
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2014

SUNY GENESEO

*G*reetings Political Science and International Relations alumni! I take a pause from my research to send you our 2014 summer newsletter. I began composing and sending newsletters to our alums May 2004, thus this newsletter marks ten years of, I pray, welcomed correspondence with you. The first newsletter was a mere 4 pages, containing only 4 pictures. Subsequent newsletters have become considerably longer, not only because student helpers and I have spent more time constructing the newsletter, but also the department became more active as a result

of alumni involvement. In 2009 I began sending the newsletter biannually, there was more than enough department activity to necessitate more frequent commu-

nication. Besides, I enjoy doing it. This newsletter reports on our annual senior/honors dinner, an alumni career panel, our many speakers, provides political humor (often needed) and a host of other activities. This past year we held a freshmen dinner. At this event, held at the Big Tree Inn, first-year Political Science and International Relations students sat with Political Science and International Relations seniors for purposes of advisement, a nice opportunity for upper-classmen to connect with first-year students. This event—as well as the senior/honors dinner, our speakers program, and faculty and student research—was funded entirely by alumni contributions.



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

2014 Annual Senior & Honors Dinner	3
Freshman Dinner	5
Alumni Career Panel	7
Speakers	8
Perceptions of Media Bias and Their Implications	9
Anxious Politics: Threats in the Democratic World	10
Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream	11
Inequality in the United States: Reconsidering Unequal Representation	12
Focus on Alumni	13
Political Families	21
Honor Theses Completed Spring 2014 (Political Science, International Relations, or College Honors)	22



Join the Official Geneseo PLSC/IR Group on Facebook



Check out the new video on the Political Science and International Relations Department at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZY3x0VpXoI&feature=youtu.be>

2014 Annual Senior & Honors Dinner

The Department of Political Science and International Relations held its annual senior/honors dinner at the Big Tree Inn on April 25th. The dinner was generously underwritten by **Robert Rude'74** and **Maureen Rude'12(P)**. Alumni in attendance at this year's dinner included **Barbara Bilodeau'86**, **David Case'99**, **John McManus'94**, **David Russell'87**, and **Martha (Brown) Valenti'07**. **David Russell** kindly provide a few words to the students and faculty.



The Award for Outstanding Senior in Political Science was given to **Martin Rogachefsky**. **Katie Becker** and **Carly Biondi** shared the award for Outstanding Senior in International Relations. **Devin McConnell** received the award for Outstanding Internship (The Worker Justice Center of New York), and **Martin Beach** was the recipient of the Rose Alent Award, given to the outstanding senior carrying a major in both International Relations and a Foreign Language.



Nathan Jakway (President of the Political Affairs Club), **Tushara Surapaneni** (President of Model UN), **Anna Winters** (Teresa House, inner city ministry in Albany,) and **Patrick McCormick** (Enlace Project and Peace Action Geneseo) were recipients of the **Ed Janosik Leadership**



From the top right: **David Russel '87**, Professor **Jeff Koch**, **Katie Becker '14**, **Carly Biondi '14**, **Martin Beach '14**



Award. Each of these students is an outstanding student in the classroom, and an exemplary citizen in the Geneseo community. **Matthew Fitzgerald** received the award for Outstanding Student in Legal Studies.



Finally, **Julia Mizutani** received the Ambassador Apartments award, given to the outstanding junior majoring in International Relations.

The department's annual dinner is perhaps my favorite Geneseo event. It provides the department an opportunity to give recognition to our students' accomplishments, and allows us to give a warm, heartfelt send-off to our graduating seniors. Additionally twenty-six students were admitted to Pi Sigma Alpha (the National Honors Society for undergraduate Political Science majors); and twenty students were admitted to Sigma Iota Rho, the National Honors Society for International Relations majors.



Left column: **Matt Fitzgerald '14**, Professor **Robert Goeckel**, Professor **Eunju Kang**, **Marty Rogachersky'14**. Right column: Professor **Jeff Koch**, **Nathan Jakway '15**, **Tushara Surapaneni '15**, **Patrick McCormick '15**



Freshman Dinner



Members of the Pi Sigma Alpha (the national honors society for Political Science undergraduates) decided to hold a freshmen advisory dinner. The students submitted a successful grant proposal. The dinner was held March 24 at the Big Tree Inn. The provided \$500, the remaining \$1300 to cover the costs of the dinner was pro-

vided by alumni contributions. The purpose of the dinner was for first-year students to receive advice from seniors. Students were placed at tables with others of shared interests (International Political Economy, Political Development, American Public Policy, etc.) To facilitate student/student interaction, the two faculty present sat at a table separate from the students. Students' response to the event was overwhelmingly positive, thus we plan to hold the event during the spring 2015 semester. The department is most grateful for the alumni contributions that supported the event.



Pictured right: **Katie Becker '14**

Political Humor



Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other
- *Oscar Ameringer*

The taxpayers are sending congressmen on expensive trips abroad. It might be worth it except they keep coming back.
- *Will Rodgers*

I remember when I first came to Washington. For the first six months you wonder how the hell you ever got here. For the next six months you wonder how the hell the rest of them ever got here - *Harry S. Truman*

The problem with political jokes is they get elected - *Henry Cate VII*

We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office - *Aesop*

It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it - *Dan Quayle*



Pictured above: students attending a lecture.
Below: Professor **Jeremy Grace**



When you give to Geneseo please restrict your contribution to the Department of Political Science and International Relations.

Alumni Career Panel

On April 25 the Department hosted an alumni career panel for our students. Alumni in attendance were **Barbara Bilodeau'86** (Bain and Company) **Kathryn Firkins'87** (formerly town of Greece), **Martha (Brown) Valenti'07** (Foodlink), and **John McManus'94** (Harris Beach Law firm). Serving as moderator was **Michael Tantillo'74** (DA for Ontario County). The alumni discussed the mission of the entity where they currently work, what

they do at that organization, their path from Geneseo to where they are now, and what they found to be rewarding experiences at Geneseo. A few other topics about life at Geneseo were covered. The department is most grateful to the alumni who returned to Geneseo to share their experiences with us. We hope to have other alumni return to Geneseo for similar panels.



Pictured top left: Martha Valenti'07, Barbara Bilodeau '86, top right: Mike Tantillo'74, below: Kathryn Firkins'87, John McManus'94, Martha Valenti '07, Barbara Bilodeau '86, Mike Tantillo '74



SPEAKERS

The Department hosted a variety of speakers during the Spring 2014 semester. Two speakers, **Michael Cairo'92** and **Brian Fogarty'99** are Geneseo Political Science alumni.

Professor Michael Cairo. "The Gulf War: The Two Bush Presidencies and the Middle East".

Professor of Government Peter Enns, Cornell University: "Inequality in the United States: Reconsidering Unequal Representation."

Professor Brian Fogarty, University of Missouri-St. Louis. "Perceptions of Media Bias and Their Implications"



Professor Suzanne Mettler, "Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream."

Professor Shana Gadarian, Syracuse University: "How threat and anxiety shape public opinion and interest in politics."

Professor Steve Livingston, Middle Tennessee State University: "The Demise of the Dollar?"

Professor Tatishe M. Nteta, University of Massachusetts: "Contingent Representation: Presidential Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and the Representation of African American Interests."

Professor Stephen Schwark, University of Illinois-Springfield: "The Carter Presidency and Middle East Peace."

Pictured on the left: Professor **Tatishe M. Nteta**, above: Professor **Jeff Koch** listens in on a lecture, and below: students listening in on a lecture



Perceptions of Media Bias and Their Implications



On Wednesday, February 19, **Dr. Brian Fogarty'99** of the University of Missouri-St. Louis came to Geneseo to

give a talk on “Perceptions of Media Bias and Their Implications.” Fogarty opened the talk by explaining exactly what it means to be biased, outlining three main types of bias that exist in the media: the gatekeeping bias, when news outlets only report specific stories; the coverage bias, when news outlets only receive their information from specific sources; and the statement bias, when news outlets present certain stories within an ideological framework.

One of the important things to remember, noted Brian, is that media bias is often difficult to recognize, and even harder to measure. In fact, media bias was not mentioned in academia until a 2005 study done by Tim Groseclose and Jeffrey Milo, which looked at news stories and placed them on a scale according to their level of bias. Although this was an important first step, Brian stated that there is still much to be done in research towards understanding media bias.

The main point of Brian’s talk, however, was that what truly matters in the world of media biases is public perception, or what people perceive to be biased. People are certainly aware that biases exist in the media – in fact, as Brian stated, this is even acknowledged by politicians and the media itself. However, one of the interesting points Brian made



was that media bias does not always bother people or is even necessarily a bad thing. One study he cited showed that people prefer to receive their news from like-minded media outlets, and that this actually increases political participation and helps people decide what news is important to them. What matters, according to Brian, is simply to be aware of how bias works so that it is easier to recognize.

Brian graduated from SUNY Geneseo in 1999 with a B.A. in History and Political Science, and published three articles as a student in the Political Science Department’s journal, *The Political Realm*. He has been teaching at the University of Missouri-St. Louis since 2005 after receiving his M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and is currently interested in researching American politics and political methodology.

In addition to his lecture, Fogarty attended a lunch at the Big Tree Inn with Jeff Koch, political science department chair and professor, and seven political science students. “It was interesting to hear a previous student from Geneseo speak on his opinions on mass media and bias in the media,” communication and political science double major junior Morgan Messineo said. “It’s great to see what a Geneseo education can come to.”



Anxious Politics: Threats in the Democratic World

On March 26, Shana Gardarian, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Syracuse University, came to campus to give a talk entitled, “Anxious Politics: Threats in the Democratic World.” The talk centered on the topic of her new book, called *Anxious Politics*, which examines the role of anxiety in contemporary politics. In the book, Gardarian argues that threats and uncertainties over political issues that people receive cause them to search for coping mechanisms, including seeking more information from those considered to be “experts” in their field, as well as seeking out politicians to provide

gers of illegal immigration. What she found was that those in the experimental group who read articles that appeared more threatening became more anxious about immigration and more likely to seek out even more negative stories and agree with them.

The take-away that Gardarian wanted to give students from her research was that anxiety is truly consequential to American politics. She says that anxiety over political issues increases people’s attention to not only politics in general, but also



“protective” measures. Because of this, Gardarian says that anxiety plays a critical role in shaping public opinion and politics in general.

Although the book centers on four key issues – public health, terrorism, climate change, and immigration – Gardarian focused mostly on immigration during her presentation, presenting two experiments from her research. In one study, she gave a control group and an experimental group different stories about immigration to read, and then asked participants to respond to questions dealing with the articles they read. The control group read mostly stories that were fairly unbiased, and the experimental group read stories that portrayed the dan-

specifically to information that they deem to be threatening, which in turn persuades people to support policies that they believe will be protective (although she noted that when anxiety-producing messages are overtly persuasive, the effects may be more limited). Given this tremendous importance that emotional anxiety has in the political world, Gardarian says that it is imperative to understand who uses anxiety, what it is used for, and how people can protect themselves. *Anxious Politics*, a book that Dr. Gardarian is working on with Dr. Bethany Albertson of the University of Texas-Austin, is expected to be released in 2015.

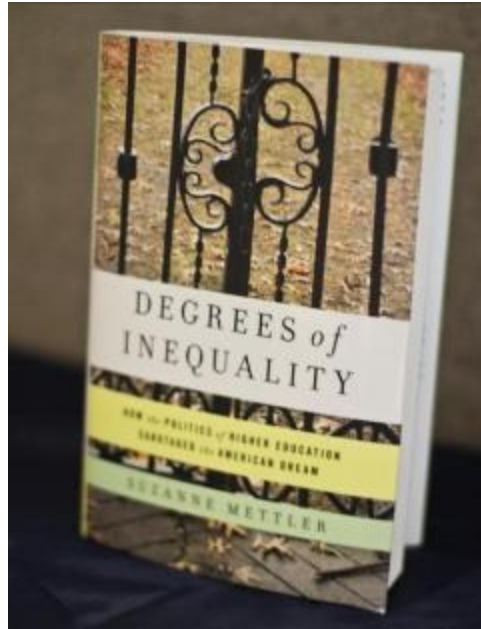
Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream

On Wednesday, April 11, Geneseo hosted Dr. Suzanne Mettler, Clinton Rossiter Professor of American Institutions in the Government Department at Cornell University. Dr. Mettler came to give a talk about her most recent publication, a book called *Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream*, which was released in April. In the book, Mettler argues that higher education has transformed the path of the American dream into a stratified system that in many ways reinforces inequalities.

She began the presentation by discussing two interviews she conducted while doing research for the project. One man she talked to was Richard Colosebo, a WWII veteran who grew up during the Great Depression in the 1930s. His parents were immigrants with very little money, so his chance of being able to go to college was slim. As a result, he went into the armed services, fighting for the 89th infantry division in Europe, and after the war he took advantage of a G.I. Bill that allowed him to pursue vocational training and become a television repairman, and eventually went to receive a master's degree in engineering.

Dr. Mettler juxtaposed Colosebo's college success story from over 50 years ago with the journey of Martine Lebeck, a college graduate within the last 10 years. Lebeck came from a low-income background, struggling to get ahead her whole life; this was only further complicated when she became a single parent in her 20s. Eventually, Lebeck went to Everest Institute to try to become a nurse, but unfortunately she found that didn't receive the train-

ing that she was promised and couldn't find a job after graduation while being in tremendous debt.



Mettler uses these stories to illustrate a new reality that has emerged in the United States in recent times: the fact that higher education provides mobility and opportunities for some, but in some cases can leave people worse off than they were before they started school. Dr. Mettler acknowledges that there are a number of factors to blame for this, but mostly, she says, it a political failure. The main cause is what she has termed "Polyscape": a densely cluttered political terrain with policies created in the past that are often left outdated and unattended, yet continue to

have an impact on higher education today. If the United States wishes to continue producing outstanding college students and make a positive impact on the future, says Mettler, the politics surrounding higher education needs to be reworked and more sustainable policies need to be developed.



INEQUALITY IN THE UNITED STATES: RECONSIDERING UNEQUAL REPRESENTATION

Peter Enns, Assistant Professor in the Government Department at Cornell University, came to Geneseo on April 9 to give a presentation entitled, “Inequality in the United States: Reconsidering Unequal Representation.” As a high school Spanish teacher in inner city Baltimore for three years through Teach for America, Enns became inspired seeing economic inequality displayed in the student body on a daily basis. Enns research was also greatly influenced by recent figures that showed that the top 10% of Americans are earning nearly 50% of the nation’s wealth, with the top 1% owning nearly 20%, and the top hundredth of a percent of Americans owning almost 5%.

Those staggering statistics beg one main question, said Enns: Why haven’t there been more policies to change this? There is potential to help quell the enormous differences – through an increase in minimum wage, for example – but there are still far too many roadblocks from preventing more equal standards. Namely, Enns equates economic inequality to inequality in representation.

Replicating data written about in *Inequality and American Democracy* (Jacobs and Skocpol, 644¹) and *Affluence and Influence* (Gilens, 6458), Enns explored the relationship between economic status and proposed policy changes. Specifically, he looked the relationship between who certain policy changes and what exactly did get changed. What he found was that when the 90th economic percentile (upper 90% of American earners) favor a policy change it is more likely to happen, and when the 50th percentile favors a policy change, it is neither more nor less likely to happen. In other words, it doesn’t matter whether nobody or most people in the 10th percentile favor a policy change; as more wealthy individuals are in favor of a policy change, the more likely the policy change is to occur. Simply put, the 50th percentile of Americans are being ignored while the wealthiest are being listened to. Given

these important differences, Enns says that is incredibly important that those lower on the economic spectrum make their voices heard as much as possible so that they aren’t politically silenced.

Currently, Dr. Enns is a member of Cornell’s Survey Research Institute Advisory Committee. In addition to his ongoing research on over time opinion and policy dynamics, Peter is working on a book entitled *Incarceration Nation*, which shows how an increasingly punitive public has been a fundamental factor in the rise of mass incarceration in the U.S. Its release is still TBD.



FOCUS ON ALUMNI

Karen Marra O'Brien graduated from Geneseo in 1980 with dual majors in Political Science and Economics and is a member of Omicron Delta Epsilon, the National Economics Honor Society. After graduating from Geneseo, Ms. O'Brien went to Syracuse Law School concentrating her areas of study in Business Organizations and Transactions. Ms. O'Brien accelerated her graduation date to December 1982 so she could marry and join her future husband, Michael, who had graduated from Geneseo the prior year and was working as a CPA in Rochester, NY. Ms. O'Brien worked for approximately two years at a small tax law firm in Rochester before the couple moved to Maryland where Ms. O'Brien worked in the corporate area of a general practice law firm just outside of DC. Having gained an interest in securities regulation since law school, Ms. O'Brien was delighted when she had the opportunity, two years later, to work at the US Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") in the Division of Corporation Finance where she reviewed complex registration filings for hot topic initial public offerings and mergers, in addition to writing rules and drafting no-action positions and interpretations for the Office of Small Business Policy.

After four years, Ms. O'Brien left the SEC and be-

came General Counsel of the North American Securities Administrators Association ("NASAA"), the voluntary association whose membership consists of 67 state, provincial, and



territorial securities administrators in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Canada, and Mexico. As General Counsel, Ms. O'Brien's responsibilities included oversight of legal issues for the Association including maintenance of corporate obligations; providing legal assistance to the membership-at-large regarding membership and securities issues; acting as liaison to various federal agencies, self-regulatory organizations, consumer advocacy organizations and other trade associations; and responding to inquiries

from Congressional representatives, state officials, and the general public. In addition to her daily responsibilities, Ms. O'Brien participated in several special projects including being named NASAA representative to the White House Competitiveness Policy Council's Subcouncil on Capital Allocation, member of the SEC Advisory Committee on Capital Formation and Regulatory Processes, NASAA representative responsible for coordinating state securities responses with the Treasury Department

FOCUS ON ALUMNI

on NAFTA and GATT, and NASAA legal representative to Congressional committees on NSMIA legislation. Ms. O'Brien was also a participating author of model statutory and regulatory changes to state securities laws and regulations post-NSMIA and two *Amicus Curiae* briefs submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In September of 2000, Ms. O'Brien left NASAA, after receiving the organization's highest award, the "Blue Sky Cube," to start a regulatory consulting firm, Financial Industry Service Group LLC ("Finseg") where she continues to serve as one of the firm's managing partners. As a co-founding partner of Finseg, Ms. O'Brien provides regulatory consulting services in the area of broker-dealer, investment adviser and self-regulatory organization compliance. Services of the firm generally include: acting as independent consultants on settlement-related regulatory audits; conducting internal examinations/investigations; drafting, revising and updating compliance policies and supervisory and internal control procedures; conducting anti-money laundering audits; and assisting firms with privacy, outsourcing and system assessment issues.

James Corcoran graduated from Geneseo in December 1980 with dual majors in Political Science and Management Science. He went on to graduate school at the University of Southern California, receiving a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning. He served as the Director of Planning for the City of Lake Elsinore, California and then became an advisor to the President and Cabinet of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. From the Marshall Islands he went to Plainsboro, NJ as the Director of Community Development. His travels then took him to the Cayman Islands as the Deputy Director of Planning. After three and a half years in the Cayman Islands he accepted a position with Gwinnett County, Georgia as the Director of Planning. He was then requested to return to the Cayman Islands as the Director of Planning where he served the Cayman Is-

lands government for an additional five years. He returned back to Gwinnett County to work in the private sector working with a redevelopment company. He began his tenure with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2011 having worked in Alabama (tornado disasters), Pennsylvania (Hurricane Irene), New York (Hurricane Sandy) and currently Alaska (Yukon River flooding).

James calls Atlanta 'home'. He is married and has two daughters, Erin (Geneseo, 2013 dual major in International Relations and Business Administration) and Briana (attending Georgia Institute of Technology).



FOCUS ON ALUMNI

Joanne Foster (Carra) graduated from Geneseo

in 1977 with dual majors in Political Science and Geography. She headed to Albany to pursue a master's degree in public administration, but shortly after arriving in Albany she instead began working for the New York State Department of Labor. From there she went to the Office of the State Comptroller and the Division of the Budget. Taking the circuitous route, she completed an MA in Geography at the University of Albany in 1987. In 1990, she moved to South Florida and worked for a small business -- but was always pestered by that innocuous question from Dr. Deutsch asking why she wasn't going to law school.

So, in 1997 Joanne graduated from the University of Miami School of Law *cum laude*. She passed the Florida Bar and immediately began working for a Miami firm that practiced admiralty and maritime law, a unique and interesting practice. In 2006, she has become Florida Board Certified and Admiralty and Maritime Law and currently sits as Vice-Chair of the Admiralty and Maritime

Law Certification Committee. She now practices in Stuart, Florida, as managing partner of the firm, Guy Yudin & Foster, LLP, serving the recreational boating community, representing marine business and handling legal issues related to boating accidents. In addition she handles business, environmental, riparian rights and property rights matters. Much of her practice takes place in the federal courts. She has sat on the board of the Marine Industries Association and is secretary, general counsel and lecturer for the Chapman School of Seamanship.

While at Geneseo, Joanne was accompanied by her two small children who were in early elementary school and who occasionally attended classes. To this day they remember playing out on the Quad and being part of the campus community. Joanne became a grandmother while in law school and is looking forward to a trip to Albany for her grandson's high school graduation.



FOCUS ON ALUMNI

Stuart Henderson began his matriculation at Geneseo in 1974, at first planning on a career in medicine. I was tripled in a double room at the then relatively newer dorms across the street from the

old campus - with a hippie from Buffalo and an ultra-conservative from Schenectady (but that is a whole other story). After one semester, I decided that I wanted a career in law. Political Science was often a major of law school candidates, so that became my major - even though

it was a very small department in those days. However, I really had no idea what a law career entailed, and fearing 7 years of education for a job I could end up hating, I decided to try and learn more about it. I went to visit a sole practitioner named Randolph A Meyer, who at that time just so happened to office above the Vital Spot (then a favorite Geneseo student haunt - and mine-just off campus). After a brief conversation about how much I wanted to be paid (at zero, we had no issues) I started to work at his office as a clerk (while also working at the nearby Holiday Inn kitchen

both nights and weekends - I think it has changed hands since). I then went to see both Dr. Janosik and Dr. Deutsch to see how they could help with this career choice, and after

some discussion about preparing students to go to law school, we unofficially started a "pre-law" program. Dr. Frank Kemerer taught a course in Constitutional Law for one year, too. I also recall the Department setting up an enjoyable 2 week internship in Albany with



a politician named Tom Frey (who was also a lawyer, so more exposure there). Another distinct memory was the lectures of short-timer Prof Jay Kaplan - this was the 70's, so we were all pretty liberal (I sported an afro), but he was REALLY liberal!

Interestingly enough, Attorney Meyer ended up joining the firm of Hon Richard Wesley (then a much younger and less important man than he became since) and I went with him, clerking for



FOCUS ON ALUMNI

the new firm all of the years I was at Geneseo. I have lost touch over the years, but I see Judge Wesley has had some positive impact on the Department. He was a great guy who helped me in my early and formative years, as did Randy Meyer.

Due to testing into the accelerated program (not sure now what it was actually called then, but you could test out of first year intro courses), and taking very full loads of classes each semester, I completed my undergraduate degree by May 1977. Pursuant to plan, I applied to several law schools. While wait listed at Cornell, I was accepted at Albany Law School, so decided to go there. After the obligatory 3 years, I graduated in 1980 with my JD. Since I still had to work to pay for college, I had taken a clerking job in Albany my first year there, and as it turned out, they offered me a job upon graduation. I practiced with this GP firm for 5 years, then spent another year in a partnership with one of that firm's partners when the original firm broke up. After a little bit of everything (criminal, traffic, real estate, matrimonial, litigation, wills & estates), I ended up specializing in insurance litigation. During that time, I married a local lady, and had a child.

Part of my legal work was for a local Albany property and casualty insurance company (Farm Family Mutual Insurance Company in Glenmont, NY). One day I was asked by a senior executive there if I would consider coming to the company side. Given the challenges of a small practice (or any small business) and having a young family, I decided to choose the safer alternative employment, starting in 1986. I ended up working there for the next 13 years in various roles and departments, and having 2 more girls (all now grown, out of college, 1 married, and 2 with Masters Degrees). Around 1996, when I was in a COO type position at the insurance company, we decided to take the company public on the NYSE with Solomon Brothers – an exciting and heady time (ringing the bell at the Exchange in

NYC, road shows, etc.). However, my boss was my age, and while I loved my staff, it was time to explore something else.

On a networking trip to Manhattan to see a friend who had just joined a global German reinsurance company, I was offered a job there to assist in operations and the integration of a newly purchased (but actually larger) subsidiary. Since they said yes to just about every demand I made, and even though I did not see myself as a NYC kind of guy, in May of 1999 I accepted a VP role at Gerling Global Reinsurance Corporation of America. I lived in NYC for a few months transition, with an office at 5th and 56th by Tiffany's and Trump Tower, eventually moving the family to Berkley Heights, NJ and commuting by train to Manhattan. I had various roles and promotions there over the next 3 years, but it became apparent to me that they were in financial trouble. Also, a little thing known as 9/11 happened while I was in NYC (a very long day!) which caused my wife some concern about continuing to work there.

In my usual form, I started networking for another job, and heard of an opening for CEO of a Midwest insurance company called Western National Mutual Insurance Company, headquartered in Edina, Minnesota. They had financial issues, though solid fundamentals, and had been without a CEO for the last 18 months or so. After getting a map to find out where MN was, I flew out, interviewed, and eventually accepted the position on October of 2001. The family moved out in 2002 (after we were sure it was going to work) and I have been here ever since. By every measure used by insurance companies or business in general, we have been extremely successful (if I do say so myself). Comparing 2001 to now, Surplus (equity) is over \$315 million from \$64 million; revenue is up to \$415

FOCUS ON ALUMNI

million from \$150 million (6 acquisitions); we are in 19 states (we were in 4); 515 employees in offices in Edina, Anchorage, Phoenix, Chicago, and Seattle; rating agencies gave us 5 financial upgrades to current “A”; we have been a Top 50 Company by 5 year financial performance (out of about 3,000 companies) 8 out of the last 9 years. Personally, I have been fortunate to win some awards, serve on some Boards, etc. You can learn a lot more with Google.

Robert A. Goldfinger’77 is the President of Nomino Data. He leads the development of client relationships, partner collaborations as well as providing expert consulting services and technology search design and implementation expertise.

With nearly three decades of leadership experience in the public and private sectors, Mr. Goldfinger brings a unique combination of management expertise, operational leadership and

marketing across business environments that require technology solutions.

Mr. Goldfinger has held leadership positions within the Fraud/Risk Management sector at multiple firms including financial services and technology entities. He has a proven ability to design both operational and technical approaches to enhance Risk, Fraud and Compliance management programs. Mr. Goldfinger’s background within the Compliance, Anti-Money Laundering/Combating Terrorist Financing, Security and Operational Risk disciplines allow him to view overall risk management operations with a practical risk based approach.

Edwin Rambuski attended Geneseo from 1976-1980 and then went on to graduate from law school at the University of California, Davis. After passing the California bar exam in 1983, Edwin joined a 25 lawyer firm in Oxnard, CA



where he practiced for 5 years. Edwin left the firm in 1988 and took a 2 year sabbatical from the practice of law, traveling overseas and racing bicycles. Edwin then settled in San Luis Obispo, CA and started his own law practice which he continues today as a sole practitioner. Edwin continues to race bicycles and sponsors a racing team <http://teamrambuskilaw.com/>.



FOCUS ON ALUMNI

Edward Dunscombe'77: As a seventeen year old arriving in Geneseo in 1972, I soon found myself at the draft board on Main Street, near Aunt Cookie's and the local McGovern Head-



quarters. My draft lottery number was never called, I had my first of many tuna's on Italian, and Nixon was elected. Two out of three's not bad!

My Geneseo liberal arts education, including a Political Science-History double major, has served me well during an unanticipated and sometimes contentious career in public libraries. Following graduation, I took a year off, then returned to pursue my Masters in Library Science, completing it in 1978. Shortly after a two-year stint with the City of Rochester Records Management Program, I relocated to Binghamton with my wife (Sharon Misura Dunscombe, class of '78, MLS '79). We've had a rewarding life in the "Triple Cities," a great place to raise our children, Andy and Hannah.

I've been at the George F. Johnson Memorial Library in Endicott since 1980, serving as Director since 2003. My political science background, most memorably under the tutelage of **Dr. Ja-**

nosik, has come in handy, as I've dealt with mayors, village and town boards, county legislators, and members of the NYS Senate and Assembly. I've even had the pleasure of welcoming Senator Schumer and Congressman Hinchey to GFJ. Most notably, our library, faced with drastic funding cuts, has initiated numerous public votes to secure funding. Almost every vote has been opposed by a local government and wound up being decided in the library's favor via the courts. One went all the way to the NYS Supreme Court Appellate Division, preserving the right of citizens to adequately fund their local libraries through petition and vote.

I realize now how my Geneseo liberal arts education has been so critical to my career. Sharon and I have retained many of the friends we made there, and often return to visit the beautiful campus and reminisce. It's a magical place for us - thanks Geneseo!



FOCUS ON ALUMNI

Wayne Borgeest

I have
nothing

but the best memories of Geneseo and my times there. I learned a lot and it has shaped my politics (I think for the better, but Fox News would disagree!). Professor Deutsch used to say – “you get the government you deserve.” Of course, he was right! After graduating from Geneseo in 1976, I worked in hotel management for three years before attending law school at Pace University School of Law in White Plains, NY, where I was a member of the Pace Law

Review. I graduated cum laude in 1982 and took a position with a 95-person law firm in Manhattan. I defended municipalities and police officers in liability actions for a period of years, and later acted for foreign and domestic insurers as monitoring and coverage counsel in cases across the United States, and internationally. In 1997, after 15 years of practice, I gave up my partnership position with my old firm, which had grown to over 450 lawyers. Together with two partner colleagues from my old firm, we founded a new firm in Manhattan. I had devel-



that focused on liability insurance for corporate management, and worked on litigation matters that centered on the liability of corporate directors and officers, corporate governance, securities laws, bankruptcy, employment practices,

oped a
practice

trustee and fiduciary liability, and insurance. I have acted for insurers of many, many corporate boards sued for securities fraud, self-dealing, M&A deals, and other acts of misfeasance and malfea-

sance. My role typically is to enforce the “D&O” insurance contract as written, and to seek an early and cost effective resolution of litigation; this is usually done through negotiation, mediation, arbitration and litigation. Our firm, Kaufman Borgeest & Ryan LLP, currently has over 115 attorneys practicing out of six offices in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and California. On a personal level, I met my wife, Denise, in 1987, and we married in 1989. We have two children, twin daughters, Emily and Erica.

Political Families

Two Geneseo graduates recently appeared together at a political event in Buffalo, New York. Republican State Leadership Committee (RSLC) President **Matt Walter** (Political Science/French '94) was the keynote speaker at an event for Assemblyman **Ray Walter** (History '94).

The event can be viewed on www.electraywalter.com. On July 7th, Ray's website will enter a new era of digital politics when it will be one of the first websites to go live with a new .gop top level domain (tld). At this time, RSLC is the only political party to acquire their own tld.



You can read more about the new internet expansion and the RSLC's efforts to innovate through .gop, including feature articles in the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Politico and others, at www.dotgop.co.

During the event, both Ray and Matt referenced the importance of higher education institutions- like Geneseo the state system schools in Buffalo- to New York's future.

"Geneseo helped inspire us to serve our communities and to always strive for new and innovative ways to improve our field. Twenty years later, the things we learned there are having an impact in New York government and politics across the country," said Ray Walter.

Matt praised Geneseo in his remarks when addressing the need for quality, affordable higher education that can spur economic growth. "With the quality of the education, the quality of the professors, the quality of the programs, the best thing about Geneseo is the quality of the people," said Matt Walter.

Ray Walter was first elected to the Assembly during a special election in November, 2011. He was reelected to serve his first full term in 2012. He is the Ranking Member of the

Aging Committee and serves on the Committees on Ways & Means, Health, Insurance and Housing.

Matt Walter has supported Ray, and candidates across the country, in his work with the RSLC since 2011. He was named President in January. Since 2002, the RSLC has been the largest caucus of Republican state leaders in the country and the only national organization whose mission is to elect down-ballot, state-level Republican officeholders including lieutenant governors, attorneys general, secretaries of state, state legislators and members of the judiciary.



Honor Theses Completed Spring 2014

(Political Science, International Relations, or College Honors)

Efthimia Barbagiannis: “Refugee Determination and International Law”

Martin Beach: “Legalized Homophobia: The Persecution of LGBT Individuals South of the Sahara”

Katie Becker: “Asylum, International Law, and Regional Practice”

Carly Biondi: “Women’s Rights in New Regimes”

Alexandra Fasulo: “Analyzing Eight Western European Cabinets and Parliaments: A Comparative Case Study of Female Representation from 1999 to the Present.”

Matthew Fitzgerald: “Economic Voting in the United States”

Sean Hansen: “U.S. Drone Policy: The Controversy of Governmental Oversight”

Bethany Caroline Hyland: “Organ Trafficking and Human Rights in the People's Republic of China”

Daniel Matthews: “Global Energy Security and European Dependency on Russian Energy Sources”

Devin McConnell: “Generational Effects in American Politics”