



# *momentum*



## **GIVING DAY**

Exceeds its goal, pages 16-19

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New Agricultural and Clean Energy Technology Center feeds hungry industry with qualified grads, pages 3-5

Mustangs celebrate commencement, pages 8-11



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*Pictured on the cover, from left, are students and members of the women's ice hockey team, Logyn Nyitrai and Kendra Johnson, celebrating Giving Day with Mo the Mustang. Photo by Allisa Coomey*

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## A message from the President

During this past year, all of us at SUNY Morrisville have worked hard to navigate the difficult and uncertain challenges presented by COVID-19. Nevertheless, in the coming year, we are looking forward to charting a promising post-COVID-19 future with new academic programs, new construction and stronger partnerships with our community stakeholders. While the pandemic continues to present ongoing challenges, I am confident that Morrisville's student-centered dedication by our faculty, staff and alumni will not only allow us to recover from these challenges, but also enhance our educational mission for a vibrant future.

Many of the articles in this issue of *Momentum* focus on making a difference in the world, at the college and in the community, as well as overcoming challenges. In so many ways, our alumni, faculty, staff and students continue to make a difference in the world. Even during difficult times, so many have gone above and beyond, striving to help others to rebuild their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The articles in this issue reflect broad community impact, from the campus (new Agricultural and Clean Energy Technology Center), to helping at-risk teens, to providing outstanding news coverage, fighting wildland fires, rehabilitating horses, donkeys and mules — to fixing cars, building futures (residential construction) and innovation (Cotton Scholarship recipients), and so much more.

Owing to some adverse COVID-19 budget outcomes, we have had to suspend printing some of our publications, including *Momentum*. Consequently, this latest issue of *Momentum* is available in an electronic version only.

When budgets have recovered and we are granted the opportunity to do so, we hope to print future issues of *Momentum*. The work of the college goes on through difficult times and we continue to serve our communities and each other. We welcome your stories and will share more of them in the coming months.

If you would like to suggest story ideas about alumni for future issues of *Momentum*, please contact the SUNY Morrisville Office of Communications & Marketing at [commmark@morrisville.edu](mailto:commmark@morrisville.edu).

Sincerely,

*David E. Rogers*  
President David E. Rogers

# GOING



## New Agricultural and Clean Energy Technology Center feeds hungry industry with qualified grads

By Alaina Potrikus

The future of agriculture, engineering and energy isn't confined to traditional desks and lecture halls at SUNY Morrisville.

Students will begin taking classes this fall in the \$16 million **Agricultural and Clean Energy Technology (ACET) Center**, a 30,000-square-foot applied learning technology building that will bolster the renewable energy, agricultural engineering, and diesel technology programs.

Renewable energy students will have indoor solar roofs, several wind turbines, bioenergy labs, heat pump technologies and 35-foot climbing towers for hands-on training involving clean energy. That's energy from renewable, zero-emission sources that do not pollute the atmosphere when used, as well as energy saved by energy efficiency measures.

Three large garage bays for diesel technology and agricultural engineering will increase capacity for servicing heavy equipment and long-haul tractor and trailer assemblies. Each lab will feature a five-ton overhead crane, multiple project stations and state-of-the-art testing equipment.

The real-world laboratories, based on industry standards, help prepare students to succeed in industries that are hungry for qualified graduates.

"We are all very excited about this new building," said SUNY Morrisville President David Rogers. "There is a clear need for graduates in these areas, and the ACET Center comes at a critical time, especially as New York State pursues clean energy priorities. This is another way that we are creating opportunities for graduates to



address climate change, even as we position Morrisville with sustainable pathways in higher education."

### A green history

The roots of SUNY Morrisville were planted in 1908, when it was chartered as the New York State School of Agriculture to train and support the next generation of farmers.

The move toward green energy began in 2004, when a 120-foot wind turbine started spinning on the hill behind the dairy barn, saving the college thousands of dollars on its electric bill. It was followed by a methane digester, installed to generate electricity from the more than 7,000 gallons of dairy manure produced each day.

The projects were years ahead of national conversation on the role of renewable energy in energy independence and combating climate change.



But the seeds planted at Morrisville grew into a robust incubator tackling how agriculture and technology play a role in food, fuel, energy and the environment.

Today, students can choose from more than 20 classes in renewable energy at SUNY Morrisville to prepare to enter the workforce in the fields of wind, solar, micro hydro, geothermal and bioenergy.

The hands-on renewable energy curriculum was the first of its kind and continues to stand apart from other programs.

“When we wrote it, there was no model to follow,” said Philip Hofmeyer, associate professor of renewable energy, who heads the college’s environmental and renewable resources division. “I don’t think there’s any other program in the country that does what we do.”

Faculty continue to refresh and revise the curriculum, paying close attention to the skill gaps and needs identified by employers.

“We are following the job market,” said Ben Ballard, associate professor of renewable energy, who also heads the college’s Renewable Energy Training Center, offering technical courses to support the long- and short-term needs of New York State’s renewable energy sector.

### A focus on technology

Associate Professor Charles “Chip” Ax makes sure his students still master the same basics he learned when he received his agricultural engineering degree from SUNY Morrisville in 1989.

But the college’s agricultural engineering and diesel technology curriculums also keep pace with the complex systems and current machines that students will encounter on the job.

“The equipment has become extremely sophisticated,” Ax said of coursework focused on the latest advancements to electronics, hydraulics, powertrains, fuel systems, exhaust systems and precision operation.

Industry partners like Caterpillar, Kubota, Komatsu, Case International, New Holland, Claas, Mack and Peterbilt are clamoring to provide equipment to help train students, as well as hire them after graduation, adding even more horsepower to the state-of-the-art learning laboratory.

“When students walk out of our building, they will be ready for a selection of well-paying jobs in numerous machine specialties and locations,” Ax said.



From left: professors Phil Hofmeyer, Ben Ballard and Ryan Quinn stand in front of a climbing tower in the new ACET Center.

### Out of the elements, into the future

As one of the first students of the renewable energy program, Ryan Storke '17 has fond memories of climbing towers to fix wind turbines, analyzing samples from the methane digester, and creating biodiesel from leftover vegetable oil from the campus cafeteria.

The firsthand education prepared Storke for a career overseeing wind, solar and other renewable energy projects across the United States.

“We were doing pretty amazing stuff with the resources that were available. “I really enjoyed learning,” said Storke, who also has A.A.S. degrees in diesel technology and renewable energy technology from SUNY Morrisville.

The brand new facilities at the ACET Center will amplify opportunities for students to excel in the hands-on coursework that has been the cornerstone of SUNY Morrisville for more than a century.

Pairing the renewable energy and diesel technology programs in the new building made sense for a number of reasons, including cross-training for specific certifications.

“It ties together all of the strongest and best aspects of Morrisville, and that’s a really powerful thing,” Hofmeyer said. “They really do go hand in hand.”

The biggest improvements for both programs: purpose-built labs and high ceilings in the new building, which will accommodate year-round indoor training on state-of-the-art equipment, so students won’t have to worry about wind, snow, ice and rain during lab sessions.

### A booming job market

Kevin Nickels said he has always been impressed with the caliber of SUNY Morrisville students who intern with his solar installation firm, Nickels Energy Solutions.

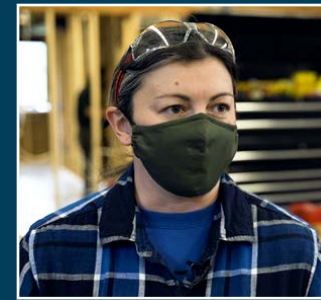


Associate Professor Charles “Chip” Ax ‘89, left, and Instructor Jared Ford ‘07 of the agricultural engineering and diesel technology programs, stand in front of a tractor students repaired in labs.

### Student spotlight, Eden Adler ‘24

For Eden Adler, environmentalism is a lifestyle.

“I have a hybrid car, I sort my recycling, I’m always bugging my friends about doing what is best for the environment,” she said.



So, when she decided to change careers, her penchant for sustainability brought her to SUNY Morrisville, where she was attracted to the hands-on curriculum and plentiful job prospects.

“When you get into renewable energy, your goal is to save the planet,” she said. “Everything I learn in this program will apply directly back to my life.”

So far, she has learned the basics of electricity by wiring an apartment alongside residential construction students, and studied the boilers that heat the therapy pool at the college’s Equine Rehabilitation Center in her heating and cooling class.

“I really didn’t want to sit in a classroom and do the same monotonous stuff,” she said. “I’m not stuck writing papers every week. It is much more engaging for me.”

While her coursework has introduced her to a number of potential career trajectories, solar energy has piqued her interest the most.

“How to put them together, how they work, how they can power a house or a commercial building,” she explained.

Her ideal job: designing homes that incorporate as many renewable technologies as possible.

“I want to pass on that excitement to other people who are interested in a more sustainable lifestyle but still not sure how to make it happen,” she said.

Below are some of the features of the ACET Center. The labs will be appointed with equipment from industry partners, who have jumped at the chance to outfit the training areas.

**Solar Lab (PV and thermal):** Features three indoor roofs, pole-mount, ground-mount and ballast-mount arrays for photovoltaic and solar hot water systems.

**85 kW solar PV array:** Ground mounted array for on-site energy production, providing a real-world laboratory for commercial solar installation, design and permitting.

**Wind & Hydro Lab:** Features wind turbines up to 50 kW in size and five micro hydroelectricity turbine systems.

**Tower Climbing Lab:** Wind and telecom climbing safety lab featuring three 35-foot tall indoor towers and an outdoor 80-ft. tall tower.

**Thermal Energy Lab:** Features geothermal and air-source heat pumps, high-efficiency biomass boilers, hydronics “backbone”

“They’re not starting from square one,” said Nickels, who has hired four Morrisville grads in recent years. “They have a higher level of understanding coming in, and the learning curve is really minimal.”

Graduates from the renewable energy and diesel technology programs are in high demand, with dozens of employers reaching out each semester for qualified applicants.

On the diesel side, an aging workforce combined with ever-changing technology has created openings for a new generation.

The job prospects for renewable energy students have been bolstered by state and national efforts to promote cleaner energy sources. In New York State, community solar farms and other large-scale energy projects are racing to meet a goal of producing 70 percent of the state’s electricity from renewable sources by 2030, as mandated in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

“Keeping renewable energy in New York expands our economy, giving added momentum to our efforts to build back better and stronger,” said NYS Gov. Andrew Cuomo earlier this year. “New York has been at the forefront of the fight against climate change and we will continue to be an example of how this fight can be won.”

When Ryan Quinn ‘14 was an undergraduate student, the concept of using solar energy to reduce carbon emissions from the electrical grid seemed like wishful thinking.

Now, as an assistant professor in the college’s renewable energy program, Quinn helps prepare students to design, develop, install and operate solar photovoltaic systems.

“This is going to be the next generation’s energy system, and it is so exciting that we get to be such a big part of it,” Quinn said. “The future is super bright.”

with thermal storage, hydronic heat emitters and forced air ductwork stations.

**Biofuels Lab:** A dedicated chemistry lab for biofuels production and testing (e.g. biodiesel, ethanol and biogas).

**Biomass Processing Lab:** Features grinding, drying, extraction and related biomass preparation and processing equipment for biofuels and bioproducts.

**Diesel Technology, agricultural engineering, hydraulics, heavy vehicle and powertrain labs:** These three large labs have increased capacity for heavy equipment, agricultural equipment and over-the-road trucks. The facility also features a hydraulics technology lab plus an equipment wash bay (indoor and outdoor).

The building also includes a computer classroom, conventional lecture classroom, faculty offices, conference room and lounge.





Dahmili Pierre Browne '20

The sky is the limit

### Grad wants to give back to the community after Equal Opportunity Program changes her life

underserved communities an opportunity to get a college education and go on to greater accomplishments.

Browne shares her story to inspire others, using her own journey as a beacon.

Going to college was Browne's first step toward her lifelong ambition to help others.

"I wanted to go to college so my mother and I could live comfortably someday and so I could help others," she said.

Earning her bachelor's degree got her a step closer toward her goal of becoming a juvenile counselor, probation officer or serving in a role that helps at-risk teens.

"My dream is to become a juvenile counselor in Georgia and eventually open my own facilities around the world to help teens," Browne said. "I have an empathy for at-risk teens. Teens need a support system and it's very crucial for that age."

EOP was that pillar for Browne.

"They helped me with money for books, counseling me with home, school and homework problems," she said. "They were always there for me no matter what the situation."

In addition to counseling, financial and academic support, EOP also develops skills to build social networks and mental fortitude to succeed, according to Marquis Bennett, director of EOP & Special Programs at SUNY Morrisville.

"Students need the consistency of an office whose primary focus is their development and well-being,"

"EOP changed my life. They were always there for me no matter what the situation."

**Dahmili Pierre Browne**

Bennett said. "We want to keep giving students opportunities. Most recently, the program expanded its outreach into the medical field to get students involved in those and other pathways moving forward."

College was a place Browne could count on for support and safety. She flourished there, astounding professors with her eagerness to learn and her indelible desire to help others.

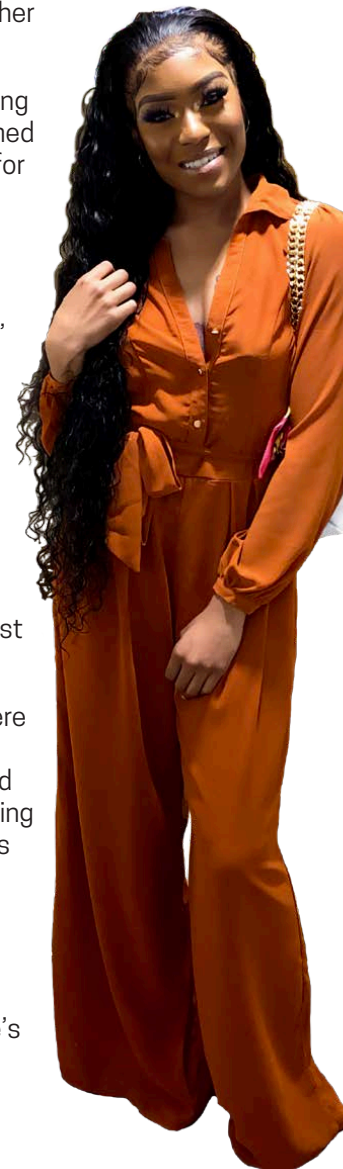
She excelled academically, earning Dean's List kudos and being named spotlight student of the month for the EOP program.

Her achievements were further lauded by SUNY, which awarded her the Norman R. McConney, Jr., Award for Student Excellence. The award recognizes outstanding EOP students for their academic excellence and strength in overcoming significant personal obstacles throughout their lives.

None of these accolades or her career plans seemed possible just four years ago.

"I always had to worry about where I was going to lay my head," she said. "I didn't want to grow up and struggle, so I told myself I am going to do what I have to do and focus on my education."

She thrived in a hands-on classroom environment, embracing every opportunity to get involved on SUNY Morrisville's campus and learn.



"It was not just textbooks. It was hands-on using simulators," she said of labs and classes. A favorite class, adolescent development and juvenile delinquency, sealed her career interest.

Knowledgeable professors, a lively campus atmosphere and EOP all played a role in her prosperity.

"Molly was unique in that her effort was so seamless," Bennett said. "To the untrained eye, it looked like she wasn't trying too hard. That's what made her special. She wanted to make it look easy, so others wouldn't be afraid to put in the work."

That fortitude has defined Dahmili all of her life, according to her mother, Maries Browne.

"She has always had a strong attitude and will," she said. "That is how I know she is capable of obtaining anything. And I always told her, once you start something, you must finish it."

Giving up has never been part of Browne's nature.

"When the odds seem stacked against me is when I am even more eager to overcome them," she said.

Her diploma, a testament to that, holds much promise for the determined grad.

"I see my daughter leaving quite an impact in this world," Maries Browne said.

"The sky's the limit," Browne said. "I want to open centers like the boys and girls club and group homes for homeless teens. It is a way to give thanks and to give others the opportunities I had."

### About EOP

The State University of New York's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) provides access, academic support and financial aid to students who show promise for succeeding in college but who may not have otherwise been offered admission.

Available primarily to full-time, matriculated students, the program supports students throughout their college careers within the university. EOP strives to support all students in their efforts to become successful college students thereby progressing to successful professional careers.

In addition to academic and financial support, EOP provides counseling and develops skills to build social networks and mental fortitude to succeed.

By Franci Valenzano, Class of '86

A life once limited is now filled with opportunity and dreams for Dahmili ("Molly") Pierre Browne '20.

The SUNY Morrisville criminal justice graduate spent most of her childhood moving in and out of motels and living in shelters in a crime-ridden part of Bronx, New York, where sirens saturate neighborhoods and a quarter of all students drop out of high school.

So much changed for Browne when the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) offered her the chance to go to college.

"EOP changed my life," said Browne of the program that gives New York State's disadvantaged students from



# LESS POMP, MORE *Circumstance*

Celebrations were scaled back,  
but Mustang Pride wasn't

By Franci Valenzano,  
Class of '86

There were smiles of joy, relief, elbow bumping, physically distanced selfies and Mustang Pride was in full swing as SUNY Morrisville graduates celebrated scaled-back, in-person ceremonies in lieu of a traditional commencement this year.

The separate indoor ceremonies, which all followed New York State and Health Department guidelines, balanced safety and tradition, allowing graduates to put some normalcy back in their lives following COVID-19 restrictions, which forced a virtual commencement ceremony in 2020.

Seven in-person academic celebration

Autobody graduate  
Vincent Rose '21



ceremonies were held across three days, with the Norwich Campus also holding a drive-thru commencement to honor its graduates. All SUNY Morrisville graduates from the Class of 2021 also were invited to be a part of the college's virtual ceremony, which aired live via YouTube May 22.

President David Rogers was among those who commended graduates. "The world is waiting for you graduates — and there is a lot you can offer. We can't wait to see what you do."

Philip Hofmeyer, who heads the environmental and renewable resources division, also offered advice at one of the ceremonies.

"As you move through the next phases of your life, I expect someday you will look back on your time here and realize that SUNY Morrisville is an important part of your life story," he said. "...it is important to remember that SUNY Morrisville is a family. I continue to embrace you as family members, and I am excited for the great opportunities in your future."

Among this year's graduates are some staying to pursue four-year degrees, while others are starting exciting careers.



Here is where some  
of our graduates are headed:

### Agnes Olson fulfills dream of becoming a wildland firefighter

While many of her friends were preparing for graduation celebrations, **Agnes Olson** was reporting for duty at the Powell Fire Crew Station in Idaho.

She's working for the United States Forest Service as a wildland firefighter, a dream job that SUNY Morrisville put within reach.

The Nez-Perce Clearwater National Forest at the Powell Ranger Station, where she is located, is a heavily timbered area that sees its share of fires. She will be part of a team that fights them, performs controlled burns for at-risk areas and searches for hot spots.



Agnes Olson '21  
competes in a  
Woods Sports Team  
competition.

"Fires are a concern especially because the western United States is in a bigger drought currently than they were a year ago and this fire season is predicted to be just like last year, if not worse," Olson said.

On top of her work duties, she will be evaluating the effects of fire on the local ecology and developing maps that track fires by different sources and cover types, to fulfill internship requirements for her bachelor's degree in environmental & natural resources management.



The free-spirited New Berlin, New York, native set her sights on SUNY Morrisville because of its hands-on learning and because it offered everything she needed to pursue a career as a wildland firefighter.

In addition to applied learning and training, professors helped open many doors for Olson, who obtained numerous certifications, including NYS logger, CPR and AED, wildland firefighter, and erosion and sediment control.

Along with the six-month supply of clothes and personal items she packed in a suitcase, she tucked in myriad memories

from a college that offered her more than she ever imagined, including leading its Woods Sports Team.

A bunkhouse, which is on the fire station grounds, serves as her home for the duration of her stay in Idaho.

“I feel very honored to be doing this line of work,” Olson said of her new post. “I am very excited for this opportunity.”

Olson received an associate degree in natural resources conservation before obtaining a bachelor’s degree in environmental & natural resources management.



Grace Wight '21 and Lola

She’s already on to her next journey, working as a veterinarian assistant at Montana Equine Medical and Surgical Center, in Montana, while also pursuing her license as a veterinarian technician.

“I came to Morrisville from New Hampshire, knowing I wanted to help horses and Morrisville had the best equine rehabilitation program,” she said of her college choice.

The college’s diversified equine program gave her a look at different aspects of the industry, beginning with earning a two-year degree in equine science & management, where she learned about Reining and Western Pleasure before going on to the four-year program for equine rehabilitation & therapy.

Two enriching internships broadened her horizons, one at the college’s Western barn and the second at the Montana Equine Medical and Surgical Center, which offered her a job following her internship. The center is a private veterinary hospital and practice dedicated to high-quality diagnostic and therapeutic care of horses, ponies, mules and donkeys.

“I used my (second) internship as a chance to get my clinical experience and found I could use my equine rehabilitation experience in that, too,” Wight said.

She credits a hands-on equine program and professors with paving the way for all she has achieved. “They are so knowledgeable and are always thinking of each student as an individual.”

There were four-legged lessons, too. “Every horse helps you and teaches you something different,” said Wight, who credits Lena, a paint horse with extraordinary patience, with introducing her to Reining and Western Pleasure. The pair took top wins in various contests and competed together on the college’s riding team.

In her new role at the Montana Equine Medical and Surgical Center, Wight joins a highly trained staff known for offering some of the most advanced therapies and diagnostic equipment.

“Morrisville provided me with everything I needed — a solid foundation and the background I needed to further my career and make all of this possible,” Wight said.

## Amato twins follow their own path after graduation

It was no surprise when **Alex and Justin Amato** unknowingly showed up for their academic graduation ceremonies wearing similar shirts. The 19-year-old twins have shared nearly everything in their lives — a bedroom and toys, played on the same ice hockey teams, and recently added one more common experience — graduating from SUNY Morrisville.

While they are pursuing different paths, SUNY Morrisville gave them the chance to stay connected at college and to find careers doing what they love.

Alex graduated with an associate degree in automotive technology and is a technician at a Ford-Lincoln dealership in Queens, New York, where he has worked since 2019. Justin graduated with an associate degree in residential construction and is an electrician at Lippolis Electric, Inc., in Westchester County, while also working toward obtaining his electrician’s license.

Their childhood goals — Alex wanted to be a school bus driver and Justin, a train conductor — changed considerably through the years, but when it was time to decide on a college, their decision to attend SUNY Morrisville was solid.

“It offered both of us exactly what we wanted,” Alex said. “I have always had a passion for cars and Morrisville’s (automotive) program is one of the best in New York State.”

Morrisville immersed both brothers in hands-on learning while giving them a chance to hone interests and broaden their skills in many areas. Alex expanded his experiences working



in the college’s autobody building and Justin took on woodworking and electrical courses.

“We both learned really well from the hands-on labs and the diversity of the students at SUNY Morrisville made it very unique,” Justin said.

“My ultimate goal is to continue working at Ford and also build custom cars — and build them to be fast,” Alex said.

“My ultimate career goal is to have my name big enough where people will say oh, that’s Justin Amato. I want to have my electrical license and become a general contractor and invest in real estate, commercial and residential, with Alex,” Justin said.

“Justin and I have some great memories from SUNY Morrisville,” Alex said.

and care for them. She enrolled in SUNY Morrisville’s equine program — a decision that led to an impassioned career.

“This is bittersweet. I am going to miss everything about Morrisville, but big steps are ahead,” Wight said after she received her bachelor’s degree in equine science, with a concentration in equine rehabilitation & therapy.

# Norwich Campus celebrates graduates



The SUNY Morrisville Norwich Campus celebrated commencement with a drive-thru ceremony. As graduates circled through the parking lot, they were greeted by faculty and staff cheering them on and waving signs lauding their accomplishment.

Among graduates was the first cohort of nursing students from the college’s partnership with Bassett Medical Center, a program started in 2018 to boost primary care in vulnerable communities.

The RN primary care training program supports licensed practical nurses (LPN) interested in becoming Registered Nurses (RN), while continuing to work in Bassett’s centers. The Norwich Campus is one of four nursing institutions involved in the first phase of the program, aimed to increase access to primary care in underserved communities served by Bassett.

Students were enrolled at SUNY Morrisville for a total of three years, while maintaining a full-time work schedule and attending classes, primarily part-time, to earn their nursing A.A.S. degree. Courses were offered at the Cooperstown Bassett facility, online, on-campus and on the weekends to accommodate student work schedules.

Throughout the training program, students had a personalized approach, which included individualized intake sessions with admissions, advising and financial aid.

The program is made possible through a U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant, which covers tuition and fees.



# BUILDING SUCCESSFUL CAREERS

As the demand for skilled residential construction workers goes through the roof, SUNY Morrisville professor embraces the challenge



Mike Gridley '04

By Franci Valenzano, Class of '86

As a hot housing market and spike in home remodeling propel the need for skilled tradespeople in the residential construction industry, Mike Gridley '04 is doing his part to ease the demand.

The assistant professor of residential construction at SUNY Morrisville has been teaching the tricks of his trade and molding skilled workers for more than two decades in the classroom and as proprietor of Gridley Construction, in Hamilton, New York.

Now more than ever, his mastery in the field is essential as the COVID-19 pandemic drives the demand for proficient tradespeople through the roof. A buoyant housing market and

a surge in home remodeling and repair, along with favorable interest rates, spell out abundant job opportunities but not enough skilled workers to fill them.

"The pandemic caused many people to want to add space, especially outside," Gridley said. "It also changed their minds about going on expensive vacations and instead, putting more money into their houses and property where they spend a lot more time."

"As soon as the stimulus money came in, many homeowners took advantage of it and started repairing small stuff in their houses, like garage doors, and wanted small kitchen and bathroom remodels," said Or Oren '05, owner of Oren Construction, a high-end residential design and remodeling

construction business in Hamilton, New York. "That made the entire industry as busy as I've seen in the last 14 years."

As residential construction jobs soar past pre-pandemic levels, companies are anxious to fill them. What are employers looking for? Workers that know what they're doing, according to industry leaders.

"It is hard to find good labor and Morrisville's residential construction and wood products technology programs are a great source of qualified candidates," Oren said.

"Based on our students' skillsets, they are poised to fill the huge shortage in this trade," Gridley said. "Everything we teach provides students with experience and skills to gain a competitive edge in the job market."

"Coursework is applied and relevant, so the skills our students come out of the program with are high value and can be applied on the job site from day one," said Ryan Quinn '13, assistant professor of renewable energy and residential construction.

"Everything we teach provides students with experience and skills to gain a competitive edge in the job market."

Mike Gridley

Quinn earned a Bachelor of Technology degree in renewable energy from SUNY Morrisville and came back to teach in the program after obtaining a Master of Science degree from SUNY ESF and working in the solar industry as a project engineer. In addition to his classes in solar photovoltaics and electrical theory, he also teaches plumbing, electrification and HVAC courses in the residential construction program.

## More than just building

Students in the residential construction program get hands-on experience in all the latest construction techniques, framing systems, energy systems, masonry systems, foundation concepts, plumbing, electrical, HVAC and surveying. Students also gain experience in finish carpentry and furniture production and business while taking electives offered by the wood products technology program, which has its own 14,000-square-foot Wood Products Technology Center.

They even learn about the business of construction, with courses in business law, accounting and human resources, and can explore related topics that include small power equipment, welding and engineering.

With the soaring cost of treated lumber and a shortage of other materials, estimating has become more important in the industry and is gaining traction in classes.



Students work in the college's electrical lab.

Coursework in employee supervision, accounting and public speaking round out the program. What's more, students can take crossover and relevant courses in other programs to augment their education.

"Morrisville's wood products technology and residential construction programs introduced me to the principles of construction, especially in wood construction, including fine carpentry skills that set me apart from my competition," Oren said.

The residential construction grad learned to design and work in teams.

"In remodeling, it is necessary to diagnose and solve problems created by poor installation," Oren said. "I call myself a 'house doctor' and use the knowledge I gained from my bright instructors at Morrisville as the foundation of my best practices in construction."

SUNY Morrisville wood products technology student Finneas Goodwin is taking classes in residential construction and wood products technology, which offers him a look at the steps involved in turning raw lumber into a finished product through courses in finish carpentry, wood laminates, furniture production and manufacturing, sales and marketing of wood products, architectural millwork and related fields.

"When I graduate this year, I can go into so many different fields with everything I know, including framing, electrical, plumbing, HVAC or woodworking," Goodwin said.

As alumni, Gridley, Quinn and Oren know the value of a



Kimani Thomas builds a shed in a residential construction lab.





From left, Assistant Professor Ryan Quinn '13 works with students Finneas Goodwin, Jason Crain '21 and Eden Adler '24 on a furnace they assembled and commissioned in a residential heating systems class.

"I receive roughly three to four emails a week from regional employers looking to hire graduates for positions in construction, remodeling, carpentry, HVAC and more."

**Ryan Quinn**



Students in a masonry class pour a concrete slab for a radiant heated floor system.

SUNY Morrisville education. All were heavily sought after in their industry when they graduated.

The future is even rosier for today's graduates, as renewed interest in the trades continues to climb.

"I receive roughly three to four emails a week from regional employers looking to hire graduates for positions in construction, remodeling, carpentry, HVAC and more," Quinn said. "We have a unique problem, in that we typically have more job opportunities than students."

"I am approached often by contractors and managers who know I teach and ask me if I have any students looking for work," Gridley said. "With this labor deficit, there are many employers seeking students who can run a sawmill shop, or do plumbing and electrical work, in addition to building."

"We hired Morrisville residential construction graduates, who later opened their own small businesses in our area and who we refer clients to," Oren said. "The college's hands-on training sets them up for successful employment."

"Everyone gets a hands-on experience and you really get your hands dirty," Gridley said. "Our job sites, construction lab, sawmill and woodshop are where the magic happens."

Students learn, design and build in state-of-the-art facilities, which include a 6,000-square-foot residential construction laboratory with framing, plumbing and heating, masonry and electrification labs. They also have access to a variety of finish-carpentry facilities and a computer lab with AutoCAD and LandCADD software.

Working in actual community settings is another feather in the program's cap. Last year's coursework didn't follow

the norm as the pandemic forced a half-semester of virtual learning before students were able to return in-person, with limited class sizes during the Fall 2020 semester.

"It has been a challenging year," Gridley said. "While we are not able to do projects in the community due to the pandemic, we are still doing smaller-scale projects in labs."

This semester, they're manufacturing pre-fab pieces for a 16-by-24 rough cut shed with a steel roof to house equipment for the college's Woods Sports Team. The entire project is supplied using on-campus resources and materials, while wood products technology students saw, rip (cut) to size and air dry the lumber themselves.

Through the years, Gridley has supervised his students in many community projects, including building houses and decks, finish basements, remodel and brick work, as well as pouring concrete slabs and foundations.



A student in a wood products technology class works on a project.

### Building his career

Gridley started seasoning his skillset when he was 8, helping his father build things around the house. Not long after, he was making wooden tree stands out of rough, hardwood cuts.

Those projects fueled bigger endeavors — turning an attic into an apartment, building an addition onto the garage of his family's home, building pole barns and eventually remodeling, designing and building houses.

His affinity for taking something from ordinary to extraordinary eventually led him to SUNY Morrisville, where he earned an associate degree in residential construction. Shortly after he graduated in 2004, he started his business.

"I love the challenge and the satisfaction I get when I build something," Gridley said. So much so that he decided to share his knowledge with others, getting his bachelor's and master's degrees in construction and returning to his alma mater to teach. He's been building successful careers ever since.

The foundation of the program is a hands-on approach.

"The hands-on experience is an important aspect of any program," Gridley said. "You can learn in a classroom, but you also need the field experience. To actually do the work yourself is an entirely different situation than reading about it in a textbook."

Eden Adler '24 makes the one-hour drive, from Solvay, New York, every day to campus, where she is taking residential construction courses as technical electives for her renewable energy Bachelor of Technology program.

"It is hands-on in everything at SUNY Morrisville and this is very important for me as I am a very hands-on learner," she said.

"I want to become my own contractor and own my own business eventually, but I am also interested in the electrical union," said residential construction student Justin Amato '21. "This degree gets me into the second year of the electrical union so really, if I wanted to, I don't need to go work for someone. I can start my own business."

"What this means for graduates of the program is if they are accepted by the union trade, they will go in the apprenticeship program as a second-year apprentice and won't have to start at the bottom," Gridley explained.

The program provides students with an arsenal of skills, bridging them to careers in the residential building industry, including as an independent contractor, builder, estimator, supervisor, purchasing agent, material sales, or in real estate and development.

And they're prepared to tackle obstacles, including most recent challenges like the skilled labor deficit, increased lumber prices, limited supplies and supply chain issues.

As residential construction continues to play a vital role in the economy's recovery, Gridley is among those embracing the challenge.

"We continue to think of ways to add to students' experiences," said Gridley, who would eventually like to incorporate building modular homes and partnering with a leading builder into the program.



Campus community  
comes together  
for

# Giving Day

## Event exceeds its goal, helps students stay on track



Theresa Kevorkian, vice president for institutional advancement, displays one of her balloon creations during Giving Day.

By Franci Valenzano, Class of '86

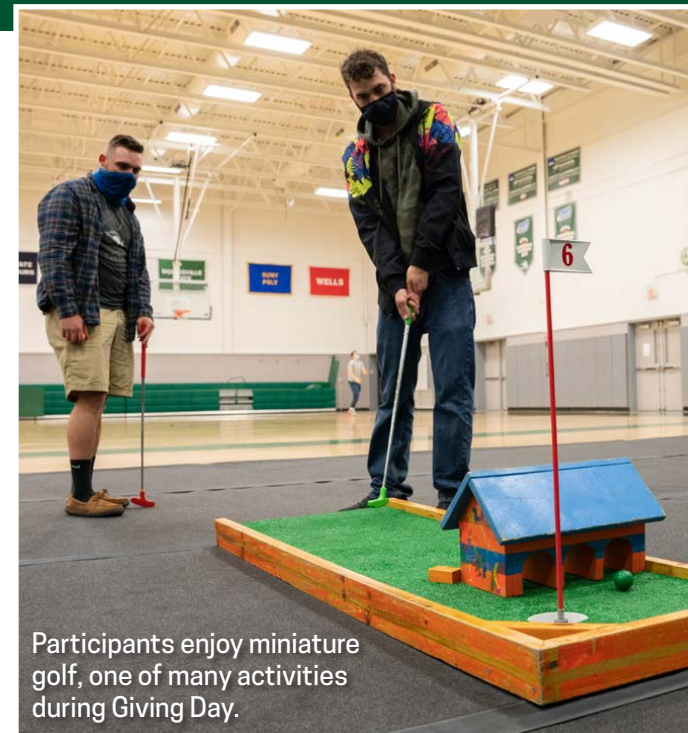
As a single mother, Rolanda Campbell '22 has faced her share of financial burdens while pursuing her education at SUNY Morrisville.

But childcare costs, transportation worries and so many other financial burdens were alleviated thanks to the college's Student Hardship Fund, which helped her stay on track.

The fund supports students who incur a sudden expense or change in circumstances they cannot overcome with financial aid or family support.

"I am thankful that this exists to help make these things possible," Campbell said. "This has been a trying time not just for me, but for many students."

This year, opportunities will open for more students in need as the college's third annual Giving Day raised \$71,856, which will directly support the Hardship Fund.



Participants enjoy miniature golf, one of many activities during Giving Day.

Since its inception in 2014, the Student Hardship Fund has helped put dreams within reach for hundreds of students.

During the pandemic, the number of students applying for the fund tripled as students and their families experienced job loss and other unexpected costs. The fund became a top priority, with the community rising to support its need.

"We are so moved by this outpouring of support from our community of alumni, parents and friends," said Theresa Kevorkian, vice president for institutional advancement. "The college is committed to helping every student stay in school, regardless of their circumstances, and gifts on Giving Day will bolster this fund for another semester to aid our students."

SUNY Morrisville's Giving Day 2021 was a 24-hour challenge that brought the Morrisville community together in celebration of philanthropy and Mustang Pride.

When \$25,000 was raised, five challengers stepped up to match the funds dollar-for-dollar, with a \$50,000 goal. Challenge donors were: Donald Babcock '59; Harmon Hoff and Eve Ann Schwartz; Jim Owen '63; Terri Spiegel '74; and Glenn Tucker '78 (see bios on page 19).

When the goal was reached, Morrisville College Foundation board member Gary Smaldone '81 pledged an additional \$10,000 matching challenge that kept the momentum going.

Also rising to the challenge was the college's esports team, which raised \$541 during a 24-hour marathon stream.

"Coming into Giving Day, we knew we needed to raise \$50,000 to support the fund for next fall," Kevorkian said. "Exceeding the goal means we can support more students

more generously and that this total may even carry through to next spring. It is so reassuring to know we'll be able to keep helping students this way."

A financial emergency of as little as \$300 can interrupt a student's education.

"The fund enables them to get back on their feet and press on with their degree, which will lead to a rewarding and sustainable career," said Courtney Turner, director of annual giving.

This year's Giving Day festivities were scaled back, due to the pandemic, but it didn't put a cap on generosity or enthusiasm.

Participants enjoyed mini golf, food, games, demonstrations by the college's Woods Sports Team and a virtual concert with SUNY Morrisville alumnus Tim Moyer and his popular Central New York band, Gridley Paige.

Campus community support was overwhelming, with 215 donors, eleven of them students who wanted to support their fellow classmates.

Dairy management student Devin Kuhn is one of many who championed the cause. "I have a couple of friends who were assisted by this fund and I know how important receiving any type of financial assistance is."

"This is a wonderful idea and I am happy to be a part of it," said Connie Forward '94, a college staff member and Giving Day donor.

"We all face hardship in our lives and I am so proud to be a part of this by making a gift," said staff member Johnathan Whitbeck, whose friend Cassidy Martinez '22 lost her laptop and all of her books in a house fire last year.

"We all face hardship in our lives and I am so proud to be a part of this by making a gift."

**Johnathan Whitbeck**

"The hardship fund took away the burden of replacing those materials almost immediately," Martinez said. "I am beyond thankful for this fund and I hope that any students who are financially insecure can breathe a little easier."

"Making a gift to the Hardship Fund is an act of kindness for our students and it is also a vote of confidence in their ability to succeed," Kevorkian said.

Below, some students who received the Hardship Fund share the impact it had on their lives:

"Being a single mother, it has been challenging to continue





Students upcycle t-shirts to make Morrisville-themed bags.

my education while dealing with childcare closing and reduced hours at work,” Campbell said. “With the Student Hardship Fund I was awarded, I was able to pay bills and have transportation back and forth to school. I was also able to pay for childcare so that my son can continue to receive a great education from the Children’s Center on campus.”

“The Hardship Fund helped me when I did not have enough money to pay for my courses,” said student Brooke Severin ’21. “I would not have been able to graduate without the help I received and I am so thankful.”

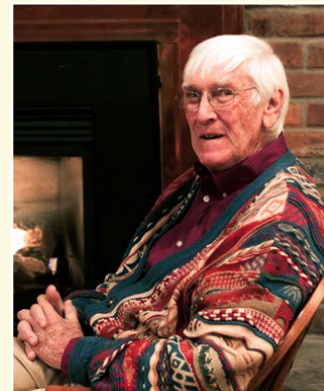
“The Hardship Fund has helped me pay for my rent, books and tuition,” said Orchid Kinzie-Middleton ’21. “I am forever grateful for this fund and its mission to alleviate some of the financial burdens that students face. I am positive that without the Hardship Fund, I would have had to put my education on hold. There is no limit to my gratitude for those who have helped make the Student Hardship Fund accessible to me.”

# Thank You

to our challenge donors who made this Giving Day possible!



## Donald Babcock '59



Donald Babcock '59 spent his career in the auto parts, music and real estate industries and now splits his time between Skaneateles Lake and Mount Dora, Florida. Babcock generously funds student scholarships every year. As a student, Babcock experienced food insecurity and does his part to make sure students today do not have the same struggle.

## Harmon Hoff and Eve Ann Schwartz



Harmon Hoff and Eve Ann Schwartz hold many roles in our community including town supervisor, school board member, retired teacher and lifelong beef cattle farmers. Hoff and Schwartz support the Student Hardship Fund because they believe that education is the path to strength and sustainability, not only for each individual student and their family, but also for our community as a whole.

## Jim Owen '63



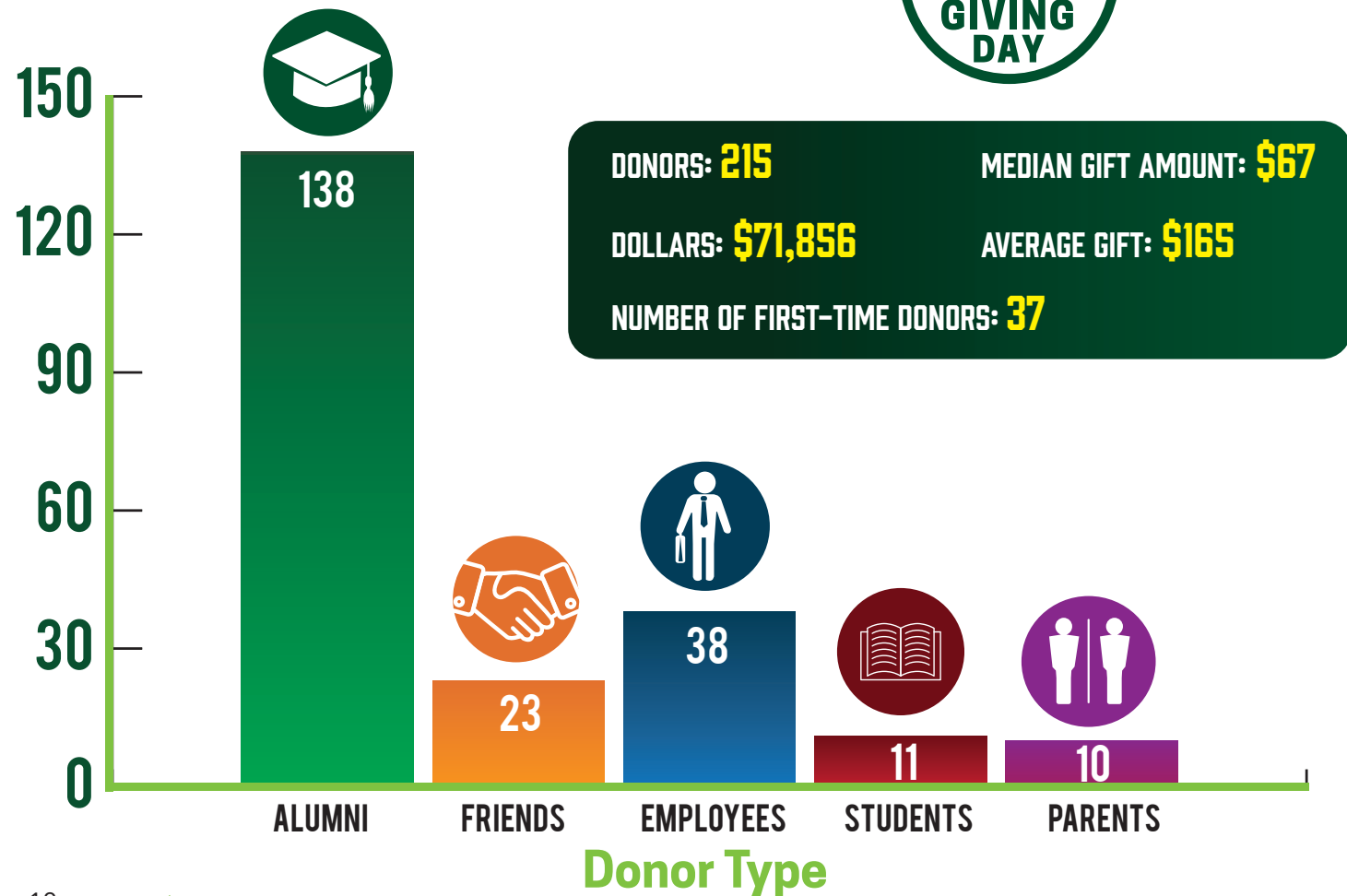
Jim Owen '63 spent 35 years as a business teacher and athletic coach and credits Morrisville with giving him his start. He supports student scholarships to help students get inspired the way he was as a student.

## Terri Spiegel '74



Terri Spiegel '74 pursued a successful career in nursing after graduating from Morrisville and now lives outside of Atlanta, Georgia. Spiegel is passionate about academic excellence and supports students so they can focus on their studies and launching their professional careers.

## GIVING DAY DONOR BREAKDOWN

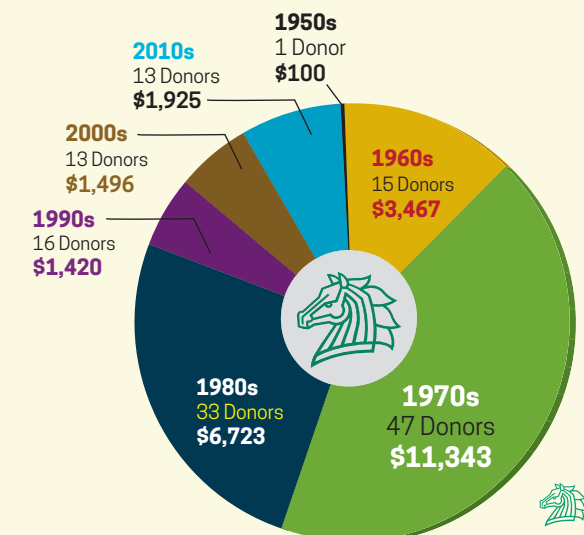


## Glenn Tucker '78



Glenn Tucker '78 and his wife Shelly own and run their own business in Phoenix, Arizona. Tucker supports the Student Hardship Fund because he wants to improve students' quality of life and enable them to enjoy and make the most of their college experience.

## GIVING DAY ALUMNI DONORS BY DECADE







# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## SUNY Morrisville journalism alumnus receives prestigious award

By Marti Howell

“If your goal is to make difference, you start with journalism and Morrisville.”

Those words spoken by SUNY Morrisville journalism graduate Mike Gormley are precisely what he has been doing as a reporter covering politics and government for four decades.

Since he graduated in 1981, Gormley has racked up more than two dozen journalism awards, including the 2016 New York State Publishers Association Distinguished State Government Coverage Award of Excellence for his investigation into New York State Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s campaign finances.

His most recent is recognition by the Legislative Correspondents Association as the recipient of the 2020 Walter T. Brown Memorial Award for his coverage of New York state politics and government.

Gormley, who lives north of Albany, New York, has built a career on the foundation that honest, unbiased and comprehensive reporting is essential to democracy.

“It all goes back to Morrisville,” he said. “You’re at a great journalism school but you also have a chip on your shoulder because you’re at a two-year state program. But if you have the drive, you can accomplish a lot for society. You can change lives.”

SUNY Morrisville’s journalism program has been changing lives for more than 50 years, adding a bachelor’s degree in journalism and videojournalism as part of the program.

Gormley aspired to become a journalist so he could tell the stories that mattered to people and “make an impact on people, life and society.”



Mike Gormley '81

He has been doggedly pursuing the stories that change the lives of New Yorkers since the 1980s, staying on the political beat because he believes strongly in the journalist’s duty to be a servant to the public.

“You can make a difference every day,” said the reporter who has covered issues as diverse as health care, elder care, police unions and the pandemic.

Gormley routinely looks for situations where people are voiceless.

“There are people who don’t have a voice. We’re their only shot,” he said. “It’s a chance to do important work.”

That is how Gormley has always viewed journalism — as a chance to do important work and an opportunity to make a difference.

“There are people who don’t have a voice. We’re their only shot. It’s a chance to do important work.”

**Mike Gormley**

Gormley recalled the night when he and other staffers from the college’s newspaper, The CHIMES, were relaxing at The Fort Bar & Grill and the bowling alley down the street caught on fire.

They called the publisher, recalled the edition they had worked on that day and wrote and designed a front-page breaking news story, scooping local newspapers.

“It was nice to have a story that said yesterday,” Gormley said.

Gormley remains a reporter who is always on duty, always on alert, always looking ahead. He described his process as a formula that includes regular beat stories and enterprise projects.

“I like to have one good story going, one for the weekend and one project for the future,” he explained. “All of this is on purpose.”

“Mike has always worked harder than anybody,” said Denise Snyder, also a 1981 graduate of the Morrisville journalism program and Gormley’s wife of 36 years. “He’s like a bulldog when he goes after a story.”

“It’s the digging that challenges me,” Gormley said.

In his years of investigative reporting, Gormley has explored everything from organized crime in New York and Pennsylvania, to the violence of civil strife on the Iroquois nation in northern New York and Canada. He even went undercover with an ultra-right-wing group in Broome County. His series, “God, Guns and Government,” resulted in federal convictions.

“The story is what matters,” Gormley said. “The story and the public.”

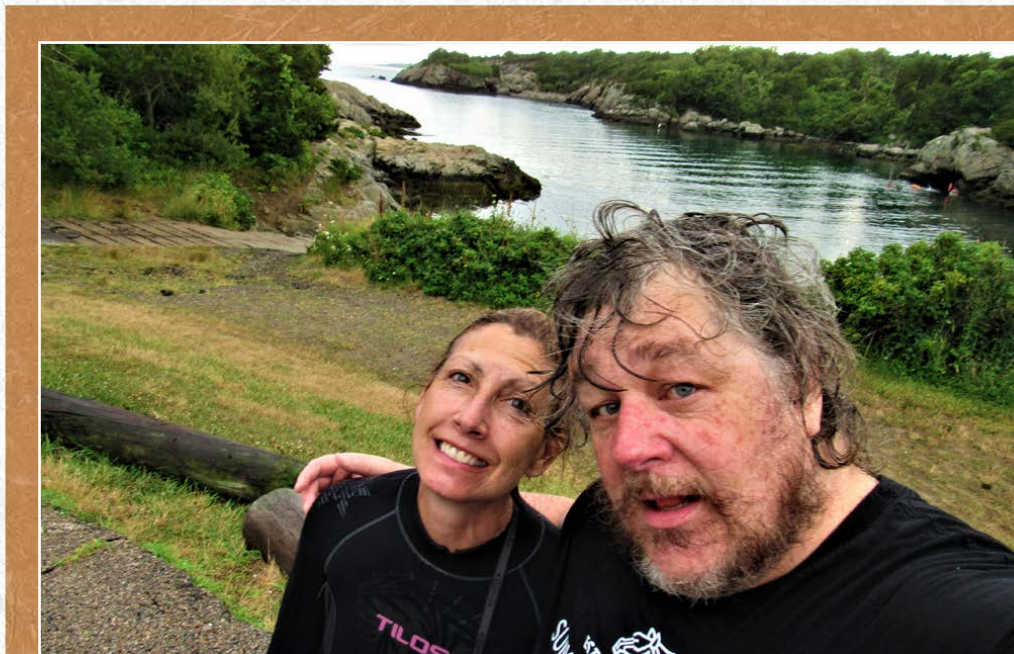
Today, his roots are still firmly planted in the journalism program that stretched far past the two years he spent in it.

He remains connected — as so many journalism graduates do — to the college, faculty and each other, through a strong journalism bloodline built by a loyal crew of professors who led by example. That thread continues to pull separate classes together for milestones and celebrations, Gormley among them.

“I like to have one good story going, one for the weekend and one project for the future. All of this is on purpose.”

**Mike Gormley**

“We love to come to campus to watch games and see everyone” Gormley said. He also sponsors an annual scholarship in memory of the late John O’Connor, one of his beloved journalism professors.



Mike Gormley '81 and his wife, Denise Snyder '81, who met at SUNY Morrisville.



# Graduate leads the way on and off of the ICE



Danielle Bunting '21

“From the time I stepped on campus, I knew that I could make a difference,” said Bunting. “The (women’s ice hockey) team had great leaders in Maria deWilde, Kaitlyn Schlake and Ciara Lark that made the environment welcoming and set the example for years to come with the program.”

She knew Morrisville would help guide her down the path to success later on.

“From the time I stepped on campus, I knew that I could make a difference.”

## Danielle Bunting

Women’s hockey had one of the most successful seasons in the young program’s history during Bunting’s freshman campaign, capturing the Colonial Hockey Conference (CHC) regular season and tournament titles, and earning the league’s first automatic qualifying bid to the NCAA Division III Championship Tournament.

A top competitor for the next two years, Bunting again made an impact on the ice, but it was what happened off of the ice that further developed the young student-athlete into who she is today.

Bunting chose the human performance & health promotion major with the initial plan of becoming a physical therapist. Like so many, that plan changed when her own personal struggles with uncontrollable skin issues took her down a different path, which led her to pursue a medical degree in dermatology.

Off the ice, Bunting also excelled academically. She pursued tough courses throughout her academic career when they weren’t typically in the ‘lineup,’ such as organic chemistry; found time to tutor in the college’s Academic Services Center; volunteered with various community service projects within the hockey program and across campus;

and was also involved with the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) as an officer. She also maintained Dean’s List and President’s List accolades.

“I had a jam-packed schedule,” she said with a smile when describing her typical day. “I started my day at 5 or 6 a.m. with practice, went to class, fit in tutoring during breaks, studying, hanging out with friends and other things I was involved with. Professors were willing to work with my schedule and made it (easier) to accomplish all I set out to do.”

In-between it all, she found time to give back, too.

“My teammates guided me to tutoring, but in a good way,” she said. “It has helped me build relationships with others, allowed me to give back when I can, and help others better understand things I love in a way to help them.”

Her efforts helping others didn’t go unrecognized, as she was named Morrisville’s 2020-21 Peer Tutor of the Year.

Bunting capped off her career with an internship at Park City Off the Mountain Gym in Utah during the spring term, an experience that turned into a personal training job for the budding doctor while she determines where her feet will land next.

Success comes as no surprise to those who know Bunting best. Determination has lauded her several accolades throughout her career, including ACHA All-American Scholar honors, All-Academic Team accolades, becoming one of the first inductees into the college’s Chi Alpha Sigma Alpha Lambda Chapter of the National Honor Society for Student-Athletes, and being named captain of the women’s hockey team.

“Finding the right group of people to lead the way is important,” said Bunting. “You can do whatever you put your mind to — you can achieve anything.”

## By Brandy Thurston, Class of '95

“It’s worth it if you put in the effort,” said Danielle Bunting '21 while reflecting on her time as a SUNY Morrisville Mustang.

Bunting, a Thornville, Ohio native, capped off her stellar academic career at SUNY Morrisville with the prestigious State University of New York (SUNY) Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence (CASE), which she was honored with this spring as she also completed her Bachelor of Science degree in human performance & health promotion. The CASE award, the highest bestowed upon a student by SUNY, acknowledges students for distinguished achievements, who have best demonstrated and been recognized for their integration of academic excellence with other aspects of their lives including leadership, campus involvement, community

service, arts (creative or performing), athletics, and career achievement.

Bunting learned from her mother, Wendy, a work ethic that would lay the foundation for success in any avenue she pursued — never giving up on following dreams, giving all you can to whatever is thrown at you, whether it be academically, athletically or in life. Bunting credits much of her success to her mom, who has served as a role model for the aspiring medical student.

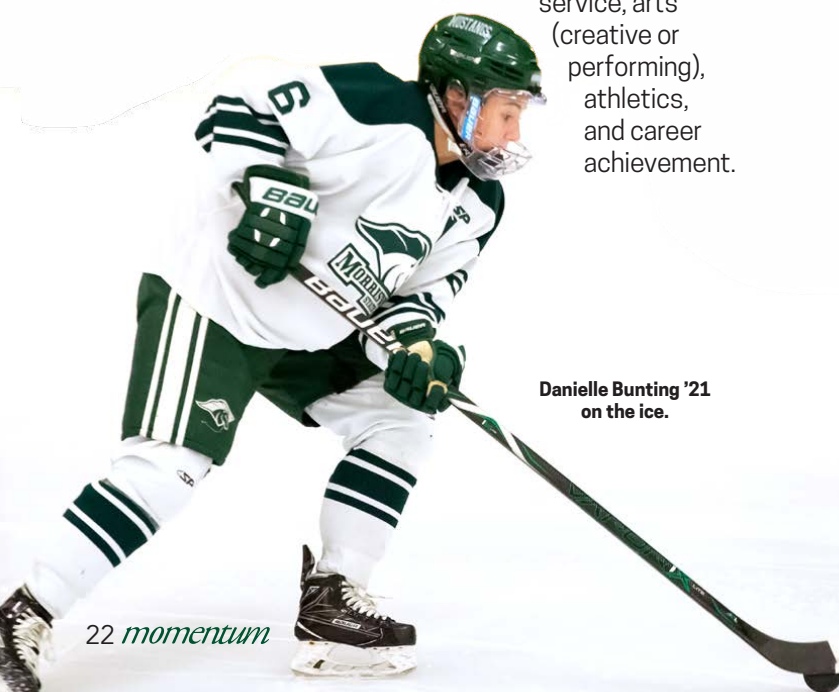
“My mom helped raise her siblings from the time she was 14 and encouraged success on so many levels,” she said. “She set the bar high in all that my brother and I did and was there to help guide us along in what we wanted to do, academically and athletically.”

When it came time for Bunting to start pursuing the next chapter of her life, she knew that her biggest fan would be supportive of her dream and began searching for the next place to make that happen.

From an early age, Bunting watched her brother play sports, and at less than three years old, began playing soccer, soon finding her way to the ice and learning how to skate. Once she saw how much fun her brother was having playing hockey, she wanted to join in. She already had the feel for the ice, showcasing her talents in figure skating.

When she first picked up a hockey stick at seven years old, Bunting knew this was a love that she could never skate away from. That passion led her across two states to the small Central New York village of Morrisville in August 2017.

Her affinity for hockey and love of science drew Bunting to SUNY Morrisville, a place she called home the past four years.



Danielle Bunting '21 on the ice.







# Budding ENTREPRENEURS

## Students take business ideas to next level

By Mikaela Schneider, agricultural business development '22

As the semester came to an end, three agribusiness students had something a little extra to celebrate. They won the top three prizes in the 2021 Cotton Family Business Idea Competition, a competition where students have the opportunity to win money and take their ideas to the next level.

The competition began in 2017 with generous support from Doug and Susan Cotton of Horseheads, New York, for the Douglas and Susan Cotton Fund for Entrepreneurial Development. The competition requires students to write a brief description of their business and answer the following questions: What problem does your product, service or business idea solve? Who will benefit from your

product/service? What are the benefits of your product or service? What would be required to make your idea a reality? Is it feasible?

After the judges reviewed the entries, the top six finalists presented virtually via Zoom on April 22. This year, three agricultural business development students took home the winning prizes.

**Bryce Haynes** from Tully, New York, earned the top prize of \$1,000. Her business idea is a Human Resource Almanac for Agriculture. She wants to start a business that makes human resources and payroll easier for agricultural producers.

With the competition money, she plans to create agriculture handbooks for farm business owners. The handbooks will include all the necessary laws to ensure that farmers are compliant with NY and Federal labor laws. Haynes will translate the handbooks into Spanish, ensuring that all employees also understand the laws.

Haynes graduated with a bachelor's degree in agricultural business development, with a minor in psychology. She completed her 15-week internship with the Steve Walker Law Firm. Her future goal is to attend law school.

"The flexibility and support offered by Morrisville's teachers, administrators, and assistants can't be matched at any other university," Haynes said. "A degree from SUNY Morrisville has opened a world of doors I never knew existed."

Winning second place was **Destry Mullen** from Stafford, New York, who received \$700. Mullen graduated with a

bachelor's degree in agricultural business development and a minor in cannabis industry studies.

Mullen's business idea is to start a hemp processing facility. In addition to processing, Mullen would like to help farmers increase profits from new viable crop rotations.

"I was so honored to be awarded second place in the Cotton Business Idea Competition this semester," Mullen said. "The money that I received will be saved for future need or potentially used to start printing hemp information brochures for potential future hemp farmers."

Mullen plans to build relationships with hemp farmers, work with prospective investors and obtain more real-world experience while working for Eaton Hemp in Eaton, New York.

**Miriam Hoelscher**, the third-place winner from Eden, New York, took home \$500 in the competition. Her goal is to own a beef farm, to be named Cow Cove Cattle Company, where she will provide the community with a quality supply of beef year-round.

In addition to beef, consumer education and farm tours will play a significant part in Hoelscher's business. She plans to utilize the prize money to assist in purchasing her first herd of beef cows. Upon graduating in 2022 with her bachelor's degree in agricultural business development, she plans to attend SUNY Oswego to earn a master's of education.

"Thank you to the Cotton Family for this support," Hoelscher said. "It was not only an honor to receive this award, but it also was an amazing opportunity to present in front of my peers and the judges, as well as listen to my peers' business ideas. If it wasn't for organizations and people like you, students like me wouldn't have the opportunity to pursue their dreams."

Miriam Hoelscher '21



Bryce Haynes '21



Destry Mullen '21

### OTHER TOP FINALISTS WERE:

**Shaniya Sharpe**, business administration student - Xplore NYC

**Abdoul Samake**, applied psychology bachelor's degree major - Credit Card Theft Deterrent Device

**Sidney Barrett**, horticulture bachelor's degree major with a minor in cannabis industry studies - Sidney's Safe Pesticide Spray.

The Cotton Family Business Idea Competition is just one of the many ways SUNY Morrisville provides hands-on, real-world education to students.





# GRADS

make THE grade

## Two SUNY Morrisville graduates honored for their commitment and leadership



Sheneya Wilson '13

### Inspiring entrepreneur selected as a Forbes Next 1000 honoree

There's no stopping SUNY Morrisville alumna Sheneya Wilson. The Class of 2013 accounting graduate joins notable entrepreneurs from around the country in her selection to the inaugural Forbes Next 1000 list.

Wilson, 26, who refers to herself as a serial entrepreneur and "The People's CPA," is a certified public accountant, real estate investor and financial educator. She is the founder and CEO of Fola Financial LLC, a firm dedicated to assisting individuals and businesses with navigating their financial journeys by providing bookkeeping, tax planning and tax preparation services.

Wilson also is the founder of the Tax Essentials Learning Program (T.E.L.P), where she educates aspiring tax professionals on the tax code and teaches them how to build their own tax practices. Her expertise has been recognized in various publications including the *New York Times*, *CNBC*, *Sheen Magazine* and *Forbes*. She also serves as a tax expert on the Business Insider Tax Review Board and is a Forbes 30 Under 30 Scholar.

An active public speaker who enjoys sharing her experiences and knowledge to empower others, she also is the co-founder of My Successful Sistah Inc., an organization that hosts an annual event called "Cap N Crowns," where young women are celebrated for their educational accomplishments with a celebration ceremony.



Marvin Phillips '05

### Casino gaming industry leader named in "40 Under 40" Class of 2021

While he was studying information technology at SUNY Morrisville, Marvin Phillips also was honing his skills as a summer analyst intern at the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort (AMCR). It turned into a passionate career for the now director of information technology, at AMCR, who was named to The Emerging Leaders of Gaming's "40 Under 40" Class of 2021.

The "40 Under 40" recognizes young leaders who play a pivotal role in the casino gaming industry. Sponsored by The Innovation Group, the award is dedicated to shaping and propelling the gaming industry by influencing strategy, technology and the leaders of tomorrow.

Phillips is responsible for the AMCR's information technology infrastructure, leading a team that develops the cybersecurity and technology strategy for the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's gaming operation.

His role is integral to the long-term strategy of the casino, ensuring that the company's business plans are supported through technology by establishing direction and executing the implementation of a portfolio of marketing, guest relations, operations and next-generation gaming products.

Phillips also has an associate degree in gaming casino management from SUNY Morrisville.

## ★ In Memoriam ★



Mary Kellman Adamo '63  
 David L. Allen '63  
 Mary Kay McGee Anderson '75  
 Susan D. Babcock '01  
 Gail M. Bartnick '69  
 Michael J. Bell '88  
 Karen L. Collins Brauer '75  
 Paul A. Cerio '56  
 William C. Chambers '75  
 David E. Clark '60  
 Douglas A. Clark '79  
 Richard E. Clary '52  
 Russell D. Cole '74  
 Edward J. Colling '77  
 Joshua Thomas Cusson '07  
 George Demeree '55  
 Rebecca L. Franco '80  
 Fredrick Frisbie '49  
 Barbara Ann Fuller '62  
 John Gugliotti '72  
 Daniel Homokay '69  
 Robert A. Johnson '72  
 Harry R. Knorr '82  
 Dean Hart Knox '78  
 Donald F. Kratz '72

Patrick J. Lacey '75  
 Phyllis Elaine Lambert '88  
 Donald L. Larkin '45  
 Charles M. Lehman '52  
 Carl F. Matthie '62  
 Robert A. McClelland '50  
 Celine Marie Kelly McIndoe '80  
 George G. McNeil '52  
 Virginia Mead '55  
 Judith Ann Metcher '82  
 Jill A. Mueller '96  
 Renee Nasci '98  
 Steven Nemec '63  
 Chante Phyllis O'Neal '96  
 Kathy Adelyn Paduano '68  
 Rose Ellen Pahon '63  
 Sharon G. Roberts '91  
 Eugene Rosa '61  
 Jeffrey Sauer '80  
 Karen E. Soule '88  
 James Southard '54  
 Robert A. Tompkins '57  
 Karl L. VonHahmann '85  
 Robert D. Waghorn '57  
 Chester A. Zbydniowski '78



# momentum

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**Sept. 24-25  
2021**

- Alumni Parade
- Athletics Competition
- Rides, Games & Food



**Reconnect with classmates and attend events throughout the weekend!**

For more information, visit [morrisville.edu/mustangweekend](http://morrisville.edu/mustangweekend)