

1766

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

REDISCOVERING RUTGERS

WELCOMING ALUMNI AND STUDENTS BACK TO CAMPUS



The magazine published
by and for the
Rutgers Alumni Association
SUMMER/FALL 2021



Rutgers Alumni Association 190 YEARS OF SERVICE TO RUTGERS ALUMNI

Founded in 1831, the Rutgers Alumni Association (RAA), a 501(c)(3) service organization, is the alumni association of the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, and includes alumni of the School of Engineering, Mason Gross School of the Arts, the School of Graduate Studies, and the School of Management and Labor Relations. Membership in the Rutgers Alumni Association provides many benefits for its alumni, such as receiving special Rutgers publications, access to RAA events, merchandise, and much more!

As the fourth-oldest organized alumni association in America, the 190-year old RAA is proudly supported by a volunteer army fueled by more than 500,000 alumni constituents. We welcome your participation. To find out more about the RAA, visit www.rutgersalumni.org or call 732-932-7474.

RAA OFFICERS 2019-2021

President:

Danielle Bechta SAS'11

Vice Presidents:

Kenneth Kolanko RC RBS'07 GSE '13

Luis Largo GSE'07

Raylene Ravarra RC'95

Brian Tobin RC'96 GSN'17

Corporate Secretary:

Bruce E. Marich RC'63 GSNB'65

Treasurer:

James O'Neill, Jr. RC'76 GSM'84

1766

1766 is published by the Rutgers Alumni Association
Vol. 38, No. 1

Except for official announcements, the Rutgers Alumni Association disclaims all responsibility for opinions expressed and statements made in articles or advertisements published in this magazine.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



Trying to pull together content for a publication that typically includes some stories about Rutgers Alumni Association events – when there are none – was a bit challenging. Similarly, selecting a cover story was not an easy task, so, the editorial team eventually landed on a forward-looking cover reflecting something that RAA members are looking forward to – returning to Rutgers and events and experiences that allow us to relive old, and create new memories.

In this issue, you will get to meet alumni who share how they have learned to pivot during the pandemic, as well as a few (including our own *1766* designer, Robin Cabana), who answered the call to work on a new newsletter providing invaluable resources and support that helped thousands of New Yorkers get vaccinated.

We also feature “something old and something new” – a throwback story on the infamous Ledge, and a story on the recently-founded Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice, which will operate University-wide on all Rutgers campuses.

I hope you enjoy this issue! I also encourage you to visit rutgersalumni.org for additional news and profiles of Rutgers alumni.

Francine Tardo RC'96



COVER STORY

Returning to the
Rutgers-New
Brunswick Campus.

PHOTO BY JOHN HESTER

1766 STAFF

EDITOR

Francine Tardo RC'96

CONTRIBUTORS

Jeannine DeFoe RC'97

Christa DiMaio Richie
CCAS'99 GSC'05

John Hester LC'94

Kristin Baresich SAS'14

Lori Neuman RC'90

Marty Siederer LC'77

ART DIRECTOR

Robin Cabana DC'98

INSIDE

Backstage with the College Avenue Players 5

Alum's newsletter builds community in NYC 11

Memories of the Ledge 16

Meet Rutgers' go-to expert on the weather 22

CONTACT US

Our Office Location:
One Spring Street, Room 410
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Our Mailing Address:
Rutgers Alumni Association
P.O. Box 11320
New Brunswick, NJ 08906

Phone: 732-932-7474
www.RutgersAlumni.org
info@rutgersalumni.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DANIELLE BECHTA SAS'11

Greetings Rutgers Alumni!



I can hardly believe that two years has passed and my term is coming to a close. As the first two-year president of the Rutgers Alumni Association (RAA), it has been a pleasure connecting with you. My goals as president were to strengthen the RAA by reaching more alumni and deepening our relationship with the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS). I want to thank our partners at SAS and the Rutgers University Alumni Association. We all navigated this wild and unpredictable year together, and I am grateful for all of your support.

Just before the pandemic began in 2020, we moved our offices back on campus, sharing space on Spring Street with SAS. Although we haven't had a lot of time in the office, we are eager to get back as part of Rutgers' return to campus. As the world changed drastically, the RAA rose to the challenge of its new virtual environment, finding ways to celebrate alumni and looking for new ways to connect with the greater Rutgers community. Looking forward, we are excited to continue engaging more alumni

using a mix of in-person and virtual events.

One recent accomplishment I would like to highlight is the creation of a new strategic plan. This plan will guide our organization for the next two to three years. I want to say thank you to all of the volunteers who spent hours creating an ambitious plan that will help grow the RAA. Thank you for your vision and your tireless commitment.

I want to say congratulations to our 2021 graduates! As an SAS graduate you automatically become a member of the RAA. We welcome you with open arms and want to know how we can best serve you. If you have a passion for finance, event planning, communications, or just want to stay connected, there is a place for you at the RAA. So don't be shy, check us out on social media, or at www.rutgersalumni.org. We can't wait to meet you and for you to become an active part of your alumni association.

And finally, I want to congratulate the new officers and board members who will lead the RAA next year. I know your passion for alumni engagement will strengthen this organization and I am looking forward to being a contributing member and helping in any way that I can.

Thank you for allowing me to lead the RAA over the last two years. I am so grateful for this experience and look forward to the next chapter in my lifelong commitment as a volunteer for the RAA.

CONGRATULATIONS RUTGERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION 2021-2022 OFFICERS

President

Brian Tobin RC'96
GSN'17

Vice Presidents

Kenneth Kolanko
RC/RBS'07 GSE'13

Luis Largo GSE'07

Houshang Parsa RC'80

Lindsey West LC'08
SC&I'08

Corporate Secretary

Amy Kihm RC'01

Treasurer

James O'Neill, Jr. RC'76
GSM'84

Stay informed
and engage
with us at our
website and
social media
channels



WEBSITE
rutgersalumni.org



FACEBOOK
RAANewBrunswick



INSTAGRAM
[rutgersalumniassoc](https://www.instagram.com/rutgersalumniassoc)



TWITTER
RAANewBrunswick



LINKEDIN
[groups/7461471/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/7461471/)



YOUTUBE
[youtube.com/c/
RutgersAlumniAssociation](https://www.youtube.com/c/RutgersAlumniAssociation)

EXECUTIVE DEAN'S MESSAGE

PETER MARCH RUTGERS SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Greetings Rutgers Alumni Association!

I hope you and your loved ones are healthy and safe.

I write to you as we bring down the curtain on a year that might well be one of the most challenging in the history of Rutgers University.

The campus remained mostly empty since last fall and the majority of undergraduate courses were taught remotely. Our Convocation, which typically follows University Commencement in the stadium, was virtual, as it was in 2020.

Yet, we look with great hope and cautious optimism to the fall of 2021.

Rutgers President Jonathan Holloway and the university chancellors are preparing for a return to campus with strong protections for the safety and health of our students, faculty, staff, and host communities. This plan will have to follow guidance set by state and federal guidelines.

Nevertheless, we at the School of Arts and Sciences—Rutgers largest and most comprehensive school—are thrilled to return to the Banks of the Old Raritan. We will do our part to help Rutgers move in a safe, careful, and deliberate manner toward repopulating our campuses and making Rutgers once again the vibrant, student-centered community that it has been since the 1700s.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic over the last three semesters, I have been consistently inspired by our School's response to this crisis. I wrote last year of the resilience of faculty and students in managing the transition to remote education. Now I want to discuss our commitment to research—a fundamental component of Arts and Sciences—which often cannot be done easily via Zoom.

Consider, for example, Monica Driscoll, a Distinguished Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry who runs one of the largest research labs at Rutgers University. Her research cuts across an array of topics—including Alzheimer's Disease and ALS—drawing extensive federal funding from the National Institutes of Health.

Over the last year, the Driscoll team has worked out a system that allows experiments to continue while respecting social distancing protocols. Researchers stagger their lab time across day and night and have spread out through the Nelson Biological Laboratories. If by chance you had ventured into Nelson this year, you would have seen dedicated researchers at their benches, masks on, ample space from their neighbors, and tarps hanging from the ceiling.

It is an operation that has taken much forethought, patience, and cooperation. And it is emblematic of the spirit that runs through the entire school.

The lab manager, Mary Anne Royal, who has worked with Professor Driscoll for more than 20 years, puts it this way:

"This year has been all about finding the way to do what we love in spite of another hurdle. Faced with this incredible challenge, we did what we always do: We talk to each other, we collaborate, and we figure it out."

I suspect this is true for all of us. Whether in our work lives or home lives, we have all done our share of "figuring it out."

I also see this in the partnership between SAS and RAA. Although the pandemic has prevented us from gathering together, you have nonetheless stepped forward to assist the School of Arts and Sciences in ways that matter greatly to our community of faculty, staff, and students. You generously contributed to our scholarship funds on Rutgers Giving Day. You participated in virtual Convocation, recording inspirational messages to our graduates. And you have shared some of the great examples of our graduates' achievements on your website and social media communities.

The School of Arts and Sciences is proud to be the principal constituent school for the Rutgers Alumni Association, and we feel fortunate to have the RAA become the official alumni association for SAS.

Together we are going to accomplish great things.

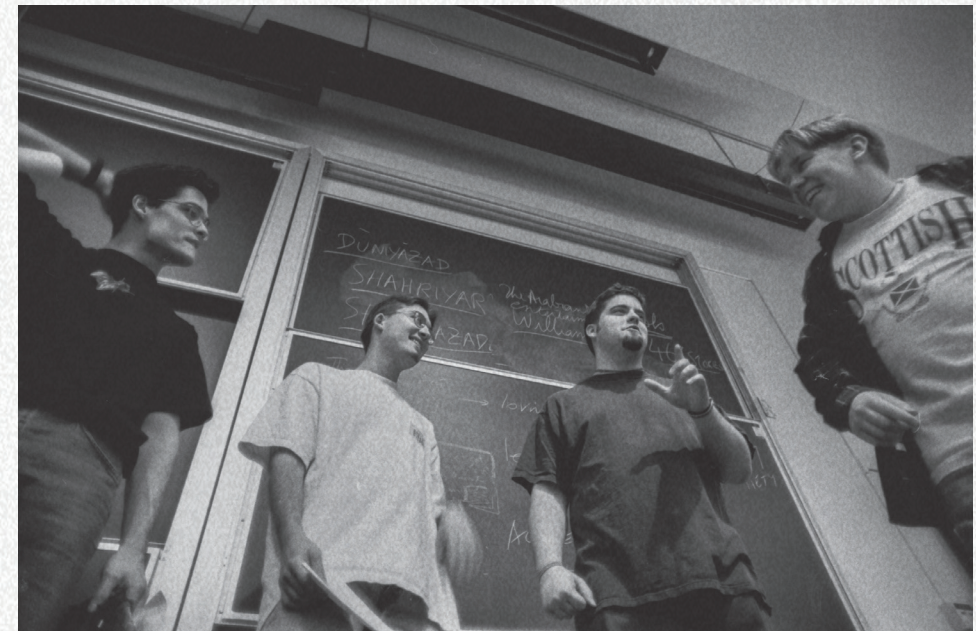
I cannot wait until we can greet each other in person. I hope to see you all at a tailgating event this fall.

Sincerely,

Peter March

Executive Dean of Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences

BACKSTAGE WITH THE COLLEGE AVENUE PLAYERS



Rob Poole, Jason Keil, Matt Crawford, and Mike Dawson, all RC'98.

PHOTO BY JOHN HESTER

The theatrical group has been bringing the laughs (and showtunes) to campus since the '80s in shows that are proudly unpolished

By John Hester LC'94

Rutgers University has long offered a wide array of cultural activities and entertainment, which includes professional-quality productions by Rutgers Cabaret, the Livingston Theater Company, the Cabaret Theater and Little Theater at Douglass College, and of course the myriad of productions staged by students of the Mason Gross School of the Arts. Another theatrical group that may not be as well known, however, is the College Avenue Players.

The origins of the College Avenue Players are two-fold. The group was first conceived in 1980 by Mark Hopkins RC'82 and Dave Soltero RC'83 as a forum for

non-theater majors. According to original member David Morgan, the very first production was a variety show performed on the Douglass campus. This was followed in November of 1980 by a production of Woody Allen's play "God." Only a few more productions followed, including the musical "Hair," before the group simply drifted apart, and stopped performing. It would be nearly a decade before the College Avenue Players would be resurrected.

In 1989, students Jay Glick LC'93 and Steve Kaiser RC'90 took the step of revitalizing the group, founded on the same mission as the first incarnation — giving non-theater majors a public platform to display their theatrical talents. The College Avenue Players had

another lease on life, and this time, the group was here to stay.

Run on a shoestring budget since the beginning of its second incarnation, the College Avenue Players has long had a reputation of do-it-yourself, fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants productions that could be attended for a nominal fee. The group doesn't have a fancy studio or stage, as with many other Rutgers productions. The College Avenue Players' homebase since its reincarnation more than three decades ago has been the no-frills Scott Hall on College Avenue.

Shows often revolve around sketch comedy, as in the group's signature production, the annual fundraiser, Comic Relief. This show, and others like it, have often relied on reproducing comedy routines made famous by Monty Python, "Saturday Night Live," and other classic shows, in addition to some original, student-written material. Lacking a stage construction crew, the shows have sometimes included backdrops made from a black curtain duct taped to the lecture hall blackboards, and many found items that make up the set. "Backstage" is an area at either side of the stage, blocked off by chalkboards, or literally outside of the back doors of Scott Hall.

Far from detracting from the shows, this rough-hewn approach is at the heart of the appeal of the College Avenue Players. Productions often have the feeling that anything can happen, and it often does. What is behind the productions, however, is a team of students just as intent at putting on a great show as that which you would find in the more "polished" Rutgers productions.

While comedy is at the core of the College Avenue Players, they have also staged many musicals and dramas over the decades. Productions from past years have included "Pippin," "Butterflies are Free," "Glengarry Glen Ross," and many others.

The easy part is when things go right during a show. It is when things take an unexpected turn that the familiarity and comfort with fellow actors – developed during the long hours of late-night rehearsals – allows one to follow through and make the best of a difficult situation – forgotten lines, prop malfunctions, and the



Above: Jen Heimall RC'98, Elisha Baer SCILS'97, Geoff Fetner CC'98



Left: Carey Hackett RC'96 MGSA'99
PHOTOS BY JOHN HESTER

would often go down in flames in spectacular fashion.

One alum is actor Simon Feil MGSA'00. Following his years as a member of the group in the mid-1990s, Simon has had roles in many television productions, including "House of Cards," and "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," as well as recurring roles in "Orange is the New Black," "Inside Amy Shumer," and many other shows. He has also had roles in films such as "Julie & Julia," "Ocean's 8" and others.

Perhaps the most notable member of the group was Katie Dippold RC'02, who achieved fame as a writer on the hit TV series "Parks and Recreation." Katie was a member of the group during her Rutgers years in the late '90s and early 00s. Besides "Parks," Katie's writing career also includes the 2016 reboot of "Ghostbusters," "The Heat," starring Sandra Bullock and Melissa McCarthy, and "Mad TV."

Despite a pause in productions due to the pandemic, the College Avenue Players continue to thrive more than three decades after being brought back from the dead.

like. In past productions, "Improv Night" was a hallmark of the Comic Relief shows. On these nights, the cast would begin by following the script, then go "off script" to see where things would progress. If the stars happened to be aligned that night, cast members could riff off of one another and create comedy gold. If not, the sketch



Save the Date!

LOYAL Sons & Daughters

62ND ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

*The Rutgers Alumni Association
invites you to join us as we celebrate our 2020 honorees*

Saturday, March 26, 2022

The Hyatt Regency New Brunswick

5:30pm Cocktail Reception | 6:30pm Dinner & Awards

Online ticket sales begin January 2022. Visit rutgersalumni.org.



HONOREES

Denniston E. Bonadie RC'92 EJB'01
Dorothy W. Cantor, PsyD GSAPP'76
Alan M. Crosta Jr., MD RC'86 NJMS'90
Ronald V. Ghilino RC'80
Debra Ann Lynch DC'79
James C. Savage Sr. CAES'71
Brian N. Tobin RC'96 GSN'17

FROM
THE BANKS TO

Broadway

The Tony award winner got her first taste of performing while she was at Rutgers

By Lori Neuman RC'90

Communication, connection, and inspiration. That's what drives Aurelia Williams-Philpotts RC'97 GSE'98. It's also what she leaves you with from the moment you meet her – even if it is by phone. Her laughter is contagious, her energy is positive, and her warmth somehow carries through. It should come as no surprise that this Tony Award-winning singer and actress has developed a solid career in musical theater. And yet, for this self-described introvert, it is.

Asked about her career path, Aurelia speaks with enthusiasm and awe. After earning her master's degree from Rutgers Graduate School of Education, she turned her focus from teaching – which she says she will always be passionate about – to Broadway. Williams-Philpotts starred in shows such as “In Transit” and “Once on this Island,” for which she and her castmates received a 2018 Tony for “Best Revival of a Musical.” Here's what she had to say:

Is it true you didn't start singing until you were in college?

It's true! I did not grow up singing and was unsure what I wanted to do after college. My career was kind of a fluke. Dr. Leonard Bethel, a Rutgers professor of African American Theology who also happened to be the reverend at my family's church, referred me to a student group to sing at their upcoming formal. Soon after, I started singing on campus and joined a rap group. I also got the courage once to try Rutgers improv, which was pivotal for me and one of my most memorable experiences. It inspired my love of comedy, acting, and live performance. Until then, my interest was primarily singing – I wanted to be a recording artist.

You earned your master's degree from Rutgers Graduate School of Education, with plans to become a teacher. How did you make the leap to becoming a performer?

I was not expecting to make a career of performing, because I developed such a strong passion for teaching. I had even considered a full-time teaching position after graduation, at an elementary school in my hometown of Plainfield, NJ, where I had done my student teaching. But, the desire to be a singer was calling me. With the support of my family and friends, I pursued my dream,



knowing I had my teaching certification as a solid back-up. I started auditioning, one thing led to another and here I am. Whether it's musical theater or singing with talented musicians like Tomás Doncker and the True Groove All Stars, I give it my all.

With theaters closed due to COVID-19, how have you been adjusting, and what shifts has this meant for your career?

I've been doing more film and TV, and my living room has become a TV and recording studio. Theater is still happening but it's being developed in different ways. For instance, I'm currently working virtually to develop a musical adaptation of “The Scarlet Letter.” I really miss being in the room with everyone though, to harmonize and vibe with each other like we'd do in person. I thrive on the personal connection that comes from being in a room with your peers, and collaborating with other talented artists, writers, and directors. It's exciting to be part of the developmental or creative process, working together to achieve a common goal. I miss that. But I tell myself it's only for now.

Aurelia Williams-Philpotts starred in shows such as “In Transit” and “Once on this Island,” for which she and her castmates received a 2018 Tony Award for “Best Revival of a Musical.”

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMBE J. WILLIAMS



“I still get nervous and excited but at the end of the day, the arts are a place where people really see each other's humanity – especially in times like now when things are so divisive.”

ABOUT AURELIA WILLIAMS-PHILPOTTS

Favorite Broadway show/musical? “Annie” was my first, but it’s difficult to say which is my favorite because there are so many. “Avenue Q” was great. It’s vital and brilliant.

Favorite movie? “The Color Purple” and “Harlem Nights”

Favorite song? Anything by Stevie Wonder

Acting or singing? Both — they are intertwined

Favorite hobby? Reading. I’m always reading.

Favorite book? “A Wrinkle in Time” by Madeline L’Engle

What does it feel like to be part of the Tony Award-winning cast for “Once on this Island?”

Winning a Tony was one of my most exciting and unbelievable moments. It was a collective effort and particularly meaningful for me. I was what’s known in the industry as a swing/standby which is an understudy for both principal and ensemble roles. This means I had to memorize a variety of roles and be ready at a moment’s notice to perform them. I had to learn so much, and because this show was staged to be on an island, this included dancing in sand — for 90 minutes! It’s really hard, especially if you think about the effort it takes to walk on the beach, much less dance on it. The fact that we won still blows my mind.

What do you like most about performing live?

I love connecting with people and providing a vehicle for people to connect with each other. I see it as a gift. As performers, we are telling stories about people you may fall in love with or not be able to stand; but for those moments, we are connected, and the arts provide an avenue to do so. But I find the entire creative journey to be the thrill ride.

Do you still get nervous before a show?

There is a misconception that most performers live for the applause, when many are shockingly shy and introverted as I was, growing up. I still get nervous and excited but at the end of the day, the arts are a place where people really see each other’s humanity — especially in times like now when things are so divisive.

You do a lot of volunteer projects that combine your love of education with your love of the arts. Tell me more about that.

Arts education is one of the most important experiences for students, and it’s important to bring art to those who may not be able to afford or experience it. We all need creative outlets and



someone to foster them, so I try to support these programs whenever I can. I am also regularly involved in an organization called Dream Wakers, which hosts classroom video chats offering students the opportunity to talk to people with non-traditional careers. It’s another way to connect with people who otherwise may not cross your path, and enables me to keep one foot in the educational arena. The connective tissue here is education. Even though I didn’t end up being a teacher, I will always be an educator.

How did your experience at Rutgers contribute to the person you are today?

I’m still very close to the friends I hung out with when I was in school. They are largely African American, so we naturally came together and stay connected to various issues and what happens on campus. I’m also part of a Facebook group of mostly male, African American Rutgers graduates. There are some alarming statistics on young African American men not succeeding in college, so these men made it their goal to help them succeed. On a completely separate note, I was also a resident advisor when I was at Rutgers, which prepared me well for things like public speaking and conflict management — both invaluable skills.

What advice do you have for others who may be looking at a new career path, or a non-traditional one?

A lot of people ask me how you get started in theater, as a singer. My answer is to just do it. There is no magical doorway to pass through. Find out what you need to do to reach your goal — whether it’s finding where the auditions are or who you need to connect with — and do it. If it doesn’t work out, tally up what you learned along the way and do something else. You can apply this to any opportunity.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY AT THE

EPICENTER

NYC

How a weekly newsletter, founded by a Rutgers alumna, has been breaking down barriers through journalism in the wake of COVID-19 and social justice movements

By Kristin Baresich SAS’14

IF it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to get through a pandemic. One need only look to Epicenter-NYC, a weekly newsletter co-founded and published by veteran journalist S. Mitra Kalita RC’98 SCILS’98, to see this concept in action.

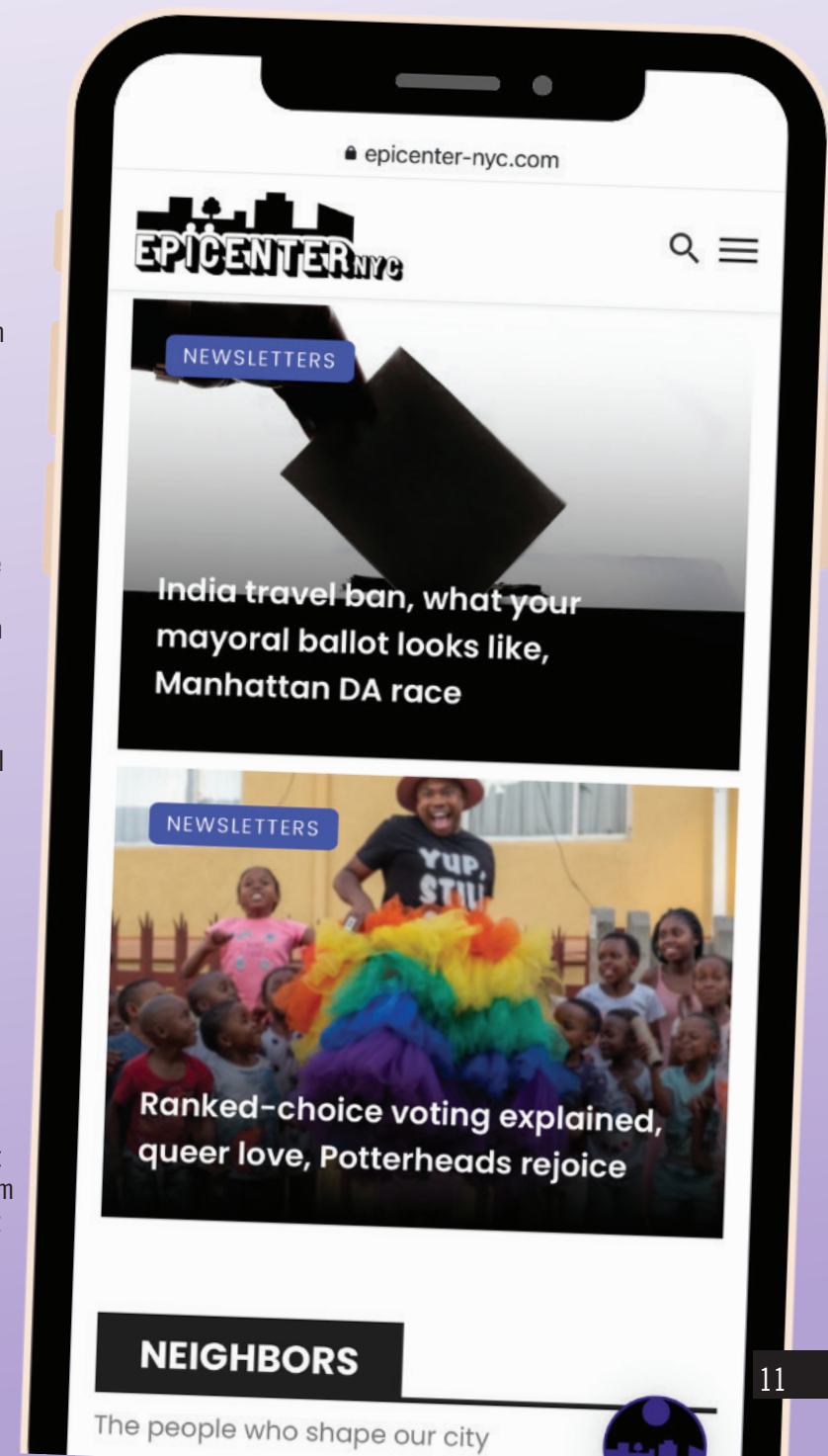
Since its launch in July 2020, Epicenter-NYC has been focused on uplifting New Yorkers and serving as a touchpoint to give and get help in a variety of ways — from addressing food insecurity and PPE supplies to supporting local artists and businesses.

The name “Epicenter” reflects its roots in Kalita’s neighborhood of Jackson Heights, Queens, and the surrounding area — one of the hardest-hit regions in the early days of the pandemic. While Epicenter-NYC was created to serve this immediate neighborhood, its vision and reach go beyond city limits.

“I think about serving people through news and information as these concentric circles that expand outward,” said Kalita. “When we talk about local news, I don’t think of borders of a neighborhood as much as an individual and the many overlapping identities they embrace, and what they might want to know about. So while at our core, I do think our community is the epicenter, it also emanates outwards as an epicenter does.”

She cited some of her own identities as examples — a resident of not only Jackson Heights, but also Queens and New York City; a former resident of Puerto Rico; a daughter of Indian parents; a woman; a mother of two girls.

“Black and brown communities are a really important part of a mindset like this one because people come from all around the world to carve out a home here. It doesn’t mean they have given up on where home used to be,” said Kalita. “You can’t care about Epicenter without having some global view of the rest of the world.”





From left: S. Mitra Kalita RC'98 SCILS'98, Epicenter-NYC publisher, interns Chloe Tai and Jade Stepeney, both SAS'21 SCILS'21, and Robin Cabana DC'98.

Jersey roots underpin a diverse community

The broader Rutgers community has played a significant role in Epicenter-NYC as well. As the newsletter has grown, three more Rutgers graduates have joined its ranks: Robin Cabana DC'98; Jade Stepeney SAS'21 SCILS'21; and Chloe Tai SAS'21 SCILS'21. Cabana and Kalita met during

journalism and media studies. "But then the next article I did was on anti-Asian attacks and what was happening in the city with that, and . . . I had so much more emotion behind that." Spurred by the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes, Tai summarized some of the incidents in New York and shared resources and ideas for Asians to help keep themselves safe in her piece "What Asians want you to know." It ran on

"I reached out to a bunch of senior citizen centers in the area, and I ended up talking to seven or eight seniors who got the vaccine," said Stepeney, who shared her findings in the piece "What older New Yorkers think as they get vaccinated." "They all had similar stories — without the help of a son, daughter, in-law of some kind, they wouldn't have been able to get vaccinated."

Others, like many in the restaurant industry or individuals working multiple jobs, couldn't afford to spend hours refreshing scheduling websites or didn't have the luxury of taking time off for a vaccine appointment, thus limiting their options amid the competition for receiving a dose. "It's one thing for state law to say you have to give workers time off," said Kalita. "It's another for people who might feel like they are not powerful to actually be able to ask for that."

Practicing "Journalism of Utility" to help New Yorkers get vaccinated

But not only did Epicenter-NYC staff write about issues of equity and access to the vaccine, they also jumped into the fray and sought to help as many individuals as possible get vaccinated — publishing downloadable resources on their website, live-streaming videos on how to schedule a vaccine appointment, and booking appointments directly for eligible individuals.

"The instinct of a journalist is to say, 'That

person can't get documentation — let's do a story on it, saying this immigrant worker is sad and frustrated.' What we decided to do was say, 'Here's a public folder of letters you can download. Here's Andrew Cuomo's statement on how immigration status or insurance status should not be a deterrent to getting vaccinated,'" said Kalita. "We started to create what I call a journalism of utility. A worker would be able to tell us his problem and would also be able to turn to us for the solution."

The result? As of May 2021, Epicenter-NYC staff and volunteers had secured more than 5,000 appointments for New Yorkers and helped break down barriers for countless others.

The initiative was inspired by listening to the community and the specific needs they shared with Epicenter-NYC. One touchpoint came as a result of Epicenter-NYC's small business ambassador program, in which they partnered with New York University students to feature a series of local small businesses, each business nominating the next to be featured.

"Our intention was to create a bit of a daisy chain of interesting stories of New Yorkers, and what customers need to know right now to best support them," said Kalita. "In January, one of those restaurants — Jackson Diner — approached us and said, 'Could you help us try to figure out how to get our restaurant workers vaccinated?' At the same time, some of our other readers



[said], 'I'm trying to get my elderly parents vaccinated, do you have any ideas?' This became pretty organic in the approach we already had, but it allowed us to play this role of service to our community that ended up being kind of tangential to journalism but then boomeranged back around and made our journalism so much better."

A new perspective on reporting

Tai said being part of Epicenter-NYC has shown her what it means to go beyond simply providing information and practice active journalism.

"Epicenter showed me that I can do this — I can show my passion and be a journalist at the same time," said Tai.

Stepeney is grateful for the opportunity to report on critical community issues with empathy and compassion.

"I hope it inspires other people to lend a hand or figure out how they can help in their communities too," said Stepeney.

Epicenter-NYC collaborated with other communities around the country to overcome obstacles in getting people vaccinated and sponsored a VaxFest2021 event at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Jackson Heights, Queens.

PHOTO BY NITIN MUKUL

"Epicenter showed me that I can do this — I can show my passion and be a journalist at the same time."

CHLOE TAI, SAS'21 SCILS'21, EPICENTER-NYC INTERN

the same minority journalism workshop as high schoolers and later went on to serve as managing editor and editor-in-chief, respectively, of *The Daily Targum*. Cabana began working on social media and design for Epicenter-NYC soon after its launch, while Stepeney and Tai joined as interns and became involved with writing and social media.

"When I joined Epicenter, the first assignment they gave me was on the community boards, which are these local governing bodies in NYC, and covering that story was fascinating," said Tai, who double-majored in political science and

March 16, 2021 — the day of the Atlanta shootings in which six Asian women were killed.

Each edition of Epicenter-NYC opens with, "Dear Neighbor," an apt lead-in for a newsletter that focuses on supporting the community and uplifting marginalized groups. With the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination effort, Epicenter-NYC staff readily investigated their neighbors' challenges associated with the rollout and access to coveted vaccine appointments in the city.

Many elderly individuals had difficulty navigating the online scheduling systems.

Learn, listen, subscribe

Visit the newsletter's website at epicenter-nyc.com. Sign up for the newsletter — it's free.

Check out the Epicenter-NYC podcast on Apple, Spotify, Amazon and Audible.

BRINGING ALUMNI BACK HOME TO REDISCOVER RUTGERS

By Christa DiMaio Richie
CCAS'99 GSC'05

In a recent interview with *1766* as his first year as president of Rutgers University was coming to a close, Jonathan Holloway shared some thoughts on the importance of keeping alumni engaged by creating a welcoming environment where Rutgers graduates feel heard.

Holloway wants to connect with alumni personally, and he has a plan. As restrictions put in place during the pandemic ease and more in-person gatherings are now possible, he will ask Rutgers alumni to “come home”—that is, he will invite them back to campus. He wants to meet with them to discuss how they might bring the best of themselves back to the University.

“Rutgers needs to continue to identify great strength areas and those on the cusp of being great,” Holloway said, and he believes alumni can play a vital role in this process. He wants them to be a part of the vision to reconnect with the University to discuss how they might bring their talents, expertise, and support back to Rutgers.

“We need to change behavior. Both the alumni and the University need to come together,” he said.

Holloway hopes to execute his plan of meeting with alumni across campuses throughout the year to talk about new learning opportunities and innovative ways to reconnect with Rutgers. He acknowledges that many alumni may not know what they can offer, and he would like to meet and listen to what they would like to see Rutgers become in the next few years.

He believes by working together, alumni

can rediscover Rutgers, and, in doing so, recreate a community inspired by new connections between administration and alumni. He realizes the alumni are exceptional, and he believes the alumni can effectively transform Rutgers University.

Holloway also acknowledges that “Rutgers cannot be everything to all people.” Instead, he focuses on the concept of a “beloved community,” which stems from the belief that those within the Rutgers community have more in common than they do not.

“A beloved community is when we acknowledge one another including differences and similarities to create a more robust University.” His words reflect Rutgers and those who value Rutgers’ contribution to their lives; instituting a new culture begins by rediscovering how to contribute to these values in professional

and personal pursuits.

In a recent interview with *Rutgers Magazine*, Holloway emphasized his focus on connecting with others and intently listening to them—something he refers to as “granting grace,” a practice that he has modeled in the past at Yale University and which he continues today. He promises to listen as he meets with alumni and to bring them back to what they hold dear.

Holloway’s ability to be “graceful” is evident to those who interact with this history professor. He hopes that respect and a willingness to listen when engaged with others, whether within the confines of the University or beyond it when connected with purposeful actions, establish a path to bring alumni back home.

Below: Rutgers-New Brunswick Campus
PHOTO BY: JOHN HESTER



A CHALLENGING FIRST YEAR

In April, President Holloway hosted a virtual event for alumni where he shared some perspectives of his first year at Rutgers, including a rare interaction with a small group of students on campus who recognized him and asked him to take a selfie with them. His other observations included:

- This year has been one challenge after another, but he has seen Rutgers’ resilience throughout.

- Two of the biggest challenges were not being able to meet and engage with students and faculty in person and moving commencement to a virtual format.

- Scarlet Promise Grants, need-based financial aid awards that close the gap between aid from federal and state sources and what Rutgers families can afford, are even more important in the times of COVID-19. There has been \$9 million raised toward a \$10 million goal.

- He congratulated Rutgers sports for having a banner year.

Jonathan Holloway answers a question at the press conference held after approval from the Rutgers Board of Governors/Board of Trustees on becoming the 21st president of the University.

PHOTO BY NICK ROMANENKO/
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

ON THE LEDGE

Alumni share memories of this small building with a big place in the larger Rutgers lore

By Marty Siederer LC'77

“ON the Banks of the Old Raritan” stand four buildings, three of which can easily be seen from the Piscataway side of the river: The high-rise “River Dorms” — Campbell, Frelinghuysen, and Hardenbergh Halls — and a smaller building that has its own place in Rutgers lore: The Ledge.

The Ledge, now known as the SAC (Student Activities Center), may not have as “formal” a place in history like Old Queens on the College Avenue Campus, but it has a sentimental place in Scarlet hearts and minds.

When the Ledge opened in 1956, it was the only student center for the College Avenue Campus. An article in the 1959 Scarlet Letter yearbook referred to the Ledge as the College Avenue campus’ then all-male students’ “home away from home and an excellent place to meet students from the Women’s College (now Douglass Residential College) who visited The Ledge in great numbers.” The building contained a cafe, a lounge that served as a study area, a staircase that led to ping-pong and pool tables, and an outdoor terrace with views of the Raritan and Johnson Park in Piscataway. A year later, the open areas in The Ledge were converted to an infirmary when a flu outbreak struck the campus. In the early 1960s, an anti-segregation protest was held inside the building.

Jim Cuviallo RC’69 remembers The Ledge as the place where he saw “Flash Gordon” movies and students coming to the screenings in costume.

“During sophomore year I lived in Hardenbergh Hall and would go to the Ledge almost every night for a coffee, hot chocolate, soda, or a hamburger. Often, a Bob Dylan song, either ‘Like A Rolling Stone’ or ‘Positively 4th Street’ would be playing on the jukebox. Back then, jukeboxes were the only way to listen to music if a radio wasn’t available, and each song may have cost a dime. I would look around the cafe

area and students who were there seemed to be just chilling and getting away from it all. I once said to my friend that we should put a sign over the exit door saying ‘Leading Back to Reality.’”

For Bill Downey RC’79 RBS’83, The Ledge was a place to meet up with his friends who were commuter students and to see performances in a small venue. “I lived at Tinsley Hall and The Ledge was a great place to meet up with friends I knew from high school who were commuting to Rutgers,” he recalled. “Back then, Jean Shepard had a popular radio show on WOR-AM (radio) that was truly theater of the mind, and he did a number of in-person performances at The Ledge that cost around \$1.50 to attend, and were standing-room only. At the show I attended, he stirred up the crowd with comparisons of Rutgers to Princeton University.”

The Ledge hosted a variety of events, ranging from concerts by up-and-coming bands to performances by the Rutgers Promenaders Square Dance Club. On December 17, 1971, the bands Southern Conspiracy and Powerhouse were two bands that played at The Ledge. The third performer? Bruce Springsteen. The cost to see all three bands? One dollar. Springsteen returned on April 1, 1973, for another triple-bill concert that ran five hours, and also featured Southern Conspiracy and Heavy Trucking.

For some alumni, The Ledge was their go-to place to watch television, particularly soap operas. Nancy Abrams Bernheimer RC’84 and Barbara Pollison Beck RC’82 remembered watching the milestone episode of “General Hospital” marking the wedding of main characters Luke and Laura. Eugene “Gino” Gentile RC’80 lived in the river dorms and, like most students, did not have a TV set in his room.

“Keep in mind that this was way before having cable TV or Internet access was available,” Gentile said. “I used to meet up at The Ledge with a friend who was a commuter student. So, part of my Rutgers memories include going to the Ledge with

my friend and hearing ‘All My Children’ play in the background.”

The Ledge was a springboard for careers in the music industry. On November 6, 1971, Looking Glass, featuring three class of 1970 Rutgers graduates — Elliot Lurie, Lawrence Gonsky, and Pieter Sweval — gave a free concert. The band went on to record and release “Brandy,” a number-one hit in 1972. (More about Looking Glass in the Fall/Winter 2019 issue of 1766). Lenny Kaye RC’67, who went on to fame as a member of the Patti Smith Group, spent his student years playing with his band The Zoo at the Ledge and the campus fraternity houses. Kaye interviewed protest singer and songwriter Phil Ochs at the Ledge Cafe for an article that ran in *The Daily Targum*.

For commuter student Barbara Wright RC’78, The Ledge “was my campus ‘home away from home’ and my place of employment as a work-study student. I did my homework while earning minimum wage

answering questions in the lobby and watching people play pinball, and waited on the front steps to sit right under the stage for Elvis Costello’s first show at Rutgers on February 23, 1978.”

Rutgers School of Communications and Information Professor Steve Miller RC’79 lived in Frelinghuysen Hall and the Ledge was his go-to student center even after the College Avenue facility was opened. “The Ledge hosted the river dorms’ annual talent shows, but my biggest memory is going there one night, looking downstairs and seeing a disco ball on the ceiling and a hundred students dressed up in bell bottoms, leisure suits, and shirts with wide lapels. I still get nightmares about that evening,” Miller laughed.

Adam Wolf RC’87 recalled the “bottomless cups of coffee for 25 cents” that The Ledge served during the week of final exams, and Dan Kramer RC’72 “saw my first microwave oven at the ledge when

it opened. I was there when Cheech and Chong did a free show. I spent so much time there!” And for Tom Mueller RC’91, a slice of pizza at the Ledge was his go-to snack.

Mark Williams RC’77 credits The Ledge with improving his pool game. “One year I was awarded work-study money and the next thing I knew I was working at The Ledge. I was assigned to work with another student, Raphael, and together we both ran the place several nights a week. Basically, our job was to hand out recreational supplies like cue sticks and balls for the pool tables, and ping pong balls and paddles for the ping pong tables. In reality, though, we didn’t have to hand out much of anything. Very few students actually used The Ledge for recreation, at least in the evenings. Those few students who did show up mainly studied. Since neither of us wanted to study much, this freed up lots of time for Raphael and me to play pool.

“We even learned a few trick shots. We got so absorbed in our nightly pool contests that we started to get annoyed when students interrupted us for something as mundane as recreational equipment. Couldn’t they see we were busy?”

“I was a Jewish kid from a small mostly white town, and Raphael was a Puerto Rican kid from a big city. Things were pretty self-segregated at Rutgers back then. There were some exceptions, but my experience at Rutgers in the 1970s was that most people hung out with those from their own ethnic group. At any rate, Raphael was the only Puerto Rican friend I had while I was at Rutgers, and he told me that I was his only white friend. Sometimes Raphael’s friends would come over and join us for a free game of pool (we were supposed to charge, but our friends played free).

“All in all, working at the Ledge was a pretty good deal for me. I got paid a little money, played a lot of pool, and got to be friends with someone I probably would have never met anywhere else.”

With the opening of the College Avenue Student Center in 1969, The Ledge and Student Activities Center are now its under-appreciated sidekicks. While the original floor plan has been replaced by cubicles and offices, and access to the terrace is limited, the memories of the “little student center that could” will always be there.



The Ledge, seen above in 1965, opened in 1956 and was the only student center for the College Avenue Campus.

Left: The Rutgers Promenade Square Dance Club meets.

PHOTO COURTESY RUTGERS UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES



HELPING PARENTS BALANCE WORK & FAMILY

Medini co-authors book on parenting and working from home

By Francine Tardo RC'96

When Shari Medini RC'06 was a student at Rutgers, she was a psychology major with a minor in English, but also had an interest in computer science. As a co-owner of AdoreThemParenting.com, a website featuring helpful resources for parents, she is able to combine all of her interests and uses them on a daily basis. In response to an increased number of parents having to juggle working at home with family responsibilities, she recently co-wrote a book, *Parenting While Working from Home*, to offer some tips to help parents manage their time and stay productive.

What inspired you to write this book?

My co-author Karissa Tunis and I have been working from home for over a decade so we have helpful tips and insights to be able to share with fellow parents who have been thrown into this for the first time. There are a lot of unique struggles to working from home — especially while raising a family! And this book is an opportunity to pass along practical advice in an easy-to-read monthly guide.

What is the most common challenge parents are facing in this current environment?

Knowing where to place their focus. Everything can feel like an emergency. My work needs me. My kids need me. And there are no clean spoons left! By the end of the day, parents feel like they both didn't stop for a second and also got very little accomplished.

Instead, we need to take back control of our time and attention. Simplify your schedule by being very careful of what you say "yes" to. Stay focused on the tasks that will make the biggest impact. And have simple, clear, attainable goals for each week for different areas of your life such as work, family, and home.

What is your top tip for struggling parents?

Be intentional with your time. We often get asked how parents can find daily balance when they are expected to take on so many different responsibilities. And our solution to this is that you give

up the idea of daily balance and instead zoom out to see a bigger picture. Striving for weekly (or even monthly) balance is much more attainable and productive!

This allows you to get creative with how you spend your time and energy day to day. We can also intentionally set a main priority for that day — for example, some days are work days, where the kids will likely spend extra time on their screens while we focus on accomplishing a bigger work project; some days are house days — where the focus is simply to get the house back into order, that might mean switching loads of laundry throughout the entire day and deep cleaning a bit more; some days are family days — where the focus is on quality time with our kids and family as a whole.

"By the end of the day, parents feel like they both didn't stop for a second and also got very little accomplished."

What motivated you to start your own company to help parents?

AdoreThemParenting.com was born out of a realization that, like many other parents, Karissa and I had been stuck in a cycle of consuming negative media. At first it can be humorous and comforting to know that you are not the only parent out there who is struggling; sometimes it helps to commiserate and joke about hiding in the bathroom with a bar of chocolate. However, when you're reading article after article where the author is complaining about their kids, their spouses, their messy houses, and their demanding bosses, you start to see your own life through that lens.

As a first step, we made the purposeful decision to stop consuming all of the negative parenting content. It was amazing how quickly we started to see a positive shift in our own lives. The most important lesson we learned was that there was nothing too big or too small to troubleshoot! If something was frustrating us, we could likely brainstorm a way to improve it. We feel fortunate to have now collaborated with over a hundred experts that have

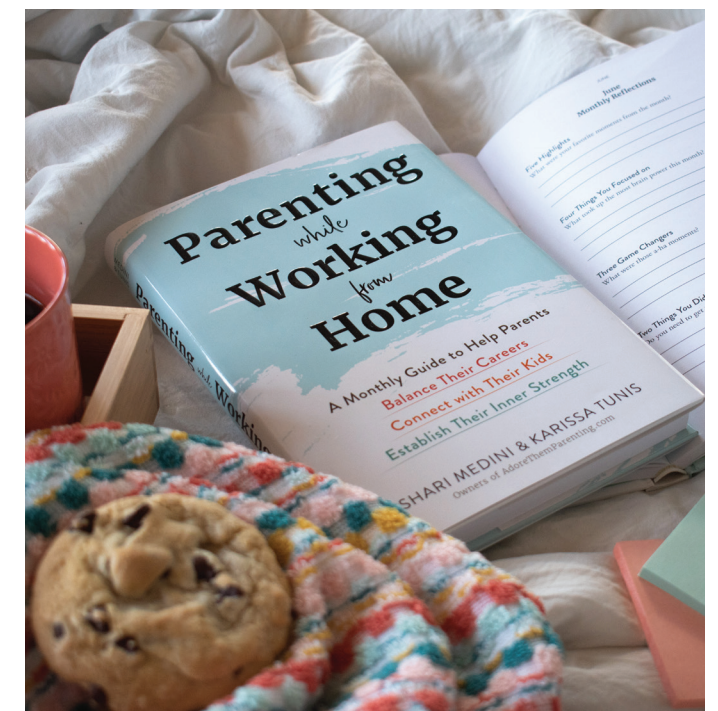
weighed in on popular parenting topics. We have shared hundreds of articles and thousands of ideas in beautiful, encouraging ways. And we truly appreciate the opportunities we've had to inspire parents, grandparents, educators, and childcare providers around the globe.

What type of feedback have you received on *Parenting While Working from Home*?

As parents, we are busy and can get caught up in the whirlwind of our daily lives. We have heard appreciation from parents regarding the easy-to-consume format of our book. Each chapter focuses on a different month of the year, contains journaling prompts to help figure out what's working and what's not, and breaks down practical advice into different areas of your life (you, your kids, and your work).

So many families have been thrown into this work from home situation without having the tools and resources to navigate it all smoothly. And while there will always be some trial and error to figure out what works best for your own family, it has been amazing to hear parents share the ideas and insight that they have been able to use from our book.

And while the process of landing a literary agent, signing a book deal, writing an entire book with my co-author, and marketing this book in the midst of a pandemic with our children home 24/7 has been intense... I have loved every single step of this journey.



Medini landed a literary agent, signed a book deal, and wrote an entire book with her co-author in the midst of a pandemic.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHARI MEDINI

RUTGERS ESTABLISHES NEW INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF GLOBAL RACIAL JUSTICE

Five-year, \$15 million grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation funds its creation

By Jeannine DeFoe RC'97

Rutgers' new Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice will support and amplify the work of researchers whose work brings impact in areas including policy reform, K-12 education, social justice work, and the carceral state.

Rutgers is using a 5-year, \$15 million grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to establish the institute, which will use humanistic theories, methods, and approaches to study global issues of race and social justice. It will operate university-wide and will eventually include centers at the Newark, New Brunswick, and Camden campuses, and include a collection of named professorships linked to the institute's mission as well as postdoctoral fellows from throughout the university.

"The nation is at a tipping point with respect to racial and social justice," University President Jonathan Holloway said in a statement when the initiative was first announced in September 2020. "This grant will enable Rutgers, an institution older than the country itself, to be an international leader in understanding the causes, effects, and solutions to problems that have plagued the world."

Through the institute, Rutgers faculty from different disciplines whose work addresses racism and social inequality will be able to work in coordinated ways. Holloway said he expects the work to be funded by additional philanthropy from individuals and foundations that are also seeking to address global racial and social inequality and justice.

"The university is committed to this for a long time," said Holloway, adding that the institute will work toward sustaining partners and alumni gifts in the future.

Michelle Stephens, a professor of English and Latino and Caribbean studies in the School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, submitted the grant application on behalf of the university and will serve as the founding executive director of the institute. Prabhas Moghe, the university's vice president for Academic Affairs, will oversee the institute.

Stephens, the former dean of humanities at Rutgers-New Brunswick, is the author of several books on race and how it is culturally portrayed and teaches courses in African American, American, Caribbean, and Black Diaspora literature and culture.

In January the institute also named four directors of campus branches across the University. Each director is a faculty member who will oversee the implementation of the institute's mission at a local level:

Erica Armstrong-Dunbar, Rutgers-New Brunswick director: Dunbar is the Charles and Mary Beard Distinguished Professor of History in the School of Arts and Sciences. She studies the lives of women of African descent in America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, focusing on slavery, racial injustice, and gender inequality.

Elise Boddie, Rutgers-Newark director: Boddie is a Henry Rutgers professor, professor of law, and Judge Robert L. Carter Scholar at Rutgers Law School in Newark, who studies how race is used to exclude people from everyday spaces.

Gregory Pardlo, Rutgers-Camden co-director: Pardlo is an associate professor of creative writing and director of the MFA program in the Department of English at Rutgers-Camden. A poet and memoirist, Pardlo won the Pulitzer Prize in 2015 for his poetry collection, *Digest*.

Patrick Rosal, Rutgers-Camden co-director: Rosal is a professor of creative writing in the Department of English at Rutgers-Camden. Born and raised in New Jersey to parents who came to the United States from the Philippines, during a time when virtually all Filipinos were excluded from immigration into the U.S., Rosal learned firsthand how it felt to be part of a marginalized community.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. In 2019 the Foundation awarded a grant of \$1.5 million to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and Rutgers University-Newark to amplify Newark voices through jazz and poetry.

"Rutgers University has long been a home to distinguished scholarship in race and the humanities," Mellon Foundation President Elizabeth Alexander said in a statement. "We believe in the deeply meaningful work these Rutgers scholars will undertake together, and we are proud to fund the humanities-driven exploration that will inspire even more researchers and institutions to join in this extraordinary new academic endeavor."

Learn more

<https://globalracialjustice.rutgers.edu/>



Elise Boddie, Rutgers-Newark director, a Henry Rutgers professor, professor of law, and Judge Robert L. Carter Scholar at Rutgers Law School in Newark.



Gregory Pardlo, Rutgers-Camden co-director, is a professor of creative writing and director of the MFA program in the Department of English at Rutgers-Camden.

Michelle Stephens, founding executive director, professor of English and Latino and Caribbean studies in the School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers-New Brunswick.



Erica Armstrong-Dunbar, Rutgers-New Brunswick director, is the Charles and Mary Beard Distinguished Professor of History in the School of Arts and Sciences.



Patrick Rosal, Rutgers-Camden co-director, is a professor of creative writing in the Department of English at Rutgers-Camden.



"The nation is at a tipping point with respect to racial and social justice. This grant will enable Rutgers, an institution older than the country itself, to be an international leader in understanding the causes, effects, and solutions to problems that have plagued the world."

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT JONATHAN HOLLOWAY

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID ROBINSON

NEW JERSEY'S EXPERT IN ANY WEATHER

State climatologist David Robinson has been the go-to source for students and the media on climate issues

By Marty Siederer LC'77

When David Robinson took weather forecast observations for a fourth-grade project, it was a hint to his future career path that led him to join the Rutgers faculty in 1988 as an assistant professor in the Department of Geography and then be appointed New Jersey State Climatologist in 1991. If Robinson's name sounds familiar, it's because he's often the go-to expert quoted in news articles about climate and weather trends.

Robinson was a self-described "weather geek" growing up in Tenaflly, NJ. "I used to stay up late and tune in my transistor radio to out-of-town stations," Robinson recalled. "From that, I learned about weather systems that were coming up the Atlantic Coast and from the West, and listened to when rain or snow was scheduled to stop in their areas, and knew that the tail end of a storm was

getting closer to where we lived and perhaps whether more snow than rain might fall."

While in elementary school, Robinson devoured a series of books about the history of American winters that analyzed winter seasons going back to 1604. "I also may have been one of the youngest subscribers to Weatherwise magazine, a scientific journal-type publication covering meteorology and climatology – stuff that goes much deeper than what's in a weather map." Robinson subsequently befriended David Ludlum, the magazine's publisher and author of the history of America Winters books, and calls Ludlum one of his mentors in his career arc.

Robinson went on to graduate from Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA, in 1977 with a bachelor of science degree in geology, and earned his master's (1981) and Ph.D. (1984) degrees in earth science from Columbia University, New York City. After serving as

"We in the state climatologist community like to say that locals trust locals." DAVID ROBINSON

an associate research scientist at Columbia's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory with a focus on snow mapping, Robinson joined the Rutgers University faculty as an assistant professor of geography in 1988. At the time, Mark Shulman, a professor in the meteorology department, was serving as the New Jersey State Climatologist. When Shulman announced plans to step down from that role in 1991, he recommended to the Dean of Cook College that the position be given to Robinson. Robinson has served in that role for over 30 years and is the longest-serving state climatologist in the nation.

Climatology 101

So what does a state climatologist do? The state climatologist and the Office of the New Jersey State Climatologist collects comprehensive weather data from throughout the state, conducts climate research, and provides information to New Jersey residents about climate-related areas. The office is affiliated with the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station and the Center for Environmental Prediction at the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Science (formerly Cook College).

"The short description of our work? We help individuals, agencies, and the private sector in New Jersey make decisions where weather or climate plays a role," Robinson said. "We in the state climatologist community like to say that locals trust locals."

The small climatology team of six professionals and several students operates a 65-station weather network throughout the state, at Rutgers, municipal, county, state-owned properties or some private properties, that send data every five minutes to the Rutgers operations center. In turn, all of that information is fed to, among other entities, the National Weather Service national center and local forecast offices in Mount Holly, NJ, and Upton, NY, which use the data for weather forecasting and tracking. The state climatology office also manages the 300-person Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network observing program where each day citizen scientists report precipitation observations from their home station online to the office and a national center.

Climate communicator

When it comes to providing information about weather and climate events and trends, Robinson is often sought out by New Jersey media outlets for a state perspective. It's a chance for him to spotlight the role that the state climatology office plays in providing scientific data, but he

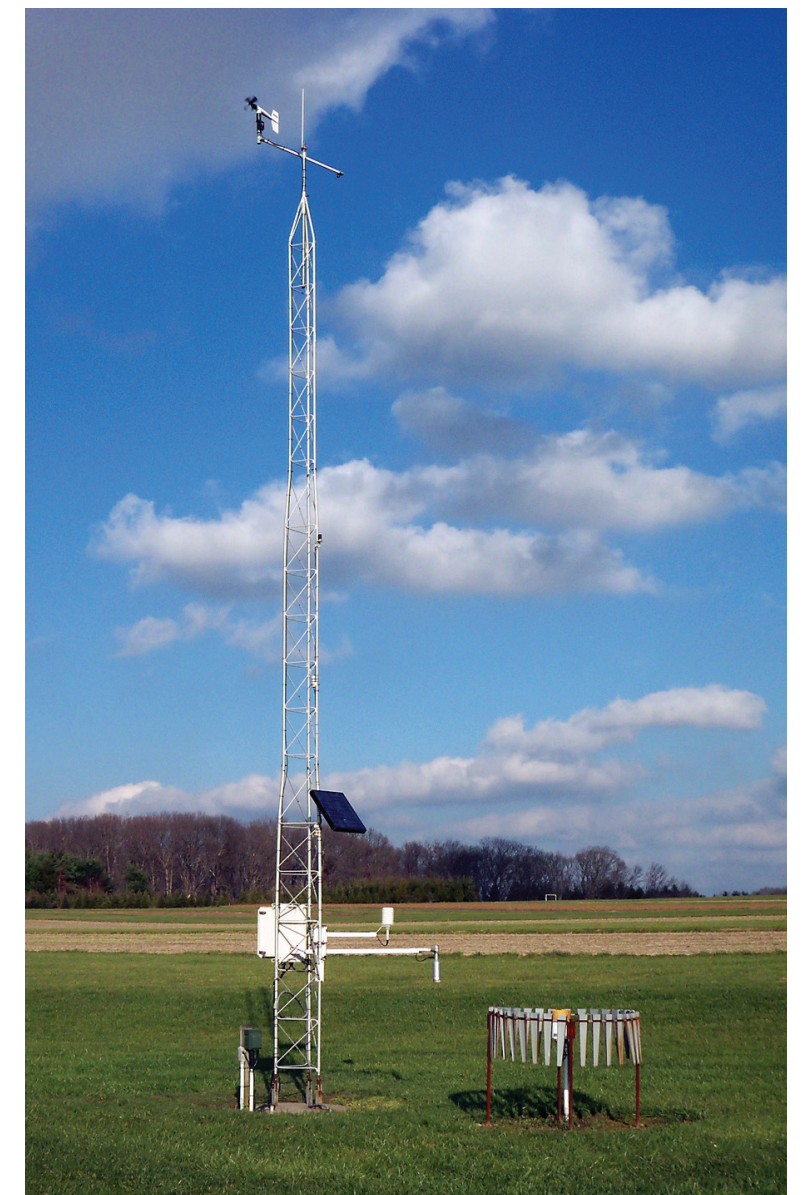
didn't seek out a role as a media spokesperson.

"That happened over time," Robinson said, "as media outlets wanted more information to explain why there was more or less snow or rain than normal, or why average annual temperatures are increasing. The important thing to note is that we explain the patterns for weather but we're not in the forecasting business."

Like all Rutgers faculty, Robinson had to adapt to teaching students virtually during the pandemic. He was also a guest speaker via Zoom to various audiences, ranging from elementary school classes to senior citizen groups. And, yes, he still has his homework assignment from fourth-grade, which he uses in talks with students about his job and possible careers in climatology.

**Rutgers NJ
Weather
Network
station at
Snyder Farm
in Pittstown,
PA.**

PHOTO COURTESY
OF DAVID
ROBINSON





RAA

Established 1831

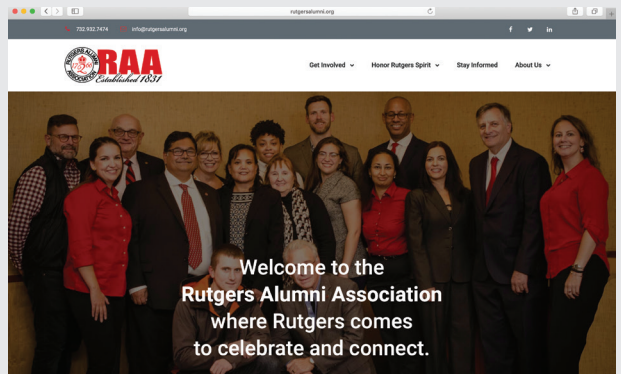
Rutgers Alumni Association
PO Box 11320
New Brunswick, NJ 08906

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
New Brunswick, NJ
Permit No. 863

For information about upcoming events,
visit www.RutgersAlumni.org



Rutgers' rival Princeton may have gotten a shout out in Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway tribute to the nation's first treasurer, but Rutgers also has ties to Alexander Hamilton. As part of Gen. George Washington's army, Hamilton defended the Raritan from advancing British troops in a spot marked by this placard. PHOTO BY JOHN HESTER



Visit the RAA website

Visit our website to celebrate Rutgers, find out about upcoming events and connect.
www.RutgersAlumni.org



Engage with us on social media networks



FACEBOOK
[RAANewBrunswick](https://www.facebook.com/RAANewBrunswick)



TWITTER
[RAANewBrunswick](https://twitter.com/RAANewBrunswick)



INSTAGRAM
[rutgersalumniassoc](https://www.instagram.com/rutgersalumniassoc)



LINKEDIN
[groups/7461471/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/7461471/)



YOUTUBE
<https://www.youtube.com/c/RutgersAlumniAssociation/>