



**Going Digital:
Discussing the future of
Fitchburg State's Alumni Magazine**

Background

- *Contact* magazine publishes twice annually
- Traditionally includes 32 pages, with president's welcome, campus news, feature stories, class notes, in memoriam, university advertisements
- Mailing list of approximately 45,000 includes alumni, faculty/staff, families of current students, VIPs

Background



Past issues posted at fitchburgstate.edu/contact-magazine

SOARING HIGHER

FITCHBURG STATE HAS A LONG AND GROWING HISTORY OF HELPING PROFESSIONALS ADVANCE THEIR CAREERS THROUGH ONLINE AND IN-PERSON GRADUATE PROGRAMS. HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR STORIES.

MAKING A BIGGER IMPACT



Joshua Romano '05. It was looking for ways to make a bigger impact on students. For the career educator who had been teaching at area high schools for years, there was a post as dean of students at Lunenburg High School that inspired him to enhance his administrative credentials. For this, he launched Fitchburg State, where he received a master's degree in 2010. He also got to know Fitchburg State colleagues who were competing their own personal experience at Lunenburg High. "I've enjoyed that for always had that connection to Fitchburg State," he said.

Two years later he was an assistant principal at Mumfords High School in Winchester, and later a principal. Additional administrative posts followed at other schools, as did Romano's own continuing education. He completed a certificate of advanced graduate study from Fitchburg State in 2014, and earlier in 2022 he finished a doctoral at Salem State. This fall he greeted his 1,800 students at Lunenburg High School as its newest principal. The area and former of Lunenburg High recommended a bigger impact? "he said.

"I wanted to go somewhere larger, where you're making a bigger impact?" he said. "I've been ready to take on the challenges thanks to the work I've done here."

"Fitchburg State was a phenomenal place for me to get the preparation for what I did in education," Romano said. "What's produced in Fitchburg State education program are practitioners, people who are going to get out and actually do it. You will find that you need to be effective in education. It's about being curious, and in helping students. The success I've had in an educational background has been in what Fitchburg State took away from me."

NO TURNING BACK

Katie Richards '20 kept her MBA goal in sight despite challenges. A few short years ago, Katie Richards and her husband, Mike, were used to heading the tight-knit group of four children. Parents of twin daughters Hannah and Maddie, they were also managing full-time careers in business and human resources. In 2018, they decided to pursue their MBA degrees.

"My people told me that was completely crazy for wanting to get my MBA," Katie recalled. "But when I first found out I was pregnant with twins in 2011, and I had people planning to return to my company, but then I had the response from many was that I'd have to give something up. I've always just refused to accept that I couldn't have it all. I knew there had to be a way."

Katie said Mike was steadfast in his encouragement that she would power the dualities along. They were well into their studies when the pandemic struck in 2020. "I said, 'You're far from I can't turn back now. So we did what Katie said and didn't have to strategize and make a crazy plan'."

The plan included getting up at 5:30 a.m., working in shifts to balance homeschooling their then 3-year-old daughter with conference calls, professional obligations, and schoolwork. Katie would start, getting her daughters ready for school, then coaching, singing preschool songs, leaving to head to work, and then working. At 10 a.m. she and Mike would switch, and the usual morning employee rotations for more than 750 employees during the healthcare crisis. Some things were non-negotiable, including family dinner time and putting the kids to bed.

With their daughters in bed for 8 a.m., Mike Katie and Maddie turned to his books. "We were so grateful that Fitchburg State gave us flexibility with scheduling," she said. "We found a very real staff of professors that we did. It just got the moment they were in, with nothing of respect for each individual position. It taught me that leadership is about being in, and making the moment."

It wasn't easy. "There were a lot of moments of sheer vulnerability," Katie said, recalling one night when she typed papers while her 3-year-old daughter sat on top of her head. "I was so tired, and I was so proud of my own work."

With that reality and family support, she said, it was achievable. The coursework also paid off for her career, as Katie described putting lessons from her education into practice. "I've been in many important roles since then, from career advisor, and I was able to leverage my knowledge from Fitchburg State to participate at a higher level," she said.



The couple finished their MBA degrees in 2020. About a traditional commencement ceremony, they made their way to campus the following fall, when the university hosted a Fikens Walk for graduates who hadn't gotten the chance to cross a stage. Katie had printed out and given for their twin daughters, whose support had been integral for their parents' success.

"It was their moment just as much as it was ours," Katie said. "I hope my story reminds people, and especially other women, that we really can have it all. Katie said, "Having educational and professional goals isn't selfish, and relying on a support system will only propel you towards the finish line. There are two words when I think of that support of my life got and grew: I had a support system that was with a sense of perseverance, passion and humility, but also had to give myself grace because perfection isn't at the window, and that's OK. I just hope when my girls look back, they are proud, and know that mom didn't quit because they were watching. When someone tells you your path is too full, remind them that it's not, and they are aware as hungry as you."

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY | WINTER 2023 | 3

SOARING HIGHER

Current Format

ALUMNI news

CLASS NOTES

The following graduates made headlines in the news. Contact Editor: Susan B. Bissell at sbissell@fitchburgstate.edu

2015
CANDACE L. BARNETT '15 was named dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She was previously dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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ALUMNI news

SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

Submit a Class Note, Collaboration Interview, or an Alumni Interview to Susan B. Bissell at sbissell@fitchburgstate.edu. Contact reserves the right to edit for length and clarity. Please do not include a contact number. To help us help you, please include your name, phone number, and email address.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHARLOTTE

Current Format

ALUMNI news

SAVE THE DATE!

ONCE A FALCON,
ALWAYS A FALCON

HOMECOMING
fitchburgstate.edu/homecoming

November 3-5, 2023
Save the date!

Good things happen
when we work together.

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16 | WINTER 2022 | FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Whether you're looking to **Reskill, Upskill** or develop a **New skill**, The School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education (SGOCE) at Fitchburg State University is the place to be!



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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY | School of GRADUATE, ONLINE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION



Why Digital?

- Real-time updates of content
- Measurable engagement
- Environmentally friendly
- One-time expenditure
- Optimized for content sharing via social media and/or departmental pages

Why Digital?

- Cost Containment
 - Print, design and postage, Summer 2021: \$50,899
 - Print, design and postage, Spring 2022: \$75,599
 - Annualized Cost: \$127,000
 - Net Increase: **48.5%**

Digital Presentation

- The digital site is envisioned as the go-to repository of our institutional storytelling, from features about alumni to looks at institutional history, student stories, campus initiatives, and more
- Would let us integrate content like faculty research and student work (ARTeries, VISIONS, Undergraduate Research Conference)

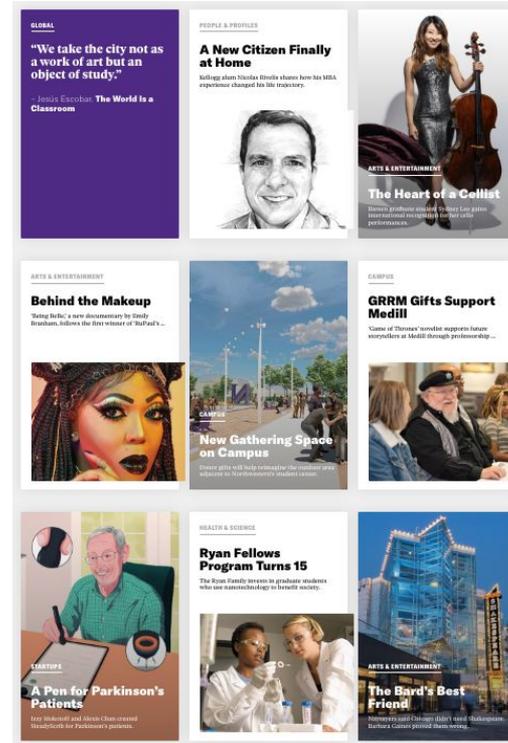
Printed Component

- Digital presentation would be complemented by four-page “digest” or full-color postcard summarizing latest stories and sent twice annually to full mailing list.
- Print and postage costs will be substantially less than full-size magazine while still providing an engaging and affirming picture of Fitchburg State to our audiences.

Our Templates

- Northwestern University
 - [Northwestern Magazine](#)
- Cornell University
 - [Cornellians](#)
- Middlebury College
 - [Middlebury Magazine](#)

Northwestern University



Northwestern University

Magazine Sections ▾

Voices

SOCIAL ISSUES

Messages Shape Identity and Transform Lives

WINTER 2022

Marcus Dean's psychosocial experiments have shown that social forces such as peers, parents, teachers and financial resources shape the academic experience and life paths of young people. "The right message at the right time can change how someone feels about themselves and transform the type of education and life that they might envision and pursue," he says.

[Read Dean's essay.](#)



PEOPLE & PROFILES

Sound Off: The Magic of Snow

WINTER 2022

Who says winter in Evanston is no fun? Alumni recall snowed-out flights, football under a hail storm in 5-degree weather, a snowman built on a dorm rooftop, and more winter adventures.

[View photo set](#)



POLITICS

Cody Keenan on Hope and Speechwriting

WINTER 2022

Cody Keenan '12 spent eight years as a White House speechwriter for President Barack Obama '06 '10. Now a visiting professor at the Weisberg College of Arts and Sciences, Keenan talked with Northwestern Magazine about his work in politics, what he learned from the former president and what gives him hope.

[Learn more about Keenan.](#)



SOCIAL ISSUES

The Case for Foreign Correspondents

FALL 2022

In the era of the foreign correspondent over? That's the premise behind a new media venture spearheaded by Justin Smith, the former Bloomberg Media chief executive, and Ben Smith, the former editor of BuzzFeed.

[Read Cohen's essay.](#)



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In Memoriam

In memoriam is a page to read featured obituaries of Northwestern alumni, faculty and staff. Visit [Donations](#) to read memorials of Northwestern community members submitted by their family or peers. Please send obituaries to alumni@northwestern.edu.

Filter alumni by decade:

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Narrow to:

Faculty and Staff



Virginia "Ginny" Risnow Harris '54, St. Paul, Minn., Sept. 3, 2022, at age 90. From education to local reporting to government service, Harris was passionate about her community involvement. After graduating from Northwestern, she taught at St. Richard's Elementary School while raising her family before moving to Victoria, Minn., where she worked as a reporter, then editor, for the Sun Newspaper system. Her reporting on civic matters caught the attention of the local city council, and she was named as Victoria's first city administrator, becoming the first woman to be hired for the position in Carver County. After a successful tenure as city administrator, she became Carver County's director of planning and zoning, a position that she held for almost 20 years. She served in many land-use planning organizations and committees, always making an effort to preserve agricultural land for farming. Harris also served as director of the Lake Minnesota Conservation District. She is survived by her children, Larry, Michael, Tress, Bob, Tom, Patricia and KC; 14 grandchildren; and one great-grandson.

Robert J. Werner '53, '54 MBA, '57 DMA, Roanoke, Va., Aug. 31, 2022, at age 90. Werner was a passionate advocate for a comprehensive arts education. As dean of the University of Oklahoma's College-Conservatory of Music for 15 years, he oversaw the construction of the \$93.2 million CCM Village that enhanced the conservatory's teaching and performance capabilities and advanced the school's reputation as a leading center for performing and media arts. The 250-year-old Robert J. Werner Recital Hall in the CCM Village honors his legacy. Werner served as president of both the International Society for Music Education and the National Association of Schools of Music. He supported publications for community education programs as well as developmental frameworks for music education at elementary and secondary levels. He received a Northwestern Alumni Association Alumni Merit Award in 1991. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Sharon McInfield Werner '51, children Mark, Kurt and Erik; grandchildren Eliza, Kristen, Haley and Sydney; and great-grandchildren Claire, Caden and Dylan.



Edmund W. Chang '80, West Newton, Mass., Aug. 18, 2022, at age 64. Whether it was work, independent projects, design competitions or teaching, Chang never lost his passion for architecture and design. After graduating from Northwestern with a degree in American studies, he worked as a designer for an architectural firm before attending the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. He later moved to Los Angeles and worked as an architect while also teaching at the University of Southern California. In 1990 he and his then partner, former Harvard classmate Roger Sherman, won a design competition for the West Hollywood Civic Center in Los Angeles. In 1992 he started Chang and S'Yrigarden Architects with his wife, Susan S'Yrigarden. They relocated to the Boston area and worked on residential and institutional projects for Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In Newton, Mass., Chang designed City Hall's Millennium Park and worked on an urban design committee for the area. Chang, who retired in 2021, is survived by his wife, his son, Alexander; his mother, Edith; his sister, Patsie; and his brother, Laurence.

Middlebury College



Middlebury MAGAZINE | RECENT STORIES

MENU | Q

Munya Munyati Has A Few Stories to Tell

Catching up with a young filmmaker who is rapidly making a name for himself at Vice.

[CONTINUE TO STORY >](#)

FEATURES



More Than a Game

In a critically acclaimed work of nonfiction, Abe Streep '04 introduces readers to the Arlee Warriors, a high school basketball team on a Native American reservation in Montana, where life's challenges are abundant.

By Alexander Wolff
Photograph by Devin Yalton

OCTOBER 21, 2022



Munya Munyati Has A Few Stories to Tell

Catching up with a young filmmaker who is rapidly making a name for himself at Vice.

By Mara Dolan
Film stills by Munya Munyati

SEPTEMBER 16, 2022



Reverberations

A transcontinental move, a career discovered, a landmark speech studied and translated—and an identity reshaped.

By Clara Chmer, MA Translation '22
Illustration by Anna Gustala

APRIL 2, 2022



The Road(s)

A little over a year ago, a writing student headed south to Florida for no other reason than 3-term was forced to go remote. She soon found herself reporting on an environmental justice battle that was rolling the state.

By Alexandra Burns '21.5
Illustrations by Virginia Nayberg

MARCH 2, 2022

Cornell University



Cornellians

ALUMNI
Alum's Bakery with a Hollywood Following Hits a Sweet Spot

Susan Sarich '13 launched SusieCakes to create scratch-made treats—and provide sustainable careers in hospitality.

[READ THE FULL STORY →](#)

RECENTLY POSTED



QUIZZES & PUZZLES

[How Well Do You Know Cornell?](#)



PERSPECTIVES

[We Met as Freshmen—and Climbed Kilimanjaro Together at Age 70](#)



CORNELLIANA

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Celebrate Big Red Love—in Pictures!

For a Valentine's Day feature, *Cornellians* is seeking photos of two-alumni couples on and around campus. Do you have photos and a love story to share—of you and your sweetie, or perhaps your Cornellian parents or grandparents?

[EMAIL US](#)

Next Steps

- Our team reviewing “wireframes” with web developer now, creating the different elements we’d have at our disposal - articles, class notes, *in memoriam*, etc.
- Anticipate this going live in time for Spring/Summer “issue,” with corresponding mailings

Questions / Discussion