

Croix Laonsay, a 2016 graduate of the School of Science and a resident of Hawaii, is the recipient of a Fulbright U.S. Student Program Grant.

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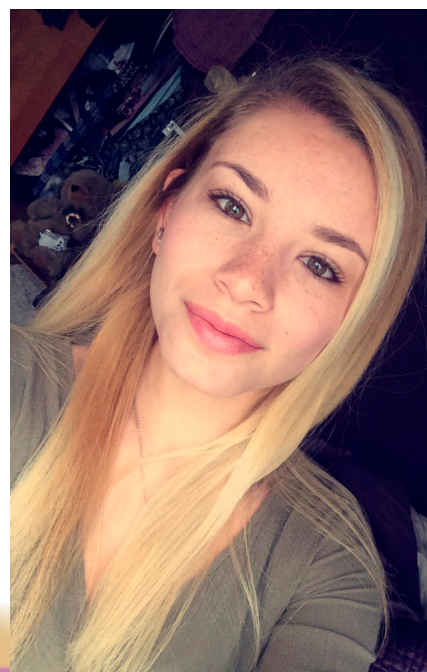
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Diversity Works is published twice a year by the Marist College Diversity Council
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Croix Laconsay '16 is the recipient of a Fulbright U.S. Student Program Grant.

Two from Marist Receive Fulbrights

By Mariah Christian, Staff Writer/Intern

The Fulbright Program is no stranger to Marist College, and two new Marist College graduates, Jay Arzu '16 and Croix Laconsay '16, have been awarded Fulbright U.S. Student Program Grants.

The Fulbright Program, the U.S. government's flagship international educational exchange program, is sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State.

Marist has been named one of the top schools for producing Fulbright scholars. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs recently identified Marist as one of the U.S. colleges and universities that produced the most 2015–2016 Fulbright U.S. students. Four Marist alumni won Fulbright awards for 2015–2016, putting Marist on par with only 24 other master's institutions nationally. Marist was also named a top producer for 2014–2015.

The program Arzu and Laconsay applied to was the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, which allows students to conduct research or study abroad for up to a year, based on a study the student creates. The Fulbright U.S. Student Program currently awards approximately 1,900 grants annually in all fields of study and operates in more than 140 countries worldwide. The application process includes an essay, a transcript, and letters of recommendation.

Arzu has been awarded the grant to Italy to pursue an MPA at SDA Bocconi School of Management in Milan. Laconsay has been awarded the grant to pursue research on chemical bonds with Dr. Sason Shaik at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel.

Both men credit their success to Pat Taylor, the graduate school and fellowship advisor in the Center for Career Services, who was their mentor throughout the entire process. "They are both wonderful guys, incredibly talented," Taylor said. "They are different guys,

but equally deserving."

For Arzu, the grant was a dream come true and showed him that hard work pays off. He will be in Italy for 12 months.

"I'm excited to represent the United States when I'm in Italy," he said. "I plan on representing it well and learning about city planning and sustainability, then coming back to the United States and starting my own business."

"I couldn't believe it. My dream came true," said Laconsay on the prospect of carrying out research in Israel. "Now I have the opportunity to not only study my passion but also volunteer in the community and learn how they train young scientists and how they do science in the world of enduring faith."

After completing the program, Laconsay will attend the University of California at Davis where he will work toward a PhD and eventually become a professor.

Faculty Members Promoted

By Mariah Christian, Staff Writer/Intern

Three members of the Marist faculty have been promoted, effective fall 2016.

Dr. Sally Dwyer-McNulty has been promoted to professor of history, Dr. Neil Fitzgerald to professor of chemistry, and Brian Haughey to senior professional lecturer of finance.

Getting a promotion to professor is rigorous and a long process. The faculty member has to be observed several times in the classroom by faculty members within the department, the dean, a faculty member in a related discipline, and a faculty member from outside of the school. The candidate then must assemble documents that represent strengths and contributions in teaching, scholarship, and service. Then the candidate has to make a case for promotion by writing a promotion brief and summarizing her or his contributions.

Dwyer-McNulty, currently an associate professor of history in the School of Liberal Arts, came to Marist in 1999. She

started her application to become a full professor in 2015. "It took 11 years to have all the parts I felt I needed to make a strong case."

Originally from Philadelphia, PA, Dwyer-McNulty earned her PhD at Temple University. "At Temple, I had amazing professors who encouraged my research and teaching," she said. She also credits her father, husband, and three children for her academic success.



Dr. Sally Dwyer-McNulty has been promoted to professor of history, effective fall 2016.



Former President Linus Foy

The Legacy of Diversity at Marist Began in the '60s

*By Mariah Christian, Staff Writer/Intern, and
Desmond Murray, Editor*



Some current faculty and staff at Marist College were not even born when in 1958 a Marist Brother took over this Hudson River Valley college campus as president.

Linus Foy accepted the president position of Marist at the age of 28, becoming the youngest college president in the United States. He served as president of Marist from 1958 until 1979.

With Foy's young age came innovation and modern ideas. Once he became president, he took the initiative to expand enrollment and increase diversity. Marist had always been known to be a strictly Catholic school, but Foy wanted to change that; he wanted the public to see that Marist was "open to everyone." To do so, he made the board more diverse, adding laymen and laywomen. Implementing diversity on the board started the progression of diversity at Marist and brought in students of not only Catholic

backgrounds.

What started as a school to educate Marist Brothers slowly expanded and renovated to allow lay male students to enroll. Foy introduced an evening division in 1959 to accommodate lay students. But he wanted to diversify Marist to an even greater extent; he wanted to open the College to women. At the time, he was told that Brothers were forbidden to teach women, but then in 1964 he went to Switzerland where Marcellin Champagnat founded the Marist Brothers. "Boys and girls came running out of the school with a Brother as their teacher," Foy recalled. When he asked if that was allowed, he was told absolutely, yes. Two years later, the first woman, a nun, was admitted. Women were first allowed to take only evening classes and then in 1968 were permitted to take day classes as well. By the time President Foy retired, enrollment was more than 50 percent women.

Foy explained that women had a hard time adjusting to the campus at first because of its male culture. In order for women to feel more comfortable, Foy got in touch with David Leigh, the director of the fashion program at Bennett College. Bennett College was in the process of closing, so Foy arranged to adopt its fashion program in 1977. With the program came more female applicants. The designs of the fashion students were displayed in the windows of Donnelly Hall so that women would feel a greater sense of comfort and connection, and as though they had a place on campus.

Foy also made sure that women were getting facilities equal to men's. For example, in the McCann Center he implemented a weight room for the men and a dance center for the women.

In the late 1960s under Foy's leadership, programs for the educationally disadvantaged were expanded at Marist. The Marist College Upward Bound Program, founded in 1966, is a federally funded college preparatory program designed to generate in participants the skills and motivation necessary to complete their secondary education and then a program of postsecondary education. The Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) was established at Marist in 1969, one of the original 24 HEOP programs in New York State. Marist HEOP (which was renamed the Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program in 2006) is a comprehensive academic support program designed to assist students who otherwise might not be able to attend college due to educational and financial circumstances.

The important lesson that Foy brought to the Marist community was the value of diversity, before "diversity" became the buzz word of modern times. In reflecting on his tenure as president, Foy noted that he was not the first president to implement diversity on campus. Before him came Bro. Paul Ambrose, who "promoted diversity which insisted on the worth of every individual person created by God." Brother Paul supervised a student body of Marist Brothers from all around the world.

Marist College is, always has been, and always will be a college continuously looking for improvement and innovation. It continues to be a place where diversity is celebrated.



Alumna Robin Minitier '11 spoke to Marist students on campus about her Fulbright experience.

Photo by Kelly Stohr

Three Marist Graduates Tell Their Fulbright Stories

By Dominick Depole, Staff Writer/Intern

At the inaugural Fulbright Student Grant Alumni Presentation, Marist graduates Robin Minitier, Kendra McKechnie, and Nicholas Homler described how they earned their grants and what they learned in their studies abroad. The presentation took place in Marist's Student Center March 9.

As students, the three were guided into the Fulbright U.S. Student Program by Graduate School and Fellowship Advisor Pat Taylor. The program is an ultracompetitive scholarship that supports from nine months to a year of either pursuing research on a specific topic or teaching English in a foreign country.

Taylor, who has been working with Fulbright for over 15 years, assists students in the extensive application process. The total number of Fulbright grants available each year is approximately 1,900, with 10,000 applicants annually.

"The trick for a student who talks to me about the Fulbright is to identify a debate, a challenge, a problem that the student finds particularly compelling and one that has a great deal of relevance for a specific country," Taylor said.

"They develop an affiliation or partnership with a formal organization that's on the ground in that specific country to help them develop a network relevant to research," Taylor added.

Robin Minitier '11 studied the development of women's rugby throughout India in 2012. It was a topic of passion for Robin, who played rugby in college and has an adopted sister from India. Being a male-dominated society, India does not have many rugby teams for women, but one town did.

This is where Minitier played, coached, refereed, and studied the only women's rugby organization in India, which has been in existence for 10 years. Her little sister

even visited her during her study.

The experience for Minter was eye-opening, as she also learned about many aspects of Indian culture. Exposure to India's grand buildings and at the same time its immense poverty were two things that most Americans would not be too familiar with.

"You have to go to these things sort of open-minded," Minter said. "I just sort of immersed myself into the culture."

Kendra McKechnie '14 had just returned from spending a year in the Chiang Mai province of Thailand. McKechnie taught English at a rural secondary school on an assignment that included a six-week internship with Fulbright Thailand. Her stay was extended by three months to assist further as an English Teaching Assistant.

McKechnie is very well-rounded in the language department. A French and secondary education major at Marist, she studied abroad in Australia, Italy, and Morocco. She also spent semesters studying language in Bordeaux, Dakar, and Marseille. With experience in French and Italian, she felt the desire to explore the diverse Thai language.

Teaching English in Thailand didn't come as easily, though. Most of the students had a low level of English knowledge, and McKechnie said she learned to teach "communication" rather than English.

The classroom culture in Thailand proved unorthodox to an American. Often the students would shout answers to each other or copy answers on tests, claiming that they were "group learners."

Teaching with no curriculum, technology, or textbooks was a challenge that McKechnie rose to. She was able to go out for some fun, too. She played on the Chiang Mai Ultimate Frisbee team and volunteered at the Elephant Nature Park, where she spent time with the elephants and helped cut down sugar cane and corn.

"I spent a lot of time with the other English Teaching Assistants," McKechnie said. "Growing so close to some of them through our mutual experience was not something I expected from this year."

On a different note, Nicholas Homler '13 studied filmmaking in New Zealand for all of 2015. Sponsored by the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand, he spent his entire year creating videos for independent cinemas throughout the country.

He even made a documentary, *The Reel People of New Zealand*, about people who have devoted their lives to keeping cinema alive in small towns. The radio/TV/film major fulfilled his dream of filming in scenic New Zealand.

For Homler, natural beauty is the heart of the New Zealand. He decided to live on a farm of rolling green hills with over 40 cows on it. When he wasn't editing his footage, he went hiking or surfing on the country's beautiful waters.

Homler's short videos are currently playing in front of audiences in New Zealand. He was also able to work with dozens of movie theater owners, and he found time to watch a few films along the way.

"A grateful benefit of my project was that it allowed me to travel the country from top to bottom," Homler said. "From bungee jumping to glow-worm caving to white-water rafting, I surely got my adrenaline pumping."

Taylor sees a great change here in students when they return from abroad.

"They're fundamentally transformed," said Taylor, who will try to organize a second annual event next year with another group of Fulbright grant recipients. "They've gained these insights into another country, another culture—a whole other way of doing things, a whole other way of framing reality that makes them understand themselves better and makes them understand the United States better."

*Dr. James H. Cone presenting
"The Cross and the Lynching Tree"*

Photo by Kelly Stohr

Author Cone Explains *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*

By Luke Carbery Mogan, Staff Writer/Intern



As a founder and outspoken advocate of black liberation theology, Dr. James H. Cone blends an introspection of what it means to be African American with discussions of religion's ability to liberate those living under oppression. Authoring 12 books, penning more than 150 articles, and speaking across five continents, Cone continues to exercise the voice he found deep within himself many years ago. As part of Marist's African American History Month event series, Cone visited Marist on Feb. 3 to present his lecture "The Cross and the Lynching Tree." The lecture shares the same title as his latest book.

Cone recounted the long process he endured to complete *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (2012) while coming to terms with the material relative to his own life. He spent 10 years researching, writing, and mulling over the book, saying he has actually "been writing this book all [his] life." Cone called the book's subject, comparing congregations within African American communities and the abuse of religion by white supremacist groups, "too important for a half-hearted intellectual effort."

At times, the book, which "engaged the mind and spirit," was too much for Cone to bear. "I prayed up to the God of the universe: Give me wisdom and insight and especially courage to write about the black Christian experience in America," Cone recalled. "The book empowered me to say things with clarity and power that surprised even me."

The Cross and the Lynching Tree explored the paradox of religion using two iconic images of opposing Christian authorities, one the typical Christian cross and the other the horrific lynching tree used by white supremacy groups. While African Americans turned to the Bible to escape racial oppression, white supremacists acted under the guise of the same God as agents of oppression.

"I spent a lifetime pointing out the hypocrisy and mendacity of the white church in a white-dominated society," Cone said.

As Dr. John Knight put it in his introduction, "the threat of the lynching tree was especially real" for Cone,

a witness to the rise of the civil rights movement while growing up in Arkansas. Cited in Cone's book *Martin & Malcolm & America* (1992), Martin Luther King, Jr., offered a view of integration as an achievable dream in America while Malcolm X, surname Little, spoke about the nightmare that is experiencing America as an African American.

"I lived in segregated Arkansas, a lynching state," Cone said. "To live every day under the terror of death was no easy task. It was a horrifying nightmare that shook me to the core of my being."

Cone described wearing a "white mask" from childhood into young adulthood. He hid any shred of his racial identity to avoid standing out, mostly for his own safety. Conforming to what was expected of him as an African American in society only worked to enable the dehumanizing process of the white supremacy machine. Resisting oppression is the moment when someone finally becomes human, Cone said.

"The only way to find yourself is to express yourself," he said. "When they suppress themselves instead of resisting, they destroy themselves." In an act of defiance and self-expression, Cone took his "mask" off decades ago to create his voice, inspired by the words of distinguished civil rights leaders. King and Little are two members of Cone's "Intellectual Trinity," role models for the development of his content of character, or religious identity, and racial identity, respectively. The third member is author James Baldwin, known for his socially analytical essays and stories from his collection *Notes of a Native Son* (1955), on whom Cone bases his identity and aspirations as a writer.

Cone looked to the creations of other African American artists, like Baldwin, for an answer to the question he struggled with: "How did African Americans survive and resist four centuries of white supremacy?"

He read Baldwin and Richard Wright, author of the original *Native Son* (1941). He heard the great blues musicians of the time. He listened to the lyrics of Billie

Holiday's "Strange Fruit," a chilling euphemism for the bodies left hanging on a lynching tree. Searching for what inspired these artists to continue to create in a society acting against their favor, Cone found an answer: hope.

Empathizing with the struggles of his heroes and peers, "feeling their pain," Cone discovered hope to be the prevalent factor in the uplifting sermons of African American congregations. Negating the hate-fueled teachings behind white supremacy and dominance over other human beings, hope compelled generations of African Americans to continue living.

Noting the scarcity of economic or educational resources and opportunities, Cone said he found the will to survive through self-expression, "believing I was somebody in a world that said I was nobody."

When asked how the inception of the Nation of Islam fit into the context of Christianity, Cone examined the dichotomy of hope and empowerment favored by King and Little in their methods of organizing African Americans into action during the civil rights era. Little's identity as a Muslim and creation of the Malcolm X personality was just one reaction to white supremacy. Cone considers Little's social presence responsible for putting the "black" in "black theology."

Using his own abilities to create something he could call his own and show off his "somebodiness," Cone aimed to write and study theology the way "Louis Armstrong blows trumpet" or "Billie Holiday sang 'Strange Fruit.' "

Coincidentally, Cone spoke in the same manner as an artist writes a song or melody. The lecture followed a poetic style, with pauses and line breaks, repeating phrases for effect and incorporating emotion into the words.

Dr. Lea Graham, a poet and faculty member in Marist's English Department, noticed Cone's pattern of speech. "His art of speech is drawing off the rhythms of black churches, the blues, Baldwin, and other black writers."

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Alex Myers, writer, teacher, speaker and LGBTQ activist, and Dr. Patricia Ferrer-Medina, assistant professor of Spanish and member of the Diversity Council, at Myers's presentation at Marist.

Photo by Jenna Whitehead

Alex Myers, Author and LGBTQ Activist, Speaks on Transgender Issues and His New Book, *Revolutionary*

By Daniel McFadden, Staff Writer/Intern

Author Alex Myers spoke to a packed room of Marist students and faculty in the Hancock Center on March 8. Myers is a writer, teacher, speaker, and LGBTQ activist who has given talks on transgender issues for nearly 20 years. For Myers, transgenderism is a personal issue. Although you wouldn't know by looking at him, Myers was once Alice Myers, a young girl from Paris, Maine.

Speaking on his transition and the steps leading up to his decision, Myers said he "always preferred flannel shirts and jeans" growing up. After identifying as lesbian for some time, Myers decided to make the transition to becoming a man at the age of 24 and began taking hormone supplements. Myers's coming out received a mix of support and confusion from family and friends, but all adjusted when they realized he was the same as before, if not more content with his new identity.

As the first transgender student at Phillips Exeter

Academy in Exeter, NH, Myers gained insight into what it means to be transgender. To dispel misconceptions about transgenderism, he constructed and presented what he called his "Transman(ifesto)." One important thing he learned: "Identity is not an end point, it is a process."

The subject of identity features prominently in his new book, *Revolutionary*, a historical novel set in the 18th century revolving around the life of Deborah Samson. Samson, born in the 1760s, is known for having served at West Point during the Revolutionary War disguised as a man. Samson lived a year and half as a man fighting in the war before falling ill and being taken to an Army hospital, where a doctor uncovered her secret. Samson was given an honorable discharge despite being exposed. After the war, she toured the country presenting her story in what Myers quipped was "America's first drag act."

"There have always been transgender people—they just haven't been called that," Myers said. Throughout



history there have been instances of women dressing as men and vice versa. There is even evidence in the Bible of transgender characters though since that time, Myers acknowledges progress has been made. "This generation is the first, I believe, to have it not be a disguise but be ourselves."

In addition to writing, Myers also teaches English at St. George's School in Middletown, RI, and is a distant cousin to Marist's own Dr. JoAnne Myers, associate professor of political science and vice president of the board of the Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center.

"I am proud to call him my cousin," said Dr. Myers. "He could very easily pass and accept all the privileges we give to white educated men, but he reaches out to help others who are working through their identity, and he helps educate the rest of us. Alex 'looks' like most of our students," Dr. Myers continues, "but he has a powerful story to tell—that one's sexual and gender identity might not be one and the same, and that both are works in progress that unfortunately in our society we do not discuss."

The Marist LGBTQ Subcommittee of the Diversity Council hosted Myers, and the event was made possible with additional support from the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Center for Multicultural

Affairs, the School of Liberal Arts, and the Political Science and History departments, and in particular Dr. Patricia Ferrer-Medina, assistant professor of Spanish and chair of the Marist LGBTQ Subcommittee of the Diversity Council.

"Transgender students confront issues on campus of which very few people are aware," said Ferrer-Medina. "His visit and lecture was a way to call the attention of people to some of these issues. Gender identity, race, privilege are very important issues on campus on both a personal and an academic level. These issues will only become more significant as student populations become more diverse and as universities struggle to engage these students."

"It's a beginning," Dr. Myers said. "We need to discuss gender and sexuality and the roles that they play in our society; think power, think patriarchy."

Through his work, Alex Myers keeps the dialogue on transgenderism open and ongoing. "We have to learn the language of ourselves," he said. "We have to be our own translators. And if there are no words to describe ourselves, then we have to create them."

For more information on Alex Myers, visit AlexMyersWriting.com. For more information on the Marist LGBTQ Subcommittee, visit Marist.edu/studentlife.

Author Cone - *Continued from Page 11*

For Cone, his writings have been much more than passionate forms of self-expression. "I write for the forgotten, abused, marginalized, and despaired. I write for gays, lesbians, and transgender people ... undocumented immigrants stuck on the border ... Muslims and refugees and all those who live in terror in Iran, Afghanistan, and Syria."

Dedicating *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* to his parents, Charles and Lucy, Cone said, "I write to encourage African Americans to take off the mask and get in touch with their inner resources."

The message Cone wanted the audience to take away from that night was that circumstances do not

define someone, as the opportunity to rise above one's circumstances will always be there. A standing ovation from professors, students, and Poughkeepsie residents followed the lecture in a packed Fusco Recital Hall.

Lectures at Marist by activists and academic leaders such as Cone and Dr. Cornel West this past September have been met with critical acclaim and large student involvement.

"Marist definitely needs more speakers, and it needs to be constant," said Dr. Kristin Bayer, assistant professor of history at Marist, citing the crowd Cone drew and the discussions his lecture sparked.

"People think of civil rights as the past," said student Elio Velazquez. "But the effort is still present."

*Robert Wright, executive director of Nubian Directions and former Marist employee, receives diversity award at Mid-Hudson Civic Center.
Photo by Desmond Murray*

Former Marist Employee Receives Diversity Award

By Jamelia Thompson, Staff Writer/Intern



Robert Wright, executive director of Nubian Directions, received the Richard K. Wager Workplace Inclusiveness Award at the 25th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast in Poughkeepsie on Jan. 22. The award recognized his organization for its diversity and success as a small business.

Wright's previous work includes participation in Marist programs such as Upward Bound and the Liberty Partnerships Program. Desmond Murray, associate director of field experience at Marist and a member of the award's Nominating Committee, nominated Nubian Directions for the award.

Receiving the award is of great significance, Wright said. "We try to make sure that our staff reflects our communities. When people come in and meet people who they can relate to, they can feel invited."

Nubian Directions is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 by Wright and members of his family. The organization's name derived from Wright's brother-in-law's interest in African studies. Nubian is rooted in its association with Egyptians who were considered progressive people.

The organization works closely with those who have drifted away from support within the educational system and provides technology training, work-readiness skills training, and educational support services for youth and adults to build skill sets that enhance their ability to succeed in the workforce in an ongoing effort to foster sustainable community development.

"This generation of young people needs guidance," said Wright. "Some of them are left behind, and those are the ones driving our statistics. Working with that popula-

tion is important—it fills a gap.”

Enola Rijos-Pinera, 18, a member of Nubian Directions since July 2014, said the program highly exceeded her expectations. Rijos-Pinera joined the program in an effort to pursue her GED.

“As a teenager who was at risk of academic probation and being sent away, I don’t know where I would be without this program. It really benefits young people. It helps us stay off the streets, we have something to do, it builds us up, and we learn not to take opportunities for granted.”

As a result of her commitment to the program, Rijos-Pinera has gained skills and certifications in CPR, disaster training, and many other areas.

In addition to the program’s academic opportunities, Nubian Directions also involves its members in community service projects.

“We learn how to give to others without wanting something in return,” said Rijos-Pinera.

Youth in the program have participated in rebuilding homes for low-income families, installing bookshelves, and labeling books. In a project called Adopt a Block, youths are working to clean up the streets of Poughkeepsie.

A unique asset to the program is its extensive pre-orientation process, referred to as Mental Toughness. The process lasts four to six weeks and strengthens the possibilities of members’ meeting the objectives of Nubian Directions and completing the program.

Wright’s interest in helping youth has always been a part of his career path. Upward Bound, founded in 1966, is a federally funded program that aims to generate in participants the skills and motivation necessary to complete secondary and postsecondary education. The Liberty Partnerships Program (LPP), established in 1990, is a state-funded program that provides services to high school students in Kingston and Poughkeepsie. Its services help

prepare students to graduate from high school and equip them with skills for college or entry into a career.

Gladys Negron-Collier, director of Upward Bound at Marist, said when Wright worked with the Marist program, he was assistant director and also a mentor to her. She remembers his involvement with the community and deep interest in helping youth.

“Robert has been in the business for a long time,” said Negron-Collier. “I admire him for giving up a 9-to-5 job and making a leap into his own business. Not everyone can give up a steady paycheck and take a chance at their own business not knowing if it will succeed or fail.”

Steve Sansola, associate dean of student affairs at Marist, also had an opportunity to work with Wright. He recalls Wright as a passionate, motivated, and positive role model and noted the impact Nubian Directions has had on the Poughkeepsie area.

“The program is very active in the community. It provides opportunities, community service, and networking, and it has a lot of partnerships with local businesses throughout Poughkeepsie,” Sansola said.

Regardless of their different practices, programs like Nubian Directions, Upward Bound, and LPP all share a similar objective: to empower youth.

“These programs get young people together as peers,” said Sansola. “They motivate each other when they are in groups.”

As Nubian Directions and its staff continue to aid youth, they remain open to expanding their services to any community that needs help.

For more information about Nubian Directions and its application process, visit <http://nubiandirections.org/>.



Left to right are Bro. Stephen Kpunga, Kevin Bruce, IT major, and Bro. Jude-Mary Umenze at the Mon Afrique event in the McCann Center.

Photo by Kibria Biswas

Mon Afrique Gets Better Every Year

By Jamelia Thompson, Staff Writer/Intern

On April 15, Marist College celebrated African culture in its annual Mon Afrique event in the McCann Center's Grey Gym.

"A lot of people have this concept about Africa being a third world country and poor, [one that] does not have a lot of resources, but this celebration makes people think a different perspective about us," said student Cornelius Krapah, president of the Mon Afrique committee. "Even though we have our problems, we are still going to celebrate who we are."

Mon Afrique, now in its sixth year, was started by Emelia Lartey, an international student from Ghana, as a small project and has now blossomed into a beautiful celebration. The event is sponsored and supported by various people and organizations on campus including the Center for Multicultural Affairs, Student

Affairs, the Gospel Choir, the Office of the President, and many more.

This year's Mon Afrique celebration was themed "Royal Dynasty," a decision made by the Mon Afrique committee.

"'Royal Dynasty' doesn't necessarily mean big kingdoms and stuff like that. It means the values in us that our parents gave to us," explained Krapah. "It will always be with us and it never dies."

The celebration featured various acts and performances that embodied African culture and traditions including a fashion show that displayed the fashion of various African countries.

"It was my first time attending this event," said Baaba Christian, designer of Bchris Couture and originally from Ghana. "I

enjoyed the different performances and I also liked how everyone worked together for the show to come together.”

The fashion show was comprised of both male and female attire. “I was dressed up as a king to represent the rich culture Africa has,” said Kevin Bruce ’16. “In representation of the culture itself, I had to open up the show — at an African event the show cannot go on without the presence of the king.”

Bruce was one of the main attractions at the event. His garments were painted in bright golds and reds.

“This is definitely one of the biggest diversity events on campus. It brings people of many different walks together,” said Bryanna Adams ’17, poet and Black Student Union president.

Adams was a co-host with junior Timos Pietris at the event. She also was a part of the planning committee and recited an empowering poem titled “Our Story” during the event.

Many students of the African culture look forward to the event because it’s an opportunity to educate the student body and faculty about where they come from.

“If you go to Africa, they don’t care if you’re white or black,” said Joshua Imboli ’17, an usher at the event. Imboli migrated from Ghana to America when he was 18. “They actually express their love towards you. ... I don’t talk about its resources, the kings and queens or the gold or the diamonds. I’m putting those way aside because that does not describe Africa. What describes Africa is love.”

“To me, we get to show America the beauty, the love that exists, not what is shown in the media,” said Ebi Komboere Olo-diana ’17, also a committee member. “This event gives something different from the media.”

“I like to see all the African celebrations. It’s always nice to see students demonstrating their talents, showing us what a different part of the world looks like,” said Christina Vertullo, math lecturer at Marist.

“The love that everybody brought to the event was like no other,” said Bruce. “I’ve never seen something like that before. The Mon Afrique show has gotten better and bigger, and it will definitely get bigger in the coming years.”



Left to right, Dr. Stacy Williams, assistant professor of psychology; Dr. Dennis J. Murray, then president; Dr. Jocelyn Smith Lee, assistant professor of psychology; and Dr. Tia Gaynor, assistant professor of public administration, at the graduate commencement exercises at Marist May 20. Murray retired as president of Marist on June 30.



Asian Alliance at Marist Rings in Lunar New Year

By Daniel McFadden, Staff Writer/Intern

The Lunar New Year is an annual event observed by many Asian cultures throughout the world and has its historical roots in ancient China. Marist College commemorated the Chinese Lunar New Year of the Monkey with an event Feb. 5 featuring a traditional lion dance, traditional Asian foods and beverages, and cultural presentations by members of the Asian Alliance. The event, held in Student Center rooms 3101-3105, was co-sponsored by the Asian Alliance and the Center for Multicultural Affairs.

The event began with a welcome by Matt Yuen, president of the Asian Alliance. One of the few culturally oriented clubs at Marist, the Asian Alliance is a group for students interested in learning about and celebrating the distinctive cultures of Asian countries. "Marist isn't too diverse," Yuen said, "and we're trying to change that."

Yuen then turned the spotlight over to members of Kwan's Kung Fu Studio of Peekskill, NY, to demonstrate the lion dance, a hallmark of the Lunar New Year celebration. These members practice the Fu Jow Pai or "Tiger Claw" system of Kung Fu, a tradition with its roots in southern Chinese culture. The dance, which lasted roughly 10 minutes, incorporated a very animated and colorful lion mask made of bamboo and papier-mâché and

weighing in at about 30 pounds.

The performers operating the mask from underneath threw cabbage leaves out of the mouth of the lion as they danced around the room to the sound of drum and gong beats. Getting hit with one of these cabbage leaves during the ceremony bodes good luck and financial success in the New Year. As one member of Kwan's phrased it, the spectacle signifies the clearing away "of old baggage from the old year and starting fresh, to have a prosperous new year."

For some students like Ian Sniffen, a Marist student of half-Filipino decent, the evening was an entirely new experience and offered a taste of diversity. For others, like Nora Wang and Abby Wong, sisters and students from China, the celebration was a welcome reminder of home—with some minor adjustments. When asked what they felt was missing from this Lunar New Year celebration, the sisters answered, "Parents."

Fireworks, candy in the morning, TV talk shows with celebrity performances, and small red envelopes containing money were among some of the other fond memories shared by Asian students reminiscing about the annual holiday. "It's like Christmas," said Wang.

Sharing their own unique cultural experience of the holiday, Marist students and members of the Asian Alliance gave presentations on how their country observes the holiday. Tien Liengtiraphan touched on some New Year traditions he has grown accustomed to living in Thailand, including morning prayers to God and paying respects to elders, preparing and cooking a whole pig, and watching his relatives gamble in the evening to prove their good fortune. Liengtiraphan joked about the time he once got hit in the head with a firecracker, something he took as a sign of good luck.

Student Lee Jae told the audience that in South Korea the Lunar New Year event is a three-day celebration that incorporates the donning of traditional festive gowns known as “Hambos.” Students Momoko Tsukatani and Nanako Hayashi explained that in Japan, celebration of the Lunar New Year includes visits to shrines or temples for worship. Hayashi said

in her country people traditionally eat Osechi Ryori, a Japanese New Year meal made of a collection of small foods such as shrimp, herring, dried anchovies, and sweet omelets. The foods represent such things as fertility, longevity, and harvest.

The evening concluded with a buffet-style feast of traditional culinary delights from a number of Asian countries. Vegetarian egg rolls, Cha Siu Bao, Chicken Momo, and Pa Jun were among the items featured in the bounty supplied by Sodexo. Fortune cookies and Thai Tea were also served, as well as a sticky-sweet rice dessert.

Information on the Alliance and its upcoming events is posted regularly on the club’s Web site and Facebook page. Membership is open and ongoing for all students who are interested in furthering their own sense of “diversity, integrity, and unity.”

Marist Student Doesn’t Let Disability Stop Her from Achieving Good Grades

By Cheyenne Heinen, Staff Writer/Intern

Marist College’s diverse student body contains a wide range of successful students who have disorders that impact their learning and overall functioning. Although these particular students may find an education setting difficult to perform in, senior Rachel Karach (right) thinks otherwise.

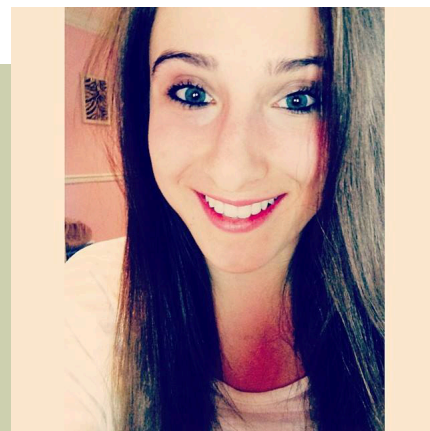
Karach, who majored in writing and media studies, was honored with the Award for Excellence in Media Studies and Production at Marist’s Baccalaureate ceremony and graduated summa cum laude this past May. She has a mild form of cerebral palsy, which mostly impacts her physically rather than cognitively. Cerebral palsy is an impairing condition that affects muscle movement, posture, and coordination. It is formed when the brain is damaged during the first few years of life.

“I trip over myself a lot,” said Karach, “and I walk slower than other people, too.” Although Karach’s condition does not impact her cognition, she explained that it makes her feel “stiff” and “spastic.” She received some assistance through Marist’s Office of Special Services, such as parking to shorten her walk from car to class.

She has not let her condition hinder her success or her social life. She lived in an apartment with a few friends and had just as much fun as your average college student.

Karach plans to attend graduate school, and Jeff Bass, her advisor as well as one of her former professors, described her as an outstanding student. “From an academic perspective, she is an honors student with a very high GPA and always performs near the top of her class. From a professional standpoint, she has earned a professional certificate in Avid Media Composer, the industry standard film and video editing system.

“Rachel has a good sense of humor and is a pleasure to have in class. She is humble and self-effacing. I appreciate her as a student and as a person.”





Wendy Maragh-Taylor, an adjunct lecturer, participated in the Marist Social Work Association's event for African American Month.

Reflecting on a Visit to Liberia

By Luke Carberry Mogan, Staff Writer/Intern

Wendy Maragh-Taylor, an adjunct professor teaching educational psychology, spoke on her experiences building a school and church in Liberia on Feb. 11 as part of an event organized by Marist's Social Work Association (SWA) for African American History Month.

In July 2010, Maragh-Taylor accompanied her husband on one of his volunteer trips to his home country of Liberia, visiting his family and working to help rebuild areas still affected from the 14-year civil war. A licensed clinical social worker herself, Maragh-Taylor was interested in helping any way she could. Previously she had sent donations to fund the construction of a local church and school facility. But she wanted to contribute more than just money.

Addressing the future social workers attending her presentation, Maragh-Taylor began by congratulating and

encouraging any "call to action, grand or small." Calling upon her own experience, Maragh-Taylor explained that the two most profound lessons she learned were her "realization [of] individual power" and one's ability to "make [an] incredible impact on people."

Calling her time in the West African nation her "Liberia Project," Maragh-Taylor discussed the differences between the real Liberia and the "image of Africa [framed] in a particular way." In the Liberian capital, Monrovia, tourists could find "cities, buildings, beaches, and palm trees." Yet over the course of 14 years, the Liberian civil war claimed 200,000 lives.

"The war was still present," said Maragh-Taylor, noting that her common sightings of amputees shattered the false reality of the capital city's aesthetics.

Though her husband had family in Monrovia, including his brother, Maragh-Taylor's destination was Zorzor, where his grandmother lived and where the church and school were being built. The rural interior of Liberia, Zorzor is likened to "basically another country compared to the capital."

Maragh-Taylor included excerpts from her book *This Part of the Sky: Building in Liberia*, which details the events in Liberia in greater detail. One excerpt described her first meeting with her husband's aunt. As part of a time-honored social ritual, the aunt laid white cloth down on the ground for Maragh-Taylor to walk on, welcoming her into the household.

Recalling overwhelming moments brought on by the sadness surrounding the loss of life from the civil war, the cruelty of the rebel soldiers, and the abduction and indoctrination of child soldiers, Maragh-Taylor wrote, "I couldn't even pray and instead I wept."

Despite differences from the routine she was accustomed to in the United States, Maragh-Taylor was accepting of her new surroundings. The two lifestyles seemed worlds apart, and yet she was amazed by the social cohesion in the communities. "They had poverty, but people didn't kill or steal," Maragh-Taylor wrote.

Before opening up a question-and-answer portion of her presentation, Maragh-Taylor read from the last chapter of her book, titled "The Power of You." She read aloud, "All social justice work starts with [an] emotional connection."

When asked about the "readjustment" of coming back to the United States from Liberia, Maragh-Taylor made the stark contrasts between the two countries apparent.

"[In Liberia] we built a school [while] a school closed in the United States," she said. "When people go hungry in this country, it means someone dropped the ball."

Maragh-Taylor was witness to the separation of material wealth between herself and her husband's family. Though they lived in mud brick huts with tin roofs, they were spiritually rich, grateful for what they had—most important, each other—and not focusing on what they did not have. Since returning from Liberia, Maragh-Taylor has made an effort to live with less, owning and needing fewer items.

Mixing a challenge with a chance for personal introspection, Maragh-Taylor let this question hang in the air: "What kind of legacy do you want to leave?"



Photo by Kelly Stohr

Randolph McLaughlin, professor of law at Pace Law School, distinguished scholar, author, and litigator, gave a lecture at Marist in April entitled "Civil Rights and Social Justice." The event was sponsored by Annamaria Maciocia, director of the Paralegal Program, senior professional lecturer, and pre-law advisor, and the Marist College Pre-Law Program.

McLaughlin, who joined Pace Law School faculty in 1988, specializes in voting rights litigation. He is a graduate of Columbia University and Harvard University School of Law.



Claudia Lent '16, a double major in criminal justice and psychology, and Dr. Addrain Conyers, assistant professor in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, at Lent's honors thesis presentation.

Opening Our Eyes: the Realities of Privilege

By Christina Crasto, Staff Writer/Intern

Claudia Lent '16, recent recipient of the 2016 Andrew Lutakome Kayiira Award in Criminal Justice, presented her honors thesis, "Opening Our Eyes: the Realities of Privilege," in the River View Rooms of the Student Center on April 11. A double major in criminal justice and psychology, Lent talked about her research on race relations and privilege on campus encompassing focus groups and interviews with students of color.

Lent said she was inspired to do the research by current events and overheard conversations on campus which led her to wonder where she, as a white female, fit into these conversations. In introducing her presentation, Dr. Addrain Conyers, her thesis advisor, described her as one of his most socially conscious students.

"If Claudia feels there is injustice anywhere, she will fight it."

Beginning her research with a literature review, Lent cited the influence of the Black Lives Matter movement, activist Cornel West, and author Patty McIntosh. She then referred to an article by McIntosh she used during her interviews with students of color about the 62 "Points of Privilege." Assuming that most privileged people are often blind to prejudices, she created a platform for students to be able to express themselves and anonymously share their own experiences with racism.

Lent readily admitted that she grew up, similar to many Marist College students, in a white, middle-class family and related how she became aware of what her own "whiteness" has given her throughout her life. She defined white privilege

as “any advantage, opportunity, benefit, head start, or general protection from negative societal mistreatment which persons deemed white will typically enjoy, but which others will generally not enjoy.”

Lent’s main finding about the attitudes and behaviors of the typical Marist student was that most of the racism experienced by her focus group members and interview subjects was caused by misinformation. With a “majority of campus privileged by wealth and race,” Lent said, “you might not even realize you’re perpetuating it.” The problem becomes more about not taking the time to consider a fellow classmate’s past experiences or struggles. This lack of cultural competence, or as Lent described it, “ignorance to cultural differences,” is present in three ways: colorblindness, microaggressions, and misconceptions. As one anonymous participant described, students often “assume everyone had the same experiences as you,” rather than recognizing the need to educate yourself and others about cultural differences.

In terms of solutions, Lent recorded the suggestions of her participants and acknowledged the need to continue this conversation and “use your privilege to correct the system.”

Communications major and research participant Tatiana Miranda ’16 described her experience with the research project

as incredible, as she has previously expressed frustration that white privilege is not mentioned more often on campus. In addition, Miranda agreed with Lent’s mantra about continuing the conversation. “People should be more uncomfortable on this campus than they are,” said Lent.

An anonymous participant stated:

“When I have children, I will most certainly have to teach my children about systematic racism, not to look certain people in the eye, not to be loud at certain times of the night and in public because you’re going to be a stereotype and, depending on where you are, they’re going to call the cops on you. Or if you’re in the mall, people are going to follow you.”

“I think this is an important topic that more people should be talking about and Claudia handled it with respect,” said Kristen Sandberg ’16, an applied mathematics major.

Lent plans to continue her research with the help of Conyers and fellow junior criminal justice student Bryanna Adams.



Jerome Pickett '98, senior vice president and chief security officer of the National Basketball Association (center), speaks with Dr. Geoffrey Brackett, executive vice president (left), and Dr. Jocelyn Smith Lee, assistant professor of psychology (right), after giving the keynote address at the Catharine Street Community Center Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center in Poughkeepsie, NY.

Pickett, a native of Newburgh, NY, is a member of the Marist College Alumni Executive Board.

Photo by Desmond Murray



Emmanuel Wale Onakoya '15, a former member of the Marist football team, begins a position with KPMG in summer 2016.

Marist Football Alum Lands Job at KPMG

By Jamelia Thompson, Staff Writer/Intern

Marist College 2015 alumnus and former football player Emmanuel Wale Onakoya's diligence in the classroom and exposure to the different facets of the business world landed him a deal advisory position at audit, tax, and advisory services firm KPMG in New York City

"The entire time it is a grind," said Onakoya. "There are a lot of ups and downs, but being able to juggle all that, whether playing a sport or completing an assignment, shows that you put in the hard work and it does pay off."

Raised in Maryland, Onakoya graduated from Marist with a degree in accounting.

In addition to interviewing with KPMG, he had the opportunity to speak with and be interviewed by accounting firm PWC as well as several investment banks including JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs.

"It came down to where I felt most comfortable, and the people I was going to meet."

Onakoya was equipped with a "tremendous amount of experience that a typical college student would not have," according to alumnus Chris Heath '96, a mentor to Onakoya. Heath was assigned as a mentor during Onakoya's sophomore year at Marist through the College's football mentoring program. The program pairs current players with alumni to help prepare them for life after sports.

Heath and Onakoya were able to develop a close relationship because they both lived in Washington, DC. During the summers, Onakoya had the opportunity to intern for Heath at Robbins Gioia, headquartered in Washington. Each time Onakoya interned there, he was exposed to areas vastly different from his study of accounting.

Another mentor is alumnus Kevin Cody '91. Formerly a member of Marist's football and lacrosse teams, he has introduced Onakoya to several people from his work environment as well as people he has made connections with at Marist. Both mentors have had a chance to observe Onakoya's transition and his eagerness to further his education and establish professional networks.

As an undergraduate, in addition to working with his mentors, Onakoya interned at Ernst and Young, where he did auditing in the firm's financial services office. During the summer following graduation from Marist, he joined the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA).

"I was able to gain insight on more of the services that the big four accounting firms offered," said Onakoya. "I was also able to speak with successful leaders in the field of accounting and finance on what it takes to get ahead and succeed, not only as an African American but as a businessman in general."

Professors at Marist who taught Onakoya remember him as a hard worker. "It was a difficult course," said Dr. Gregory Tully, associate professor of accounting. "Everybody struggles, but Emmanuel was willing to put in the work for a demanding class."

"Accounting is not like any other subject," said Dr. Jianing Jade Fang, associate professor of accounting. "In Intro to Accounting, on Emmanuel's first test, he did not do so well ... after we talked, he did better."

Onakoya is currently enrolled in graduate school at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. During summer 2016 he will complete a master's degree in accounting as well as the remaining sections of the Certified Public Accountant exam (CPA).

Onakoya plans to continue to excel. "My short-term goal is to pass my CPA exam, and for my long-term goal I would like to make partner at KPMG."

Student Employment Appreciation Day Expands

By Desmond Murray, Editor

For more than 12 years, the Student Financial Services Office has celebrated Student Employment Appreciation Day in the month of April.

During this celebration you can see the campus filled with complimentary food, DJ music, games, and vendor tables.

According to Mary Lou Kutchma, director of student financial assistance in Student Financial Services, Student Employment Appreciation Day was first organized at Marist in 2003. This year was the first time that Student Employment Appreciation Day encompassed a week's worth of events.

"We in Student Financial Services decided to change and implement this in 2016 as a way to branch out and encourage more departments to become a part of the festivities and celebration of student employees,"

said Erica Leman, senior assistant director of student employment in Student Financial Services.

Student Employment Appreciation Week is recognized nationally and is traditionally celebrated during the second or third week of April, according to Leman.

Another new feature of Student Employment Appreciation Week was the Student Employee of the Year/Student Supervisor of the Year Awards Dinner on April 14.

Honorees at the event included Student Employee of the Year—Kristen Sandberg of Mathematics; Student Employee of the Year, Honorable Mention—Alexa Comuniello of Phonathon; Student Supervisor of the Year—Juan Olivera-Silvera of Fashion; Department Decoration Contest—Registrar's Office; and Marist Student Employment Appreciation Week 2016 Social Media Contest—Molly Weeks of Student Financial Services.



Juan Olivera-Silvera, internship faculty coordinator for the Fashion Program



Journalist Kevin Merida Inspires Marist Community

By Luke Carbery Mogan, Staff Writer/Intern

Washington Post managing editor Kevin Merida joined Marist College's Center for Sports Communication Director Keith Strudler and the academic community on Feb. 25 to discuss his appointment as editor in chief for a relaunched ESPN Web site, *The Undefeated*. Merida's past accomplishments include his analytical coverage of the 2008 presidential election, writing a series for the *Washington Post* titled "Being a Black Man," and being the first African American to hold a managing editor position at the *Washington Post*.

With a majority of his career spent reporting on political and social struggles, Merida's background fits in with the objective of *The Undefeated*: to mix sports stories with various social issues, especially race.

"I got into journalism after the Watergate period,"

Merida said. "That's what really excited me."

Labeling the early to mid-1970s as "the greatest time ... to be a journalist," Merida recalled the experimentation and sense of "entrepreneurship" he and his colleagues felt at their student-run newspaper at Boston University.

Taking advantage of the variety of multimedia outlets being an online publication provides, Merida plans to expand *The Undefeated* to include short documentaries, music videos, podcasts, long-form content, and even spoken word art such as standup comedy.

"[The goal of *The Undefeated*] is to build a community and an audience," Merida said. "To have [these] urgent, necessary conversations ... put people together." Merida

noted the importance of celebrity-athlete activism in addressing today's social issues.

"*The Undefeated* will write about subjects we know we can take on, not dance around [the issue]," Merida said.

The latter half of Merida's presentation, including a question-and-answer portion for those in attendance, followed a theme of finding identity: *The Undefeated* finding a style appealing to demographics of subscribers, Merida's rise to a position in a profession lacking administrative diversity, and athletes developing a personality reflecting their own social background and the times they play in. He even found a way to work in his favorite quote: "Lead from where you are."

When asked about his experiences as a person of color in a position that at most newspapers lacks diversity, Merida responded, "We're always aware. I always see it. I always notice it. I'm never happy [or] comfortable with that, being the only person of color in a meeting. We're always discovering people in places we never knew they were."

Merida drew a parallel between himself, the highest-ranking person of color in print media, and Channing Dungey, both the first African American and first female president of a major broadcast television network, who was recently elected president of ABC Entertainment.

"We all have multiple identities. Sometimes you're representing something that you are," Merida remarked. "[Sometimes] you're representing yourself and your family, but also other people."

A major goal of *The Undefeated* was described as "to examine high-profile athletes" and observe "behavior, patterns, and reactions" by fans, the media, and other players. Merida brought up the clash of Cam Newton's

playful onfield identity and the way the media interpreted his actions. Newton's flashy theatrics during games were deemed as showboating to the fanbases outside of the Carolina Panthers franchise. What was overlooked was the amount of passion Newton has for his fans—for example, handing the ball to children in the stands whenever a player scores a touchdown. A source for controversy, Merida said, was how Cam Newton was attacked for his "showboating" and Aaron Rodgers, a white quarterback, was given a State Farm Insurance commercial for his celebration move.

Following the original presentation was a lunch event organized and catered by Marist. While answering questions asked by Marist students and faculty present, Merida challenged students to look for diversity wherever they go.

"Bring something of yourself to everything you do," Merida said. "Be deliberate about being really eclectic. Seek people out who are different and make that a part of your value system."

When a student asked how an editor can work to "foster a [more] diverse workplace," Merida said, "People need to be seen, know that they're alive, that they're somebody. How do you convey people's importance? Include [these] people in conversations and seek out their opinions."

Commenting on the existence of glass ceilings or barriers in his line of work—which Merida does not believe in—he plainly stated, "If somebody doesn't want you, you shouldn't want them."

Left: Journalist Kevin Merida, editor in chief of ESPN's The Undefeated, spoke at Marist about mixing sports stories with social issues.

Ngoné Lo '16, a resident of Dakar, Senegal, was the recipient of the 2016 Marist College Intern of the Year Award.

Photo by Al Nowak



Marist Students Selected as Interns of the Year Including One International Student

By Desmond Murray, Editor

Ngoné Lo, an applied mathematics major with a concentration in chemistry, was this year's recipient of the 2016 Marist College Intern of the Year Award. Lo, a resident of Dakar, Senegal, received her award on May 4 at the Field Experience Recognition Award Ceremony at Marist College in the Cornell Boathouse on the waterfront.

She made history by being the first international student at Marist to receive the award.

Lo, who graduated summa cum laude this past May, was a Dean's List student and a member of Pi Mu Epsilon National Mathematics Honor Society, a member of the Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society, and a MasterCard Foundation scholar.

She participated in internships at the National Institutes of Health in Gaithersburg, MD; United Bank for Africa in Dakar, Senegal; and Imagine Learning Inc., in Provo, UT.

"I was thrilled to learn of Ngoné Lo's award," said Karen Tomkins-Tinch, coordinator of International Student Programs in the Center for Multicultural Affairs. "Her hard work, dedication to perfection, and thirst for knowledge truly set her apart as a student and as an employee. She is very deserving of this award."

Tomkins-Tinch said Lo also has been her employee as an international student orientation leader, keeping track of student meals and reconciling accounts.

Dr. Joe Kirtland, professor of mathematics and internship faculty coordinator for mathematics, nominated Lo for the award.

"Ngoné is my advisee. She is one of the hardest-working and brightest students I know," he said, noting that she earned an A in all of her math classes except for one in which she earned an A-.

In addition, seven students, representing each of the academic schools at Marist, were recognized for their field experience achievements. The students were Kelsey Fitzgibbon, media studies and production; Matthew Struble, communications with a concentration in advertising; Madeline Heusted, business administration with a concentration in human resources; Emily Rose Storck, psychology and dual certification in childhood education and special education; Thomas Snihur, biomedical science; Mary Babin, English; and Nicholas Cipriano, psychology.

The Center for Career Services presented the awards in front of an audience of employers, Marist faculty and staff, students, and family members.

The annual award, presented by Marist's Center for Career Services since 1993, recognizes a graduating senior for outstanding achievement in experiential education, which includes internships, co-ops, and student teaching assignments. The college-wide award was presented to Lo based upon

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Gospel Choir Performs for African American History Month

By Christina Crasto, Staff Writer/Intern

The Marist College community came together for a night of singing, dancing, and learning at the History of Gospel Music Program on Feb. 19 in the Cabaret. The event was sponsored by the Center for Multicultural Affairs, the Student Activities office, the Music Department, the Gospel Choir, and the Chamber Singers.

"Tonight we had an opportunity to celebrate our African American culture and history on campus with song, dance, and verse," said Bob Lynch, director of student activities.

Before the performance, members of the Gospel Choir held hands in prayer to prepare themselves for the evening. The group's goal, according to their Web page, is to "speak the Word of God to all who seek it." The choir consists of Marist students from any major who have a passion for performance.

With a saxophone, drums, and two guitars, the Chamber Singers and the Gospel Choir came together under the leadership of Sarah Williams and David Burns. When asked to comment on the event's success, Gospel Choir Director Burns humbly pointed out his tattoo and quoted his favorite Psalm, 150, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord."

By the second song, Burns and the Gospel Choir had the whole audience standing up for "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing." The audience joined in on almost every song, from clapping to swaying, and there were smiles all around the room.

Between the happier numbers were darker moments explaining the history of gospel music, dating to before the Civil War. The addition of historical readings between songs helped the audience connect to the stories behind the music. After the African dance team finished its performance, the lights in the Cabaret went out. The sounds of yelling filled the room to reenact the slave trade as an emotional woman talked about having to leave her home and her children being taken away. Another moment that caused the clapping and smiling to pause was a reenactment of Rosa Park's iconic refusal to sit at the back of the bus: "I didn't know just saying no would begin the civil rights movement."

From the first song "Marching to Freedom" to the final tune "Lean on Me," the recurring theme of the night was inclusion. Director of the Center for Multicultural Affairs Iris Ruiz-Grech said the main objective of the event was not only to raise awareness within the Marist community but also to continue "bringing different cultures and ideologies together." The last reading of the evening reflected that with the closing line "United we stand, together we can."

"They did a good job of bonding us together," said psychology/special education major Shannon Cover, "especially at the end when they had us hold hands and sing."

Gospel Choir member and biology major Joanna Derisse said she enjoyed "seeing everyone come together and celebrate unity."

Fellow choir member and junior finance major Mary Espino agreed. "It was my first time performing in Gospel, and I immediately felt connected to everyone there."

Continued from page 28

Interns of the Year

receiving the highest rating among candidates from all of the academic schools from a panel of judges.

At the award ceremony, the Center for Career Services also presented the 2016 Marist College Intern Employer of the Year Award to USAA, based in San Antonio, TX.

Past recipients of the employer award have been Orthopedic Associates of Dutchess County, Ernst & Young LLP, Health Quest, Anderson Center for Autism, *Hudson Valley* magazine, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, MTV Networks, Target, Morgan Stanley, Maggy London International, the Dutchess County Sheriff's Department, the Center for Enhanced Performance at the U.S. Military Academy, St. Francis Hospital, IBM, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, the American Cancer Society, Central Hudson Gas and Electric, Northwestern Mutual Life, Paine Webber, and Madison Square Garden.

The keynote speaker at the luncheon was Jim Fogler, president and publisher of the *Poughkeepsie Journal*.

Left to right are Dennis J. Murray, Presidential Fellow Freddimir Garcia, Project Coordinator for Executive Affairs Diane Hart, and Executive Vice President Geoffrey Brackett at the 40 under 40 Awards.

Two Marist Administrators Honored at 40 under 40 Awards

By Christina Crasto, Staff Writer/Intern

Two members of the Marist College community were recognized at the 11th Annual Shaker 40 under 40 Awards from the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce on April 28. “The award recipients are people who “make the Hudson Valley the best place to live, work, play, and stay,” said President and CEO of the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce Frank Castella, Jr.

“They are the rising leaders at work and in the community, but aren’t looking for praise and do what they do selflessly,” Castella said.

Recipient Freddimir Garcia is a Presidential Fellow of the College and works closely with the president’s office to coordinate constituents, organize events, and represent the Office of the President at community meetings. After graduating from Marist with a bachelor’s in business with a concentration in marketing and minors in advertising and Spanish, Garcia continued to work with the College in its Financial Services and Admission departments. He received an MBA from Marist in 2014.

On receiving the Shaker 40 under 40 Award, Garcia said he was honored and thankful for former president Dennis J. Murray, who “continuously encourages the Marist community to develop and nurture the relationship with the community.” Garcia is also an active member of the community, serving on



Photo: Courtesy of the Poughkeepsie Journal

the board of directors for several local nonprofits including the Catharine Street Community Center, Family Services, and the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

“I am extremely thankful for the opportunities presented to me and look forward to continuing my work in serving others,” Garcia said.

Award recipient Diane Hart is project coordinator for executive affairs at Marist and a member of the board of trustees for the Mid-Hudson Children’s Museum. Hart received an MPA from Marist in 2008 and has previously worked with several nonprofits in the area, such as United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region, A-HOME, the American Red Cross of Greater New York, and AmeriCorps. During her career in the nonprofit sector, Hart created three volunteer programs operating statewide and raised more than \$5 million in grants and individual donations for various nonprofits.

In response to her award, Hart said she was honored to be included among so many other talented recipients. In discussing her involvement in Newburgh and Poughkeepsie, she said she loved both communities and strives “to do everything I can to make them wonderful places to live, work, and raise a family. I hope in some way, through my volunteer efforts and work at Marist, I contribute to that goal.”



American Promise Documentary Shown at Marist

By Cheyenne Heinen, Staff Writer/Intern

The documentary *American Promise*, shown at Marist on Feb. 9, followed two middle-class adolescent black men, Idris Brewster and Oluwasun (Seun) Summers of Brooklyn, NY, as they progressed at the Dalton School, a private, predominantly white coeducational school in New York, NY, which provides classes from kindergarten through high school. The film, which won a Special Jury Award at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival, was made over the course of 12 years by Idris's parents.

The unfortunate perpetual stresses the two boys endured from their parents, educators, and peers discouraged them from moving forward in the school. At one point Idris stated, "I bet if I was white, I'd be better off."

A diverse group of faculty and students from Marist as well as people from the community attended the showing of the film and participated in a comprehensive discussion afterward.

"With much gratitude I appreciate that the film was about two families that set out to document their sons' educational journeys at a prestigious private school expecting great things," said Dr. Nini Visaya Hayes, a professor at Marist and a former middle and high school teacher from Seattle, WA, who attended the film. "That said, there were many themes about race, racism, class, gender, parenting, being a young person, and

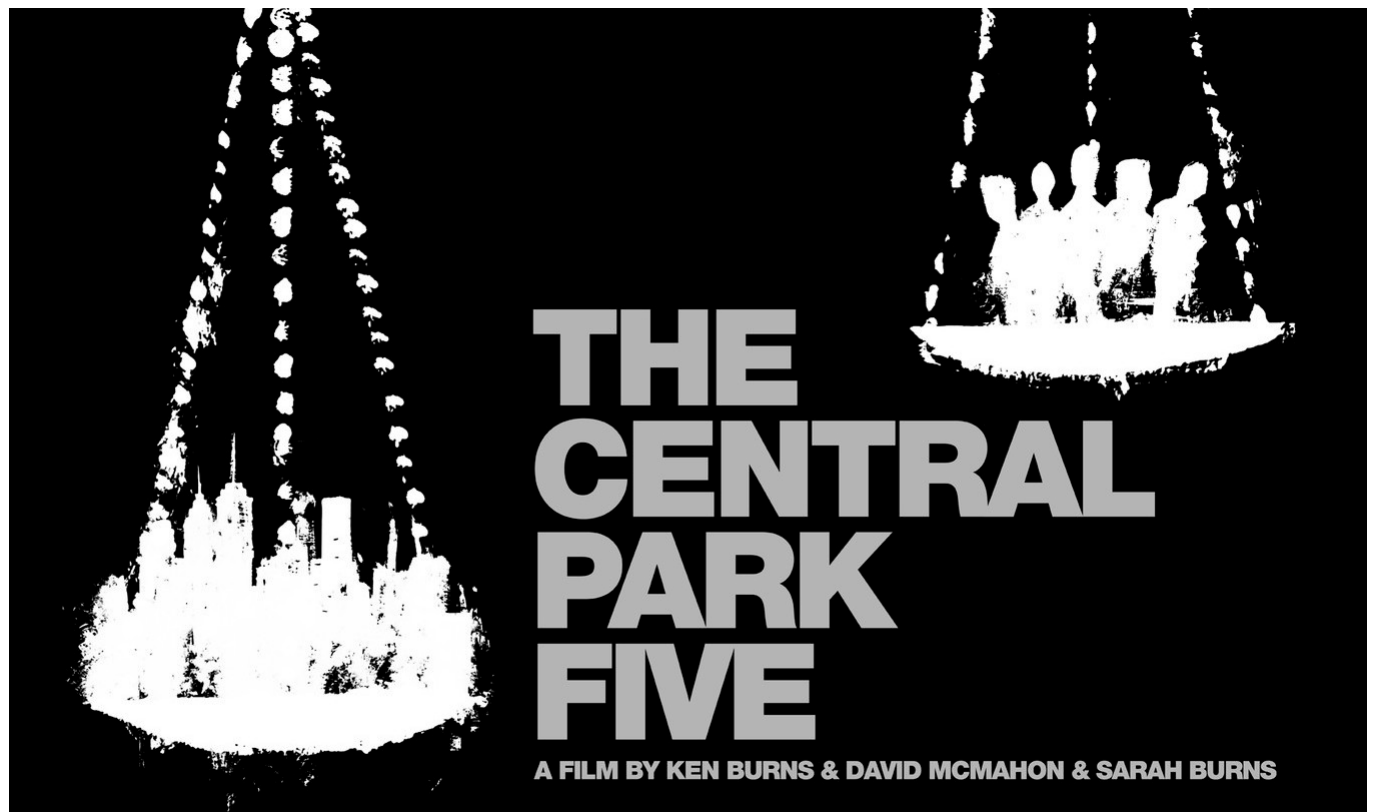
educational inequities that disproportionately impact students of color no matter how prestigious the institution because racism and classism and other systems of inequality are pervasive.

"Throughout my educational journey I have found a community of educators of color and allies that have mentored me, affirmed me, and supported me in the work I want to accomplish," Hayes said.

Several Marist students who attended the film reflected on their own experiences in college.

"One of the difficulties that I had, especially freshman year, is that I didn't see too many students who looked like me," said Jordan Carter '16, a broadcast journalism major. He related to many elements that were displayed in *American Promise* including that he comes from a well-educated family and lives in Hartford, CT. "Education can literally transform one's world," Carter said, "to heights that may even be unimaginable."

Carter felt being a minority in an educational setting has "reinforced the focus of giving all to even the smallest opportunities." Nevertheless, his origins have not hindered his motivation and successes here at Marist.



A Screening of the *Central Park Five*

By Luke Carberry Mogan, Staff Writer/Intern

On the night of April 9, 1989, a female jogger was brutally attacked and raped in Central Park, leaving her in a coma for 12 days. At the same time, on the other side of the park, droves of New York teenagers gathered, some of them attacking parkgoers and participating in vandalism. Five teens, who participated in neither the jogger attack nor the instances of what the police called “wilding,” were picked up by police later that night: Raymond Santana, Jr., Kevin Richardson, Antron McCray, Yusef Salaam, and Korey Wise.

The jogger’s identity was protected by the simple title of the “Central Park jogger” and the five young men came to be identified as the “Central Park Five.”

On Feb. 12, Marist College’s Center for Multicultural Affairs (CMA) partnered with the Black Student Union to sponsor a screening of *Central Park Five*, a documentary about the resulting cases by documentarian Ken Burns and his daughter, Sarah, for African American History Month. Dr. Addrain Conyers,

a criminal justice professor, hosted the screening, discussing the social undertones prevalent in America at the time of the court proceedings.

“Pay attention to the case,” Conyers said. “But, pay [close] attention to the media coverage [and] how citizens reacted.”

The cases begin with an interrogation process that a social psychologist interviewed in the film called “gruesome.” Initially, officers of the Central Park Precinct had brought in Santana, Richardson, and McCray.

Without informing the teenagers why they were brought in for questioning, the officers made use of aggressive interrogation tactics to corroborate a story between the three suspects, who did not know each other and were never in the same room. After 14 to 30 hours spent “breaking” the young men, the officers constructed a false timeline of the attack by pitting them against each other.

Assuring the teenagers that they could go home after submitting their statements, the officers forced the young men to sign their lives away. Salaam and Wise were brought in shortly after and questioned in a similar process. Wise submitted his statement like Santana, Richardson, and McCray, while Salaam never signed a confession.

Court proceedings took place over the next year and a half, culminating in convictions for all five of the youth: 5 to 10 years for Santana, Richardson, McCray, and Salaam, while Wise was convicted for 5 to 15 years.

The law was most certainly not on their side. And at times, it was believed neither were the defendants' legal counsels. Salaam recalled times when it seemed like his lawyer, family friend Bobby Burns, was "asleep" during the trial. Richardson's lawyer, Howard Diller, argued that Richardson was there but did not take part in the attack. Santana's lawyer, Peter Rivera, was the only defense lawyer to argue that the boys' statements were coerced.

In seven years' time, Salaam, McCray, Santana, and Richardson were all released. Wise was still imprisoned, serving out the rest of his time in Rikers Island. The ember of the story would have burned out if not for a coincidence of the prison system. Matias Reyes, a fellow Rikers inmate, learned who Wise was and why he was serving time at Rikers.

In 2002, inmate Reyes confessed to attacking the Central Park jogger. The police had the DNA evidence to prove it. The story of the "Central Park Five" sprang back to life, bringing up painful memories and irreversible mistakes.

The bulk of the documentary's first act is spent showing how five African American and Hispanic teenagers were victims of unethical treatment by New York police officers misusing their authority. The five knew they were innocent, the court did not believe them, and New York City was a "circus," Conyers called it, of mixed opinions.

In the second act, the DNA evidence and confession of a man serving a lifetime sentence—convicted for other heinous crimes years after the Five were sentenced—was not enough

to convince the public of the Five's innocence. Several New York publications stuck to their past judgments, printing articles condemning the Five for the crimes.

The obsessive lapse of fair judgment in the New York legal system allowed five young men to atone for the crimes of a serial offender, enabling him to continue his sprees. An NYPD Police Commission hearing reviewed the proceedings of the past case and investigation and found nothing.

"Their innocence never got the attention their guilt did," historian Steven Wilder said in the film.

Although Reyes confessed, the Five were not exonerated from the previous verdicts and Wise was still in prison serving his original sentence. Protests called for overturning the original verdicts in December 2002. On Dec. 19, 2002, the Manhattan District Attorney office of Robert Morgenthau overturned the previous convictions.

The Five sued the City of New York in 2003 on grounds of malicious persecution and racial discrimination. They were awarded \$1 million for each year they were wrongfully imprisoned, totaling \$41 million.

Explaining the racial tension in America at the time, Conyers said, "There's always fuel for racial tension. The fuel is there. The civil rights [movement] is not too far removed. This happened in the mecca of diversity, the melting pot."

"We have to acknowledge the role media plays," Conyers said, "[or else] the Central Park Five will disappear in history."



Dr. Derek Greenfield Speaks to Marist's Student-Athletes

By Cheyenne Heinen, Staff Writer/Intern

Marist College's athletic programs bring together young men and women of different races and cultures, exposing each other to different customs and traditions while sharing a common passion in a sport. However, the term "diversity" is not particular to the conjoining of cultures but also pertains to the experiences, choices, and exposure to certain environments that alter an individual. That is why Dr. Derek Greenfield, a visionary speaker, college professor, and administrator, spoke to Marist's student-athletes and the College community on Feb. 10.

His message was that diversity applies to a wide spectrum of people.

"His message was more about understanding differences and embracing one another," said Alyssa Gates, director of Student-Athlete Enhancement and adjunct lecturer. Gates arranges for speakers such as Greenfield to address student-athletes and the community every spring.

"His approach was different," said Gates. "There was a larger activity where he would say, 'Everyone, stand up if you've ever felt discriminated against' or 'Stand up if you weren't included in something.'" Gates described his message as

"deep" and said he had penetrated the student's minds from a different angle.

Greenfield's presentation was an eye-opening experience for all who attended. Those who participated in his activities stood if they felt comfortable in doing so; then participants who chose not to stand but nevertheless had shared a similar experience could know that people in their environment encounter similar obstacles.

"This event really made me think a lot about my teammates and care for their personal life, as they are brothers and family to me, on and off the field," said sophomore and Marist men's soccer team member Enzo Petrocelli. "The message that I believe that he was trying to send to us was to respect others and not judge someone by their ethnicity or by the color of their skin and to really reach out and connect with them.

"Everyone is equal and deserves a shot to meet new people and become friends."

Above: Dr. Derek Greenfield gave a diversity lecture to Marist student-athletes in February.





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