

## President's Corner



This is an exciting time for Atlantic Cape and our students. On February 28, 2018 the college held a grand opening of our new Student Center! This Student Center, right in the middle of the Mays Landing Campus, is

the hub of student life and academic success at Atlantic Cape. The first floor includes meeting spaces for several student clubs including the Student Government Association (SGA), Rewrites Literary Magazine, the Atlantic Cape Review, and the Radio Club. The second floor

is the home of our student success initiatives with career resources, math and writing labs, the Honors Lounge as well as the new Veterans Center. The building is filled with spaces for students to study and relax. There is always something exciting going on in the Student Center.

The college also hosted the Evaluation Team from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in early April. The college's regional accreditation from the Middle States is essential to the health of the college, so this was a challenging and rewarding endeavor. The college community completed a Self-Study entitled, "Charting the Course for the Next 50 Years," and the Evaluation Team visited all three campuses to confirm the information presented in the Self-Study. This process of self-reflection will guide our work in the upcoming years and

will make Atlantic Cape a stronger institution with improved services for our students. We look forward to the Evaluators' report in late June.

Thank you to the Alumni who assisted with the preparation of the Self-Study Report and preparation for the Evaluation Team's visit. Your feedback and suggestions help the College move forward.

Thank you for your continued involvement and interest in Atlantic Cape Community College. We always look forward to hearing from our alumni, so please reach out to us!

*Barbara Gaba*

Dr. Barbara Gaba  
President

## Meet the 2018 President's Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients!

### Raymond Davis, '92

Ray graduated with high honors from Atlantic Cape Community College in 1992, earning an AS in Criminal Justice with high honors. He transferred to Stockton University to pursue a BA in Criminal Justice. He later continued his education at Fairleigh Dickinson University where he received his Master's degree.

Ray began his career in 1987 as a patrolman for the Egg Harbor Township Police Department. After earning his degree at Atlantic Cape, Ray became eligible for promotions. He has now served the force for more than thirty years and became the EHT Chief of Police in 2015.

He is also the president of the Atlantic County Chiefs of Police Association and Chairman of the NJ State Association of Chiefs of Police's Legislative Committee. Additionally, he serves as the Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator.

In his spare time, Ray coaches youth baseball, hockey, and soccer for girls and boys in EHT.

### Maria Mento, '77

Maria graduated from Atlantic Community College in 1977 with a Liberal Arts AA degree. She holds a BA in Business Administration from Rowan University and an MBA in Finance from Rutgers University. She is a certified county finance officer, certified municipal finance officer and a certified public manager.

Maria was hired by ACUA in 1990 and ultimately became the Chief Finance Officer before she retired in 2015. In addition to her service at ACUA, she also served as a volunteer and board member for many local nonprofit organizations. She is the Chair of the United Way's Atlantic County Women's Leadership Initiative and serves on the board of St. Joseph's High School in Hammonton.

She is also the Vice-President of the Board of Trustees for Atlantic Cape Community College and serves as the liaison to the Atlantic Cape Foundation board. She is a strong supporter of the college and the foundation and has created a scholarship in memory of her mother.

In 2012, Maria was inducted into the Atlantic County Women's Hall of Fame and in 2013 she was recognized by the United Way as the Volunteer of the Year. Maria is currently serving as the City Administrator for the City of Ventnor.

Atlantic Cape Community College would like to congratulate this year's Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients! They will be honored at the Annual President's Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner on April 19th and during the Commencement Ceremony on May 17th.

## 35th Annual Restaurant Gala Raises \$214,400 and Honors ACA Graduate Georgeann Leaming

The 35th Annual Atlantic Cape Community College Restaurant Gala was held on March 28, 2018 at the Harrah's Waterfront Conference Center in Atlantic City. **This year's event raised \$214,400**, the proceeds of which support scholarships for students attending the Academy of Culinary Arts, an emergency fund for students, and Atlantic Cape Foundation operations.

The 2018 Culinary Honoree was **Georgeann Leaming** of Brigantine, executive chef of Gordon Ramsay Pub & Kitchen located in Caesars Atlantic City Hotel and Casino and **1999 Academy of Culinary Arts graduate**. Leaming was also the Season 19 champion on the Food Network's Chopped! series.

Kevin Orzman, regional president for Caesars Entertainment (Bally's, Caesars and Harrah's Resort in Atlantic City) was honored at the Restaurant Gala as the Community Honoree.

The annual event celebrates food by highlighting hors d'oeuvres prepared by students in the Academy of Culinary Arts and showcasing the specialties of 40 of the region's best restaurants during a progressive dining experience. Live entertainment was provided by the Ocean City Pops and Central Park The Band. The night concluded with an incredible Dessert Extravaganza full of delectable confections and tasty sweet treats created by local dessert providers and students from the Academy of Culinary Arts.

**The Atlantic Cape Foundation, Gala Planning Committee, and Academy of Culinary Arts would like to express their gratitude to the event's sponsors, participants, and patrons.** It is because of your generosity that this event continues to be the premiere food and beverage event in South Jersey! Additional information and pictures from the event can be found at [atlantic.edu/gala](http://atlantic.edu/gala).



## Alumni Spotlight - Jenna DeLuca, '17

Atlantic Cape Community College Board of Trustees Alumni Representative



*Jenna DeLuca, 22, graduated from Atlantic Cape in May 2017, earning two Associate in Arts degrees in Communication and English. Jenna is currently attending Rider University as a Communication Studies major. She graduated from Hammonton High School in 2013.*

### Driven and Determined

"I currently am a Communication Studies Major at Rider University in Lawrenceville, NJ where I am the Vice President of Riders Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America. I also write for The Odyssey. I am in the midst of applying for the "Plus One Program" at Rider. If I'm accepted, it means that I will be able to begin working on my graduate courses starting in my senior year (Fall'18 - Spring '19). If all goes well, I will be graduating from Rider yet again in '20 with a Master's in Business Communication. I also plan to get a teaching certificate as soon as possible."

### Career Path Influences

"For as long as I can remember I've always wanted to work with youth/young adults. When I began school at Atlantic Cape, I was a secondary education major, but after taking an Interpersonal Communication course I decided to switch my major to Communication. Throughout my time in the program, I was greatly impacted by Professor Keith Forrest. His constant support and wisdom changed my life forever. His encouragement served as the driving force for me when it came to my education and my own level of confidence. His impact on me made it crystal clear as to what career path I needed to follow. My goal is to become a college professor and follow on in Keith's footsteps. Without his influence, my story may have been a very different one. I just want to offer that same

source of support and encouragement to other young people like myself, who haven't quite figured it out yet. Some of the biggest moments for me happened right in the classrooms at Atlantic Cape and I hope that someday I can foster those same types of moments in my classroom as well."

### Engaged in the Community

"I genuinely love giving back to the places and groups that shaped me into the person that I am today. In the summers I spend a vast amount of my time with my friends at Hammonton Town Drama and it truly has been a blessing. I also am a cheerleading coach for the Titan Cheer Corp Youth Level 1 Team and spend a number of weekends with my girls at competition. It is so extremely rewarding to be able to pour into these children and help them work toward new goals and skills on and off the mat. Apart from that I volunteer each and every year as a judge for The 10-Day Film Challenge."

### Opportunity Starts Here

"If I'm being completely honest, I had always planned on attending Atlantic Cape. The idea of having to do well on the SAT was very intimidating to me and I knew that an SAT score was not necessary to attend Atlantic Cape. Of course the other factors were affordability and location. Through aid and scholarships, my tuition was covered entirely. It was an easy 20 minute commute, so it was super close to home. To make it even more convenient, the Jump Start program came to my high school which made this transition almost effortless."

### Experience as a Board of Trustees Member

"If there were one word to describe how I've felt as a Board of Trustees member, it would have to be- blessed. During my time at Atlantic Cape, it became clear to me that higher education is something I'm extremely passionate about. Now, as I sit on this board, I have been able to see the interworking of an institution of higher education alongside of some of the most intelligent and wise individuals in our area. This position has given me an amazing opportunity to continue to learn, network, and grow right here at my favorite place. While being the youngest person in a room full of distinguished and experienced individuals was intimidating at first, it has become something I look forward to each and every month. I am so grateful to the class of '17 for entrusting me with this position and allowing me to give back to the school that gave so much to me."

# Atlantic Cape Foundation News

## Why I Chose to Honor My Dad with an Atlantic Cape Scholarship

Dear Fellow Alumni,

On February 13, I lost my Dad very suddenly to a stroke we didn't see coming. If you have lost a parent unexpectedly, too, then you can relate to the plethora of decisions that need to be handled all-too-quickly. Many of those decisions took much time and careful consideration for me and my sister, Diane, to handle. The one decision that came quickly to us, however, was how to honor our Dad with memorial contributions. I know many people (myself included) feel good making a donation in someone's name in lieu of flowers or food. To be fair, Diane and I agreed we should both select an organization that "feels right" to us. My family has always loved animals, and Diane wanted to recognize Cumberland County SPCA since she had adopted two rescue dogs. For my sister, the choice was easy and it was the right choice.

The same decision came quickly to me, too -- and I didn't think twice about the choice I made. I chose Atlantic Cape Community College, with plans for creating a Vassallo Family Scholarship. As uncomfortable as it sounds, I have often

shared with my husband and son that I want a scholarship named for me whenever that day comes. I wanted them to know my wishes. Although we never thought to talk about it while he was living, honoring him with a scholarship in our family name simply felt right. I know my Dad would be thrilled to know we are assisting a deserving student who starts their educational journey at a college like ours. I know how proud my Dad was of me and my successes -- years ago as a student and today as an administrator -- here at Atlantic Cape. My Dad heard me say numerous times that starting my college career at Atlantic Cape was the best decision my parents made for me.

Fellow alum, these decisions are not easy to make -- especially as you are grieving. I encourage you, however, to think about selecting Atlantic Cape like I did, knowing that your donations are going to aid one student (or more) in reaching their educational goals -- whatever they may be. Diane and I feel so good about this scholarship, and we are excited to watch it continue to increase. Although we have not determined the selection criteria, we know the Foundation team at Atlantic Cape

will work with us -- and even allow us to review student applications. We want to be an active part of the selection process. Best of all, we want to be present when our first scholarship is awarded (hopefully in 2019) and follow our recipient's successes at Atlantic Cape, as my Dad proudly followed mine.

-- Donna Vassallo, Class of '85  
Dean, Worthington Atlantic City Campus  
Dean, Career Education and Workforce  
Development

To learn about giving opportunities at Atlantic Cape, please visit [atlantic.edu/foundation](http://atlantic.edu/foundation) or contact Maria Kellett, Associate Dean of Resource Development at [mkellett@atlantic.edu](mailto:mkellett@atlantic.edu) or (609) 463-3670 financial assistance.



celebrating  
**40** years  
1978-2018

## Alumni in the News

**Caren Fitzpatrick '95**, was sworn in as an Atlantic County Freeholder at Large on January 2. Caren also recently attended the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Atlantic Cape's new Student Center where she spoke about the important role that community colleges have in meeting the needs of students from different demographics and learning styles stating, "community college fills that need in a very special way. It did for me."

Academy of Culinary Arts Chef Educator **Joseph Sheridan '96**, received the "Educator of the Year" Award from the Professional Chef's Association of South Jersey on March 4. Chef Sheridan was honored last year as a recipient of the President's Distinguished Alumni Award.

Former Atlantic Cape student, **Jay Rutkowski**, was highlighted in the Jan. 18 article, Oyster Farms Survive Delaware Bay Icebergs, in The Press of Atlantic City, for his work with the Cape May Salt Oyster Co.

**Jennifer Germana '97**, was promoted to Business Administrator and Board Secretary for the Margate City School District.

**Georgeann Leaming**, 1999 graduate of the Academy of Culinary Arts, was honored as this year's Academy of Culinary Arts Honoree at the 35th Annual Restaurant Gala on March 28. Georgeann is the Executive Chef of Gordon Ramsay Pub & Kitchen located in Caesars Atlantic City Hotel & Casino and was the Season 19 champion of The Food Network's Chopped series.

**John Chew '91**, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant for the Lower Township Police Department. John was hired in 1995 and promoted to the rank of Sergeant in 2006 and also spent 10 years on the Swat team.

**John Armbruster, Jr. '05**, was promoted to the rank of Corporal for the Lower Township Police Department. John was hired in 2012 and was recognized in 2015 by the Mothers Against Drunk Driving for outstanding and distinguished service for DUI/DWI enforcement.

**Carlo Marsini**, former student of the Academy of Culinary Arts, was the subject of the March 7 Press of Atlantic City article, A Convivial Atmosphere Complements Marsini's Kitchen's Fresh Take on Italian Fare. Carlo recently opened Marsini's Kitchen located in Somers Point.

## Want to get involved?

*Join the Alumni Advisory Committee!*

The committee is dedicated to supporting the mission, vision, values and goals of Atlantic Cape Community College by building alumni engagement, supporting the Foundation in fundraising efforts, and through its members acting as ambassadors for the college.

The Committee will meet on the Mays Landing Campus in the J-Building, Room 202 at 8:30 a.m. on the following dates:

May 24

Nov. 15

Aug. 23

Feb. 28

For more information, contact  
Kristin Jackson at

[kjackson@atlantic.edu](mailto:kjackson@atlantic.edu) or (609) 463-3621.

# FOURTH ANNUAL ALUMNI BASH

## Sunday, June 17, 2018

At Morey's Piers in Wildwood

# Tickets are \$30 per person



Admission includes access to all three amusement piers and Raging Waters waterpark plus an all-you-can-eat lunch at the Rendezvous Beach from noon-2 p.m. hosted by the Atlantic Cape Alumni Association!

To purchase tickets, visit [atlantic.edu/alumni](http://atlantic.edu/alumni)



## Create a lasting legacy, help build the future.

Now is the time to show your campus pride and be part of history by securing your personalized brick or tile at one of our three college campuses! Buccaneer bricks and tiles are fully customizable with a message that's perfect for families, friends, dedications, gifts and a celebration of your memories on campus!

The new campus landmarks will be located at the following sites:

	<b>New Student Success Center Patio</b> <i>Mays Landing Campus</i>
	<b>Commemorative Patio</b> <i>Cape May County Campus</i>
	<b>Light up the Entryway Flower Bed Wall</b> <i>Atlantic City Campus</i>

Facility Naming opportunities on all campuses are also available!



Order online at [atlantic.edu/foundation](http://atlantic.edu/foundation).  
For more information, contact Maria Kellett at [mkellett@atlantic.edu](mailto:mkellett@atlantic.edu).

**SOUTH JERSEY CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL**  
FOOD AND MUSIC

**SATURDAY, JUNE 2**  
NOON - 5 • RAIN OR SHINE  
ATLANTIC CAPE COMMUNITY COLLEGE MAYS LANDING CAMPUS

**\$25** WITH CODE ALUMN18  
FEATURING **CRAFT BEER** FROM DEREK CRIDER  
FOOD VENDORS HOME BREW COMPETITION LIVE MUSIC

TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS, VISIT [SJCRAFTBEERFOODFESTIVAL.EVENTBRITE.COM](http://SJCRAFTBEERFOODFESTIVAL.EVENTBRITE.COM).  
MUST BE 21 TO ATTEND

## Calling All Academy of Culinary Arts Alumni!

Looking to expand your culinary reputation? Looking to impress possible backers? Have a great idea for a menu innovation or are you looking to attract new customers from the South Jersey area?

Careme's Restaurant is offering its facility for use to graduates as a Pop Up venue. This opportunity is available to Academy of Culinary Arts Alumni only. Interested Chefs

need to contact Chef Kelly McClay at (609) 343-4939 or [mclay@atlantic.edu](mailto:mclay@atlantic.edu).

A \$250 fee will be charged and Alumni will need to bring their own staff to operate. Must provide proof of insurance or we can direct you to an event policy for a reasonable price.

