For alumnus, scholarship is investment with big returns

Lin Tucci ’71 is on the hit Netflix series “Orange Is the New Black”
The Fall Classic Golf Tournament took place on Monday, Sept. 15, at the Alpine Country Club in Cranston, Rhode Island. Proceeds from the tournament will provide student assistance through book awards and tuition scholarships. Thanks to the sponsors, players, donors and volunteers, this year’s event raised more than $34,000. This was a record-breaking year, with the most golfers, dinner guests and amount of money raised in the history of the tournament.

The day included lunch, a putting contest, a Texas scramble format golf tournament, celebrity guests, dinner, reception, raffle and awards.

Celebrity guests included Kevin Stacom, Ernie DiGregorio, Mark Searles and Jenny Dell.
LEADING OFF

A message from the President

Our 50th anniversary year is well underway and I am extremely proud to be part of celebrating this milestone. This year provides an opportunity to reflect on the past and continue to grow the college with increased momentum.

As an alumnus, you have much to be proud of and celebrate. Alumni through the decades continue to tell stories of the life-changing experiences they had as students; some can be found in this issue, which focuses on graduates of our Performing Arts programs.

These programs at are a point of pride for the college. Our students receive excellent preparation in theater, technical theater, music and jazz studies that allows them to transfer to a four-year college or university or begin a professional career. Our alumni have gone on to have long and exciting careers in the arts. The focus of our cover story, Lin Tucci – you might remember her from her Rhode Island Junior College days as Linda Petrucci – is a regular in the Netflix hit “Orange Is the New Black.” CCRI connections may be closer than you think. While on the set, Tucci met Doug Coleman ’76, a special effects supervisor for the program. Jazz artist Lois (Eberhard) Vaughan ’99 attended CCRI as a career transition and now performs and teaches full time. I hope you enjoy their stories and more in this issue.

I look forward to hearing your successes and working together to create new opportunities for CCRI students. For 50 years, CCRI has helped Rhode Islanders change their lives and achieve their dreams. I hope you will join us to celebrate at one of our anniversary events; you can learn more about them at www.ccri.edu/50th.

Thank you for your continued involvement and support of CCRI.

Ray M. Di Pasquale
President

A message from the President of the Alumni Association

The 2014–15 year is a significant and exciting time for the Community College of Rhode Island and its alumni, as many special events and activities are planned to commemorate the college’s 50th anniversary. It is my hope that this year will bring together alumni from near and far to celebrate the past and, most importantly, focus on the future.

Over the past 50 years, the Community College of Rhode Island has produced many outstanding graduates. On March 26, the college will honor its 64,000 alumni at “Celebrating Alumni for 50 Years.” Awards will be presented to 25 distinguished alumni in a number of categories. The evening will include a cocktail hour, dinner and a performance by Livingston Taylor.

On Nov. 21, the college rededicated the Bobby Hackett Theater at its “50 Years of Performing Arts at CCRI” celebration with performances from students, faculty and alumni. Many of our alumni have made significant contributions to their fields, and this issue of Green & White features a small sampling of alumni achievements in the field of the arts.

Regardless of how recently or how long ago you graduated, you are a valued member of the CCRI alumni community. It is important to update your records and contact information to ensure that you are receiving updates from the association.

Staying in touch is easy on the recently updated For Alumni and Friends page. This page can be found on the CCRI website at www.ccri.edu/foralumni.html and provides information on a number of benefits available to you.

Every member of the Alumni Association has a role to play in keeping the association growing and vibrant. The anniversary is a great time to get involved and make a commitment to your alma mater. I look forward to seeing all of you at one of the upcoming anniversary events.

Louis J. Saccoccio ’68
President, CCRI Alumni Association
New transfer agreements provide numerous benefits for students

The Community College of Rhode Island has long held articulation agreements with more than 40 colleges and universities to help students and graduates continue their education and achieve their dreams. But recently, two agreements – one with Providence College and another with American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts – have been forged with the intention of offering students additional benefits beyond the traditional transfer process.

Both agreements were celebrated with signing ceremonies at the Knight Campus in Warwick, where officials from each school convened to give brief remarks to assembled guests before making the policies official.

The Direct Connect partnership with AIC was signed in June, giving CCRI students who participate in the articulation agreement exclusive access to the AIC campus community to support a successful transition. This includes admission to sporting and other events, library privileges, assignment of a financial aid counselor and a personal AIC academic adviser – and a $4,000 scholarship in addition to an earned merit scholarship before any need-based aid is awarded. The agreement also guarantees that all application fees will be waived at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

“It doesn’t get any better than this,” said CCRI President Ray Di Pasquale, adding that an agreement with a private institution in a neighboring state that includes as much as this one is fairly unique. Di Pasquale said that in terms of offering ease of access to bachelor’s and master’s programs at a private institution, this particular agreement represents a “life-changing” opportunity for many of the college’s students.

The PC partnership was inked in September. Titled the Guaranteed Admission & Tuition Agreement, it offers students conditional acceptance into PC’s School of Continuing Education while they are enrolled at CCRI and provides a 33 percent tuition discount to eligible students who graduate and transfer there.

During the signing event, Di Pasquale said that working to form this agreement was particularly special and seamless in that it would allow local students – 99 percent of CCRI’s student population comes from Rhode Island, he noted – to continue on to a hometown school.

“It’s an unbelievable opportunity for Rhode Islanders,” he said.

Alumni Association career networking program

The Community College of Rhode Island Alumni Association is seeking alumni to help provide career and leadership information to students and alumni through its mentoring and networking program. CCRI has many career resources available to help students with job placement, career advice, career assessment, and résumé and cover letter review. These resources are now also available to alumni.

The Association would like to hear from individuals who would be willing to volunteer. Please visit the Alumni Association Web page on the CCRI website to learn more and fill out the online form if you are interested in participating.

SAVE THE DATE

“Celebrating Alumni for 50 years”

The CCRI Alumni Association will host “Celebrating Alumni for 50 years” on Thursday, March 26, 2015, at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet. As the college celebrates its 50th anniversary, we invite you to join us for an evening as we honor our 64,000 alumni. Awards will be presented to 25 distinguished alumni in a number of categories. These individuals have distinguished themselves as community leaders, have attained personal and professional success and have brought honor upon themselves and the Community College of Rhode Island.

For more information or to register, visit www.ccri.edu/alumni.
Open house shines light on CCRI’s advanced manufacturing lab, programs

The Engineering and Technology Department at the Community College of Rhode Island celebrated National Manufacturing Day in October with an open house in its Knight Campus manufacturing lab, which recently underwent substantial upgrades.

The college received a $378,965 grant from The Champlin Foundations to replace four vertical milling machines, four 14-inch lathes, four surface grinders and one drill press. Institutional funding and monies provided by the RIDE Perkins Grant also were used for the upgrades.

More than 50 guests assembled during the three-hour open house, where they enjoyed refreshments while milling about and touring the facility, networking and learning about CCRI’s new Introduction to CNC Manufacturing and CNC Manufacturing and 3-D Modeling certificate programs.

Guests included CCRI faculty, staff, students and prospective students as well as representatives from the state manufacturing industry. Two of those on hand were Bruce Gileau and Larry Fox from Porter Machining. As the two men looked over course materials, they spoke about what drew them to the open house.

“We’re looking to train employees and get employees,” said Gileau, who said that Porter Machining recently joined the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association and heard about the event. He added that training programs were crucial for creating the type of skilled machinists Porter needs.

Student Dan Chappell of Warwick said he came to the event to network with representatives from local industry. Chappell said he is underemployed in the industry and began to take the CNC certificate program courses to upgrade his skills and become more well rounded.

Chappell’s enthusiasm was matched by Assistant Professor Ray Ankrom, who teaches in the department. Ankrom said that the recent upgrades to the college’s lab brought CCRI into the 21st century. “Some of the equipment in here was made in February and March. We’re building up our student base and events like this allow us to talk to companies and see what they’re looking for in our students,” he said.

Those possibilities were certainly on the mind of Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Gregory Lamontagne as he surveyed the lab, saying that the curriculum that the upgrades makes possible is “able to give students more opportunities to become highly skilled,” adding that new students could benefit just as much as lifelong learners looking to add to their credentials or transfer to other institutions.

To learn about more programs, visit www.ccri.edu/engt.
CCRI holds second annual Security Awareness Day

On Oct. 30, the Community College of Rhode Island held its second annual Security Awareness Day, an event featuring keynote speakers and breakout sessions aimed at bringing awareness to issues in cybersecurity.

Director of Networking and Telecommunications Bruce Barrett said approximately 450 people registered for the event. The event’s 13 sponsors made it possible for the event to remain free and open to the interested public, he said.

The annual event coincides with National Cyber Security Awareness Month. “Here at CCRI, students use new mobile technology every day through wireless computing, mobile printing and distance learning. Students can do research and homework from anywhere, anytime,” said CCRI President Ray Di Pasquale in his welcome. “But with each advancement, there come challenges and risks that truly affect how we live and protect ourselves online. This is an especially important issue in higher education, as our student records are protected by federal regulations.”

One speaker on the agenda for the morning had intimate knowledge of the ramifications of those regulations on the higher education space. David Sherry, chief information security officer at Brown University, gave a presentation on the evolution of privacy and why it matters to security.

Sherry explained that in the higher education spaces, such as at Brown and CCRI, regulatory and legal obligations mean that privacy concerns have to be addressed both separately and in conjunction with security concerns. Differentiating between privacy and security, Sherry explained to an audience member that even if a network is closed and secure, as Brown’s campus network is, there is still the need for privacy within that network. Student data, for example, should not be accessible to everyone on that closed network.

Other hot topics of the day included surveillance at the hands of a very benign-seeming source: our smartphones. Dr. Xinwen Fu, associate professor of computer science at UMass Lowell, gave a disturbing but illuminating presentation on how easily the cameras we all carry can be used to spy on us, collecting information such as passcodes.

Turning to a more macro perspective on security, U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse and U.S. Rep. James Langevin, both of whom are quite active on the issue of cybersecurity at the national level, spoke about some of the concerns of privacy and security, as well as what the country is doing to combat the growing threat cybercrimes pose.

The first step in combatting these attacks is raising awareness, Whitehouse said, much as the Security Awareness Day program aimed to do. “I’m glad awareness is our focus today.”


David Sherry, chief information security officer at Brown University, speaks about the evolution of privacy.
When people talk to actor Lin Tucci (RIJC ’71) about the trajectory of her career, they often jump to her years at the Boston Conservatory of Music, where she received the formal training that would prepare her for a life lived on stage and screen. But to hear Tucci tell it, her time at the community college was the springboard to her star turn as Sister Robert Anne in “Nunsense” on Broadway and now as no-nonsense inmate Anita DeMarco on the hit Netflix series “Orange Is the New Black.”

“If it wasn’t for CCRI, I don’t know what would have happened. It was the foundation for everything else,” she recalled one day in a phone interview from her apartment in the Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood of New York City, where she has lived since she moved to the city. “I honed my entire craft there – the skills I needed to properly audition for the Conservatory and get accepted.”

Like many who are bitten by the acting bug at a young age, Tucci had the raw talent, but she had a lot to learn, too. Performance is in her DNA, she said; her father, a classically trained opera singer, died when she was 3, leaving her mother to raise three children on her own, (“She was a protective Italian-American mother. After being married to an artist, she was scared to death at the thought that this would be my life – but I felt the calling.”)
If it wasn’t for CCRI, I don’t know what would have happened. It was the foundation for everything else.”
— LIN TUCCI ‘71

Tucci always knew she wanted to continue his legacy, a desire confirmed when she was a student at Mount Pleasant High School. “I was bitten by the bug there,” she said, her passion for acting further fueled by her drama teacher Bernard Masterson. “I didn’t realize how profound he was until after I graduated, but he was so different. He gave me one of the leading roles in ‘The Fantastiks.’ The part of Hucklebee was originally a male role; he changed it to Beahuckle,” she added.

But when Tucci graduated from high school, something told her she wasn’t yet ready to go straight into a conservatory program. No matter how focused her ambitions were, she needed to gain the maturity and life experience to match. “So I went to RIJC,” she said. “I thought, I’ll take two years and see what speaks to me. I grew up in Federal Hill; I could walk to campus.”

At the college, Tucci was quick to ensconce herself in the theater community, landing the starring role of Dolly Levi in the college’s production of “Hello Dolly.” “That really sealed the deal. It was theater 24/7. I walked it, talked it, drank it, breathed it,” she said, crediting Professor Michael A. Romano with cementing not just her talent, but her tenacity. “He taught me to respect the craft,” she said. “He taught not only technique, but the discipline.”

Tucci recalled one rehearsal when she came “sashaying” in late, not paying attention to the time but rather to her “beautiful red ball gown,” the costume for her character. “He wasn’t having it. After that, I never came late to rehearsal again. In the real world, that lesson was so important. If you don’t sign in on time to rehearsal in the theater, you’re in trouble. And my work ethic has served me really well, in film and television, especially. Michael yanked my chain a little bit and I got the message.”

Nowadays, Tucci is lauded for her ability to round out an ensemble. A far cry from sashaying in late to rehearsal as the star of an
undergraduate performance, she has rubbed elbows with some of the biggest names in the musical theater, film and television business, transitioning from cabaret performances in New York to a part as a tough-as-nails nun to a pack of strippers in “Showgirls.” But what gets her noticed lately is the way she fits seamlessly into the riveting narrative strands of “Orange,” a critical darling and a smash hit with viewing audiences.

For Tucci, the exposure has been life changing, providing an energizing shot in the arm that any performer would covet. In addition to working alongside acclaimed actors, many of whom are also classically trained, she has had the pleasure of being directed by Academy Award-winner Jodie Foster. “It was a supreme honor. She was a dream to work with,” Tucci said. “Being cast in ‘Orange’ by creator Jenji Kohan makes me feel like I’m riding a rainbow.”

Now well into filming the third season, the bloom hasn’t come off the rose for Tucci, as she sees each day on set and off as an opportunity to plumb the creative depths that have sustained her since her first taste of the acting bug.

“There are certain things about my character that are familiar to my background,” she said of DeMarco, a fellow Italian-American who comports herself with sass and class. “But what makes it inspiring to me is being able to bring something on set that sparks another dimension in me. What I like most about acting is the discovery. Finding out what makes my character different. If there’s anything I enjoy most about the process, it’s rehearsal. That’s where the discovery happens,” she said.

It’s clear that statement is the essence of Tucci’s work, her career and her philosophy as an artist. The old adage says that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear – in this case, right in the student’s own backyard.

“CCRI can help you decide if what you’re passionate about should be your lifetime commitment,” she said. “I remember having one of those New York moments right when I moved to the city. There was a car coming down the street with a megaphone on top. The person speaking through the megaphone said, loud and clear: ‘If you think you’ve got what it takes, it’s gonna take everything you’ve got.’”

For more information and updates from Tucci, visit her website at www.lintucci.com and find her on Facebook.
CCRI alumni connections may be closer than you think

DOUG COLEMAN ’76

Any Rhode Islander is familiar with the interconnectedness of living in a small state and, as CCRI’s alumni network grows across the country, even a place like the Big Apple can feel as close-knit as Little Rhody.

We were reminded of this when we reached out to actor Lin Tucci for a feature on her career and came back with not just one, but two alumni success stories. Doug Coleman, who grew up in Cranston, is the special effects supervisor of “Orange Is the New Black” and graduated from then-RJJC in 1976 with an associate degree in Liberal Arts. Like Tucci, Coleman said his experience with the classes and professors at CCRI was instrumental to unlocking his true passion, rather than simply putting him on the path that might have been expected of him.

G&W: So you’d say the college was pretty instrumental in your career today?
DC: I had no idea what I wanted to do when I entered the college. It was a breeding ground for me to find what I wanted to do, and the low cost of attendance allowed me to find my way without the constant pressure of a plan that comes for most with attendance at a high-cost university.

G&W: How did you make the transition to film?
DC: After three years working at Trinity Repertory Company and the now-defunct Chateau DeVille Dinner Theater, I applied and was accepted to NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. Within a week of arriving, I had a side job working in a prop shop in the city. For the next two years, I juggled work and school until I graduated and started doing work on television commercials. New York continues to draw a lot of television and film production.

G&W: Do you have any advice for students – or fellow alums – who might be just starting out in the working world, figuring out what they want to do?
DC: I see not a shortage of dreams becoming a reality so much as I see people having difficulty finding their dream. Particularly today, most people are thrust into a trajectory based on someone else’s expectations. We strive for success rather than balancing success with contentment. The earlier you can figure out what your dream actually is puts you that much closer to experiencing it.

G&W: When did you realize that you and Lin shared a home state – and an alma mater?
DC: There’s a certain attitude about Rhode Islanders that I can always detect. And “Orange” is a very communal show; everybody eats in the same lunch room at the same time, and tables can be very diverse with the mixture of on-camera talent, technicians, directors, producers, writers, etc. Lin was on the opposite end of a table and I heard her say something. I can’t remember what it was, or if it was how she said it rather than what she said. But I turned to her and asked her: “Are you from Rhode Island?” The rest, as they say, is history.
College officials, local dignitaries and the son of the college’s first president marked the beginning of CCRI’s 50th anniversary year at the annual Opening Day Convocation.

Speakers reflected on the institution’s past as well as the future, with a particular eye toward how the last 50 years have built a network of more than 64,000 graduates.

“Think about this very carefully,” said President Ray Di Pasquale as photographs from the college’s history appeared on the screens in the Bobby Hackett Theater. “We’re celebrating 50 years of educating Rhode Islanders, helping them change their lives and achieve their dreams.”

Jim Flanagan, son of William Flanagan, for whom the Lincoln campus is named, was 2 years old when his father took the helm of then-Rhode Island Junior College and over the next 14 years would grow up alongside the institution as it struck out on its mission, gained footing and expanded.

Quoting his father’s first convocational address, Flanagan said, “Today, we realize the fulfillment of a dream, but the task has just begun,” reminding those gathered to reflect on just how monumental a task providing a life-changing opportunity to anyone who walks through the college’s doors continues to be. “My father would be so proud, and so amazed,” he added.

Di Pasquale gave attendees an insight into the celebratory events ahead on the calendar; learn more about these on the college’s 50th anniversary website, www.ccri.edu/50th.

“Let’s have an extraordinary year together,” challenged Di Pasquale, encouraging the faculty and staff to keep the passion that William Flanagan first spoke of during the college’s inaugural convocation alive in their own work. “May all of us catch something of that fire that lights our hearts,” he said.
It’s not every day you get to honor the past, present and future all at once. The crowd of approximately 100 students, faculty, staff and invited guests assembled around the front of the Community College of Rhode Island’s Knight Campus in Warwick got to do just that, though, on Sept. 24 as they bore witness to the burial of a time capsule commemorating the college’s first 50 years.

President Ray Di Pasquale and Sondra Pitts ’66 addressed the crowd before the time capsule, filled with more than 70 items, was lowered into the ground. Di Pasquale, Pitts and others took turns covering the capsule with dirt and a plaque was placed at the burial’s location.

The capsule is scheduled to be unearthed on CCRI’s 100th anniversary on Sept. 24, 2064.

“We’re celebrating 50 years of really making a difference in students’ lives, helping them to get to where they want to go. Think of the power of that.” — CCRI President Ray Di Pasquale.
The Community College of Rhode Island rededicated the recently refurbished Bobby Hackett Theater with an evening celebrating the college’s talented performers in “50 Years of Performing Arts at CCRI” on Nov. 21 at the Knight Campus in Warwick.

Hackett was a Providence-born jazz musician whose career spanned six decades and saw performances with music legends from Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman to Louis Armstrong and Tony Bennett. Several of Hackett’s family members, including his granddaughter, grandson, niece, great-grandchildren, and even his 8-month-old great-great grandson (pictured below), were in attendance.

When the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame inducted Hackett in 2013, it said “his unique and exquisite tone coupled with his melodic improvisational style gave him an instantly recognizable sound and made him a household name.”

Featured performances included aerial silk acrobat and alumna Jamie Glowacki, Performing Arts Department students, faculty and alumni staging scenes from plays performed through the decades and musical entertainment from the cast of “Hello Broadway 2014.”

Local favorite, rhythm and blues band Steve Smith and the Nakeds – inducted into the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame the same year as Hackett – served as house band to an appreciative audience.

After the show, Bruce Kalvert ’76 entertained the crowd with close-up magic tricks and attendees enjoyed posing with living statues of Mozart and Shakespeare during a reception in the Great Hall.

Visit www.ccri.edu/hackett to view more photos from the event.
Every jazz musician knows that her craft is as much about improvisation as it is practice. It’s in the improv where the most unexpected, delightful surprises can come out of all of that skill. For Lois (Eberhard) Vaughan, jazz pianist and graduate of CCRI (Jazz Studies, ’99), the notion means as much in her personal life as it does her professional experience.

“I’m from western New York,” said Vaughan, who grew up in Youngstown and earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Cornell University. She had been living and working outside of Boston, studying jazz in her spare time, when she decided to make a change. “That’s when I moved to Newport to try making my living as a jazz musician,” she said.

The transition was quite a change of pace for Vaughan, who had saved up money and lined up a housesitting job so that she could live as frugally as possible while looking for work as a musician. Supplementing her income by driving school buses, she began to teach piano as quickly as she could – and, although looking to expand her horizons after playing solo for a few years, she decided to come to the college in 1997.

“I spent a couple years looking around trying to find a school where I could learn to play with other people,” she said. Although she considered conservatories in Boston, proximity and affordability meant the choice was clear.

Although she already had amassed experience as a musician, Vaughan said she found being surrounded by fresh-faced students straight out of high school – as well as by the diverse student body represented at the college – to be exhilarating. “The fact that I was back in a learning situation was very exciting. It was a real melting pot and the classes were wonderful; I learned a lot, and had a lot of great experiences,” she said, recalling being able to participate in national adjudications and playing alongside community college students from around the country.

She recalled in particular the influence of Professor Stephen Lajoie, who she called “the driving force” in expanding her knowledge of harmony and theory as well as her ability to collaborate with others. “There were a lot of very rich experiences,” she said. “And teachers can make an incredible difference.”

While the impact on her personal income has been a positive one now that she has expanded her skill set, Vaughan said it was the artistic growth and networking opportunities that came with learning to play with other people that ultimately made her feel more at home in what can be an uncertain field.

And despite Rhode Island’s small size, Vaughan said that the state remains a creative force to be reckoned with and a wonderful place to be practicing as a full-time performing and teaching artist. “To have the arts brings people a lot of joy,” she said. “Rhode Island draws a lot of people from New York, Boston, all over the country and all over the world. The arts are a big part of what makes our state vibrant.”
Why I give: Gerald Conroy ’74

For alumnus, scholarship is investment with big returns

Pawtucket native Gerald Conroy (Liberal Arts, ’74) is a success by any measure. Now in New York City, where he works as a deputy commissioner with the Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District, Conroy is a far cry from not just his home state, but from his self-proclaimed inauspicious beginnings as a lackluster student in his high school years. Conroy said he owes much of this success to CCRI, and has made it his mission to offer others the same opportunity he found through the college’s open doors.

“I had a miserable high school record and I wasn’t going to college otherwise. But CCRI was open to me and it was affordable. I was able to reach into my own pocket and say to my parents, ‘Don’t worry, I’ve got this.’ It was my shot at higher education,” said Conroy.

“Thanks to some very dedicated and dynamic faculty, school suddenly became interesting to me. I was able to pull up my socks academically and go on and get a bachelor’s and subsequently a law degree.”

It’s these fond memories of his time at the college – and his gratitude for the fulfilling career path that followed as a law clerk, litigation associate and then criminal prosecutor – that motivated Conroy and his wife, Marguerette Hosbach, to endow a scholarship that aims to help today’s students get their foot in the door at CCRI.

Started in 1992, the Andrew and Mary Conroy scholarship, named in memory of Conroy’s parents, provides assistance to students majoring in Liberal Arts who plan to continue their education beyond graduation from CCRI. Though preference is given to students who hail from Pawtucket, Conroy said he hopes to expand the reach of the scholarship in the future.

“In the early ’90s, I was taking stock of my life and good fortune and it occurred to me that it wouldn’t have happened but for CCRI. Now, tuition is no longer what it was when I was attending the college and it could be a reach for some and a barrier for others. My wife and I decided to start this scholarship to make a difference,” he said.

The college certainly made a difference for Conroy. He recalled, in particular, Professor James Federico Jr., who taught an introductory political science class in Conroy’s first semester. “He made the topic fascinating,” said Conroy. “I worked more on that than I had on any course in a long time. And I got an A – which, at that point in my life, was a rarity.”

After that, Conroy was off and running – graduating from the college with an associate degree in Liberal Arts and going on to earn his bachelor’s degree in politics at the Catholic University of America and then a law degree from Antioch School of Law.

Looking back on his experience, Conroy has no doubts about his dollars having an impact, saying that community colleges have a “critical role” in our country, both for students seeking a well-rounded liberal arts education as well as those who look to thrive in technical fields. “Community colleges can lift people into far better economic circumstance. I want to see students benefit from that. Most of my family has attended public institutions for at least some of their higher education,” he said.

To continue to make community college a sustainable option for all comers, Conroy added that he would encourage his fellow alumni to make an impact on future students looking to find themselves at CCRI. “Whatever amount you can spare, there’s going to be bang for the buck,” he said. “For not much investment on the part of an alumnus, one can help open the doors that were held open for us.”

To learn how to establish a scholarship for students or donate to the Alumni Fund, call the Office of Institutional Advancement at 401-333-7150.
Two former CCRI filmmakers journey from classroom to cinematic recognition

Though they have yet to graduate from their film studies program at the University of Rhode Island, former Community College of Rhode Island students Kyle Sidlik and Christian Renzi already have achieved a milestone in their careers. Their short film, “The Outside of Life,” was screened at the 2014 Rhode Island International Film Festival, an elite and Academy Award-qualifying festival that received more than 5,400 submissions this year for only 210 spots.

“The festival went really well,” reported Renzi. “Our film was screened alongside other local films and the screening was sold out. I also got to do a Q&A session.”

Although Sidlik and Renzi, who wrote and directed the film, didn’t meet until last year, the two were students at CCRI prior to transferring. Sidlik came directly to CCRI after graduating from Coventry High School in 2010.

“I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do; I had always liked movies, so I wanted to try taking an audiovisual class with Associate Professor Sandra Sneesby. And I really liked it. I liked planning and then collaborating with other people and sharing ideas,” he said.

Renzi came to CCRI after spending a semester at Franklin Pierce College. Unlike Sidlik, he said he always had been focused on film “pretty much since my parents let me use their video camera when I was 12,” he said. “I tried to make serious movies, but they never came out well. I saw ‘Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind’ when I was 13 and I wanted to recreate something like that. That didn’t work out, but it got me on the road to film.”

Sneesby, who taught both students, remembered them as being creative and inquisitive with a knack for telling stories through film.

“Both of them have similar traits. They’re very unassuming. Their projects were always well done and creative. They quickly mastered concepts and were self-starters. They spent extra time practicing and learning editing software to better their films. They were insightful in class discussions and really stood out in the class for their talent,” she said.

The two met when they moved to URI, from which they hope to graduate in spring 2015, and began to collaborate on “Life” and other projects, particularly making use of small crews of dedicated, well-rounded – filmmakers, actors and non-actor friends alike to get results on a tiny budget. For “Life” the budget was $300, most of which was food, they said.

Renzi wrote the script over a three-month period last winter and, after the pair journeyed to Austin, Texas, to attend South by Southwest and saw many of the short films that had been accepted for screening there, they knew they could make the vision come to life.

While Renzi is more comfortable behind the camera, he said he has written a script that puts himself on display, in a sense. He explained “Life” as a new take on a classic story – in the vein of “It’s a Wonderful Life” or his perennial muse, “Eternal Sunshine” – wherein his main character, who is an exaggerated version of himself, is sent to a therapist who has the power to help him relive his own memories in an effort to win back an ex-girlfriend.

Working with the extensive equipment available to them via URI’s film program, they filmed over a week of 12-hour-a-day shoots. Editing with their producer, Kyle Smith, took place over the following months and they were tweaking the music up until the day of submission.

The two recently began shooting their next film “Death & Cereal.” They plan to submit “Life” to next year’s South by Southwest.
Maureen McGarry

Maureen McGarry, dean of Health and Rehabilitative Sciences at CCRI since 1999, died unexpectedly on Nov. 12.

She came to CCRI in 1988 as a Nursing faculty member who worked out of an old hospital dormitory in Newport. She was instrumental to the college’s Health and Rehabilitative Sciences programs and founded the nursing alumni chapter. For her longtime dedication to CCRI, she was honored with the Honorary Alumni Award last year.

She received her nursing degree from St. Joseph Hospital School of Nursing, her Bachelor of Science as school-nurse teacher and Master of Education in counselor education from Rhode Island College and her Master of Science in nursing from University of Rhode Island. She returned to RIC and received her Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in counselor education and earned her Doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Connecticut.

Her passion was always for education and nursing. Prior to CCRI, she was assistant director at the St. Joseph’s School of Nursing and was a special lecturer at Providence College.

She was actively involved in the Rhode Island Action Coalition for nursing and as co-chairwoman of its nursing education gap analysis. She was a member of the Nursing Education Center Feasibility Study Committee, the Rhode Island Center for Nursing Excellence and the Community Health Worker Advisory at Brown University. She served as a member and president of Rhode Island Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education and was on the board of directors of the Massachusetts/Rhode Island League for Nursing.

Nationally she was a member of the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing Evaluation Review Panel; was a program evaluator for National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission; and served as chairwoman of the National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing Nominating and Ballot Committee.

Jeffrey Butterworth

Jeffrey Butterworth, a professor in CCRI’s Performing Arts Department who taught performance and design courses for 23 years, died on Oct. 11. Butterworth taught Acting I and II, Introduction to Theatre, Introduction to Costuming, Theatrical Make-Up, Dramatic Literature, Voice and Articulation, Movement for Actors and Oral Communication. He was the adviser to the CCRI Players Club and designed costumes for more than 60 Players productions from “Cinderella” to “Cephalopod” and directed 15 plays including “Loot,” “No Exit,” “The Mikado,” “Sueno,” “Dracula” and “A Burial at Thebes.” He served as staging and movement consultant on the CCRI Music program’s opera workshop and directed its first full-length opera, “The Gondoliers.”

He is on the Textile Wall of Fame of the Costuming, Textile and Fashion Merchandising Department at the University of Rhode Island. He served as membership chairman and Region I president for the Costume Society of America. He presented papers at regional and national CSA conferences and was awarded the Stella Blum Award. He designed museum exhibitions for the University of Washington and The Essex Institute, including “Step Forward, Step Back: Three Hundred Years of Fashion Footwear.” He also created exhibition props for the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Massachusetts and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum and he spoke nationally on the history of American footwear and shoemaking.

Condolences may be sent to his family:
Fred and Ritajeann Butterworth
4815 Stanford Ave., Seattle, WA 98105

CLASS NOTES

Juanita R. Andrade-Michaud ’95
Rita L. Copley ’78
Thomas E. Furey ’79
Vincent G. Giuliano ’74
Denise A. Grenier ’80
Irene V. (Leclaire) Heroux ’99
Dorothy I. Kelly ’87
Marc C. Masone ’00
Brian P. McConaghy ’90
Carolyn L. (Volpe) Montague ’72
Kathryn J. Pasciucco ’04
John T. Sharkey ’76
Maria E. Solares ’80

’00s

2011 — Richard Banks, vice president and bank manager of BankNewport’s Narragansett office, will assume the additional role of bank manager at the Coventry office.

2014 — Meagan Marchand is the 10th nurse in her family. Marchand is a staff nurse at Landmark Medical Center.


What’s new in your life?
Send information to:
CCRI Office of Alumni Affairs
1762 Louisquisset Pike
Lincoln, RI 02865
Email: alumni@ccri.edu
Performing Arts through the years

“Fashion” by Anna Cora Mowatt (1989)

“Fashion” was written in 1845 by Anna Cora Mowatt and was equally successful in New York and Philadelphia. Under the direction of Professor Marlie Moses, the CCRI Players staged the comedy in the fall of 1989 at the Flanagan Campus in Lincoln.

The comedy was intended as a good-natured satire on the folly of newly rich Americans who, in the 1840s, regarded everything French as wonderful and everything American as commonplace.

“Benten the Thief” by Kawatake Mokuame (1985)

In the fall of 1985, the CCRI Players presented “Benten the Thief,” an authentic Japanese kabuki play, at the Knight Campus in Warwick. Under the direction of Professor Michael A. Romano, the production featured colorful and historically accurate costumes co-designed by Professor Romano and Claudia Ianuccilli, authentic makeup and a set containing many of the features of the traditional kabuki stage.

The CCRI production of “Benten the Thief” was selected to be performed at the regional Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival at the University of New Hampshire in January 1986.
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CCRI will celebrate its students, faculty, staff and alumni throughout the 2014–15 academic year with a number of 50th anniversary events, including:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 10</td>
<td>CCRI documentary premiere: “The Miracle on Promenade”</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>Alumni event: “Celebrating Alumni for 50 Years”</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>CCRI 5K run/walk</td>
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<td>Date TBA</td>
<td>Tree planting at our campuses</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
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Please join us!

Learn more about these events and submit a story, a memory or your thoughts about CCRI online.

www.ccri.edu/50th