

# Update

Alumni Newsletter *from*  
President Merodie A. Hancock



Fall 2017

[www.esc.edu/Alumni](http://www.esc.edu/Alumni)

With autumn settled in, and looking toward the new year, the faculty and staff at your alma mater have been hard at work expanding opportunities for students to better their lives and the lives of their families.

We have introduced new degrees, including an undergraduate certificate in Healthcare Management, a Bachelor of Science in Allied Health and a Master of Science in Finance, and have several more in the pipeline.

We have broken ground at our new location on Long Island, adjacent to Suffolk County Community College, which we expect to open in 2019. This state-of-the-art building will be the second recently constructed and college-owned location outside of Saratoga Springs, and will expand the connectivity of our locations and offerings. Along with these many initiatives, we now are engaged in building out our next strategic plan.

Nearly 550 participants, including students, alumni and members of the College Council, Foundation Board and your Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors, have engaged in our strategic planning process through webinars, workshops and discussion groups. Alumni input is reflected already in the strength of our vision, mission and strategic themes.

While there is much good news to celebrate at the college, over the past several months, natural disasters have ravaged parts of the United States and neighboring countries. When Hurricane Harvey first hit Texas, SUNY responded by quickly establishing the SUNY Strong disaster relief fund. I was proud to see the college community embrace this effort with gifts totaling nearly \$6,000, primarily from our employees. Most recently, Empire State College students led an effort to collect donations from college locations across New York for Puerto Rico and several Caribbean nations.

In total, nearly 200 of our SUNY Empire students were affected directly by the recent natural disasters. Some lost homes and loved ones, while others were deployed to provide military assistance to the relief efforts. In response, we instituted a Natural Disaster Student Response team, which will focus directly on those students most in need.



*President Merodie A. Hancock*

The generosity of our donors, particularly through their support of The Fund for Empire State College, provides our natural Disaster Student Response team with the resources needed to assist our students who have lost so much already. I am never surprised, but always inspired, by the generosity of SUNY Empire students, faculty, staff and alumni.

Speaking of inspiration, as you will read, three impressive alumni received our inaugural alumni awards. We are proud to shine a spotlight on the powerful work alumni do as leaders in their fields and their communities.

As you well know, Empire State College is a special place, with a spirit of giving back that runs to the very core of who we are. From volunteering to help with commencement and recruitment events, to helping those most in need, to creating scholarships and internships, our proud alumni reflect the best of who we are, every day. My sincere thanks goes out to you for all that you do to ensure that this special place continues to thrive well into the future.

You have my warmest wishes for a safe and bountiful holiday season.



*Inaugural Alumni Award winners, from the left, Janice Mary Novello '83, Susan Turben '72, H'05, Catherine Roberts '16 with President Merodie Hancock*

## Inaugural Alumni Awardees Honored

The 2017 recipients of the Alumni Awards were honored at the inaugural awards ceremony last month in Saratoga Springs. The three remarkable women selected by committee of the Alumni

Student Federation Board of Governors exemplify the true spirit of Empire State College. The 2017 Community Impact awardee, Janice Mary Novello '83, said it best during her awards speech, "Rather than using numbers and statistics to document success, here is a testament to milestones that were only made possible through superior education. We are celebrating that at Empire State College. Earning a diploma is opening a world of lifelong opportunities."

The purpose of the Alumni Awards Program is to recognize the college's exemplary alumni who have made a lasting impact on society and on SUNY Empire State College through outstanding professional, philanthropic or volunteer accomplishments. Novello received the award for Community Impact, Catherine Roberts '16 was honored with the Emerging Leader Award and Susan Turben '72, H'05, was named Distinguished Leader.

## Awards Program Open for 2018 Nominations

Nominations for the 2018 Alumni Awards is now open, with the deadline for submission set for Thursday, March 1, 2018.

All members of the SUNY Empire State College community are encouraged to nominate deserving alumni for the Emerging Leader, Community Impact and Distinguished Leader awards.

Self-nominations also will be accepted. To learn more about the program and to nominate a deserving alumnus/alumna, please visit [www.esc.edu/Alumni](http://www.esc.edu/Alumni) or contact Lindsay Valenti, associate director of alumni and student relations, at 518-580-4779 or [Lindsay.Valenti@esc.edu](mailto:Lindsay.Valenti@esc.edu).

## Batter Up!

The approaching winter season can give rise to thoughts of spring and nice weather. Start to think ahead to spring events, mild temperatures and baseball. This spring, the college will to host a brand new event at the Ball Park of the Palm Beaches ([www.ballparkpalmbeaches.com](http://www.ballparkpalmbeaches.com)). This new venue is a jewel in the heart of West Palm Beach, Fla. The 6,500 seat facility features a fantastic wrap-around concourse, ample parking, inviting sight lines

and unique fan areas to enhance the spring training experience.

Please consider joining us on March 2, 2018, to see the **NY Mets** play the **Washington Nationals**. We would love for all Florida-area alumni and other alums who may be visiting the Sunshine State to attend our first-ever Spring Training Alumni Reunion. For more information and to sign up, go to [www.esc.edu/Alumni](http://www.esc.edu/Alumni) or contact [Maureen.Winney@esc.edu](mailto:Maureen.Winney@esc.edu).

## Save the Date for our Signature Saratoga Summer Event

Speaking of outstanding alumni events, also consider attending the college's annual Day at the Races at Saratoga Race Course. We will gather more than 200 alumni,

students, faculty and friends on Friday, July 27, 2018. Keep checking [www.esc.edu/Alumni](http://www.esc.edu/Alumni) for the sign up page, which usually is posted in April.

## Alumni Website is Chock Full

If you haven't looked at the alumni website in a while, I encourage you to do so. Completely redesigned, the site offers alumni the following.

- Event Calendar
- Transcript Information
- Career Services
- College Merchandise
- Social Media Links
- Volunteer Opportunities (at open houses, commencements, info sessions, etc.)
- Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors meeting minutes and agendas for alumni input and suggestions

Take advantage of your portal to all things alumni, including a full range of services and benefits, at [www.esc.edu/Alumni](http://www.esc.edu/Alumni).

## Alumni Profile Marlene Kaufman '91

Marlene Kaufman came of age at a time and in a culture where women were not expected to be highly educated. Born one of three siblings, she has two brothers; one is a retired neurosurgeon, both went to Ivy League schools, Princeton and Dartmouth. Marlene, instead, was encouraged to prepare to be a good wife.

When she turned 38, she decided to undertake the pursuit of psychotherapy, realizing, "I really want to do this ... this is my passion and *raison d'être*." Kaufman is still working full time. She has four grandchildren with whom she is very involved, and enjoys traveling, reading and getting together with her extended family members and friends.



Photo by C. Rolley

Marlene Kaufman '91

**Q. *You have said education wasn't important for women in the family at the time you came of age.***

**A.** I had a wonderful mother who taught me wonderful things. However, while it was important for boys to get an education, that was not so for girls who were expected to learn to cook, clean and keep a good home. I always had a burning desire to be as good as my brothers.

**Q. *What were you doing before returning to school?***

**A.** I got married at age 26, and had a girl, Rachel, and boy, David, and I love them to death. Before I married, I earned an associate degree in business and fashion. All four of my uncles went to college and got graduate degrees, while mom just finished high school. Fortunately, I had a good brain, good genes and a burning desire for education.

**Q. *How did you hear about SUNY Empire?***

**A.** I am not sure, but the fact that I could earn life experience credits was extremely appealing, and gave me a leg up and a head start. My

mentor was Lois Holzman. I could not have asked for a better fit. ESC was the most warm, nonjudgmental, welcoming environment.

**Q. *Your mentor encouraged you in your ambition to be a psychotherapist.***

**A.** What I found out was that the easiest track to becoming a psychotherapist was earning a Master of Social Work. She helped me pick out courses and laid out a plan based on getting into graduate school. I got into Columbia, Yeshiva, New York University and Hunter School of Social Work. I chose NYU. My mentor helped tremendously with the application and essay, and the rest is history.

**Q. *What did you earn your degree in and what did you like most about your college experience?***

**A.** I graduated from SUNY Empire with a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and have had a successful private practice for 26 years.

The thing about ESC is that mentoring is so very special and so rare. My mentor was a friend, a coach, an educator. She really was so loving and supportive. That environment is what did it for me.

When I attended, we had a floor with a small office; it was very, very cozy, like being in an educational cocoon. [As students] we were very visible, not one of a mass crowd.

**Q. *Your husband, Alan, has been very helpful to you.***

**A.** Yes, what was important to me became important to him. We donate to the Annual Fund every year. I really want the school to continue because it made such a difference in my life. It needs to keep growing.

**Q. *You also have been active in sharing your experience as a volunteer at college open houses.***

**A.** I volunteered at four this year, two in the spring and two in the fall. I am glad to help by being able to tell a story, and have [prospective students] see where I came from and that what I experienced in life never stopped me. Many students come up to me and say, "You told my story." One woman who just had a baby really wants to go into psychotherapy. I told her to come to the school and do not stop. It is a wonderful feeling to pass it on and to make a difference.



Nicholas Coates  
*The Fund for Empire State College Scholar, B.S. in Business, Management and Economics, Manchester, N.Y.*

## The Fund for Empire State College Scholarship

*“Thank you so much for your kind gesture and allowing me to continue my education at Empire State College. With a 10-month old at home and another baby due at the end of the year, Empire State College appealed to me because I can complete coursework on my terms. Right now, because of my family and work commitments, that means enrolling in just four credits a semester, eliminating me from financial aid eligibility. **The Fund for Empire State College Scholarship** will assist me in continuing my education, and, ultimately, allow me to provide a better life for me and my family.”*

SUNY Empire State College is committed to providing our students with an affordable, quality education. The Fund for Empire State College Scholarship is just one of the many ways you help us support our students as they balance family life, work life and their studies. This year, our first year of awarding the scholarship, we were able to provide 24 students with the financial resources they need to continue pursuing their educational goals. We are grateful to our donors who continue to inspire curiosity and empower success.

The difference one donor makes in the life of one student is significant. Together, the difference we make for so many students, like Nicholas, is enormous. Make a difference today using the enclosed envelope or by going to [www.esc.edu/SupportESC](http://www.esc.edu/SupportESC).



**we can inspire curiosity and empower success.**

## Selden Groundbreaking



*Pictured at the groundbreaking for the college's newest location in Selden on Long Island, from the left, College Foundation Board Chair Marian Conway '01, '04; Suffolk County Legislator Thomas Muratore; NYS Senator Kenneth LaValle; President Merodie Hancock and Town of Brookhaven Councilman Kevin LaValle. It is anticipated the new 26,000-square-foot building will open in 2019.*