Eager to listen, learn

New Fredonia President Dr. Stephen H. Kolison Jr. sets collaborative tone

Student Emergency Relief Fund provides support

Pursuing her passion and goals, meeting a need and making a difference

Alumnus thrives as creative force on PBS digital design teams

A 59-year Fredonia friendship: A navy blue Fredonia blazer
Statement
THE MAGAZINE FOR FREDONIA ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

Fall 2020

10
ALUMNI HONORS

Outstanding Achievement Award to Finn and Taylor; Career Development Office to host ‘Network on the Go’ event in October

Fredonia to Fredonian; Dunkirk woman sews, gives protective face masks to students

11
COLLEGE BEATS | LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

Pursuing her passion and goals, meeting a need and making a difference

12
Our View

14
Student Emergency Relief Fund provides support

15
MIXED MEDIA

Photographic memories...

Social media snaps

16
ATHLETICS

The 2020 Fredonia State spring sports season had just begun when the curtain fell

Five alumni, three teams added to Athletics Hall of Fame

18
Creative Commencement celebration

20
ALUMNI PROFILE | VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Alumna thrives as creative force on PBS digital design teams

22
Class Notes/Marriages/Births/Deaths

A 59-year Fredonia friendship:

A navy blue Fredonia blazer

27
Career Corner

Help recruit the next generation of Frederonians!

Back cover

Admissions Update
Fredonia is dedicated to the health and safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors. The Office of Admissions is offering several virtual options to prospective students and their families in lieu of traditional visits. For the most up-to-date information on our virtual events, and the status of in-person tours, please check www.fredonia.edu/admissions-aid/visit-tour or call the Office of Admissions at (716) 673-3251.

Alumni and Campus Events Calendar

OCTOBER
Fredonia Marxonia
‘New York City and the Marx Brothers’ Annual Marx Brothers Festival
Author and performer Noah Diamond will present his illustrated lecture, ‘Home Again: The Marx Brothers and New York City,’ directed by Amanda Stik, as an online event on Oct. 2

William Kentridge:
‘Universal Archives’
Aug. 18 through Oct. 11

Teresa Booth Brown:
“The Neo-Quietism Project”
Oct. 16 through Nov. 20

NOVEMBER
Annual Alumni Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, Nov. 12, 4 p.m.
(To be conducted online)

Thanksgiving Break
Monday, Nov. 23 through Sunday, Nov. 29

DECEMBER
Last Days of Instruction for the Semester
Monday, Nov. 30 through Friday, Dec. 4

Virtual Homecoming
Oct. 15–17
See fredonia.edu/alumni for details.


There will be no group tours or receptions during the fall semester. For more information, contact Gallery Director Barbara Räcker at (716) 673-4897 or email barbara.racker@fredonia.edu.

Back cover

Help recruit the next generation of Frederonians!
Dear Alumni and Friends,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones doing well and in great spirits, notwithstanding the COVID-19 era in which we find ourselves. As you may know, I arrived on campus on August 17, and I am excited to be a part of SUNY Fredonia as your 10th President. I am expose to all my family and I am happy to call this institution our home. Over the next several months, I hope to get to meet and to know many of you. Indeed, it is a high honor to join you in partnership and efforts aimed at the advancement of SUNY Fredonia.

As indicated to the campus community upon my appointment, I believe that a performance meter for public higher education institutions must include inspiring and preparing students to be skilled, connected, creative, entrepreneurial, innovative, and responsible professionals and global citizens. In addition, public institutions must be engaged with the communities in which they are located. In other words, it is not enough for public institutions to be located in a community. They must be of, and for, the communities in which they are located, and be strong socioeconomic anchors for those communities. I find SUNY Fredonia to be all of these things. This is why I am thrilled beyond expression to be appointed by the SUNY Board of Trustees as Fredonia’s President.

My first message to students was to tell them that regardless of their background and the challenges we face, they need to embrace Fredonia and take full advantage of all that it has to offer. It is your university. I pledged to work hard every day to ensure that they are successful in their endeavors.

Throughout the search process, I have been so impressed with the talents of the faculty and staff, the beauty of the physical campus, and — most importantly — the remarkable student body. Fredonia’s six-year graduation rate remains above the national average for schools of its size. I look forward to working with the campus community to continue to build on that strong foundation.

It is my hope that the Fredonia family is very proud of the way the campus has responded to COVID-19. Along with continuing learning through distance education, several current students and alumni have been on the frontlines of the pandemic. Several stories in this edition of The Statement highlight that work. I am also grateful for the leadership of my predecessor, Interim President Dennis Hefner, and for the extraordinary efforts by our faculty and staff for the continuation of instruction and operations, and the making of preparations for the new school year. Thank you.

As I begin my first year at Fredonia, I am looking forward to meeting you — alumni and friends of the university — as life returns to normalcy from the constraints imposed on all of us by COVID-19. I wish you the very best. Stay well.

Very truly yours,

Stephen H. Kolison Jr., Ph.D.
President
SUNY FREDONIA

The “Nurturing Innovation” comprehensive campaign is the largest in Fredonia’s history. If you have already made a gift, the Fredonia College Foundation would like to thank you for contributing to Fredonia’s success in educating tomorrow’s leaders, and humbly request your continued support as we move forward. Donations to the Nurturing Innovation campaign are supporting scholarships, allowing Fredonia to attract and retain talented professionals, helping to provide the necessary funds for updated learning spaces with the technology needed to prepare our students for their futures, contributing to faculty/study research, increasing opportunities for experiential learning, and providing unrestricted support.

Unrestricted donations through the Fredonia College Foundation allow SUNY Fredonia the latitude to meet challenges as they arise and support the priority needs of the university. This support is crucial now more than ever as the campus works to adjust to the changing landscape of education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic while also managing sizable cuts to our state funding.

Last spring, the campus was able to quickly pivot to continue all education in a distance learning format. Now, as the world and the campus community adjust to a post-pandemic reality, it is clear that flexibility will continue to be one of our highest priorities. The support of Fredonia’s alumni and friends has always been essential to continuing the high-quality education and welcoming atmosphere that Fredonia is known for. We always say that while you may have been a student of Fredonia for only a few short years, you are a Fredonian for life!

If you are able, please consider a gift to Fredonia this fall to support the students of today and help us to adapt to the challenges of tomorrow. Gifts can be made online at www.fredonia.edu/give/form or by returning the envelope in the centerfold of this issue. Thank you for being part of the Fredonia family!
**Eager to listen, learn**

**New Fredonia President Kolison sets collaborative tone**

“‘The left hand needs to know what the right hand is doing and vice versa. Avoid surprises, especially at 4 p.m. on Friday.’ That’s the philosophy that will guide Stephen H. Kolison Jr., Ph.D., the new president of the State University of New York at Fredonia. As the chief academic officer and member of an executive team at the University of Indianapolis (Indy), Dr. Kolison saw that approach produce results.

As one of my takeaways from the University of Indianapolis, the president, Dr. Robert Manuel, emphasized the phrase ‘network university’ to describe how he wanted his vice presidents to work with each other. ‘It simply means any decision that you make for your agency or in your area of work with each other,’ Kolison explained.

For that concept to be successful, Kolison said, leaders have to be connected to each other and be fully aware of what’s happening on the campus. They have to collaborate, coordinate, and communicate: they have to share things; and they have to be able to say that if we go left, this is what will happen; if we go right, this is what happens. For it to work, even the president cannot go off and make major decisions without the vice president and other senior leaders get to know about the First time from the newspapers, or from the Internet. No, that should not happen if the president expects this concept to work well.”

When everyone is on the same page, on the same team, Kolison said, when everyone is moving things forward.

“The ‘network university’ in the true sense of the phrase has relevance to how I will manage and how I will lead,” Kolison said. “Sure, it sounds simple. But, in times of pressure, or for convenience, it is easy to forget. So, constant practice, and sometimes incentives, are essential to make it become the operating DNA.”

Kolison brings nearly 30 years of leadership experience in higher education gained at public and private universities to Fredonia, including the last three years as Executive Vice President and Provost at the University of Indianapolis. The State University of New York Board of Trustees appointed Kolison as Fredonia’s 14th president in July, succeeding Interim President Dennis L. Hefner, who returned to campus a year ago following the retirement of President Virginia Harvorth.

A native of Liberia, Kolison joins two African-Americans currently serving as president of one of SUNY’s 13 comprehen-
sive colleges.

Kolison explained, resulting in the pool of traditional college-age students falling about 15 percent. These forces make budget deficits even more difficult to address.

“For financial reasons and demographic changes, it’s imperative that we make decisions to come online and attract students from New York and other parts of the country and the globe. So, let’s make it happen!”

Getting to know the campus community and taking on leadership positions — much like Kolison has done in his career through meet-and-greets and what Kolison describes as responding to a stream of “very kind emails from well-wishers” — was a priority in the weeks leading up to Aug. 17, his first official day on campus. He’s eager to get to know his administrative team as well as faculty, staff and, of course, students. “So, I want to hit the ground running, learning as quickly as I can and as much as I can, so when it’s time to make decisions I’m making decisions based on data and on highly reliable information.”

Kolison also wants to get to know the Fredonia community, including elected officials and residents.

Kolison served three years at Indy, a private school, where he said performance drive revenue. “As Provost, I spent a lot of time dealing with enrollment and retention matters. I think that’s very relevant to what we are at Fredonia.”

Going in the ‘right direction’

Kolison is also pleased to report encouraging signs for the campus.

“This summer, the numbers of students enrolling are more than where we were last year, so that’s very good. Also, I saw in the last few years the decline has kind of stopped, and it’s beginning to grow in the right direction.” These are not the high numbers of a decade ago, Kolison noted, “but at least we say we have hit the bottom of the bleeding. So, I want to acknowledge that and say thanks to everyone on campus who has put forth the effort to stop the bleeding and then pull us in the right direction.”

Kolison wants to see Fredonia diversify the student pipeline. “Yes, it is a good thing that many of our students come from New York; we are a public institution and we should be serving the taxpayers of New York.” Kolison said. “At the same time, I am sure you will agree with me that we will need to go out and find students from other states and also find international students that can come to our institution. We have world class programs that can attract students from New York and other parts of the country and the globe.”

**What’s going to be heavy on my mind is going to be launching the fall semester under this COVID cloud that we have to deal with.”**

— President Stephen H. Kolison Jr.

Kolison explained, resulting in the pool of traditional college-age students falling about 15 percent. These forces make budget deficits even more difficult to address.

“These are things that we have to deal with in the months or years ahead,” Kolison said. So is serious competition from other schools. “In our neighborhood, a 100-mile radius, you have five other public schools that we have to compete with for students, and then if you look at where our students come from: about 95 percent of our students come from the state of New York.” Kolison noted. Very few are from other states or are international students.

“I want to be clear about these. These are challenges I was aware of in pursuing this opportunity. I came because I believe that the campus and the SUNY System will support me addressing these chal-
lenges. And, together, we will address all of these challenges and move ahead to many opportunities because we are SUNY Fredonia.”

**“What’s going to be heavy on my mind is going to be launching the fall semester under this COVID cloud that we have to deal with.””**

— President Stephen H. Kolison Jr.
Shared governance, working closely with Faculty Senate and major stake- holders, was also a priority at Unyld that Kolison is carrying with him to Fredonia. Kolison said he was fortunate to work with an effective team — the Provost’s Council — that was visionary, cohesive, diverse, and committed to advancing Unyld.

Kolison points to a strong faculty and staff, great students, world class academic programs and a beautiful campus, as Fredonia assets. “These are all incredible strengths to have, that make an institution a place of destination. There’s a lot going for Fredonia that makes it actually a very strong institution.”

At Unyld, Kolison, during his three years, planted 10 new degree programs, secured overwhelming faculty support to establish three types of faculty tracks and planned, launched and completed the development of an intellectual life vision and an academic master plan for the university. Before joining Unyld, Kolison spent nearly nine years in University of Wisconsin System Administration, as Associate Vice President for Academic Programs, Educational Innovation and Governance. Kolison was responsible for academic program planning and array management of the system that serves approximately 170,000 students across 13 universities.

At Tennessee State University, Kolison was responsible for providing direction of a comprehensive research program related to agricultural and environmental sciences. During his 10 years there, he was the Founding Dean and Research Director of the Institute of Rural and Environmental Research, and Director and Research Director of the Cooperative Agricultural Research Program.

Kolison also taught for eight years in the field of Forestry/Forest Economics and was a research scientist at Tuskegee University. He began his career in higher education as a teaching assistant at the University of Liberia, his alma mater. Kolison has Ph.D. in Forest Economics and an M.S. in Forest Economics and Marketing, both from Iowa State University of Science and Technology.

Kolison has Ph.D. in Forest Economics from the University of Liberia. He holds four post-doctoral certificates from Harvard University.

Throughout his career in higher education, Dr. Kolison has been the principal investigator on grants totaling in the millions of dollars.

**Father 'inspired me tremendously'**

The father of Stephen H. Kolison Jr., (Stephen H. Kolison Sr.) passed away nearly 10 years ago, but the legacy that he left his children growing up in Liberia clearly nurtured the career trajectory of Fredonia’s new president.

With a high school diploma, the elder Kolison became a teacher at schools (elementary and junior high schools) operated by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, which established about a million-acre rubber plantation in Liberia, for the children of its workers. Kolison said his father realized that in order “to do even better,” he needed to obtain a higher education, so, as a non-traditional student, he enrolled in the University of Liberia to earn a undergrad degree.

The younger Kolison was in the second grade when his father went back to school. “I still remember how he would take me to the campus of the University of Liberia on Sunday afternoons to study with his family, including a blue ribbon cooking contest while he was at Tuskegee University. He grows African violets as a hobby, loves airplanes, follows advancements in automobiles, is into all kinds of music, and loves soccer, basketball and horseback riding. He enjoys hiking in forests and tall grasslands.

He says that if he had the time to learn to play a musical instrument at this point in his life, it would be the saxophone. He says his love for the saxophone was influenced by the late Mano de Bongo of Cameroon and the late Clarence Clemons of the E Street Band.

Kolison and his wife, Valeria, are enjoying the use protective masks.
Outstanding Achievement Award to Finn and Taylor; Career Development Office to host ‘Network on the Go’ event in October

Two alumni will be honored this year with Outstanding Achievement Awards from the Fredonia Alumni Association — William Finn, ’83, (Business Administration), who is currently President of both Hospice and Western Reserve in Cleveland, and the Honorable William Kemsey Taylor, ’97, (Political Science and English), former Class President, Lanford Presidential Prize recipient, and currently a New York State Supreme Court Judge.

The honorees will be recognized at a date yet to be determined.

The Career Development Office is excited to announce a virtual collaborative event scheduled for employers, alumni and students called, ‘Network on the Go,’ scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 17, from 1 to 3 p.m. ‘Network on the Go’ will connect employers/organizations with Fredonia alumni and students seeking internships (year-round), and part-time and full-time job opportunities. In addition, alumni employers are invited to establish professional interaction opportunities.

For more information, please contact Internship Coordinator Jennifer Wilkins from the Career Development Office via email at jennifer.wilkins@fredonia.edu. Employer registration is available online at https://fredonia.joinhandshake.com/employer_registrations/new.

Fredonia to Fredonian; Dunkirk woman sews, gives protective face masks to students

Thanks to a former Fredonia student, students living on campus for the rest of the spring semester had cloth face masks to wear so they could do their part to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

The colorful, all-cotton masks were made by Cheryl Gawronski, who attended Fredonia more than a half-century ago. She is part of Community Sourced PPE, Operation Sewing Squad, a Facebook group whose members wash material, cut fabric, sew masks and distribute them where they’re needed in Western New York. Working remotely, these volunteers made and distributed some 33,000 face masks in 36 days to law enforcement agencies, local governments, hospitals, the New York State Department of Health and home nursing agencies, among others.

“We noticed that students were not wearing masks like they should be wearing, and I knew Cheryl was making them for other groups,” explained Jill Zappie, an office assistant in Residence Life. “I reached out to her, and she made 100 for us in a matter of three days.”

“I am so thankful to Cheryl for her kind gesture,” said Kathy Forster, director of Residence Life. “I knew that the on-campus students and the staff that the students interact with on a daily basis appreciate the thoughtfulness.”

Those thoughts were echoed by Zappie. “The residence directors were very excited about them, are very thankful,” she said.

Pursuing her passion and goals, meeting a need and making a difference

Kayla Purcell, a junior Medical Technology major at Fredonia, the faces of COVID-19 victims don’t live just on television newscasts or in newspapers. They were a part of her life as a patient care technician (PCT) and member of medical teams treating COVID-19 patients at Rochester (N.Y.) General Hospital.

“I am seeing patients, but I consider myself to be someone supporting the doctors, nurses and PAs who are really on the front lines managing the treatment of these patients,” Purcell noted. “I love it, the people I work for, the patients. I love learning something new every single day!”

Purcell was assigned to 4800, the medical specialty unit where Rochester General’s 528-bed tertiary care hospital treats COVID-19 patients.

With a career goal of becoming a physician assistant, Purcell had planned to work the summer as a PCT at Rochester General to get a head-start on the 1,000 hours of direct patient care that most graduate schools require of applicants in their PA programs, but was summoned earlier by the hospital. She began PCT training in the third week of April, working 20 hours a week, while continuing her Fredonia course work online, as all students were doing.

During the summer, Purcell was on duty 32 hours a week. She plans to serve one or two weekends a month during the 2020-2021 school year, working around class and athletic schedules, and then return and work full-time next summer.

“Since working at the hospital regularly I have refined skills such as taking blood pressures, EKGs and other basic tests that indicate patient health, communicating with patients effectively, how treatment plans are put into place and followed through within the hospital setting, and how each profession plays a vital role in patient care,” Purcell said.

“It was a great learning experience to see that COVID-19 patients every day, and as part of their care, asked them how they were feeling, if they were comfortable or were in need of something. ‘Whatever they need I try to get it for them,’ she said. ‘Patients are focused on getting better, doing what they have to do.’”

“For Kayla Purcell, a junior Medical Technology major at Fredonia, the faces of COVID-19 victims don’t live just on television newscasts or in newspapers. They were a part of her life as a patient care technician (PCT) and member of medical teams treating COVID-19 patients at Rochester (N.Y.) General Hospital. I am seeing patients, but I consider myself to be someone supporting the doctors, nurses and PAs who are really on the front lines managing the treatment of these patients,” Purcell noted. “I love it, the people I work for, the patients. I love learning something new every single day!”

For more information, please contact Internship Coordinator Jennifer Wilkins from the Career Development Office via email at jennifer.wilkins@fredonia.edu.
Students in Department of Visual Arts and New Media Associate Professor Phil Hastings’ SPFX for Experimental Video class demonstrating cloud tanks in Fall 2019.
Fredonia’s faculty and staff, along with members of the community, came together this spring to assist students during this turbulent time in their lives. A Student Emergency Relief Fund was created through the Fredonia College Foundation to help students faced with unexpected expenses related to the pandemic, and to help alleviate hardships related to moving to a digital education format. Individual grants of between $100 and $500 assisted with technology costs related to distance education, lab fees, software, Internet connections, food insecurity and other basic needs.

“It was heartwarming to see Fredonia’s faculty and staff, alumni, and friends come together to help students experiencing hardship due to the transition to distance education,” said Fredonia College Foundation Executive Director Betty Gossett. In June, it was announced that the SUNY Impact Foundation would match dollar for dollar, up to $50,000, any additional gifts made by July 1 to Fredonia’s fund. The campus and community met that challenge. As of July 12, total funds raised reached $184,990 including the $50,000 in matching funds. To date, the foundation has received 423 requests, providing over $99,000 in assistance to students — who can continue to apply at fredonia.edu/relief-request.

The funds Yek received were used to pay a month’s worth of medical insurance, which ‘SUNY’ requires of all international students, as well as miscellaneous items, such as the telephone bill and course supplies, so he was able to focus all of his attention to the distance education transition.

“I was relieved more than anything,” Yek said upon learning that his application was accepted. “There were a couple things that I needed the money for urgently that I didn’t know where I would find the money for so when I got the email I just let out a huge sigh of relief,” he said. "Yek, who is from Malaysia, has three majors: Physics, Mathematics and Applied Mathematics. Brianna noted, “I felt relieved being that someone heard what I had to say and was able to help me during this crazy time.” The funds received assisted relieves the economic pressure felt by students and shows them that the university cares for them. "This is the love and help from the faculty members who are like family members," Jun said. "It is a nice surprise: my heart is filled with gratitude. Because I know that, I can continue to study here, I am here pursuing my dreams and doing what I love.”

— Jun, TESOL major

The fund has helped to enable Jun, who lost her part-time job at Cranston Marché, to continue to live and study at Fredonia. She avoided the risk of infection if she would have traveled back to China, and was able to continue online studies, which Jun says is hard to do because of the way the Internet works in China. A grant allowed Jun to continue telephone service, so she could complete online classes, reach her family in China and purchase food and other necessities that her family could not help with since they could not send funds from her home country.

Jun indicated the assistance program provides support for Speakers of Other Languages.

Vinace said “I was very thankful and felt a little less pressure from this pandemic.”

Maddy used her allocation to help purchase a much-needed laptop. This helped her to be able to spread her learning throughout the day instead of having to consolidate it in between 5 p.m. and midnight on a shared laptop.

She will continue to use the laptop in her studies as a Mathematics and Applied Mathematics major, with a concentration in Finance, during her remaining years at Fredonia.

Vinace said, “It is a nice surprise; my heart is filled with gratitude. Because I know that, I can continue to study here, I am here pursuing my dreams and doing what I love.”

— Jun, TESOL major

A Student Emergency Relief Fund was created through the Fredonia College Foundation to help students faced with unexpected expenses related to the pandemic, and to help alleviate hardships related to moving to a digital education format. Individual grants of between $100 and $500 assisted with technology costs related to distance education, lab fees, software, Internet connections, food insecurity and other basic needs.

“It was heartwarming to see Fredonia’s faculty and staff, alumni, and friends come together to help students experiencing hardship due to the transition to distance education,” said Fredonia College Foundation Executive Director Betty Gossett. In June, it was announced that the SUNY Impact Foundation would match dollar for dollar, up to $50,000, any additional gifts made by July 1 to Fredonia’s fund. The campus and community met that challenge. As of July 12, total funds raised reached $184,990 including the $50,000 in matching funds. To date, the foundation has received 423 requests, providing over $99,000 in assistance to students — who can continue to apply at fredonia.edu/relief-request.

The funds Yek received were used to pay a month’s worth of medical insurance, which ‘SUNY’ requires of all international students, as well as miscellaneous items, such as the telephone bill and course supplies, so he was able to focus all of his attention to the distance education transition.

“I was relieved more than anything,” Yek said upon learning that his application was accepted. “There were a couple things that I needed the money for urgently that I didn’t know where I would find the money for so when I got the email I just let out a huge sigh of relief,” he said. "Yek, who is from Malaysia, has three majors: Physics, Mathematics and Applied Mathematics. Brianna noted, “I felt relieved being that someone heard what I had to say and was able to help me during this crazy time.” The funds received assisted relieves the economic pressure felt by students and shows them that the university cares for them. "This is the love and help from the faculty members who are like family members," Jun said. "It is a nice surprise: my heart is filled with gratitude. Because I know that, I can continue to study here, I am here pursuing my dreams and doing what I love.”

— Jun, TESOL major

The fund has helped to enable Jun, who lost her part-time job at Cranston Marché, to continue to live and study at Fredonia. She avoided the risk of infection if she would have traveled back to China, and was able to continue online studies, which Jun says is hard to do because of the way the Internet works in China. A grant allowed Jun to continue telephone service, so she could complete online classes, reach her family in China and purchase food and other necessities that her family could not help with since they could not send funds from her home country.

Jun indicated the assistance program provides support for Speakers of Other Languages.

Vinace said “I was very thankful and felt a little less pressure from this pandemic.”

Maddy used her allocation to help purchase a much-needed laptop. This helped her to be able to spread her learning throughout the day instead of having to consolidate it in between 5 p.m. and midnight on a shared laptop.

She will continue to use the laptop in her studies as a Mathematics and Applied Mathematics major, with a concentration in Finance, during her remaining years at Fredonia.

Vinace said, “It is a nice surprise; my heart is filled with gratitude. Because I know that, I can continue to study here, I am here pursuing my dreams and doing what I love.”

— Jun, TESOL major
The 2020 Fredonia State spring sports season had just begun when the curtain fell.

Members of the Athletics department were in an emergency meeting on Friday, March 13, when word came down, via Twitter, that the NCAA was cancelling all championships—as what remained of winter sports and all those in the spring—due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Conferences followed suit, including the SUNYAC, and sporting venues around the world fell silent.

The Department of Athletics found a couple of ways to bring some closure to the year. A social media campaign to recognize all senior student-athletes on spring teams was launched on the Fredonia State Athletics website (www.fredoniabluedevils.com). Planning also began to switch the annual awards gala known as The FREDDYS to an online format.

The FREDDYS was rolled out over the course of a week in early May. Here is a look at each of the awards categories:

**Academics**
- The Fredonia State chapter of Chi Alpha Sigma, the national honor society for college student-athletes, was increased by the induction of 20 Blue Devil seniors. Chi Alpha Sigma inductees included the 2020 Scholar-Athletes of the Year, Avril King from women’s tennis and Nic Faio from baseball, for attaining the highest GPA among all Blue Devil seniors. In addition, the women’s soccer team coached by Matt Borchard was recognized for attaining the highest GPA at the SUNYAC meet. She is tied for second-most in program history.

**Five alumni, three teams added to Athletics Hall of Fame**

The newest Fredonia State Athletics Hall of Fame induction class, the 25th in school history, consists of five alumni and three Teams of Distinction.

- **Gerg Prechtl (69)**, the former men’s basketball coach and director of athletics, will be enshrined along with one of his former players, Walt Hubbard (93). The 1992-93 men’s basketball team, which Mr. Prechtl coached and Mr. Hubbard was a part of also will be entered as a Team of Distinction.
- **Jordan Basile (99)** from baseball, Matt Borchard (66) from men’s soccer, and Sarah Hite-Moore (05) from women’s track and field will also be enshrined individually. The 1981 men’s cross country team, which Mr. Prechtl coached and Mr. Hubbard was a part of, will also be entered as a Team of Distinction.
- **Kourtney Krchniak of women’s volleyball.**
- **Women’s Track and Field:** Emily Fish won the SUNYAC Elite 20 award for the women’s track and field team. She excelled in the high hurdles and holds team records in the 55-meter and 60-meter hurdles in the pentathlon. She also competed in the multi-events. A Biology major, she was an Academic All-American as chosen by the United States Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association.

Walt Hubbard was a prolific scorer during his four seasons as a Blue Devil. He is currently fourth on the Fredonia State career scoring list with 1,309 points. He’s also sixth in career three-pointers and is among the top 15 in single-season three-pointers while helping orchestrate the most successful run in men’s basketball history, including a 22-9 mark his junior year.

He’s also been highlighted at the five events of Distinction.

The 1981 men’s cross country team, recognized at the 2000 Hall of Fame dinner, will be officially enshrined as a Team of Distinction in 2020. Coached by Hall of Famer Dr. Everett Phillips, the 1981 team won the SUNYAC Cross Country championship, finished second at the New York State meet, and third at the NCAA meet. In addition to Dr. Phillips, Don Brenner (60) and Bennie Prabucki (83) are Hall of Fame enshriners from the 18 team.

The 1985 and 1986 men’s soccer teams will be recognized for the first time. Coached by Nelson Cupolo, both teams advanced to the NCAA Division III semifinals and had a two-year record of 33-4-5, including a program-best 25-game unbeaten streak in 1986. The 1986 team won the SUNYAC title. Hall of Fame members from the two teams are Deilke Edozim (85), Brian Brisker (67) and Jeff Hammond (66).

The 1993 men’s basketball team, coached by Mr. Prechtl, posted an 18-10 record and won the SUNYAC championship by defeating host Binghamton. It also resulted in the program’s only appearance in the NCAA Tournament. The SUNYAC title was a culmination of the most successful stretch in program history which saw the Blue Devils win 40 games.

The 1993 team was the first since the program began to win a conference title.

For the 2021 season, the Department of Athletics announced the induction of the 1992 men’s baseball team. The Hall of Fame three-year team went 45-12 and won back-to-back conference titles. Inductee Mr. Phillips was the program’s first Hall of Fame member.
As the spring semester wound down, it became evident that the original in-person May 16 Commencement ceremonies at Fredonia’s Steele Hall would be postponed. Along with this, there were strong feelings on the part of administrators and the Commencement Committee that, regardless, the day should be observed in a special way. The idea for a digital celebration was developed, and Department of Marketing and Communications Videographer Jim Gibbons set to the task.

Over a series of weeks in April, Mr. Gibbons recorded Interim President Dennis L. Hefner recognizing the bachelor’s, master’s and advanced certificate graduates and their families; seniors Jacklyn Wick and Danielle Zareski singing the national anthem; and opening and closing reflections from Avril M. King, Alyson J. Baumann, Brigham Pratt and Caroline Schettler. Class President Deoniss Jackson also addressed the graduates, congratulating them on the completion of their academic careers via distance education.

A recording of the Fredonia Chamber Choir singing “The Welcome Table,” arranged specifically for the chamber choir and conducted by nationally-known composer, arranger and clinician, Stacey V. Gibbs, was included on the video. Mr. Pratt was recognized as the recipient of the Lanford Presidential Prize. Also acknowledged were the late Stephanie Handschu, whose family will accept a posthumous degree in her honor, and Melanie Aronow, who passed away just prior to the beginning of her freshman year and would have been a member of the Class of 2020.

Graduates were encouraged to view the celebration with their families. In addition, they were invited to send photos to be featured, which were developed into slides with the student’s name, major and Latin honors, as appropriate. Graduates names were read by Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, Sponsored Research and Faculty Development Judith Horowitz and SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Jack Croxton. After the first “viewing” on May 16 — additional photos were sent by graduates to be added — for a total of nearly 500 Fredonians on the final version released in June.

To view the video, go online to https://www.fredonia.edu/2020.
Chris Bishop traces his love of art to grade school when he began drawing cartoons and copying images out of newspapers. “Art has always been my thing and all I ever cared about,” Mr. Bishop recalled. “My mom told me when I was little, the teacher would hand out coloring sheets and I would flip mine over to the blank side to draw my own picture. I remember studying and copying ‘Garfield’ in first grade which led to making up own comic strips.”

“I barely passed these classes, but they were of me pursuing art while also being quietly nervous about how I would make a living at it,” the 1998 graduate said. “Up until and through college, I was most passionate about drawing cartoons and comic strips,” Bishop said. “Becoming a syndicated cartoonist like in the newspaper was my end goal.”

**Ground floor at PBS**

The Syracuse, (N.Y.), native grew to love illustration at Fredonia but becoming a freelance illustrator didn’t quite pan out as a career, so he taught himself web design and HTML, so he could build a website to promote his art. That technical knowledge combined with proven cartoon skills made him an ideal fit for a full-time gig at PBS Kids.

Those were the early years of PBS Kids; Bishop was their fourth employee. Today, Bishop is the award-winning Senior Creative Director of PBS and PBS Kids Digital, where he leads two digital design teams — stocked with interactive designers, user experience designers, animators, illustrators and a sound/music designer — but still keeps his hands in actual design and illustration work. Bishop’s body of work has grown in nearly two decades to encompass digital games, websites, apps, branding, social media and digital and broadcast content development.

“We craft the user experience and visual design of websites, apps and games on all digital platforms such as phones, tablets, computers, Apple TV, Roku, etc...” Bishop said.

The creative team grew as the use of the web, apps, phones and tablets exploded. Bishop said, “I pride myself on being able to find creative talent and build teams. Despite this, I’ve always remained hands-on with design. It’s easy to get rusty or lose touch with the latest software or techniques.”

**College life parody**

Bishop also served on The Leader staff. He began drawing comic strips, of course, and eventually became the Lampoon editor. His comic strip, “They Tell Me I’m Annoying,” made fun of college life, students, student government, Darwik and other aspects of the Fredonia experience.

“A lot of people loved it and a lot of people hated it. The newspaper staff and faculty advisor were very supportive no matter how many unhappy letters or phone calls we received about the comics. Some of my best memories of Fredonia are hanging out with the people from the newspaper.”

Bishop still does freelance illustration work, including beer can art for Crooked Crab Brewing Co.

**Alumnus thrives as creative force on PBS digital design teams**

Alumnus thrives as creative force on PBS digital design teams

I love trying to carve a concept or visual down to the most simple it can be while still working intuitively.” — Chris Bishop

Groo the Wanderer and Ren & Stimpy among his influences.

Bishop is the mastermind behind Kart Kingdom, PBS Kids first-ever virtual world. In this game, children build their own kart and go on adventures that they create, which can unlock prizes and reveal secret worlds. “We have to have a social place where kids could get together and kind of learn things in that world.”

Designing for children, ages 2 to 8, is a unique challenge, Bishop acknowledges. “Trying to get into the mindset of a kid and think how they would use an app or interface is a different way to think. I love trying to carve a concept or visual down to the most simple it can be while still working intuitively.”

Bishop credits three faculty members for having a profound influence on his growth as an artist.

He remembers Emeritus Associate Professor Mary Lee Lunde, his advisor, as a phenomenal art instructor who taught Bishop how to navigate the system, find loopholes and get away with pushing the boundaries. “And you could just chat with her endlessly.”

SUNY Distinguished Professor Emeritus Daniel Reiff. He loved courses Dr. Reiff taught — including a particularly challenging one focused on the study of art historians and their writing techniques — and his teaching style. He was a ‘very funny guy,’ Bishop recalled. “I barely passed these classes, but they were fun.”

Beverage containers featuring illustrations designed by Chris Bishop for Crooked Crab Brewing Co.

Beverage containers featuring illustrations designed by Chris Bishop for Crooked Crab Brewing Co.

Crab, a brewery in Maryland. His website is populated by paintings (large scale pop art, illustrations, logos, etc.) prints (sold on INPRNT), Instagram (daily art and works in progress) along with PBS and PBS Kids digital and merchandise.

Bishop and his wife, Shannon, who also works at PBS Kids, have two sons, Leo, 3, and Connor, 9 months.

Chris Bishop and his wife, Shannon, and their two sons, Leo, 3, and Connor, 9 months.
William Scott, ‘54, (music ed.) has been affiliated with the Hochstein School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., for 40 years, currently as Voice Department Chair. Dr. Gerald Chesin, ‘55, (speech and hearing) retired as a full professor Emeritus from Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. He has had over 50 educational articles published in state and national journals. In addition, Dr. Chesin holds four International Fish and Game Association fishing records — three for Lake Trout and one for Northern Pike. He and his wife, Dr. Carol Kennedy Chesin, live in Pittsburgh, Pa., and have a daughther and two grandchildren.

1960s

Vincent Aiosa, ‘70 (music ed.) has retired after teaching for 55 years, 31 of them at NYU (Central School and 24 in the music education department at the Steinhardt School). Ronald, 81, (music ed.) and Catherine (Brown) Sutherland, ‘77, (music ed.) completed their 33rd and final year in their Homestead for the New York State School Music Association’s annual winter conference, responsible for over 30,000 high school music majors over the years.

Michael J. Tramuto, 65, (trombone) a former member of the Fredonia Blue Devil basketball team, was inducted with the Class of 2000 into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame in February. For more than 30 years, he has been a chemical dependency counselor.

1970s


1980s

Josie D’Vincento, ’81, (theatre art) received an outstanding review in The Buffalo News for her performance as a cowgirl in the play show “What I Thought I Knew,” at the Old Subjectary Theatre in Getzville, N.Y.

Karin M. Drogolmez, ’82, (psych.) was named Founding Executive Director of the Institute at Russell Sage College. She formerly was Executive Director of the Blinding Disorders Association of Northwestern New York.

William Giannone, ’72, (music ed.) arranged JS Bach’s Six Sarabandes, BWV 807-812 (Three-part Inventions) for three flutes. Published by Rosebud Music Publishing Co. and available at www.flutesheetmusic.com. Many of my students have been selected to teach conferences and clinics are being sponsored by the music of Faure, Saint-Saens, and Bizet.

Mary Army (Marc) DellaRotta, ’79, (speech and hearing) retired in 2011 as a Speech/Language Clinician with the West Shore School District in South Central Pennsylvania. She and her husband are enjoying time spent with children and grandchildren.

Anthony J. Joseph, ’73, (music ed.) was inducted into the Owego (N.Y.) Music Hall of Fame in October 2019 occurring to Educator Award. Anthony and his wife, Kathy, celebrated their 46th wedding anniversary on Oct. 13, 2019. He retired from teaching in 2006; completing a 33-year career but continues to lead his own combo “The Anthony Joseph Swingtet”, which specializes in performing classic jazz standards and ballads.

Tanya Bethge-Heiss, ’73, (English) represented former President Virginia Horvath in March at the 150th Anniversary Celebration of Dr. Ima Becora as President of Mount Mary University in Arlington, Va., and Fredonia at a SUNY Day Washington, D.C. event reception.

Sherry Taylor Cleary ’75, 80, (early child ed.) was appointed University Dean of Early Childhood Initiatives at the City University of New York. Cleary has been on CUNY’s faculty for 13 years, leading the work of the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, a statewide effort focused on the early childhood workforce. She held posts at the University of Pittsburgh and Erie Community College before joining CUNY. Prior to her work in higher education Mr. Cleary was a teacher of the Fredonia migrant Program and Director of the Early Childhood program with the Senaca Nation of Indians.

Dr. Richard Paradis, ’78, (musician) and bassoonist Donald Venecia, ’78, (music perf.) performed Beethoven’s Symphony No. 2 and Brahms’ Serenade No. 1 in partnership with the New York Symphonic Arts Ensemble in New York City. Paradis, a former student with the orchestra in March in a performance of Music of Fauré, Saint-Saëns and Bizet.

Todd S. Ruppel, ’79, (tenor sax) has been the founder of TheAnthony Joseph Combo.

William Giannone, ’72, (music ed.) arranged JS Bach’s Six Sarabandes, BWV 807-812 (Three-part Inventions) for three flutes. Published by Rosebud Music Publishing Co. and available at www.flutesheetmusic.com. Many of my students have been selected to teach conferences and clinics are being sponsored by the music of Faure, Saint-Saëns, and Bizet.

John David, ’77, (music ed.) finished his career in Sidney N.Y., was a member of the music department of Tri-Town Theater’s production of “Jekyll and Hyde,” in March.

Nancy Kelly Ferialdi, ’77, (sec. ed.) retired in November 2019 as Executive Director of the ALS Association, Rhode Island Chapter, after 24 years of service. In retirement, she is volunteering for the Johnny Cake dell Food pantry and the Women’s Club of South County.

Marion “Molly” Anderson, ’81, (seas ec. ed.) received her second National Board Re-certification in Teaching English as a New Language in October 2019. She was originally Nationally Board Certified in 2000. Molly retired after 30 years of teaching in Florida and is currently teaching high school ESL in the Buncombe County Schools in Asheville, N.C.

Todd S. Ruppel, ’79, (bar. alt. sax.) received the Lauraus S. Rockefelder Award for Community Service. He is President and Co-founder of the super-chord, with Kristian Isakstad, an organization developing community running events with the purpose of raising money to benefit local charities and to promote running events. His La Vice Pres. Claudio Sepe, former Pres. of Club de Pechter Tempt Re in Stamford, Conn. and he and his wife, Karen, live in Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.

Paul Preston, ’92, (theatre art) is the founder of TwoKidsWhoGuy.net and in 2019 became the first recipient of “Do32” Inside Disney, a podcast of the official fan club of the Walt Disney Company. He also recently booked roles in the film “La Vraie Vie” and corporate videos for LinkedIn and LifeSource.

Kyle Tarrant, ’92, (pol. sci.) retired in December 2019 from the U.S. Marine Corps as a lieutenant colonel and works for Oracle Corp. in its National Security Group.

Andrew Weber, ’92, (music perf.) was appointed Chief Executive Officer at Healthcare Bluebook. He was formerly President and CEO for Gude/Well Connect.

Melissa Lynx, ’95, (biology) earned her master’s degree in Public Health from Kaplan University, and is the Health Director for the Erie County (Pa.) Department of Health.

Brent P. Shuldon, ’82, (biology) is retired after a 32-year career with the Chautauqua County Health Department’s Division of Environmental Services. He was recently re-elected to his fifth term as a Jamestown City Councillor and was appointed Chairman of the Public Safety Committee.

David Heid, ‘83, (music ed.) has published his latest book, “The Sleeper of Indians.” He retired from teaching in 2019. He retired from teaching in 2019 as Head of the University of New York. Cleary has been at CUNY for the last 13 years, leading the work of the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, a statewide effort focused on the early childhood workforce. She held posts at the University of Pittsburgh and Erie Community College before joining CUNY. Prior to her work in higher education Mr. Cleary was a teacher of the Fredonia migrant Program and Director of the Early Childhood program with the Senaca Nation of Indians.

Continued >>

A 59-year Fredonia friendship:
A navy blue Fredonia blazer
By Linda (Kauderer) Burke, ’64
I met Ellen (Hitchcock) Meister in September 1964 while living in Hillman House freshman dorm; she was a friend of my assigned roommate from Niagara Falls. Friendship was always so important to me. It seems as if only yesterday when we sang that song, “Make new friends, but keep the old... one is silver and the other gold.” I took these words to heart, using them as a theme throughout my life.

Ellen and I continued our friendship through four years at Fredonia, married, children and grandchildren, even though we never lived in the same city. Or course, it helped that our husbands thoroughly enjoyed their other company. As the years and the decades flew by, we tried to meet for dinner at least once a year.

This year was no exception, but it did have a surprising outcome. A few weeks ago (Fall 2019), Ellen and Bob arrived at our home for dinner and an overnight. During cocktails, Ellen casually mentioned they would be attending the 50th Anniversary Reception of the Rockefeller [Arts] Center on the Fredonia campus over the upcoming weekend.

“Really?” I replied. “I clearly remember Nelson Rockefeller coming to the Rockefeller Center on the Fredonia campus over the upcoming weekend.”

“Wow!” said Ellen, her eyes flashing. “You had a Fredonia blazer I never had one. What did it look like?”

I started to laugh telling her I had just noticed it the other day at the very back of our front closet and thinking at the time how old that must be...about 60 years old I am not saying so to see it there was rather surprising. To the closet I went and brought it out, taking off the protective plastic covering. Surprisingly enough it was in excellent condition, just missing one brass button. I am dismayed to say I could get but one arm into it, however Ellen, who has maintained her college weight, slipped it on easily. It fit perfectly!“Needless to say, we decided she had to take the blazer and wear it to the Rockefeller reception. She would need to find a brass button to sew on but otherwise it was perfect. We chatted throughout the evening thinking of her wearing the blazer with the Fredonia crest on the pocket proudly announcing 1964, our graduation year. Everyone will know how old I am,” she lamented.

Well, a few days later I received an email from Ellen including a photo of her wearing the blazer. She had paired it with a white shirt, white pants and several gold bracelets; she looked like a Ralph Lauren ad.

Her email said, “The blazer was the buzz of the evening. The college president, the chairman of the board [College Council] and several longtime professors were all interested in the 59-year-old blazer with the 1964 crest. No one knew something like that existed.”
Alexander (Smith) Svensen, ’07, (music perf.) has made several new recordings from Gilbertsville, N.Y., was a featured soloist on the role of Renato Galatano in the world premiere of “M. BUTTERFLY” with Santa Fe Opera and a role in “M. BUTTERFLY” at the American Lung Association in New York’s Buffalo, N.Y. office.

Brian Staton, ’18, (music perf.) was scheduled to make his directorial debut at the University of New York at Buffalo School of Nursing.

Molly Opy, ’19, (bus. admin./marketing) is a marketing and sales consultant for WROK in Rochester, N.Y.

2020s

Robert Egan, ’00, (comm.) from Johnson City was hired as a Cruise Director for Carnival Cruise Lines.

Dr. Shannon (Ready) Coleman, ’02, (elem. ed.) graduated with a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Quantitative Methods in May 2019 from the State University at Buffalo.

Timothy Cupello, ’06, (interdis. stds./egocentric) was named Executive Director (music perf., (music perf., (music perf., (music perf.) received a George Whittier, ’55, (music perf., (music perf.) was a role model for the role of the lead character in the “M. BUTTERFLY” with the Milwaukee Repertory Theater.

Michael J. Hawk, ’16, (music perf.) was scheduled to make his directorial debut at the Jekyll and Hyde.” The Theatre Center/Syracuse Stage’s production of “Jekyll and Hyde.”

Dr. Kaitlyn Crossan, ’15, (music perf.) was named Executive Director of the Billings Symphony Orchestra & Chorus as Manager of Artistic Operations. He earned his master’s degree in trumpet performance at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Michael J. Hawk, ’16, (music perf.) was scheduled to make his directorial debut at the New York’s Buffalo, N.Y. office.

Jeffrey Klinger, ’18, (music perf., (music perf., (music perf., (music perf.) was scheduled to make his directorial debut at the American Lung Association in New York’s Buffalo, N.Y. office.

Alesis Gigliotti, ’18, (commun./public rel.) who participated in Fredonia’s Leadership Program, is Coordinated in Research, Development and Alumni Engagement at the American Lung Association in New York’s Buffalo, N.Y. office.

Brandon Bunch, ’17, (bus. admin./marketing) is a Staff Accountant with Champus Trevisan Bower &khe; Werner LLP in Buffalo.

Lucia Halgren, ’17, (music perf., (music perf., (music perf., (music perf.) was scheduled to make his directorial debut at the role of Hernando de Soto in the production of “Candide” in February.

George Pomerantz, at The Sheen Center for the Arts, in New York’s Buffalo, N.Y. office.

Andrew M. King, ’20, (commun./public rel., (commun/journalism) is working as a Digital Communications Specialist with Verenology in the Syracuse, N.Y. area.
New York City and the Marx Brothers' the theme of Freedoma Marxonia 2020

The annual festival saluting the connection between New York City and the Marx Brothers will be held differently this year. Author and performer Noah Diamond will present his illustrated lecture “Home Again: The Marx Brothers and New York City,” directed by Amanda Sisk, as an online event on Oct. 2 - Groucho Marx’s 130th birthday. Mr. Diamond was one of the organizers of New York City’s 2014 Martha’s tribute, the creative force behind bringing the Marx Brothers’ 1924 musical “I’ll Say She Is” to the off-Broadway stage in 2016 and writer and performer of “400 Years in Manhattan,” an award-winning show at the 2019 United Solo Theatre Festival in New York City. He is currently a co-host of the Marx Brothers Council Podcast. Mr. Diamond was guest speaker for Freedoma Marxonia 2017. Please watch for details about the time and specifics on how to access the event. Contact Cindy Yochym via email at Cynthia.Yochym@fredonia.edu for information.

Dr. Noah Diamond’s presentation is supported by a grant from the Carnahan Jackson Humanities Fund of the Fredonia College Foundation. Freedoma Marxonia is supported by the foundation’s Hahn Family Freedoma Marxonia Fund.
Help recruit the next generation of Fredonians!

You can make an important impact on your alma mater by engaging with future Blue Devils. By becoming a Fredonia Alumni Recruiter you can help recruit students wherever you are.

Working with prospective students is a fun and rewarding experience. One of the most powerful and impactful recruiting tools is the experience of successful alumni who are proud of their time at Fredonia and who want to share their stories.

When you are a Fredonia Alumni Recruiter, you take part in college fairs near you, helping to expand Fredonia’s footprint in communities across the country. It allows you to remain connected with your beloved Fredonia campus, enhance the value of your degree by attracting qualified students, and create opportunities for future Fredonians.

To learn more about becoming a Fredonia Alumni Recruiter, and to sign up, go to fredonia.edu/recruiter today!