A new grant will give Bridgewater State University students the chance to become leaders in the fast-evolving field of photonics, providing them with the necessary hands-on experience to move from the classroom to the forefront of the industry.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Northeast Microelectronics Coalition Hub awarded BSU a \$1.1 million grant to fund equipment for the school's Visible Spectrum Characterization and Packaging Hub (VISPACK). The investment will expand BSU's Laboratory for Education and Applications Prototypes with state-of-the-art photonics packaging and testing capabilities.

According to BSU Physics, Photonics and Optical Engineering Associate Professor Samuel Serna Otalvaro, VISPACK will provide hands-on learning, particularly for students enrolled in the school's photonics and optical engineering undergraduate program.

"We are bridging the gap between the classroom, lab and companies," Otalvaro said. "Our students will be a fundamental part of shaping the future of electronics and photonics. ... They will become key contributors in the photonics revolution."

As photonics keeps gaining ground in becoming the go-to technology, the need for reliable packaging is growing fast, but the industry hasn't quite caught up. The new VISPACK equipment will help create much needed packaging for new prototypes created not just at BSU, but in labs across the country.

"Packaging is fundamental," Otalvaro said. "How do you get a prototype from a clean room into a cell phone? How do you protect it and isolate it from being compromised? Right now, there isn't a facility in the United States that is adapting to the type of packaging needed."

Instead of sending prototypes overseas, companies will be able to send them to BSU's VISPACK, where researchers and students will use the new equipment to develop this crucial packaging.

Lightfinder, a Cambridge-based electrical equipment manufacturer, is collaborating with BSU on VISPACK. Their team will provide in-kind contributions that include engineering time, technical input during system integration and sample devices for testing and validation.

CAMPUS CONNECTION

NEWS AND NEWSMAKERS

"VISPACK helps both BSU and Lightfinder build a local bridge from education and research to manufacturing, strengthening the regional photonics ecosystem," Otalvaro said.

BSU alumnus Matthew Baker, '25, one of the first graduates of the university's photonics and optical engineering program, now works at Lightfinder. He said the new grant and VISPACK project will be a major benefit to companies like his. Meanwhile, he added that giving startups like Lightfinder access to lab space at BSU benefits both the companies and the students.

"This really creates more opportunities for students who want to get a foothold in the industry," Baker said.

It was his experience in the BSU lab that opened the door to a job at Lightfinder.

"The quality and amount of equipment BSU has is incredible, as well as the knowledge of the faculty," he said. "This new project will give students even more hands-on experience while helping companies with emerging talent. It's a great way to build a pipeline between the university and the industry."

BY HEATHER HARRIS MICHONSKI, G'26

Top Vote Getter



Joshua Neff, '27, has always been interested in politics. As a voting and civic action ambassador with the Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice (MRISJ), he strives to build a stronger civic culture at Bridgewater State University.

"Essentially, I work with a group of students who are dedicated to teaching

other students about voting, we really want to promote civics holistically," Joshua said.

During the 2024 presidential election, Joshua and others set up tables and hosted workshops to help students gain knowledge about the election process and the ways to take civic action.

He continued that work as a 2025-2026 Newman Civic Fellow. The fellowship is a year-long program that recognizes and supports community-committed students who have demonstrated an interest in finding solutions for some of society's toughest challenges.

The program is run by the nonprofit Campus Compact.

Joshua networked with fellows from campuses across 38 states; Washington, D.C.; and Mexico.

"I am incredibly excited," he said in an interview before the fellowship began. "I'll be working with others in the cohort and exposed to so many opportunities.

This program will support me in building a stronger civic culture on campus."

Joshua said his effort to educate is non-partisan, it's about getting his peers to have confidence when it comes to voting issues and civic engagement.

"I'm excited to sink my teeth into everything and see our programs and events turn into something more traditional, something that continues year after year here at BSU," he said.

He has been involved in other programming at BSU, including the Alternative Break Program, also run through MRISJ, where he traveled to Boston and met with local legislators.

"It was a really great experience for me," he said.

"I was able to talk with them about transparency issues. It broke down barriers for me and helped me to recognize my power as a constituent."

All these experiences are helping him prepare for a career in education. The BSU junior double majors in secondary education and history, with the goal to one day teach in the classroom.

He wants to teach to have an impact.

"I want to do something, be in a career, that is positive for the community. Teaching is a great outlet to do meaningful work, where I can help people," he said. "The opportunities I've had (at BSU) have reaffirmed this is the right path for me."

BY HEATHER HARRIS MICHONSKI, G'26

A Decade of Service

After living on an aircraft carrier or on military bases in Spain or Africa, navigating an American college campus can feel disorienting. For the past 10 years, Bridgewater State University's Military and Veteran Student Services has helped student-veterans make that transition.

Miles Gallagher, '28, first learned of the department while looking for schools after serving a decade in the United States Navy.

"College is scary, especially as a 28-year-old who has never been before. Having a place on campus, where I can ask questions and be around people who have dealt with similar situations is extremely important," the aviation science major said.

Before he even set foot on campus, Miles worked with Military and Veteran Student Services Director Brian Duchaney, '02, G'07, who helped him not only fill out his GI Bill application but also set up his class schedule.

"Brian provides a very important service," Miles said. "He does so much for people. He always makes time for you if you ask. He will figure out and work on your problem until it's solved. He genuinely cares about what he does. It's not just a job for him."

Duchaney holds BSU degrees in English and earned a master's in editorial studies from Boston University. He currently teaches in both the English and communication departments at Bridgewater State, in addition to overseeing veteran services.

The double Bear served in the United States Army for 10 years and can relate to how it feels to leave the military.

"When I was an undergraduate, there wasn't a support system for military students," he said. "I'm lucky to be able to assist students with finding the resources they need because I understand the questions they have and can direct them to the right services."

For Ceallach Lee, '25, Duchaney was instrumental to his success while earning dual degrees in geography and history. Now an alumnus, Lee works in the veterans center as an administrative assistant.

"Brian is great. He's always there to look out for students and their welfare ... generally speaking, he will bend over backwards to help you," he said.

During his five years of service in the Marine Corps, Lee experienced multiple injuries, adding another layer of stress to his life. Duchaney helped him navigate the often-complicated process of applying for disability compensation.

"Even before we talked about the academic stuff, Brian was helping me get on my feet. He's so knowledgeable and has always been there to support me," he said.

Aviation management major Isabella Dirusso, '28, currently serves in the air force reserves. As a commuter, she was looking for a supportive environment on campus and found it at the BSU veterans center.

"After high school, I went right into the military and am used to military people. Having this center, with people I can relate to, or those who have a similar story as mine, it's provided me with a space, a place where I feel I belong," she said.

And even though it says "Veterans Services" on the door, Lee wants the Bridgewater community to know that all are welcome, that those who served aren't as

"scary" as one might think.

"We're a welcoming place, open to people from all walks of life. The military is made up of people from all different communities; we are a blend of people made up of different backgrounds. We are just a special group of people who have had a nontraditional experience," he said.

Miles also encourages people to visit the BSU veterans center and grab a cup of free coffee.

"It's not just a space for veterans, but a space to get to know people. People are sometimes intimidated but we want you to come in our door just to hang out. Think of us like a VFW. Some of us might be a little older than most traditional students, but we are always open to sitting down and socializing," Miles said.

BY HEATHER HARRIS MICHONSKI, G'26



Miles Gallagher, '28, and Isabella Dirusso, '28, work together in the BSU Military and Veteran Student Services Center.

BEHIND THE NAME

STEARNS-McNAMARA MEMORIAL BOTANICAL GARDEN



Longtime Garden Caretaker Louis Stearns Encouraged People to “Make Friends with Nature.”

It's clear by his passion for gardening that he practiced what he preached – and it is fitting that he is one of two horticulturists for whom Bridgewater State's garden is named.

NAMED FOR

Louis Stearns and Robert McNamara

THE BACKSTORY

In the early 1900s, Bridgewater Principal Albert Boyden donated two acres of land to the school to be used for a garden. At that time, gardening was commonly taught in elementary schools. Thus, teacher preparation colleges like Bridgewater needed gardens to prepare students for their future careers as educators.

Bridgewater built a greenhouse in 1911 – the same year that Stearns began teaching at the university.

From 1911 to 1944, Stearns taught nature-related courses such as botany, horticulture and landscape design. He was also the superintendent of the greenhouse and school gardens. After his retirement, Bridgewater State named the garden that he so lovingly tended after him.

In dedicating its yearbook to Stearns, the Class of 1932 wrote that his “varied interests have molded a personality of true worth.”

The garden is also named after McNamara, who worked as a laboratory technician and greenhouse caretaker in the 1950s and 1960s. He passed away in a car crash in 1975.

USE TODAY

Located in a bucolic wooded area between Pope Hall and the Dana Mohler-Faria Science and Mathematics Center, the garden includes more than 80 trees and an outdoor classroom where faculty can teach within nature. The nearby greenhouse supports BSU classes in several disciplines as well as faculty and student research.

Material in this article comes from “Stearns/McNamara Memorial Botanical Garden” by Greenhouse Manager Emma Welch and the 1932 yearbook.

BY BRIAN BENSON, G'23

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

BY AALIYAH OLIVEIRA, '26

When I started my journey at Bridgewater State University, I knew I wanted a career in cybersecurity. Still, I didn't yet realize how deeply BSU would shape not only my technical skills but also my confidence, soft skills and sense of purpose. Coming to college as a mother of a toddler, I knew majoring in STEM would give me a run for my money.

I started my journey as a computer science major and a PISCES Scholar, a STEM-focused scholarship and

mentorship program that emphasizes undergraduate research and professional development. Through PISCES, I received early research training and paid opportunities to engage in cybersecurity projects. With this amazing opportunity, I did a research project during my first semester where I designed a QR code scavenger hunt for Open Lab Night. The activity used binary code puzzles to encourage K-12 students and families to explore the Dana Mohler-Faria Science and Mathematics Center while learning foundational computer science concepts. Watching hundreds of participants engage with coding for the first time helped me realize how powerful accessible STEM education can be.

BSU has also encouraged me to grow as both a researcher and mentor. This past summer, I was accepted into the Adrian Tinsley Program for Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship. Through this program, I studied health care data breaches from 2018 to 2024, analyzing trends before and after COVID-19. That project opened my eyes to how cybersecurity directly impacts patient safety and public trust. I was also granted the opportunity to present this meaningful work at the MIT IEEE Undergraduate Research Technology Conference. More recently, I was accepted into departmental honors, where my capstone focuses on building a sandboxed, agent-based AI advising

As a cybersecurity and digital forensics major, I've had opportunities that go far beyond the classroom. Through internships and hands-on labs, I've worked in Security Operations Center environments, supported network operations, built cloud infrastructure and conducted threat analysis using real-world tools.

system. My goal is to help educational institutions deploy AI responsibly while protecting student data.

Through my internship at Waters Corporation, I had the opportunity to create a dashboard supporting Network Operations for over 90 sites worldwide and utilize the skills I learned in my studies. At CyberTrust Massachusetts, I helped secure over 1,000 endpoints, automated incident-response workflows with Python,

and contributed to statewide risk analysis for municipalities. These experiences showed me what cybersecurity looks like in practice: protecting real people, organizations and communities.

BSU has given me the chance to give back. Six other students and I started a cybersecurity club. We have members joining every week to share resources that help us gain a better foothold in leadership, internships and post-graduate job preparation. As a leader in the P-Pod Tutoring Program through

PISCES, I facilitated study groups for Computer Science I and Cyber Programming students, helping peers strengthen their Python scripting skills while building community and academic confidence. I am also working as a Cyber Range outreach assistant with the Center for the Advancement of STEM Education, supporting K-12 students through hands-on cybersecurity labs focused on incident handling and ethical hacking.

These experiences reminded me that learning is most powerful when it's shared.

As a first-generation Cabo Verdean college attendee, representation matters deeply to me. Nationally, Black women make up only 4% of the cybersecurity workforce, and women as a whole only make up 22%. Through BSU, I have found my community of mentors, programs and peers who genuinely want to work to close these gaps. The support I've received here has helped me see myself not just as a student, but as a future analyst, researcher and advocate.

Bridgewater State has given me more than technical training; it has given me opportunity, community and a platform to grow. I came here hoping to learn cybersecurity. I'm leaving prepared to help shape its future.



FACULTY FOCUS

DR. SAMUEL SERNA OTALVARO

Shedding Light

How one BSU professor is building BSU's photonics program

When it comes to photonics and optical engineering – the study and application of light-based technologies used in everything from fiber-optic communications to medical imaging – Dr. Samuel Serna Otalvaro is helping put Bridgewater State University on the map.

Since arriving on campus in 2019, Otalvaro has been an integral part of building a laboratory for integrated photonics characterization, which is the process of testing and analyzing light-based circuits to see how well they work, and of creating the school's photonics and optical engineering bachelor's degree program.

"Our goal was to create an industry-aligned, internationally connected engineering program where students don't just learn about photonics. They work in the lab, engage with top researchers and gain access to knowledge that's rated even at the graduate level," he said.

"Reaching our six-year accreditation milestone in 2025 was huge, because it reflects not only the curriculum we've built, but the hands-on lab experience that sets this program apart."

Otalvaro began his studies in his native Colombia at Universidad Nacional de Colombia, where he studied physics engineering. He continued his education in Germany at the Friedrich Schiller University Jena, earning a master's in photonics, engineering physics and applied physics.

He picked up another master's in optics, plasma and matter, engineering physics and applied physics at the Institut d'Optique Graduate School in France.

But he wasn't finished. He decided to stay in Paris and, after applying for a grant, went on to earn a PhD in photonics.

Otalvaro's motivation comes down to one thing: "Knowledge is important," he said.

Early on, as he learned about optical engineering and photonics, he realized this area of science was evolving quickly.

"With AI, global connectivity and advanced technologies, we need to understand the hardware behind it, how it actually works," Otalvaro said. "This field touches our daily lives in ways most people don't realize."



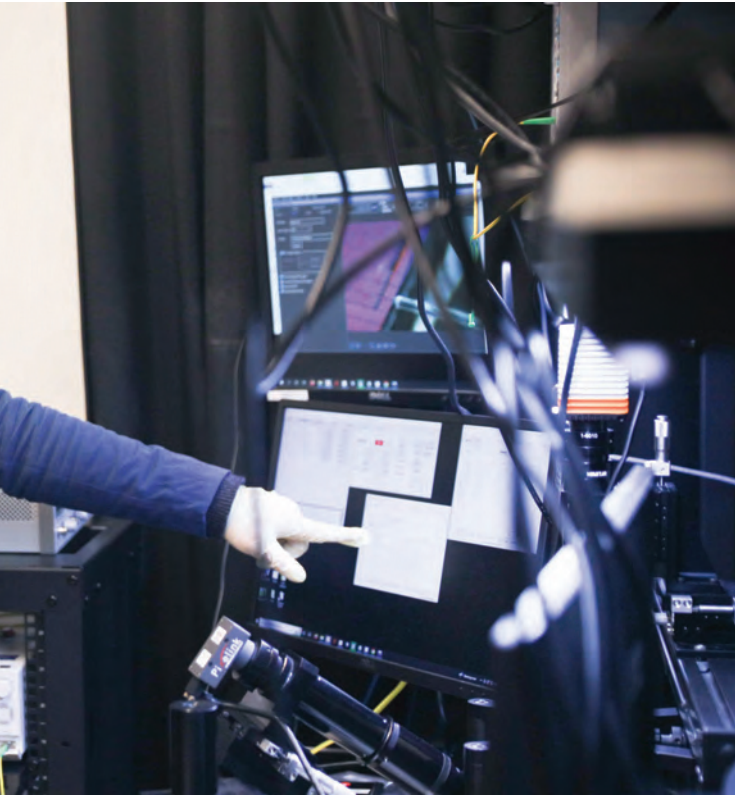
Dr. Samuel Serna Otalvaro is helping put BSU's photonics program on the map.

For Otalvaro, photonics offers a gateway to understanding the fundamental forces behind the technologies shaping the future, which is why he's so passionate about educating students.

When he's not teaching at BSU, he also serves as a visiting professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Through his connections, Otalvaro has built a collaboration between MIT and BSU.

Otalvaro, BSU and MIT are part of the Laboratory for Education and Applications Prototypes (LEAP) network that brings industry, government and higher education together to advance the use of integrated photonics and optical technologies.

He recently secured a \$1.1 million grant from the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Northeast Microelectronics Coalition Hub, which will fund equipment for BSU's Visible Spectrum Characterization and Packaging Hub (VISPACK). The investment will expand BSU's LEAP Labs with state-of-the-art photonics packaging and testing capabilities.



The expansion will create even more opportunities for students and help ensure BSU graduates enter the workforce with a competitive edge.

For Otalvaro, the most rewarding part of building the program at BSU isn't the equipment or recognition. It's the students.

"One of the best parts of working at BSU is being at a public university with such a diverse student body," he said. "Our students are here because they want to be here. They're curious, they're engaged, and they make this an honest place to teach and learn."

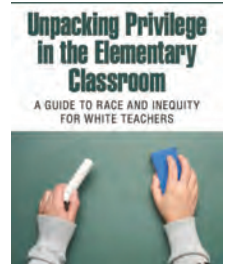
"Seeing them walk across the stage on graduation day, with their families there, knowing the work we did together helped them reach that moment – that's incredibly fulfilling."

BY HEATHER HARRIS MICHONSKI, G'26

Unpacking Privilege in the Elementary Classroom: A Guide to Race and Inequity for White Teachers

Jacquelynne Boivin and Kevin McGowan

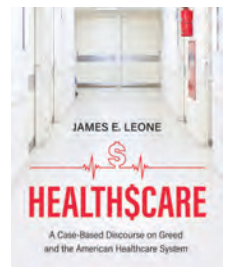
Boivin and McGowan offer a clear-cut guide for integrating antiracism into teaching and education, along with policy reform needed for systemic change. Providing hands-on experience and practical insights from literature, the authors break down subject-specific strategies to approach racial conversations. They acknowledge the variety of challenges that teachers face and encourage them to continue self-work as a step toward supporting students. Brimming with reflection and resources, the book is ideal for white elementary teachers who wish to host conversations about race with their predominantly white classes.



HealthScore: A Case-Based Discourse on Greed and the American Healthcare System

James E. Leone

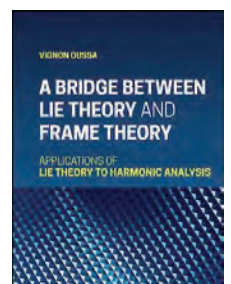
Leone explores the complex relationship between capitalism and health care in the United States. The text provides real-world scenarios that cover the nuances of the health care system, focusing on its interplay with economic forces and the resulting effect on patients and health care providers alike. Through case studies and discussions, the book elucidates the underlying structures and motivations that guide the U.S. health care system. *HealthScore* is ideal for courses and programs that address public health policy, health care economics and medical ethics.



A Bridge Between Lie Theory and Frame Theory: Applications of Lie Theory to Harmonic Analysis

Vignon Oussa

Oussa's comprehensive textbook examines meaningful connections between the subjects of Lie theory, differential geometry and signal analysis. In addition to serving as a bridge, it illustrates applications in the context of signal analysis with concrete examples and images. The book serves as an essential learning resource for graduate students, applied mathematicians and scientists who are looking for a rigorous and complete introduction to the covered subjects.



KEEPING SCORE

She's Got Game

Recent graduate gaining career experience as intern with the NCAA

A year after leading the Bridgewater State University women's basketball program as team captain, Caroline Tripp, '24, traded in her jersey for some NCAA credentials, stepping off the hardwood of the Adrian Tinsley Center onto the national stage at the association's Division I women's basketball championship in Tampa, Florida.

Tripp was one of 33 interns from across the country selected to participate in the NCAA's year-long postgraduate internship program.

Shortly after graduating from BSU with a degree in communications, Tripp packed her bags and moved to Indianapolis, Indiana. Her internship involved promoting the NCAA Division I women's basketball program, that included working the 2025 championship game where UConn beat South Carolina in Tampa, 82-59.

"Being able to say in my first year as a working professional that I played a hand in executing one of the biggest events in sports, it's been a really cool experience," Tripp said.

During her internship, she worked on many projects leading up to the championship game. Tripp traveled to South Carolina to help organize a high school skills tournament at the NCAA college basketball academy and spent a week at the University of Arizona to learn firsthand how a Division I basketball program is run.

"It's a lot different than BSU," Tripp said, but appreciates her time as a Bear and playing at the Division 3 level. "We filled Tinsley every home game, you don't always get that sort of environment to play in (Division I)."

She is also grateful for the sense of community Bridgewater offers, even at the top levels. It's not uncommon for Tripp to check in with President Frederick W. Clark Jr. and Athletic Director Mary Beth Lamb when she comes back to visit the campus.



"At Division I, you wouldn't be able to reach most presidents or athletic directors, but there is a sense of camaraderie at Division 3," Tripp said. "It means a lot to me that I went to BSU. It gave me the ability to stand out. It gave me the opportunities to do what I want to do."

"Don't discount the degree you have because it's from a smaller state school. I am very proud of BSU, we can do just as much as those who are at the big-name schools."

CAROLINE TRIPP, '24

As an undergraduate, Tripp also secured an internship with the Matt Light Foundation, founded by the former New England Patriot. Working out of the organization's Sharon office, she gained experience in social media management, blogging and developing proposals for donors and fundraising efforts.

Last August, Tripp embarked on a new chapter in Brunswick, Maine, joining Bowdoin College as assistant director of athletic services.

As she continues to build her impressive resume, Tripp said her time as a student-athlete at BSU has contributed to her early career success.

"When I applied for this (NCAA) internship, I was up against kids from Clemson, Villanova, Louisville, LSU ... all the big schools and at first was like, I'm not sure if I should be here," Tripp said. "But don't ever count yourself out. Don't discount the degree you have because it's from a smaller state school. I am very proud of BSU, we can do just as much as those who are at the big-name schools."

BY HEATHER HARRIS MICHONSKI, G'26

BRIDGING THE GAP

BY HEATHER HARRIS MICHONSKI, G'26



Unleashed Joy

*How dogs make
life better at BSU
and at home*

There is something about a dog that draws people in. At Bridgewater State University, we're lucky to have three on campus, all working within our police department.

First, there is Zach, an American black Labrador who works with Deputy Chief Ryan Tepper. Zach is a dual-purpose K-9 trained to detect explosive material while also serving as a community resource dog.

Next is Mikey. Her handler is Detective Captain Robert McEvoy. Also an American black Labrador, she helps people in crisis as a facility dog.

Both Zach and Mikey arrived at BSU through the nonprofit organization Puppies Behind Bars, which trains service and law enforcement dogs while providing rehabilitative opportunities for incarcerated individuals.

The newest addition to the BSU Paw Patrol is Arby. Just under 2 months old, he too is a black Labrador. But unlike his canine companions, Arby's stint on campus will be limited to just one year. While he's here, he'll be in training with Officer Joseph Locke (see story page 24).

Arby is part of the Guiding Eyes for the Blind organization, which trains puppies to become guide dogs. At the end of his year, he will continue his training to eventually assist someone who is visually impaired.

I won't lie: when I'm out and about on campus and happen to come across one of these pups, my day instantly gets better.

What is it about dogs that causes such joyful reactions?

When COVID hit five years ago, it's no coincidence that pet adoptions went through the roof. Stress was at an all-time high, and we were all isolated and unsettled. Dogs helped break through some of that stress and provided much-needed comfort.

At the time, I had two bulldogs, Lyla and Tank. "School" photos that year consisted of my kids working on their laptops with a furry friend stretched out across their laps.



In 2021, our canine crew grew to three when we brought home Poppy, our golden retriever. Lyla was getting older, and we hoped Poppy's puppy power would re-energize our senior girl. It worked – we eked out an extra, unexpected year with our sweet girl.

When my aunt Mo passed, we adopted her springer spaniel, Sasha. Poor Sasha has had to carry a lot of my emotional weight over the past three years. When I lost my mom this year to early-onset dementia, when I lost Mo, and when I lost Lyla, it was Sasha who pulled me out from the depths of my grief. It's funny, she doesn't say anything, but her mere presence, her furry body snuggled up next to mine, her paw stretched out ... that's where I have been able to find peace.

This past October, I showed my husband a photo of an adorable Frenchie mix looking for her forever home. Normally, he immediately says "no" to my desire to create a farm-like environment in our suburban neighborhood. But for some reason that day, his response was, "Do it."

So, we now have 9-month-old Bailey, a fearless hurricane of love.

Yes, four dogs – it's a lot. I'm sure some family and friends shake their heads at us behind our backs. Our home is modest, but we have a huge, fenced-in backyard, with plenty of room for them to roam and play.

Let's face it: the world feels heavy these days. The news is a never-ending cycle of negativity, which is why I look to my dogs when I feel overwhelmed.

They don't know what's happening outside of their bubble. All they care about is food, walks, games of tug, belly scratches and nighttime snuggles. When I return home from work, they rush to the door with an excitement that makes me feel as if I am the most important being to ever exist.

A dog's perspective is simple: focus on what's right in front of you. Allow yourself to give and receive love. Cherish those who care for and take care of you. Step back from the noise of the world for a moment and notice the bird flying through the sky or the squirrel climbing the tree.

Our canine friends inspire us to lighten up, grab a ball for a game of catch, head out for a walk and, when our loved ones need comfort, don't hesitate to extend a paw. Dogs are truly remarkable – they have the innate gift of making the world a better place simply by existing.

So, the next time you're visiting the BSU campus and the day feels heavier than expected, stop by the police department. Chances are Zach, Mikey, and Arby will be there, tails wagging, ready to remind you that everything is going to be okay.



THE WITHOUT EXCEPTION CAMPAIGN enables us to expand our impact by securing the resources students need to thrive at BSU, strengthening the support systems that help them along the path to graduation and increasing our ability to offer them opportunities that translate into successful careers.

A gift to the campaign honors and affirms the very best of Bridgewater State University: where we come from, who we are and all that we can be. Please accept our sincere thanks for your support.

bridgew.edu/bsu-campaign



Momentous 185th Gala

BY BRIAN BENSON, G'23

Festivities connect BSU's past, present and future as endowment nears \$100 million goal

When Bridgewater State University opened its doors in 1840 to 28 students, the Massachusetts education system looked very different. Student riots were commonplace, and the state had not yet established professional standards for teacher training.

Herman Melville lasted just one winter as a schoolteacher. Henry David Thoreau quit after two weeks.

Yet, amid this tumultuous environment, Horace Mann and BSU's other founders envisioned high-quality normal schools that would professionalize the teaching workforce, thereby improving all levels of schooling. Even in its infancy, Bridgewater was ready to rise to the occasion – and it has never stopped doing so.

"BSU has been, is, and always will be exceptionally relevant in meeting the evolving needs of society," President Frederick W. Clark Jr., '83, said at a gala marking the university's 185th anniversary.

The gala, held late last year in Flynn Dining Commons, connected BSU's roots to the present as the university lays the foundation to continue serving students from all walks of life for decades to come. Mann, who was the state's first education secretary and is widely regarded as the father of American education, even spoke to gala attendees via a hologram. BSU draws guidance from his strong belief that education should be a right for all and not the domain of a privileged few.



Horace Mann speaks to gala attendees via a hologram.

Today, that means that a high-quality Bridgewater degree remains accessible to students who otherwise would be unable to afford a college education. It is why, as Clark often remarks, the university's faculty, librarians and staff focus unwaveringly on helping every student succeed – one student at a time – without exception.

To ensure the university continues to fulfill this vital role, the BSU Foundation launched the “Without Exception” comprehensive campaign in June 2024 with the goal of increasing Bridgewater’s endowment to \$100 million. At the gala, university leadership announced \$8 million in donations, bringing the endowment up to \$92 million.

The new commitments include \$2 million from Louis M. Ricciardi, '81, and Bruce, '68, and Patricia, '67, Bartlett, to establish the Endowed Chair for Free Enterprise and Free Speech within the Ricciardi College of Business. The faculty position is the first of its kind in the business college, and, to the donors’ knowledge, no other Massachusetts college or university offers a similarly focused position.

“We wanted to be innovative and set the College of Business apart from its peers,” said Ricciardi, who played a key role in organizing the gala as co-chair with his fiancée, Elizabeth Soares.



Left-to-Right:
President Frederick W. Clark Jr., '83;
Carrie Kulick-Clark, '85, G'98



Left-to-Right:
BSU Trustee Francis Giles and
Kendell French, '26



Ricciardi and the Bartletts envision the professor researching and teaching about capitalism, entrepreneurship and the responsibilities businesses have to their employees and communities. The chair would also forge connections with businesses and facilitate internships within corporate suites.

"We're trying to create an environment that would look at what free enterprise is and how it's supported by free speech and the freedom of choice that we frequently take for granted in this country," Ricciardi said.

Private philanthropy is critical for BSU because the state continues to underfund public higher education. Bridgewater maximizes every dollar to support the education of its 10,400 students, and the university leads all Massachusetts public colleges and universities in efficiency when dividing its state appropriation by the number of degrees awarded, President Clark told gala attendees.

"We are deeply aware that innovation, continuous improvement in all that we do, student success, and careful stewardship of our resources are essential elements to sustain our trajectory of success," Clark said.

While large donations often garner headlines, contributions of all sizes truly make a difference in helping a new generation of students achieve their dreams, said Ellen Cuttle Oliver, '82, G'89, chief development officer and executive director of the BSU Foundation.

"At the time of its founding, Bridgewater Normal School was a beacon of hope for those seeking lives away from the farms or the mills," Oliver said. "Today, we remain that beacon for yet another generation looking to change their lives for the better." ♦



Left-to-Right:
President Clark,
Ellen Cuttle Oliver, '82, G'89,
Louis M. Ricciardi, '81, and
David Rumrill, '91



A special thanks to the 185th Anniversary Gala Host Committee. Left-to-Right: President Clark, Host Committee members Louis M. Ricciardi, '81, Elizabeth Soares, Patty Oliari, Mark L. Oliari, and Ellen Cuttle Oliver, '82, G'89. Not pictured: Bruce Bartlett, '68, Patricia Quinn Bartlett, '67, Joseph St. Laurent, '88, and Linda A. Walenty-St. Laurent, '88, G'16.



Members of the President's Cabinet enjoy the festivities.



Not All Heroes

Two BSU graduates, one mission to make a difference

BY MICHAEL OLIVER

Some people spend their careers in the spotlight. Others make their mark more quietly, but not less impactfully. Patty Fisher, '97, and Edward Valla, '87, fall squarely in the second category – one transforming policing in Newbury, the other shaping minds at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy – yet both share the same goal: stepping in where it matters most.

After graduating with a sociology degree from what was then known as Bridgewater State College, Fisher began working at the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center in Newburyport. There, she coordinated with local police departments to provide domestic abuse survivors with crisis intervention counseling and support through the legal process.

When the grant supporting Fisher's work at the center ran out, serendipity stepped in: the Newbury Police Department began looking for someone to replace their outgoing domestic violence officer.

"Had you asked me what I was going to do (after college), I thought I would work for DCF or work for the district attorney's office as a victim witness advocate," she said.

But what really grabbed her was seeing officers in action overnight and the immediate, lasting difference they made for victims.

After two high-profile murder-suicides in neighboring towns – tragic, preventable outcomes of domestic abuse – Fisher began advocating for a more holistic approach to policing.

Fisher recalled how the officers all agreed something had to change, that "the system needs to get better." They realized collecting better information was key, leading to the risk assessments now used regularly in law enforcement and to train district attorneys and judges.

Fisher is now Newbury's police chief, leading a department that emphasizes community-focused policing, building trust and safety in ways that resonate far beyond the badge.

Edward Valla, '87, exemplifies the same spirit of quiet support for others, though his path looked very different.

Nearing the end of his doctorate program at the University of Connecticut, Valla had been planning a career in higher education when he learned the FBI field office in Boston was looking for



Wear Capes

intelligence analysts. Drawing on his experience as a former army intelligence officer, he decided to apply. Months later, he joined the bureau's brand-new counterterrorism task force.

"I'll be honest with you," he confided, "it was kind of boring ... I didn't have much to do."

During the first few years, much of Valla's work was self-directed. He spent his days at the Boston Public Library sifting through records and following whatever leads he could. By 2001, he was thinking about moving on, but that changed when the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, created an urgent need for counterterrorism work. Valla felt duty bound to see it through.

Even during his time at the FBI, though, Valla's desire to teach never faded. In 2008, he began teaching a weekly counterterrorism course at Bridgewater State and soon joined the certification team for the Homeland Security Program at Endicott College.

When the Boston FBI office announced plans to relocate to Chelsea in 2016, Valla decided it was time to part ways with the Bureau and pursue his teaching career full time.

Today, Valla is an assistant professor at Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

"I love all of it," he said. "I love being with the kids. I love seeing them grow."

Many rely on him as a trusted adult, and though he's not a counselor, he listens, guides and helps them navigate serious challenges they sometimes bring to him.

Valla looks back on his FBI career with pride, but it's clear teaching is where he belongs.

"The kids make it fun. I'm really going to miss it when I have to retire, but it's great," he said.

"It's just a great place to be."

Stories like Fisher's and Valla's show how BSU alumni step into roles that matter, responding to real needs in their communities. Through programs in criminal justice, social work, education and more, the university equips students with tools to make their own meaningful marks – proving that, with dedication and courage, anyone can become a helper. ♦

HEATHER McCARRON CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY

On the Front Lines Without a Badge

How a BSU-trained social worker is changing Foxboro's police and fire response

BY BRIAN BENSON, G'23

Christina LaRose, '12, G'14, is often on the front lines of emergency response, but she is not a police officer or firefighter. Instead, the social worker brings a unique skillset honed during her time at Bridgewater State.

"I'm so grateful for the school and everything I've gotten out of it," said LaRose, director of clinical services for Foxboro's police and fire departments. "It was probably the best decision I could have made."

LaRose knew she wanted to pursue a career in social work from a young age. As a teenager, she worked at a nursing home and enjoyed conversing with the residents and social services staff.

LaRose thought she would always work with seniors, but her Bridgewater education highlighted the field's breadth.

"Going to Bridgewater really opened up my eyes to all of the opportunities," she said, praising courses with Dr. Kathy Bailey. "She helped me understand more of what was available and gave me really good skills to go into the work and not burn myself out."



Christina LaRose, '12, G'14, center, speaks with Foxboro firefighters.

At BSU, LaRose learned to serve individual clients by meeting them where they are. She also graduated with an understanding of how to create broad change through public policy. And, as a student employee in Central Receiving and Inventory Management, she learned the value of relationships.

After working in elder services for two towns, LaRose became the Foxboro police and fire departments' first social worker in 2023. Her appointment came as a growing number of agencies added social workers to their teams.

The concept dates back several decades. The 2020 murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer and other acts of violence by police underscored the need for social work-law enforcement partnerships, said Dr. Michael DeValve, a Bridgewater State associate professor of criminal justice.



Christina LaRose, '12, G'14, left, connects with Foxboro School Resource Officer Melissa O'Connor.



"It's vital," said DeValve, whose areas of expertise include peacemaking criminology and conflict resolution. "This is what progress looks like ... I think policing, when done properly, is a gift of love. Generally, having a clinician around makes that much more possible. It makes everybody safer."

LaRose offers a new perspective while responding to emergency calls. She connects people facing mental health crises with the appropriate resources and prevents unneeded hospital stays. Her clients could include a teenager who ran away from home, a person facing a drug addiction, a domestic violence victim or a senior coming home from the hospital to a refrigerator with spoiled food.

Her efforts have led to fewer 911 calls from Foxboro's frequent callers. She is especially proud of one client who overcame a drug addiction and is now helping others do the same. Foxboro even added a second social worker to the team, helping to better serve the hundreds of people in need. LaRose is also preparing for the World Cup games at Gillette Stadium, which she expects will lead to increased mental health, substance abuse and human trafficking calls.

DeValve envisions a day when the occupations are fully merged, such that one person is both a police officer and a social worker.

"It's exciting," he said. "I think there's hope, but like in all things, it really comes down to the quality of the heart of the people."

There is no doubt that LaRose has the heart for the job. The Massachusetts Association of Women in Law Enforcement called her a "fierce advocate for those who have been affected by both domestic and sexual violence" in announcing that she received the association's Civilian Achievement Award in 2024. The organization also cited her work to improve data tracking, commitment to a job that is not 9-5 and efforts to establish a human trafficking-response team.

But for LaRose, the real reward comes when she sees a client doing much better.

"Getting them the support they need ... that's what keeps me coming back," she said. ♦





Pawlice Academy

BSUPD's newest recruit begins specialized training

BY HEATHER HARRIS MICHONSKI, G'26

No badge identifies Bridgewater State University's newest police force member – only a tail in constant motion.

That tail belongs to Arby, a black Labrador retriever who is partnered with Officer Joseph Locke. The eager canine is on a temporary campus assignment as he begins training to become a guide dog for the visually impaired.

This is the first time a police department has collaborated with Guiding Eyes for the Blind, a New York-based nonprofit organization that provides guide dogs to people with vision loss.

"I love being around dogs, and it's been great to have the opportunity to participate in something that's never been done before – not just for myself, but for the (police) department," Locke said.

Through the partnership with Guiding Eyes for the Blind, Locke participated in training to become a "raiser" for Arby.

Raisers are assigned puppies that live with them full time for 12 to 15 months. During that time, the dogs learn socialization cues, house manners and guidance to prepare them for the next phase of guide dog training.

"Our volunteers are literally the best human beings there are. They are willing to give and do whatever it takes to help meet all the needs of the pups so they can go out into the working world," said Lisa Bumbalo, Guiding Eyes for the Blind regional puppy instructor.

BSU Officer Joseph Locke, left, with Arby, a guide dog in training, and Lisa Bumbalo, Guiding Eyes for the Blind regional puppy instructor.



Officer Joseph Locke, left, holds Arby, a guide dog in training, as President Frederick W. Clark Jr., '83, Chief Glen Anderson, and Dr. Brian Payne look on during the Plymouth County Comfort Dogs Training Facility dedication.

BSUPD's participation was sparked during a meeting last year between Glen Anderson, BSU police chief; Dr. Brian Payne, interim dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences; and Dr. Deniz Leuenberger, chief of staff, vice president for planning and strategy and interim dean of the College of Graduate Studies, when Anderson wondered if someone from the department could take part.

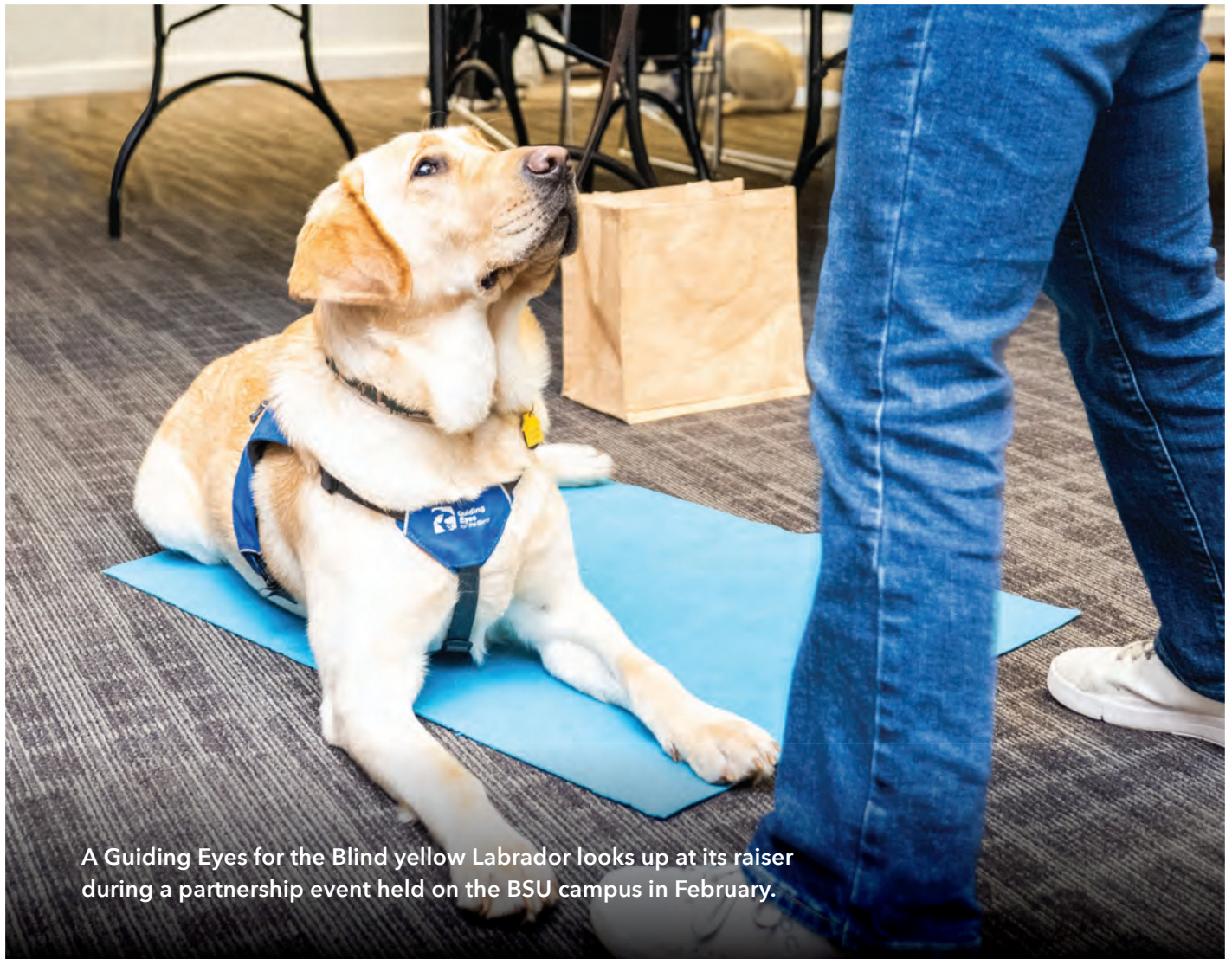
"The thought of our department contributing to something that would ultimately change the life of someone who is blind or visually impaired was incredibly compelling," Anderson said. "To be able to give such a meaningful gift felt like the opportunity to serve in a new and deeply fulfilling way."

Leuenberger supported the idea, and Payne reached out to Bumbalo, who was thrilled with the concept.

"In some ways it is almost too good to be true," she said. "BSUPD has been so enthusiastic, and Officer Locke is a great guy. He has approached this all with an open mind and has learned a lot in terms of what he needs to support Arby."

According to Payne, who has worked as a puppy raiser through the organization since 2017, a college campus is an ideal setting for training a dog.

"The biggest thing you are teaching the puppy is how to adapt and behave in a human environment," he said. "BSU is a microcosm of a large city. You have communal living spaces, public transportation, meeting rooms, the outdoors – all at a smaller scale. It's a great way to introduce a puppy to a very busy human world in smaller increments."



A Guiding Eyes for the Blind yellow Labrador looks up at its raiser during a partnership event held on the BSU campus in February.

Since arriving on campus in December, Arby has shared every moment with Locke, attending Guiding Eyes training sessions and venturing across campus – and beyond – as a team.

An important lesson as they live and work together, Locke said, “is getting him to ignore the distractions.”

“I’m helping teach him the foundations so he can go on to be as successful a guide dog as he can be,” he said.

When Arby is finished training with Locke, he will return to Guiding Eyes headquarters and training school in Yorktown Heights, New York, for the final leg of his education. If he passes, he will be placed with someone experiencing vision loss.

Locke already knows saying goodbye to Arby will be difficult, but he realizes Arby’s purpose is to

change someone’s life for the better. He plans to attend the graduation ceremony once his canine partner passes all his training.

“Knowing I am helping to provide a service animal that will be a life-changing addition to someone’s life, to give them freedom and mobility – that is what makes this so exciting,” Locke said.

Going forward, Bumbalo said she would love to continue working with BSU, including recruiting more volunteers to serve as puppy raisers.

“It would be great if we could find more raisers at BSU,” she said. “It’s been really so neat working with these guys. They are wonderful people that have really embraced the program. I can’t wait to see what the future holds for Officer Locke and Arby.” ♦



Making it Matter

One alumna's journey from the Boston streets to the Suffolk County DA's office

BY HEATHER McCARRON

When Loyalty Cannon, '23, arrived at Bridgewater State University in 2019, she was doing something no one in her family had done before. She was stepping into college without a roadmap – destined to be the first generation to earn a degree and determined not just to succeed, but to make it matter.

Today, she works in human resources for the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, supporting the people behind the work of the justice system itself, and guiding others following similar paths.

It all began with a lived experience. When she started at BSU, she was already committed to a criminal justice major. Growing up in the Greater Boston area, she not only saw firsthand how crime and incarceration affected families and communities, but she also experienced how it affected her own family.

"My father was incarcerated basically all of my life," she confided. Her family moved frequently across Boston, often into neighborhoods where the effects of crime were impossible to ignore.

These early realities raised many questions about how the justice system works, who it serves and who it fails, and how it might better help people caught inside it.

While in high school, Cannon got involved with Sisters Unchained, a self-described prison abolitionist nonprofit organization that supports girls, young women and nonbinary youth affected by parental incarceration. She helped advocate for legislation offering alternatives to prison for parents convicted of nonviolent crimes, even giving a speech at the Massachusetts State House in support of it.

The bill passed, illustrating to her how systems can change when people speak up and locking Cannon's path into place.

"It was the motivation for me," she said.

At BSU, Cannon paired her criminal justice major with a psychology minor. Her major courses exposed her to how courts work, how policies are implemented and how institutional decisions affect people, while psychology

courses deepened her understanding of behavior, motivation and human interaction.

She chose BSU for practical reasons – affordability, proximity to home and the welcoming orientation – and stayed because of its campus culture, sense of safety and acceptance, and because she felt supported.

"I never felt alone at BSU," she recalled. "If I was stressing about grades or tuition, there was always a department that could help."

"I never felt alone at BSU. If I was stressing about grades or tuition, there was always a department that could help."

LOYALTY CANNON, '23



SUFFOLK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Kevin R.

That sense of connectedness and support extended beyond offices and classrooms. A chance stop at East Campus Commons to pick up her textbooks led her to meet Aboubacar Diakite, who was then a community liaison for the BSU Police Department and was helping with a “Popcorn with Police” event.

He helped her find and apply for an internship with the Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office and became a lasting mentor. Years later, they still check in. For Cannon, that relationship embodies one of the things BSU does best: offer connection alongside independence.

She said she chose the internship over a more traditional research paper, wanting to apply what she was learning in a real workplace environment. Having that experience on her

resume helped her get a full-time job in the DA’s office as a human resources assistant within six months of graduation. A year later, she was promoted to human resources generalist and named the internship coordinator.

Cannon now helps lead onboarding and offboarding employees, explains benefits, supports employee relations and steps in wherever the HR department needs coverage. Her academic background plays out every day: understanding compliance, navigating regulations and approaching employee concerns with efficiency and empathy.



The most satisfying part of her job, Cannon said, is problem-solving – helping employees navigate questions and policies and keeping up with constant changes in labor law. If she doesn't know the answer, she said, she won't stop until she finds it.

At the same time, she runs an internship program that connects undergraduates, law students and high school fellows with meaningful workplace experience.

"It's very on-demand work," she said. "But I like getting things done."

Three years post-graduation, Cannon stands at an inflection point. She's considering law school. She's also considering a master's degree in business administration. Her criminal justice foundation keeps both options in reach.

She's always liked to have an idea of what she wanted her life to look like, she said, recalling how she would always tell her mentors, "I'm going to law school right after undergrad," and they'd say, "you never know."

"I'm still trying to figure out what it is I really, really see myself doing," she admitted, and for now, she's allowing herself the space to figure it out.

Her message to BSU students, whether they are pursuing criminal justice or other disciplines, is to take charge of their future by maximizing networking, building a LinkedIn profile early, seeking mentors and trusting that exploration is part of the path to success.

She also advises students not to shy away from pursuing opportunities they are not fully sure about – it could lead to new pathways and open doors they never imagined.

"Don't be like me. I waited until my senior year," she said, emphasizing that "nothing prepares you more for the real world than hands-on experience." ♦

Putting True Crime on the Map

Inside a first-year geography seminar and other courses helping shape criminal justice education at BSU

BY BRIAN BENSON, G'23

As a true crime aficionado, Emma Longmore, '28, is fascinated by the most infamous criminal masterminds. During her first year at BSU, Emma explored the topic through an innovative geography course.

"With the amount of classes Bridgewater offers, you're always going to find something you're interested in," said Emma, a criminal justice major from Everett who took the first-year seminar titled Spatial Analysis of True Crime. "I find myself being drawn to [true crime] and have a passion for it. Once I saw this class, I knew it was right up my alley. I was so excited."

Part-time geography faculty member Courtney Sutcliffe, '14, G'18, teaches the class, focusing on how geography influences crime sprees. Students listen to true crime podcasts, write reports, create maps and present their research. It is just one example of the diverse, creative and engaging seminars students take early in their time at Bridgewater State.

As part of BSU's core curriculum, students complete one first-year and one second-year seminar. The courses allow them to pursue areas of interest or dive into entirely new disciplines while developing as writers, critical thinkers and public speakers. They gain skills that translate across disciplines and serve them well in their education and future careers, said Dr. Lee Torda, dean of undergraduate studies.

"It's an introduction to the intellectual life of college – how one has civil, thoughtful conversations among people," Torda said. "It's how to present an argument or an idea you really believe in with integrity and rigor and passion. That's pretty exciting and remarkable."

While seminars are as diverse as the university's degree offerings, Sutcliffe's course is one of several that connect criminal justice to other subjects or aspects of pop culture.

Dr. Mia Ortiz, a professor of criminal justice, teaches second-year seminars connecting her field to sports

and cinema. The cinema class explores how movies and TV shows portray criminal justice topics such as the use of forensic evidence and the role of juries.

Meanwhile, students in the sports class study gambling, on-field aggression, parent behavior, and sexual and domestic abuse, among other topics.

Ortiz challenges students to consider perspectives beyond their own by writing from the viewpoint of parents, administrators or agents. They also watch documentaries and research topics of their own choosing.

"I find myself being drawn to [true crime] and have a passion for it. Once I saw this class, I knew it was right up my alley. I was so excited."

EMMA LONGMORE, '28

Students in Courtney Sutcliffe's Spatial Analysis of True Crime class share maps they created tracking crime sprees.





"Sports is such a cultural touchstone for most of us in this country, especially in this region," she said, but "we do need to be critical of all institutions. It's important for us to not take the spaces at face value."

Dr. Feodor Gostjev sees music as a similar omnipresent force in society and designed a seminar around its intersection with justice. Gostjev's course focuses on three major themes:

- The migration of Delta blues artists to northern areas and how racial tensions and Jim Crow laws shaped their music.
- Protest music of the 1960s and the works it inspired.
- 1980s rap and hip-hop music, which was shaped by the war on drugs, mass incarceration, violence and other challenges Blacks living in inner cities faced.

Gostjev is especially interested in blues music and even visited the Mississippi Delta during a family trip to see where these musicians lived.

His course focuses on improving students' public speaking skills. For one assignment, each student researches a song and its connection to justice and presents their knowledge to the class.

"They're not talking about some nerdy academic topic," he said. "The students tend to be much more engaged and interested ... The best thing you can do for students is to ignite their curiosity."

Sutcliffe, who teaches the Spatial Analysis of True Crime course, realized this was also a topic that would interest students. She started listening to true crime podcasts several years ago and, as a geographer, naturally considered how location affects crimes.

Her students explore patterns such as murder sites' proximity to highways that provide easy getaway routes. For a final project, they work in groups to develop an interactive presentation about serial killers such as Richard Ramirez, who was nicknamed the Night Stalker and killed more than a dozen people in California in the 1980s.



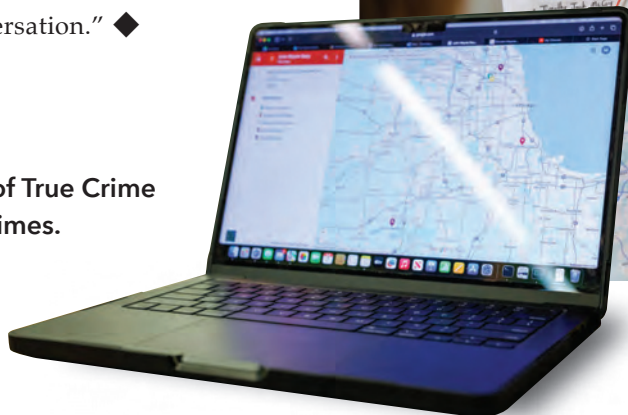
"A lot of them already had a huge interest and knowledge level [about true crime]," Sutcliffe said. "They were able to take that knowledge and think about it in a way they didn't before."

In addition to encouraging students to think like geographers, Sutcliffe strives to foster connections between classmates that extend beyond the classroom. Her students say those goals were accomplished.

"It's a very comfortable environment. There's a lot of open discussion," said Cassidy Goodwin, '28, a criminal justice major from Pittsfield.

"Everyone is a part of every conversation." ♦

Students in the Spatial Analysis of True Crime class produced maps tracking crimes.





A Closer Look Behind The Bars

Sheriff Peter Koutoujian sees people, not just inmates

BY HEATHER McCARRON

Peter Koutoujian, '83, doesn't see jails the way most people do. Where others see rows of cells and case numbers, he sees people – veterans with invisible wounds, young men struggling to define themselves and older adults coming to terms with bad decisions that changed their lives.

Each group, he believes, needs something different. And if the system isn't built to recognize that, then it demands innovation.

As Middlesex County sheriff, Koutoujian has spent more than a decade putting that belief into practice – a perspective that was shaped early at Bridgewater State where he said he experienced firsthand what it feels like to be seen and supported as an individual, not just a name and student number on a roster.

When he was named sheriff in 2011, Koutoujian quickly recognized that too many jails treated inmates the same, with one set of rules, one set of programs and one size-fits-all solutions.

"Historically, I think jails and prisons looked at individuals placed with them by the courts as large blocks of people dealing with the same or similar problems," he said. "Because of that, we thought we could use blanket approaches to rehabilitation."

That didn't work for him.

"We recognize that those in our care are not a monolith. Whether it's by age or life experience, we've identified unique populations with unique needs," he said, "and by driving unique resources to them, we can produce unique outcomes."

It has led Koutoujian – who also has experience as a legislator, prosecutor and professor – to do something different to offer individualized pathways forward.

He created one of the first dedicated housing units in Massachusetts for incarcerated military veterans, recognizing that shared service creates trust and understanding.

“Just by putting these individuals together in one space, their shared bonds of service created an atmosphere more conducive to treatment,” he said.

Another innovation is People Achieving Change Together, a unit for men ages 18 to 25 – an acknowledgement that young men face different challenges than older men in custody. Later, the Older Adult Re-Entry Unit recognized the rising number of incarcerated people over age 55, many with serious medical needs, and a different path back into society.

Many of these initiatives are first in the state – and in most cases, first in the nation – “efforts that are now being studied and replicated by colleagues across the country,” he noted.

Koutoujian, who studied psychology at Bridgewater State and was president of his class, recognizes that ideas are easy.

Proof that they work is more difficult. For that reason, he said, “data plays a critical role in everything we do at the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office.”

“These programs came about because we were able to look at the data and identify a need,” he said. “If we were not looking at the most basic, ground-level data, we would not have been in a position to establish these programs.”

His team tracks what works, what doesn’t, and why. And when something needs tweaking, they adjust it. The Medication Assisted Treatment and Directed Opioid Recovery program grew out of that mindset – a response to the opioid crisis and refined as new information came out.

The Family Support Services Unit followed, recognizing that incarceration also affects spouses, children and others – and that helping families also helps incarcerated individuals to find success after they are released.

And if an idea fails? Koutoujian doesn’t sweep it under the rug. He takes pride in his team’s “willingness to talk about what we tried that didn’t work as intended.”

“BSU has always evolved to meet the needs of each generation of students. I hope through my tenure on the Board of Trustees, we will not only ensure we’re meeting the academic, athletic, artistic and social needs of today’s students, but that we are positioning the university to do so long into the future.”

PETER KOUTOUJIAN, ‘83

“When we talk about those things, it shows others that, even if something doesn’t work precisely the first time, there’s still a way to get there,” he said.

That kind of transparency has helped the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office under Koutoujian’s leadership earn national attention. As past president of both the Massachusetts Sheriff’s Association and Major County Sheriffs of America, he said, “I had the unique opportunity to not only share the work we were doing in Middlesex but also facilitate

dialogue among leaders across the nation.”

Just as importantly, “it provided me the chance to also bring successful initiatives back to the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office, as we did with the Frederick Douglass Project for Justice,” he said, referring to the nonprofit that, according to its website, “fosters connection between incarcerated individuals and the broader community to promote empathy, understanding and systemic change.”



For Koutoujian, innovation isn't just about new ideas but also relies on collaboration – another principle that characterizes learning at Bridgewater State.

"Public-private partnerships are most successful when everyone at the table recognizes the strengths of each other," he said.

Those kinds of collaborations have been especially effective for the Older Adult Re-Entry Unit, with health care providers, researchers and correctional staff working together to address aging, mobility and chronic illness in humane and fiscally responsible ways.

Koutoujian has also helped shape change at BSU. As a state representative, he helped Bridgewater State College become designated as a university in 2010. That achievement, he said, "was less about my legislative experience and more about my educational experience at the school."

As a member of the BSU Board of Trustees, Koutoujian brings the same mindset he has at work to the university, focused on listening to and responding to the community's needs.

"BSU has always evolved to meet the needs of each generation of students," he said. "I hope through my tenure on the Board of Trustees, we will not only ensure we're meeting the academic, athletic, artistic and social needs of today's students, but that we are positioning the university to do so long into the future."

For those considering careers in law, policy or corrections, Koutoujian offers this advice: "We need more people with empathy, passion and professionalism in all these fields," he said. "Listen to the people you are serving but also make sure to follow your own moral compass because that is where the greatest innovations are going to come from." ♦



Remembering Dan Darcy

A life that lifted others

When news broke that Dan Darcy, '88, G'90, lost his battle with cancer in December, the tributes came pouring in. Those who knew him took to social media to honor their friend.

A common theme ran through the posts: Darcy was someone who radiated love, a "glow," if you will. He was a man who touched many through his kindness, his laughter and his ability to bring out the best in people.

Darcy was known to use his own Facebook page as a place to spread positivity and humor, inspiring and connecting others. It was fitting, then, that so many publicly shared their memories.

"As I read through the hundreds of social media posts remembering Dan, I was struck by how every single tribute spoke about his kindness, genuineness, mentorship, honesty, positivity, strength and how he was an all-around good person," said Joe Lyons, '00.

Lyons met Darcy as a freshman in 1996 after joining WBIM 91.5 Radio and *The Comment* newspaper. What began as professional guidance evolved into a lasting friendship.

"Dan was a friend to so many of us, but 'friend' doesn't fully encompass who he truly was," Lyons said. "Dan was a mentor, an advisor, a confidant and so much more."

Over their 30-year friendship, Lyons said every interaction – whether it was a quick chat or a long catch-up – was filled with laughter and thoughtfulness.

"He always made sure you left feeling good," Lyons said.

Anyone who walked into Darcy's office at Bridgewater State University was greeted by two oversized chairs inviting them to sit. That was the point. Darcy didn't just create spaces for people to pass through; he created spaces for people to belong.

"His voice was big; his laugh was bigger. But the biggest thing about Dan was his heart," said Ellen Cuttle Oliver, '82, G'89, executive director of the BSU Foundation and chief development officer. "Alumni would stop into Dan's office for a quick hello, but would end up staying for hours at a time. Dan made everyone feel special."



Circa 1996: Dan Darcy and Patrick Higgins, '00, G'05, CAGS '08

For many who traveled through BSU, Darcy wasn't just a staff member. He was part of the Bridgewater experience.

He began his Bridgewater State journey in 1983, earning his speech communications degree in 1988, followed by a master's in education and counseling in 1990.

In 1996, Darcy was hired as the assistant director of student activities for orientation and fraternity and sorority life at Bridgewater.

During his interview with Cathy Holbrook, G'81, former BSU dean of student affairs, Darcy spoke candidly about his own time as a student, acknowledging that mistakes were part of his growth. His goal was to empower students, to help them learn and to work with them to build something meaningful.

"Dan built trust. Students knew that he genuinely cared for them and their success. He built the kind of trust that made him a regular go-to for so many students who needed advice in all phases of their student life," Holbrook said.

Under his mentorship, students launched and strengthened leadership organizations, including the Order of Omega and Gamma Sigma Alpha honor societies. But it wasn't about the titles and programs. It was always about people.

"Dan built trust. Students knew that he genuinely cared for them and their success. He built the kind of trust that made him a regular go-to for so many students who needed advice in all phases of their student life."

**CATHY HOLBROOK, G'81,
FORMER BSU DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS**

"Dan was a cultivator of leaders," said Patrick Higgins, '00, G'05, CAGS '08, a triple Bear and now an elementary school principal. "Through his bigger-than-life persona and love for Bridgewater, he helped to develop and raise young men and women who wanted to embrace his vision and make Bridgewater thrive."

Cindy Kane, former assistant provost for strategic initiatives, worked alongside Darcy in the Student Activities Office in 1998. She shared how he helped her see the deeper impact of public higher education.

"Through the way he worked with students, he taught me how deeply public higher education can change lives," Kane said. "When the work feels heavy or complicated, I think of Dan and am reminded to return to the simple, meaningful purpose at the heart of what we do, and that's making a difference in students' lives."

ALUMNI UPDATE

Peter George, '84, technical engineer for student engagement and student life, recalled how Dan helped launch the annual WBIM Alumni Takeover in 1997, an event that continues today.

"He was always a great, lovable Bear," George said. "Everybody loved him."

Darcy left BSU in 2001 to further build his career at Emmanuel College, where he spent the next 18 years. But in 2020, he returned to his alma mater to serve as director of alumni and student engagement, a role he held until his passing on Dec. 12, 2025.

In his position, he was able to use his skills to help bridge undergraduate and alumni experiences.

"He understood profoundly that those relationships have to be built when you're an undergraduate," Oliver said. "He knew how to bridge the alumni to the student experience."

Many former students credit Darcy with shaping their career paths. Laura Flynn, '03, now director of orientation and first-year experience at Brandeis University, said Darcy's influence led her into a 20-plus-year career in student engagement.

"His passion for his work, and for the experience of his students, inspired me," Flynn said. "He is one of the reasons I ended up going into student affairs."

For generations of Bears, Darcy was the heart of Bridgewater State University as a mentor and friend.

His students went on to become principals, higher education professionals, business owners and community leaders. They carry on the lessons he modeled: that leadership is service, that kindness matters and that laughter can transform even the heaviest of days.

Dan leaves a legacy of leadership and advocacy that has sent ripples through generations of Bridgewater graduates. He truly was a visionary and mentor to so many, which is why so many attribute post-college success to his guidance and tutelage.

During Darcy's five-year battle with terminal cancer, he approached the situation with the same grace and optimism for which he was known.

Even in his final weeks, Darcy was thinking of others. Friends recall how he made sure his 95-year-old neighbor, Sheila, received a flood of birthday cards each year to brighten her day.

"That was Dan," Lyons said. "The world needs more Dan Darcys, now more than ever."

BY HEATHER HARRIS MICHONSKI, G'26



Celebrate Dan's life

**The Daniel J. Darcy, '88, G'90,
Endowed Scholarship Fund -
Bridgewater State University**

Dan Darcy was all about giving. Those who knew him remember not what he accomplished, but how he showed up for others. He was kind, thoughtful, generous and had a sincere desire to help people succeed. He believed in opening doors and offering encouragement when it mattered the most. One of the many ways his legacy lives on is through a scholarship Dan established prior to his passing. Friends came together to raise additional funds so Dan could see the first recipient receive the scholarship in his name. Supporting this scholarship is a meaningful way to honor the values Dan lived every day. If you would like to celebrate his life and extend his impact, we invite you to consider a gift to the Daniel J. Darcy, '88, G'90, Endowed Scholarship Fund. Your contribution, of any size, helps carry forward the compassion and generosity that defined him.

bridgew.edu/give

ALUMNI PROFILE

Delivering Joy

What began as a college side job grew into a multimillion-dollar party rental company

Back when Sal Longo, '06, was choosing a college, he wanted a place where he could play football and earn his degree without emerging buried in debt. Bridgewater State, checked that box and many others.

"It was a natural fit for me," he said. "The four years I spent there were amazing."

While studying and serving as captain of the football team in both his junior and senior year, Longo also worked part-time for a party-rental company called Busy Bee that rents out inflatables, water slides, foosball, bouncy houses and more.

On his first delivery, he dropped off a water slide to a family in Hanover. The trip changed the trajectory of his career.

"I saw the joy on the kids' faces, the mom was super happy, and they gave me a good tip. I thought, there is something different here than any other service industry I've been in before," Longo said.

He continued to work for the company throughout college and stayed on after he graduated with a degree in business administration.

Today Longo owns Busy Bee and has turned the Whitman-based company into a leader in the party rental world.

The company generates between \$350,000 to \$400,000 in gross revenue per week during peak months and completed more than 150,000 events in 2025.

Busy Bee also entered a new phase: franchising. Last year, the company launched its franchise system: new locations have since opened in Worcester, Rhode Island and Cape Cod.

So where did Longo develop his impressive business skills? According to him, at his alma mater.



"At the end of the day, I don't think any of this would have been possible if I didn't go to Bridgewater State," he said. "I'm thankful for that. Yes, I've worked hard, but Bridgewater helped put me on the right path. I wouldn't be on this journey now and am indebted to the university for a lot of my success."

He said a lot of that support came from BSU's current head football coach Joe Verria.

"I'm a huge believer that you have to have mentors in life. Joe was a mentor for me and as my business continues to expand, I have the opportunity to give back and mentor young kids. Mentoring is

tremendous, it's a foundational piece for anyone's growth," Longo said.

Over the years, Longo has also hired Bridgewater State students to work at Busy Bee, providing them with the opportunity to start building their own resumes.

"It's about building a strong tool kit," he said. "I tell them to not worry about what you're getting paid, worry about what you're learning. As you build your tool kit, you become valuable. When you get more tools in that kit, you become irreplaceable."

"I've worked hard, but Bridgewater helped put me on the right path. I wouldn't be on this journey now and am indebted to the university for a lot of my success."

SAL LONGO, '06

STAY CONNECTED. Send your news to the Office of Alumni Relations via email to alumni@bridgew.edu or mail to Jones Alumni House, 26 Summer Street, Bridgewater, MA 02325.

The class notes editor reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity and brevity. Submitted photos must be either high-resolution digital images or original prints from film. Photos generated on home printers are not of publication quality.

ALUMNI UPDATE

CLASS NOTES

1962

Sheila McKenna was a member of the High Fives women's basketball team, which won third place at the National Senior Games. They earned the bronze medal in the women's 80-84 bracket. The High Fives have competed on the national stage for the past 25 years and will be featured in a documentary on senior-citizen athletes. They won four of the seven games in which they competed.

1964

The "Lunch-on-Stairs" trio, **Laurie MacDonald, Tony Pellegrini** and **John Stewart**, continue to lunch together as they did when they were commuter students.

1965

Elayne Scott Neal recently published her seventh book on Amazon titled *Understanding Dreams and Past Lives* under the pen name E. N. Light.

1976

Robert Harlow recently published a book of poetry titled *W/Reckless Love*. He retired after many years of teaching literature and writing at the University of Arizona and the University at Albany.

1993

Toby Douthwright was named the new CFO of Kravis Center for the Performing Arts.

2001

Catherine Adams joined North Easton Savings Bank as the chief commercial banking officer.

2005

Michael Quin, G'05, was appointed senior director of laboratory services at Millstone Medical Advances.

2007



Bruce Hughes, G'07, made his 300th donation to the American Red Cross Whole Blood/Platelets Donor programs on Nov. 20, 2025. As of that date, he had donated 64 gallons of blood products. Hughes continues to regularly make donations that help save many lives.

Peter Roderick was promoted to senior vice president of Branch Strategy and Deposit Operations at Seamen's Bank.

2009

Erron Custadio auditioned for a small role and was offered the leading role in the indie horror film *The Rez*. The film is being shopped around to Netflix and Amazon Prime.

2014

Shannon DiPalmo, vice president of community engagement at CAN Community Health, was recognized as one of the Top 50 Women Leaders of Boston for 2025 by the Women We Admire organization.

Larry Azer, G'14, is the new school business and finance manager for the Avon Public Schools.

2016

Joshua Overton has joined Borchers Cusano Trust Law firm as a law associate.

ALUMNI SERVICES

For more information about the services below, visit www.bridgew.edu/alumni

WEBSITE

Visit the BSU alumni website, www.bridgew.edu/alumni, to learn more about events, services and the activities of alumni affinity groups.

LINKEDIN

The "Official Bridgewater State University" group on LinkedIn is more than 59,000 strong. Request to join the group today.

INSTAGRAM

Follow us @BSU_Alumni.

FACEBOOK

Follow us on Facebook (@BSUAlum) or search "Bridgewater State Alumni."

ALUMNI UPDATE

MET AND MARRIED

A Bridgewater State Love Story

Maddie Monagle and Jonny Matthews trace their relationship back to Pope Hall

Some love stories start with fireworks. For Maddie Monagle, '18, and Jonny Matthews, '19, it began with friendship – formed in Pope Hall and shaped by the everyday moments of life at Bridgewater State University.

"We really were like best friends at first," Monagle recalled, noting their friend groups started hanging out together soon after Matthews moved in as a transfer student. "Then we started dating, and the rest is history."

A decade later, the couple is living in Quincy and preparing to tie the knot in October. They credit Bridgewater State with providing not only a great education but the beginnings of a lifelong partnership.

Monagle and Matthews bonded over meals in dining halls and Emma's Pizza nearby. They lived in a coed suite in Crimson Hall, cheered on the football team and attended homecoming festivities. Monagle and Matthews were even study buddies, helping each other survive a difficult astronomy class.

"We really were inseparable," Monagle said. "We were hanging out all the time."

United by a shared passion for helping others, their bond persevered even as Monagle graduated, and Matthews stayed at BSU for his senior year.

"She has a really big heart and genuinely cares about the people in her life, and also people she doesn't know," said Matthews.

Along the Boston waterfront, Matthews gets on one knee to propose to a visibly surprised Monagle. Monagle added: "He's just very generous and driven to help others, and that is something I appreciate and am drawn to."



Their career ambitions also revolve around serving others. Matthews, who studied criminal justice, works as a guidance counselor at Everett High School. Monagle, who earned a bachelor's degree in communications,

is pursuing a master's degree in social work and working as a team lead support analyst at Amadeus, a global technology company that serves the travel and tourism industry.

Though their careers diverged from their majors, Monagle and Matthews gained numerous transferable skills from BSU.

"Bridgewater is very important to us. I think we will always go back to visit whenever we can. It's where we started our life together."

MADDIE MONAGLE, '18

"It's a great community of people. The school really helped me build relationships," Monagle said, praising the opportunity to be immersed in a diverse, multicultural student body. "It was a very welcoming school."

Matthews appreciated the real-world connections and experiences his professors brought into the classroom. He values the academic and personal growth that comes with being a Bear.

"Bridgewater is very important to us. I think we will always go back to visit whenever we can," Monagle said. "It's where we started our life together."

BY BRIAN BENSON, G'23

DID YOU MEET AT BRIDGEWATER STATE AND GET MARRIED?

If so, we'd love to share your love story. Email stories@bridgew.edu.

IT TAKES A FEW MINUTES, BUT **YOUR VOICE** HELPS SHAPE FUTURE ISSUES.



We're looking for your honest feedback to make the *Bridgewater* magazine even better—more of what you love, less of what you don't.



SCAN THE



QR CODE



CAREER SERVICES & INTERNSHIPS OFFICE

Help lead Bridgewater State University students to success

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

UTILIZE OUR 24/7 DIGITAL CAREER CENTER

The Career Services & Internships office has a one-stop resource allowing everyone access to information that is pertinent to them. Sign up for an account on our website, powered by uConnect, which will allow you to create customized e-newsletters to keep you updated on jobs and events of interest. Check out this site and resources at: careers.bridgew.edu.

HANDSHAKE

Handshake is BSU's recruiting database connecting students and alumni to employers across the country looking to fill jobs and internships. Alumni are welcome to create an account to access position postings, networking opportunities and career event information: bridgew.joinhandshake.com/login. Make sure your company posts on Handshake as well!

COLLABORATIVE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS EXPERIENCES (CUBEs)

The CUBEs program connects organizations with students taking courses across the university's academic majors developing solutions through in-class project work in collaboration with external businesses and organizations. We also welcome other opportunities to collaborate with alumni/employers such as guest speakers in the classroom, facility tours, networking events and more! Visit: www.bridgew.edu/academics/cubes for more information.

CAREER FAIRS

The Career Services & Internships office hosts several career fairs each year that alumni are welcome to attend to search for positions or to register as an employer looking to hire our students.

FALL JOB & INTERNSHIP FAIR

Thursday, September 17, 2026

1 - 3:30 pm

Rondileau Student Union Ballroom

TELL US ABOUT YOUR POST GRADUATION PLANS!

Each year, the Career Services & Internships office surveys the recent graduating class to find out what you are doing after BSU. This data assists with university accreditation and helps us develop programs to best serve BSU students. Results remain anonymous. We are looking for responses from August 2025, December 2025, and May 2026 graduates, so please visit the QR code to complete the survey. If you are still job hunting, please complete the survey and contact our office at: 508.531.1328 to set up a job search appointment with a career advisor.



INDUSTRY MENTOR PROGRAM

The Industry Mentors program connects students with BSU alumni and industry professionals in their fields of interest. Students will work closely with our Career & Life Design Advisors to explore their skills, interests, personalities and values. As they continue their self-discovery journey, the advisor will refer students to you for a career conversation to learn more about your career experience, industry insights and tips on launching their career in your field. Contact Gerald Tang at: c2tang@bridgew.edu for more information and to sign up.

CAMPUS ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Opportunities are available for alumni to engage with BSU students throughout the academic year. The Career Services & Internships office coordinates several programs including career panels, networking events and career fairs where alumni get the chance to represent their employer and interact with students.

For more information, visit our website at: careers.bridgew.edu or contact the Career Services & Internships Office at 508.531.1328 or careerservices@bridgew.edu.

ALUMNI UPDATE

IN MEMORIAM

The university is saddened by the deaths of the following alumni and extends condolences to their loved ones:

Class of 1930 - 1960

Marie Rudd Thomas, '38, on September 24, 2025
Shirley W. Thatcher, '47, on December 20, 2024
Ellen Galligan Tracy, '48, on January 14, 2024
Jeanne Taylor Roscoe, '51, on March 18, 2025
Rita Crowley Choquette, '52, on July 29, 2021
Elaine Patch Dennis, '52, on December 7, 2025
Florence "Peggy" Katwick Shearer, '52, on December 17, 2025
William E. Coyle, G'53, on August 22, 2025
Barbara Moriarty Reincke, '53, on October 10, 2025
Richard A. Wallace, '53, on September 21, 2024
Timothea Lovett Youngberg, '53, on April 25, 2025
Ruth Healy Buckley, G'54, on February 2, 2025
Alice Griffin Chase, '54, on November 16, 2025
Doris Green Chisholm, '54, on July 30, 2025
John H. Green, '54, on January 14, 2026
Betty Rich Tuttle, '54, on June 7, 2025
Rebecca Cook Ullom, '54, on April 12, 2025
Barbara Frieh Brunelle, '55, on January 14, 2026
Harold Cornforth Jr., G'55, on March 16, 2025
Anne Vargas Ferreira, '55, on January 7, 2026
Patricia Books Ferreira, '55, G'73, on December 31, 2018
Beatrice Sullivan McDevitt, '55, on January 5, 2025
Margaret Travers Tavares, '55, on May 31, 2025
Rosemary Sweeney Davies, '56, G'64, on July 6, 2025
Frances Cremen McRae, '56, on September 9, 2025
Barbara Jackson Scott, '56, on March 14, 2025
Mary O'Brien Souza, '56, on December 12, 2024
Allen Winecour, '56, on May 13, 2025
Harry C. Allen, '57, G'61, on October 11, 2024
John Shields, '57, on May 9, 2025
Mary Belle Barker Small, '57, on August 16, 2025
Edward J. White, '57, on September 8, 2020
Irene Gomes, '58, G'70, on May 28, 2025
Mary Garvey Guyett, '58, on January 10, 2026
Joanne A. Hadalski, '58, on September 29, 2024
Betty Cowgill Jardin, '58, on December 24, 2025
Anna Marie Zanazzo Kenny, '58, on February 15, 2025
Carolyn Cooper Kingsbury, G'58, on September 14, 2021
Robert C. Norton, '58, G'62, on August 6, 2024
Ann T. Resca, '58, on January 24, 2026
Carol Troesch-Cheyne Tessier, '58, on January 6, 2026
John S. Tripp, '58, G'64, G'72, on November 18, 2025
Donald F. Beurman, '59, on February 7, 2025
Patricia Collins Boland, '59, on September 26, 2023
William S. Bruno, '59, G'62, on July 30, 2025
Lois E. Eaton, G'59, on July 2, 2024
Janice Powers Humphreys, '59, on November 30, 2025
Patricia E. Mitchell, '59, on June 15, 2023

Barbara Connor Reed, '59, on October 26, 2025
Carol Cummings Roht, '59, on July 23, 2025
Edmund F. Tavares, '59, on December 1, 2025
Richard H. Norman, G'60, on December 17, 2023

Class of 1961 - 1970

Alice Cardoza, G'61, on February 29, 2024
William J. Rex, G'61, on March 23, 2024
Andrew D. Tournas, G'61, on July 28, 2025
Sandra L. Holbrook, '62, on September 25, 2025
George N. Kayata, G'62, on June 13, 2023
Robert M. Lanzetta, G'62, on November 3, 2025
Louise Chouinard-Bailey, '62, on April 16, 2025
Barbara Nappa, G'62, on July 12, 2024
Roger E. Sawyer, G'62, on June 1, 2024
Marilyn Griffiths Tracy, '62, on October 17, 2025
Virginia Flanagan Curley, '63, on August 1, 2025
Gilbert R. Ferreira, G'63, on June 22, 2024
Dianne Vieira Joubert, '63, on July 14, 2025
Mason B. Kingsbury, G'63, on February 22, 2022
Elaine Govoni McLaughlin, G'63, on May 28, 2025
Ernest J. Morgan, G'63, on May 16, 2025
Constance Gunn Richardson, G'63, on February 4, 2025
Edward C. Roche, G'63, on May 26, 2025
Edmund M. Tavares, G'63, on November 21, 2024
Robert N. Witham, G'63, on June 27, 2025
Frances A. Yonitis, G'63, on January 3, 2022
Jack C. Colocousis, G'64, on January 19, 2022
Carroll P. Gagnon, G'64, on October 14, 2021
Barry P. Gallagher, '64, on January 4, 2026
George D. Kelly, G'64, on January 27, 2026
Barbara J. Little, G'64, on February 29, 2024
Donald P. Mahanor, G'64, on June 17, 2022
Eleanor F. Nelson, G'64, on June 11, 2022
Robert P. Renaud, G'64, on January 19, 2024
Catherine Keefe Sholtanis, '64, on December 24, 2025
Mary E. Silva, G'64, on May 4, 2023
Robert B. Simpson, G'64, on March 23, 2023
Maurice J. Splaine Jr., G'64, on July 10, 2022
Donald G. Wood, G'64, on May 13, 2024
Thomas E. Alecrim, G'65, on September 30, 2021
Marjorie L. Davis, '65, on August 5, 2025
Natalie K. McComb, G'65, on December 31, 2025
Lenora H. McGuire, G'65, on July 2, 2025
Roger J. Toni, G'65, on March 5, 2024
Peter Barca, G'66, on August 9, 2025
Albert J. Birmingham, G'66, on July 18, 2025
Teri-Ann Dunn Bumpus, '66, on July 12, 2025
Arthur J. Bumpus Jr., '66, on November 23, 2025
Richard J. Coyle, G'66, on November 8, 2025

John A. Ehret, G'66, on May 15, 2022
 Marie Fernandes, G'66, on January 14, 2023
 Clare Roach Lund, '66, G'70, on January 21, 2026
 Michael C. O'Connor, '66, on July 19, 2025
 Joyce S. Wong, '66, on January 8, 2026
 Lawrence R. Duguay, '67, on February 2, 2026
 Judith Gould Judge, '67, on August 25, 2025
 Ronald N. Normand, G'67, on June 6, 2025
 Sandra Camara Daft, '68, on November 24, 2025
 Marilyn Paige Fairbanks, '68, G'91, on November 14, 2025
 George A. Quadrino, '68, on September 4, 2025
 Suzanne Zajac Whitehead, '68, on December 21, 2025
 Carol A. Baker, '70, on February 1, 2026
 Janice Leonardo Choiniere, '70, on August 31, 2025
 Robert M. Wallace, G'70, on November 25, 2025

Class of 1971 - 1980

Shirley Barer, '71, G'76, on July 17, 2025
 Christine Provost Covey, '71, on August 12, 2025
 Paul R. Dunajski, '71, on August 31, 2025
 Clare E. MacLeod, G'71, on August 22, 2025
 Marianne Blackwood McMichael, '71, on September 15, 2025
 Georgia A. Tasho, G'71, on December 20, 2025
 Teresa A. Belmosto, G'72, on January 14, 2026
 Susan McCrillis de Aguiar, '72, G'78, on December 15, 2025
 William J. Fennessey, '72, on April 28, 2025
 Robert W. Laird, '72, on February 19, 2024
 Elizabeth M. Poirier, '72, on September 12, 2025
 Donald B. Hulke Jr., '73, on August 18, 2025
 George F. Pelati, '73, G'79, on August 4, 2025
 Ken J. Walsh, '73, G'78, on October 25, 2025
 Nancy Henderson Nicolas, '74, on October 21, 2025
 Mary Lou Fader O'Keefe, '74, G'81, on August 31, 2025
 William L. Phinney, '74, in December 2025
 Kathleen Russell Bendixen, G'75, on October 8, 2025
 Susan J. Callahan, '75, on August 18, 2025
 Thomas Lovett, G'75, on February 14, 2026
 Carol A. Pellini, '75, on October 25, 2025
 Patricia Arruda Abdelal, '76, G'10, on November 4, 2018
 Louise L. Colburn, '76, G'82, on October 5, 2025
 Jacqueline Hamilton Maher, '76, on September 15, 2025
 Nancy McNeese Marshutz, '76, on November 17, 2025
 Raymond A. Nolan, G'76, on October 7, 2025
 Robert E. Page, G'76, on January 8, 2026
 Lawrence A. Davis, '77, on December 30, 2025
 David A. Wisell, '77, on August 25, 2025
 Russell E. Abisla, '78, on January 28, 2026
 Marion Hogan Campanelli, '78, G'81, on July 17, 2025
 Jeffrey Kramer, '78, on June 23, 2025
 Dianne E. Ward, '78, on January 3, 2026
 Paul R. D'Andries, G'79, on July 25, 2025

Eleanor J. Diethelm, G'79, on September 17, 2025
 Geraldine Palmer McQueen, '79, on October 1, 2025
 Anthony F. Steward, G'79, on December 14, 2025
 Joan M. Trask, G'79, on December 29, 2025
 Bonnie S. Dietz, '80, on September 19, 2025
 Anthony M. Flebotte, '80, on July 19, 2025
 Mary M. Kelly, G'80, on November 27, 2025
 Louise Lamontagne Poirier, '80, on October 22, 2025
 Mary Ellen Sheeley, '80, G'98, on February 5, 2025

Class of 1981 - 1990

Kenneth M. Lanoue, '81, on December 30, 2025
 David G. Beberman, '83, on November 10, 2025
 Marie C. Foster, '83, on August 22, 2025
 Amy Keith Schofield, '84, on December 25, 2025
 Richard W. Snell, '84, on November 26, 2025
 Mark E. Hayes, '85, on November 21, 2025
 Patricia J. McMillan-Barclay, '85, on August 10, 2023
 Marguerite F. Mullaney, '85, on April 25, 2025
 Paul M. Silvia, '86, G'95, on December 16, 2025
 Daniel J. Darcy, '88, G'90, on December 12, 2025
 Elizabeth M. Boland, '89, on October 13, 2025
 Steven Brown, '90, on June 24, 2024
 Phyllis Downey-Fehl, '90, on October 17, 2025
 Ann R. Morrill, '90, on October 1, 2025
 John C. Ryan, '90, on December 28, 2025

Class of 1991 - 2000

Donna Schiavo, '91, G'01, on November 25, 2025
 Margaret Oliveira, '92, on September 16, 2024
 Neil P. Borden, '93, on July 28, 2025
 Kelly McFarland Milligan, '93, on August 26, 2025
 Barbara Thomas, G'94, on September 24, 2025
 Norma F. Crete, '95, on August 29, 2025
 Bruce Higgins, '97, on November 2, 2025
 Wendy Hesketh Johnson, '97, on August 7, 2025
 Janice Andrea Jardim, '99, on December 15, 2025

Class of 2001 - Present

Jo-Ellen Murgo Paterno, '01, on August 13, 2025
 Maryanne Oliveira, '02, on October 31, 2025
 Nicole Rae Sparks Jones, '05, on December 31, 2025
 Maureen S. Murray-Adamson, G'05, on September 20, 2025
 Cheryl K. Froio, '09, on January 7, 2026
 Kimberly A. Poliseno, '09, on December 4, 2025
 Paul M. Schwartz, '09, in August 2017
 Frantz Charles, G'12, on December 13, 2025
 Paul A. Melicharek, '13, on June 25, 2024
 Elens Miller-Gottberg, G'17, on December 3, 2025
 Robert L. Anderson, '18, on February 2, 2026
 Henry D. Oberlander, '20, on November 5, 2025

BSU pays its respects to the following members of the campus community who recently passed away:

Professor Mercer Fellouris, professor emerita, Department of Management, on December 12, 2025
 Margaret T. Joyce, '56, G'64, professor emerita, Department of Education, on January 22, 2026
 Dr. Patricia E. Mancini, professor emerita, Department of Biological Sciences, on October 28, 2025
 Wayne R. Phillips, '62, professor emeritus, Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education, on July 14, 2025
 Dr. Nancy L. Street, professor emerita, Department of Communication Studies, on August 16, 2025
 Professor C.T. Wolpert, professor emeritus, Department of Elementary Education, on March 13, 2025

PARTING SHOT



We are saying a fond farewell to our longtime magazine designer and editor, Karen Callan, and her husband, writer John Winters, G'11. After telling thousands of stories through words and photographs, the couple is retiring to spend more precious time with their family of rescue animals, including camera-shy cats Georgia, Woody and Little Bit, and feisty, furry housemates Joy and Sable. The latter is blind and came all the way from Tennessee to join John and Karen in their Rhode Island home. The couple's retirement plans include music, photography, books and many hours of animal snuggling. On behalf of all your grateful coworkers and appreciative readers, we say thank you and be well!



While many aspects of how we educate and engage students are continually evolving, one thing remains the same: the impact friends like you have on the future of our students.

Bridgewater State University will continue to adapt to the changing needs of our students because generous past donors had the foresight to make gifts in support of Bridgewater's future.

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Our Future LOOKS BRIGHT

Thanks to **YOU**

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BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY

HOMECOMING

OCTOBER 2-3, 2026

Visit bridgew.edu/homecoming for more information. Registration opens July 1.

• CLASS REUNION RECEPTION (CLASSES ENDING IN 1 & 6) • BSU BEARS VS WSU LANCERS FOOTBALL GAME

BEARS PRE-GAME CELEBRATION • ANNUAL ALUMNI BREAKFAST