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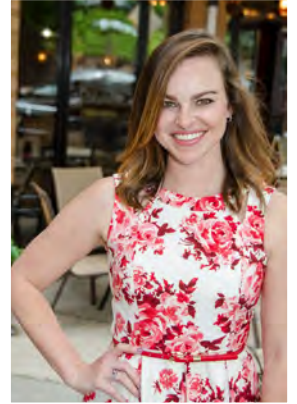


COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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Dear Readers,

It is hard to believe that we are celebrating CSU's 25th anniversary this year. What a milestone! CSU's story is one of challenge, triumph and faith. (Page 22) What began as a dream for a family of four has evolved into a university that has changed the lives of thousands. I hope you all are as proud to be a part of this organization as I am.



During its 25 years, CSU has conferred more than 60,000 degrees. Each diploma awarded has not only benefitted the graduates who earned it, but their families, friends and communities. For this 25th anniversary edition, we wanted to do something very special to highlight the many ways that our alumni are not only achieving their dreams, but are working to do the same for others. I hope that you are inspired by the 25 stories we have chosen to highlight in this edition's cover story, beginning on Page 6.

It was incredibly difficult to choose only 25 of you, as we know each and every one of you are truly spectacular. To all of our CSU alums, we are proud of you, we are rooting for you and we can't wait to see what's next for you. We love to hear your stories of perseverance, community involvement or career accomplishments. To share your story with fellow Knights, email CSU-AlumniMagazine@ColumbiaSouthern.edu.

As you read these stories, my hope is that you feel connected to other Knights. While you may not have completed your degree together or walked together on a campus, the bond of Knights is still unlike any other. And remember, none of this is possible without each and every one of you. Together, we can rise to exciting heights.

Happy Reading,

Libby Reilly
Editor-in-Chief

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Engage with us on social media or send us an email at CSU-Alumni@ColumbiaSouthern.edu



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LETTER FROM THE
ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENT



To my fellow Knights,

Welcome! Once again, I am very excited to reach out to each and every one of you, especially on the 25th anniversary of our alma mater.

Wow, 25 years and Columbia Southern University is still growing

with new courses and improving the existing ones.

What does 25 years represent? It can best be said in this quote: "An anniversary is a time to celebrate the joys of today, the memories of yesterday, and the hopes of tomorrow."

As we look back on the years we studied dutifully and successfully completed our courses to attain our degrees, we can certainly celebrate the joys and hopes that this anniversary represents.

Many of us have been given the opportunity for a better job because of our dedication to successfully completing our degrees; some of us have taken the opportunity to start our own businesses. Because of our studies, we have become more successful today.

Our educational success has been made possible because 25 years ago, Robert Mayes, Sr. had a vision to establish a "student-first philosophy," which still resonates today within the online education community. The best part is that CSU continues to grow and produce some of the best professionals in their fields.

We, as CSU alumni, should continue to raise the banner and encourage friends and family to follow the dream of higher education. It is clear that it is a worthy cause and has led to many positive outcomes.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for believing in our alma mater when the time came to make that important decision about your education.

Wherever you are tonight, and wherever you will be tomorrow, let us raise our glasses and heads high to proudly toast Columbia Southern University. To 25 more years; I thank each and every one of you.

Most humbly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ralph Blessing".

Ralph Blessing
Alumni Association President, Class of 2004

CSU Celebrates

A large graphic celebrating 25 years. The number "25" is written in a large, dark blue, serif font. Below it, the word "YEARS" is written in a smaller, dark blue, sans-serif font. The background of the graphic is a collage of many small, light-colored photographs of people, likely alumni, arranged in a grid pattern. The entire graphic is set within a white rectangular frame with a thin blue border.

with 25 Knights

Knights come from all states, careers, backgrounds and walks of life. They are entrepreneurs, record-breakers, Olympic athletes, industry leaders and local heroes. They are esteemed and accomplished individuals who are dedicated to making a difference.

To celebrate CSU's 25th anniversary, we wanted to highlight 25 alumni who have made the world a better place. This story tells of 25 individuals who, like you, are passionate about their careers and their communities. We hope sharing these inspirational stories will make you feel a connection to your fellow Knights. You all share at least one thing in common: each and every one of you has a story that defies reason. Here are theirs.





JOHN MACAHAN

Assistant Project Manager » Baton Rouge, LA

An Army veteran, John Macahan was one of the many military students who make up more than 40 percent of CSU's student body. Like many veterans, he turned to CSU to launch a second career after transitioning out of the military. Macahan's strong dedication to his career and education was reflected in 2016 when he was awarded CSU's Outstanding Safety Professional Award.

What organizations are you involved in? » National Safety Council » Project Management Institute » Young Jewish Professionals » Young Professionals Group, Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce

Awards: Outstanding Safety Professional (2016)

What is your favorite memory about CSU? The day my degree finally arrived. It was a very rewarding experience to read my name on an actual college degree.

How have your degrees impacted your life? The degrees I obtained through Columbia Southern University have allowed me to gain knowledge in my field and create opportunities to grow within my organization. They have also shown senior management that I have the ability to learn new skills and the intuition to understand a wide range of disciplines.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I really enjoy watching a project progress from start to finish. Working in construction allows me the opportunity to do that while working with a wide range of trades.

CSU Degrees Earned

MBA in Project Management (2018); B.S. Occupational Safety and Health (2016)



KATRINA JOHNSON

Police Sergeant » Birmingham, AL

Katrina Johnson is dedicated to her law enforcement career and was the recipient of a Learning Partner scholarship. Soon after achieving her degree and passing an exam, she was promoted to police sergeant at the Birmingham (Alabama) Police Department. Later, she was promoted to an investigator within the internal affairs division.

What organizations are you involved in?

Glad Tidings Church, Prisoner Outreach Ministry

Awards: » Dedication and Loyal Service, Birmingham Police Academy (May 2000-Aug. 2013) » Director's Award, Birmingham Police Academy (2009)

What is your favorite memory about CSU? My favorite memory of CSU is of course winning the scholarship through the Fraternal Order of Police. That was a blessing and I was so surprised to fulfill a dream and my heart's desire. I enjoyed talking to my instructors. If I had questions, they were very helpful. One of my favorite memories was being on the beach and actually completing a paper.

How has your degree impacted your life? A degree in criminal justice administration is acknowledged in law enforcement. It helps with promotions and with interviews to new assignments within the police department. It definitely helped me when I interviewed for the internal affairs division. When I interviewed, I was the only one in the group who had a master's degree in criminal justice.

What do you enjoy most about your work? I've always enjoyed my career in law enforcement. Being an internal affairs investigator gives me the opportunity to minister to young and veteran officers, encouraging them to learn from any mistakes and move forward in the right direction.

CSU Degree Earned

M.S. Criminal Justice Administration (2015)





TRACY BARNES

Business Owner » Durango, CO

Olympic biathlon athlete Tracy Barnes spent more than 15 years training beside her twin sister Lanny to become one of the best in biathlon, a sport that combines cross-country skiing and rifle marksmanship. While she was training and competing, Tracy began attending classes at CSU in 2010. As the Olympics neared in 2014, Tracy qualified while her sister was unable to due to illness. Tracy decided to give her spot on the Olympics team to Lanny. The noble sacrifice was recognized by the International Fair Play Committee and others as a true show of sisterhood and sportsmanship.

What is your job title? Owner of Check Outside, LLC; Owner of Top Shooting Institute; Manager of Elk Tun Builders; Manager of Barnes Properties.

What organizations are you involved in? I run two large fundraising events a year within my community whose proceeds go to local nonprofits.

Awards: » United Nations Fair Play Award (2014) » USOC Jack Kelley Award (2014)

What is your favorite memory about CSU? The people and professors who run the school and classes and the feeling of accomplishment with each course completed.

How has your degree impacted your life? It gave me the self-confidence and the knowledge I needed to start my own businesses and succeed in the professional world.

What excites you most about what you do? The unpredictable nature of business and the creativity of trying to figure out how to make it successful.

CSU Degree Earned

B.S. Business Administration/Marketing (2014)



MATTHEW BARTAL

Police Chief » Lebanon, PA

Matthew Bartal's dedication to his community and his tremendous efforts to help create an agreement to meet the law enforcement needs of two towns are key reasons he was selected as the 2017 CSU Outstanding Law Enforcement Professional of the Year.

What is your job title? Police chief for the North Annville Township

What organizations are you involved in? » American Federation of Police and Concerned Citizens » Concerns of Police Survivors » Fraternal Order of Police » International Brotherhood of Police Officers » National Chiefs of Police Association » National Sheriff's Association » United States Air Force Auxiliary, Civil Air Patrol » Valley of Reading Consistory

Awards: » Community Service Award, Cleona Borough Police Department » Officer of the Year Award, Lebanon County Fraternal Order of Police » Police Officers Hall of Fame, Criminal Investigations » Outstanding Duty Performance, U.S. Air Force Auxiliary Civil Air Patrol » Outstanding Law Enforcement Professional Award

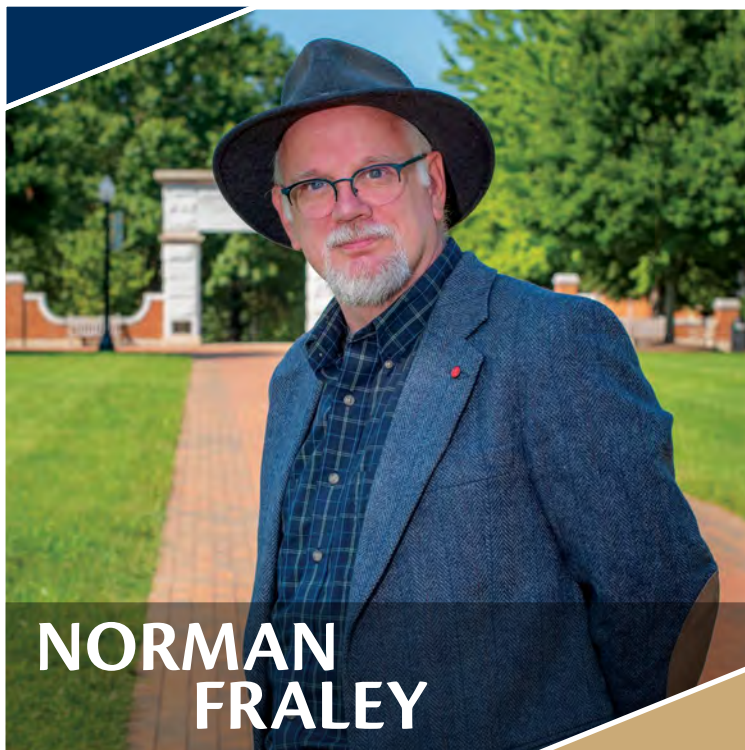
What is your favorite memory of CSU? I missed the deadline for my very first assignment due to work and thought for certain I would not get credit. I contacted the school and they were able to forward my concerns to my professor. The professor was able to work with me through my police work schedule.

How has your degree impacted your life? I most certainly can say that this degree has made me more personally and professionally marketable. Not only has it allowed me to learn intricate pieces of the puzzle while dealing with the criminal justice system, it has also allowed me to spread my wings within the criminal justice community.

CSU Degrees Earned

B.S. Criminal Justice Administration (2016); M.S. Criminal Justice Administration (2018)





NORMAN FRALEY

Executive Director/Scientist » Winston-Salem, NC

As a business scientist, Norman Fraley combines analytical scientific experience with an understanding of business functions to help organizations overcome complex problems. He uses these efforts to help nonprofits and various organizations thrive in today's business climate while also helping to educate the next generation of business minds about sustainability.

Where are you from? Quincy, Kentucky

What is your job title? Executive director, The Frölich Institute; Principal Scientist, Eurofins; Co-lead faculty, Sustainability Graduate Program—Wake Forest University

What organizations are you involved in? » American Chemical Society » Society for HR Management

What is your favorite memory about CSU? I would have to say it was competing with my younger brother Michael, who was a student at the same time. He discovered CSU through his military connections and had chosen to pursue an MBA in Project Management. Not to be outdone, I enrolled as well, choosing the MBA/HR path. Completing the coursework, projects or materials was much more enjoyable when the prospect of getting a higher score than him was there. What better than to have a third party like CSU to show him that not only was I older, but smarter!

What do you enjoy most about your work? I have worked with laboratories, food companies, clinical diagnostics, staffing companies, schools, NGOs and foreign governments to find solutions that work within the constraints unique to their situations. Sometimes they need a gizmo, sometimes they need a process and often they just need a new perspective. Often that means rolling up your sleeves and creating solutions at the lab bench.

CSU Degree Earned

MBA in Human Resources (2006)



ANTHONY J. GOUDIA

Special Agent » Miami, FL

As someone who has worked in the fire service and law enforcement, Anthony Goudia knows what it means to wear a lot of hats. He worked diligently on both sides of emergency services in Louisiana for about eight years—while earning two master's degrees—before making the leap to special agent.

Where are you from? Edgard, Louisiana

What is your job title? Special agent, presidential security and criminal investigations with the United States Secret Service.

Awards: » President's Award, St. John Westside Fire Department (2010) » Special Service Award, St. John Westside Fire Department (2010)

What is your favorite memory about CSU? My graduation ceremony of October 2014. Walking across that stage to receive my first of two master's degrees.

How has your degree impacted your life? My degree has impacted my life by providing me the opportunity to get hired at a higher pay scale. That difference is about \$7,500 more than what I would have received if I didn't have a master's degree.

What do you enjoy most about your work? I enjoy traveling around the world to see some great places and meet some great people. To learn about different cultures while working. To be a part of history.

CSU Degrees Earned

M.S. Emergency Services Management (2014);
MPA, Criminal Justice Administration (2016)





KANNAN IYER

Freelance Consultant » Plano, TX

PHOTO CREDIT » Yvonne Estes Photography

As a dedicated professional in IT management, enterprise solutions, service delivery and program management, Kannan Iyer has put his degree and skills to full use having worked for several Fortune 1000 companies.

Where are you from? Chennai, India

What organizations are you involved in? » Computer Society of India » NASSCOM India » The Association for Operations Management » Project Management Institute » Delta Epsilon Tau International Honor Society

Awards: Performance awards for securing a \$55 million contract and a \$400 million contract in 2006 and 2007.

What is your favorite memory about CSU? While it's important to have knowledge, it's even more essential to have a vast network of people to work with and learn from.

How has your degree impacted your life? Dedicate your life to your passion and the pieces will fall together beautifully.

What has inspired you in your work? I love the diversity, the variety of people, experiences, ethnic origins, races.

CSU Degree Earned

MBA in Project Management (2008)



MIKE MORENO

Safety and Technical Specialist » Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Everything Mike Moreno does is fueled by his knowledge of safety and love for his country. He received recognition for his service abroad in Afghanistan in 2013 and for his service at home during the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and Hurricane Irma.

What is your job title? Safety and technical specialist, City of Fort Lauderdale; Chief petty officer - Marine science technician, U.S. Coast Guard Reserve

What organizations are you involved in? » National Society of Leadership and Success » Professional Association of Diving Instructors » Divers Alert Network » National Safety Council

Awards: » Afghanistan Commendation Medal » Army Commendation Medal » Coast Guard Armed Forces Reserve Medal » Coast Guard Commandant Letter of Commendation Ribbon » Global War on Terrorism Service Medal » Military Service Award for tour in Afghanistan » National Defense Service Medal » NATO International Security Assistance Force Medal

What is your favorite memory about CSU? I was called for active duty for Deepwater Horizon and responded to the worst oil spill in the world. I was stationed at Orange Beach, Alabama. While I was there, I made contact with the people at CSU and had the opportunity to tour the facility and meet some great people.

How has your degree impacted your life? My master's degree has had the most impact in my career. I was hired by the City of Fort Lauderdale 10 years ago and now serve as safety specialist. The most fulfilling aspect of working with the city is teaching employees how to be safe, avoid injuries and resist becoming a fatality.

CSU Degrees Earned

M.S. Occupational Safety and Health/Environmental Management (2009); MBA in Human Resource Management (2011)





LE HONG HA

Executive VP » Hanoi, Vietnam

A leader in the Asian airline industry, Ha has worked hard to help lead his award-winning companies while always keeping the customer in mind. Vietnam Airlines, for example, recently won two World Travel Awards.

What is your job title? Executive vice president of Vietnam Airlines; Chairman of Jetstar Pacific Airlines; chairman of Skypec

What organizations are you involved in? » Vietnam Australia Friendship Association » Vietnam India Friendship Association

What is your favorite memory about CSU Vietnam?

The courses brought about a fresh learning approach that was rarely seen in other institutions at the time. What I gained from the courses was not only the knowledge, but the skills to obtain the knowledge that counts.

How has your degree impacted your life? The degree has impacted my career in a very positive way and has helped me rise through the ranks. It is, so far, one of the most important degrees that I have obtained.

What inspires you in your life and work? I believe my family is the main factor that inspires me day by day in every aspect of my life and work.

CSU Degree Earned

MBA (2007)



JOHN (Tem) FRIERSON V

VP of Business Strategies and Solutions » Canton, GA

Like many graduates, Tem Frierson's education has helped his success boom in marketing and business which, in turn, led to his selection as the 2016 DEAC Outstanding Graduate.

What is your job title? Vice president, business strategies and solutions, First Data Merchant Services

What organizations are you involved in? National Society of Leadership and Success

Awards: 2016 DEAC Outstanding Graduate

What is your favorite memory about CSU? The top of this list is the opportunity to sit next to Laurin Lader (also a Navy veteran and education representative) in October 2015 as we graduated together with our master's degrees. This was the pinnacle of my journey with the entire CSU staff and CSU family.

How have your degrees impacted your life? The degrees obtained at CSU expanded the potential border with each class I completed and each degree obtained. I began to view the market as a place where I had the right to have a seat at the table. I allowed myself to push my confidence, personal and professional goals to reflect the new course of opportunities before me. The knowledge acquired via CSU staff and curriculum provided the ability to communicate to executive levels with confidence and engage the strategic conversations. This led to quick upward mobility to where I am today.

CSU Degrees Earned

B.S. Business Administration (2009); MBA (2015)





TERRY O'BRIEN

Health and Safety Security Director » Woodridge, IL

As of one of the early graduates of CSU, Terry O'Brien is representative of the university's founding educational programs. Since then, he has excelled in a career in occupational safety and health.

Where are you from? Hamilton, Montana

What is your job title? Global environmental health and safety security director

What organizations are you involved in? » American Society of Safety Professionals » Board Member of the American Chemistry Council/HCN Group » Chairman of Acrylonitrile Group/USA » LEPC Leader for Hunt County, Texas

What is your favorite memory about CSU? How everything was by mail back then. The classes were VHS tapes and lots of reading and responding by "snail" mail!

How has your degree impacted your life? I was thrust into an EH&S role with really no background. I had a degree in chemistry, but it hardly helped in trying to understand the scope and realities of keeping our company out of regulatory issues, protecting our employees and making a real difference in getting our workers safely back home each and every day. It was really an educational journey that resulted in a career!

What do you love about CSU? I still love the school and its aggressive role in educating future EH&S leaders in my company and other companies in the world.

CSU Degree Earned

M.S. Occupational Safety and Health (1995)



MAI TRANG THANH

Company President » Bangkok, Thailand

Mai Trang Thanh epitomizes what it means to have a "career boom." After more than 20 years in the oil and gas industry, she earned a degree with CSU and joined Honeywell. Seven years later, she is now president of its Indochina region, leading its employee performance initiative, One Honeywell, in order to develop a winning culture.

Where are you from? Hanoi, Vietnam

What is your job title? President, Honeywell Thailand

Awards: Senior Leadership Award, Honeywell (2014)

What is your favorite memory about CSU? Good mix of students with diversified backgrounds, different objectives in life who always had a good support from CITC (CSU's Vietnam partnership) to make our learning more enjoyable and successful.

How has your degree impacted your life? A year after having an MBA degree, I got a job offer from Honeywell where my career has taken off.

What inspires you in your life and work? I am more passionate with result-oriented activities in both life and work. The feeling of being recognized for making an impact on society will continuously give me more energy to go beyond.

CSU Degree Earned

MBA (2010)





DANIEL TYK

Lieutenant/EMS Manager » Whitefish Bay, WI

As an advocate of continued education and a self-described lifelong learner, it is little wonder Daniel Tyk sought a degree with CSU. He believes continued education is essential to his professional and personal growth and success. His drive has moved him up the chain at his workplace and continues to fuel his pursuit of knowledge.

What is your job title? Lieutenant, EMS manager, public information and community relations officer at North Shore Fire/Rescue, Wisconsin

What organizations are you involved in? » Wisconsin EMS Association » American Red Cross » Project ADAM

What is your favorite memory about CSU? Through the use of chat groups, the programs offered the ability to connect to peers across the nation who were on the same career path. This allowed me to see how similar organizations dealt with similar problems. It showed me that while each of us faced some unique challenges in working with and managing peers, no matter the distance between us, many of our challenges were the same. This allowed collaboration unlike any local educational programs I had been a part of.

How has your degree impacted your life? My degree has given me a new perspective on emergency medical services operations and provided new and innovative ideas to implement within our organization. There are also several potential promotional opportunities on the horizon. With the relatively recent introduction of community paramedicine/mobile integrated healthcare, we have shifted our model from a reactive service to a proactive service. The ability to be a part of the innovative development of new programs and services makes coming to work every day interesting and fun.

CSU Degree Earned

B.S. Emergency Medical Services Administration (2017)



What Defines a CSU Knight?

As a graduate, you are entitled to a little boasting. After all, you've worked hard to get where you are. Knights are early risers, night owls and mid-day crunchers. They know about perseverance and dedication and doing whatever it takes to get the job done.

Do you know someone who has the potential to be a Knight?

Refer a friend, family member or co-worker to CSU and take 20% off at the CSU Bookstore. Once you've chosen your item, wear your new Knight gear proudly! And maybe boast just a little. You deserve it.

Log into your myCSU Portal to learn more.



Always Forward ➤

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**PATRICK
J. MAZZA III**

Manager of Corporate Safety » Corona, CA

The sky is the limit for Patrick Mazza. Solidifying a career in safety, he has worked many years for airline companies such as American and Southwest Airlines. Today, he serves as the manager of corporate safety for American Airlines at LAX and puts his knowledge and skills to work for the betterment of his company and its guests.

What organizations are you involved in? » The American Society of Safety Professionals » Delta Epsilon Tau Honor Society » Institute for Safety and Health Management » National Safety Council » National Society of Leadership and Success » University of California San Diego OSHA outreach authorized trainer

Awards: » Advanced Safety Certificate, National Safety Council » Academic Excellence Scholarship recipient (2016) » Next 50 scholarship recipient, University of California San Diego (2016).

What is your favorite memory about CSU? My instructors helped me find my stride and confidence after being away from academics for many years. I was impressed with their willingness to share valuable insights from their own experiences. In my frequent interactions, I could sense that they had a vested interest in me and that my success as a student and as a safety professional was a priority to them.

How has your degree impacted your life? My degree has opened the floodgates of opportunity for me, providing a sense of accomplishment I didn't know existed. It allows me to reach more people in my efforts to help transform safe work behavior from simply a priority to an instilled value. I called myself to the challenge and I did it! I feel confident, I feel empowered and I feel inspired to help others find success in their educational and professional pursuits.

CSU Degree Earned

B.S. Occupational Safety and Health (2016)



**TAMMY
MATTINA**

Police Sergeant » Knoxville, TN

Tammy Mattina received her B.S. in criminal justice administration in 2012. Since then, she has made a name for herself in the community of Knoxville, Tennessee for the difference she is making in law enforcement.

What is your job title? Police sergeant, Knoxville Police Department's Safety Education Unit

What organizations are you involved in? » The 5-0 Talent Agency » The Fraternal Order of Police » Law Enforcement Against Drugs

Awards: » 2007 TACP Police Officer of the Year » Officer of the Month twice for the Knoxville Police Department

What is your favorite memory about CSU? My favorite memory is winning a scholarship to complete my master's degree.

How has your degree impacted your life? Having my degree from Columbia Southern University has given me the confidence to push my professional career beyond what I thought was even possible. I now feel that I can compete with anyone for promotions and leadership positions. As I come to the end of my current career, I look forward to what other adventures await as I prepare to enter the workforce again. I am confident that my degree from Columbia Southern University will open previously closed doors.

CSU Degree Earned

B.S. Criminal Justice Administration (2012)





KENNETH LANG

Department Chair/Asst. Professor » Heaters, WV

Kenneth Lang, a retired detective in Baltimore, continued his love of criminal justice through teaching. Earning both a bachelor's and master's degree, he now applies the knowledge he acquired through his career and education to the students at Glenville State College.

What is your job title? Department chair and assistant professor, Department of Criminal Justice at Glenville State College

What organizations are you involved in? » Alpha Phi Sigma Honor Society » American Investigative Society of Cold Cases » American Society of Criminology » Association of Baltimore County Retired Police Officers » Fraternal Order of Police - Harvard Associates in Police Science » Internet Journal of Restorative Justice » National Association of Community and Restorative Justice » National Rifle Association » Prison Fellowship Justice Reform Advocate

Awards: » William J. Simms Memorial Award » Optimist Club Officer of the Year » Community Policing Award » Joseph Palczynski Merit Award » 50 Great Writers You Should Be Reading » DETC Famous Alumni Award, Columbia Southern University » UVF ESPY Faculty/Staff Supporter of the Year

How has your degree impacted your life? When I first entered the police academy, I never imagined that I would one day desire to teach and work to bring about criminal justice reform. CSU's program exposed me to a variety of lenses in the criminal justice system that formed the direction of my career path. I discovered a justice concept not well known in the United States: restorative justice. The educational foundation provided by CSU prepared me for this journey.

CSU Degrees Earned

B.S. Criminal Justice Administration (2010); M.S. Criminal Justice Administration (2013)



DIANA WOOLF

Health and Safety Officer » Streetsboro, OH

Diana Woolf took up distance running in 2009 as a way to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms from her time in the fire service. She soon realized this could also be a way to make a difference for others who are suffering. She founded the nonprofit RESCUE4PTSD and in April 2018, completed an IronMan 70.3 race in full turnout gear. Part of the funds raised go to Life Safety Initiative #13 for Psychological Support by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

What is your job title? Health and safety officer, University of Akron's College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering

What organizations are you involved in? » Ohio Fire Chief's Association » Ohio Fire Executive Alumni Association » Women in Fire & Emergency Services

Awards: » American Legion Firefighter of the Year » Ohio Fire Executive Class 8 Applied Research Project Award » NIMS Implementation » SCOTT Combat Challenge State Champion » Successful AFG and SAFER grant awards totaling \$4 million

What is your favorite memory about CSU? My mother's dream for me was always to earn a college education and I was able to achieve that. Unfortunately, she passed before I could obtain it, but a copy of my diploma is with her. I found a home at CSU and continue to pursue further degrees.

How has your degree impacted your life? CSU will provide educational opportunities for continued success in the future. My degree has given me a well-rounded ability to see needed change in organizations and provide solutions for progressive change. I also founded RESCUE4PTSD in order to bring awareness to PTSD in the fire service and fund programs that support those who may be struggling.

CSU Degrees Earned

B.S. Organizational Leadership (2014); A.S. Fire Science (2018)





CHAD CAREY

Fire Chief » Elkhart, IN

Chad Carey serves as the fire chief in Elkhart, Indiana. He received three degrees from CSU and later accepted a position as part-time faculty member, proving he just couldn't stay away from his alma mater. Carey has worked in the fire industry since 1994 and leads by his personal motto: "To increase safety and efficiency within the fire service through influence and education, along with providing a path of success for others."

What organizations are you involved in? » Chief Fire Officer Designation (CFO) » Executive Fire Officer (EFO) » Human Resource Certification Institute, member » International Association of Fire Chiefs » Indiana Fire Chief's Association » National Fire Protection Agency

Awards: » Character Award, City of Elkhart (2003) » Fire Officer of the Year (2006, 2007) » DEAC Outstanding National Graduate (2014)

What is your favorite memory about CSU? I have many great memories with CSU, which continue to multiply now that I also teach. I had the great opportunity to attend graduation in 2012 and 2014, where I was introduced to the CSU family and began developing relationships with wonderful people, which is very motivating. Even after I graduated, members of CSU continued to support and show interest in my growth and development.

How have your degrees impacted your life? CSU provided me with the education and tools that were needed for my growth and development. I was a captain with Elkhart Fire Department when I first started with CSU and after completing my degrees, I was able to grow within the fire service and achieve the position of fire chief. CSU programs have provided me with the tools and ability to face everyday challenges and achieve success.

CSU Degrees Earned

A.S. Occupational Safety and Health (2012);
B.S. Fire Science (2012); MBA Public Administration (2014)



JAMES SHAW

Complex Safety Manager » Leesburg, GA

James Shaw has a successful career in the safety industry and also teaches as an adjunct professor at CSU and Waldorf University. An enthusiastic CSU student himself, Shaw has earned five degrees with CSU and is the creator of a social media series called The Sir Maximus Adventures.

What is your job title? Complex safety manager, Keystone Foods; Adjunct professor for undergraduate safety, Columbia Southern University; Adjunct professor for undergraduate emergency management, Waldorf University

What organizations are you involved in? » American Legion Post #335 » First Baptist Church of Leesburg » Institute for Safety and Health Management » National Technical Honor Society Board of Directors » P.T. Schley #229 Masonic Lodge » U.S. Air Force Auxiliary Civil Air Patrol » Delta Epsilon Tau » Order of the Sword and Shield

What is your favorite memory about CSU? When I attended the 2016 ceremony for my master's degree, I was greeted by many students and employees who followed the Sir Maximus Adventures. I started posting the adventures about a year earlier and students and school personnel really liked them.

How have your degrees impacted your life? I had a desire to teach as an adjunct professor for a local college. In order to teach, I decided to return to CSU so I could finish the M.S. in OSH; I simply did not feel whole without doing it. CSU has been a huge benefit for me, my family and my professional career. Finishing the M.S. in OSH was the academic pinnacle that would help me attain that lifelong goal. CSU has helped me set, work toward and reach all of my current personal and professional goals.

CSU Degrees Earned

M.S. OSH (2018); M.S. ESM (2016); B.S. OSH (2011);
B.S. HRM (2009); A.A.S. Business (2006)





**SHANNA
TRAVIS**

Federal Advisor » Fort Washington, MD

After a successful career for the Department of Defense, Shanna Travis began working in America's capital. Today, she serves as advisor to the deputy director/chief technology officer for the U.S. Department of Treasury. She has solidified a reputation of being an expert in analytics, strategic innovation and knowledge and compliance of federal guidelines and standards.

Where are you from? Shreveport, Louisiana

What organizations are you involved in? » Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated » Society of Human Resource Management » The Links Incorporated

Awards: » DoD Civilian Achievement Award (2011) » Modern Day Technology Leader Award (2013) » On-The-Spot Leadership and Team Building Award (2014, 2015, 2017)

What is your favorite memory about CSU? Meeting the CSU faculty and staff face-to-face at a networking social in Texas and receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2016.

How have your degrees impacted your life? Upon making the decision to retire from the military, I was in search of an avenue to prepare me for a second career that would be just as rewarding as the first. Attending CSU prepared me for my career in the federal government. During my studies, I was learning information that was applicable in real-time with my daily work activities. I have progressed extremely well in my job roles, resulting in numerous opportunities and career advancements. I believe this is a direct reflection of the knowledge I gained at CSU.

CSU Degrees Earned

MBA Public Administration (2015); DBA (currently enrolled)



**JAMIE
GAUTHIER**

Criminal Investigator » Scotts Valley, CA

Jamie Gauthier spent 20 years investigating complex crimes. He then began applying that experience to teaching, where he enables other members of law enforcement to trust their training, but more importantly, their instinct.

What is your job title? Criminal investigator for Santa Clara County, Office of the District Attorney for the State of California; Professor of criminal justice and homeland security at Columbia Southern University and Waldorf University

What organizations are you involved in? » International Sports Sciences Association » Association of Certified Fraud Specialists - Sheriff's Association Institute of Homeland Security » Delta Epsilon Tau International Honor Society » Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics » National Scholars Honor Society

Awards: » CSU Distinguished Service Award » National Outstanding Graduate, Distance Education & Training Council » Police Detective of the Month » Chief's Commendation for Outstanding Work Performance » Police Officer of the Year, Scotts Valley Police Department » CSU Faculty of the Year, College of Safety/Emergency Services » Student of the Month, Northeastern University / College of Professional Studies » Employee Excellence Award, Santa Clara County, Office of the District Attorney

How have your degrees impacted your life? My professional experience includes more than 20 years in law enforcement, security management and investigations, both as a detective handling adult-related crimes, to managing white-collar crime and fraud cases in the private sector. All of my accomplishments exemplify the impact that CSU had, and continues to have, on my professional and personal life.

CSU Degrees Earned

B.S.B.A. Human Resource Management (2003);
MBA Public Administration (2005)





MARK SEALY

Fire Chief » Mobile, AL

Mark Sealy never had his sights set on the position of fire chief. After spending a rewarding career with the City of Mobile, the position became available and he used the opportunity to reflect on what he saw everyday and share his thoughts on how to better the department he loved so much. Little did he know that his strategic plan would be adapted in whole and he would be named the person to implement the improvements and lead the charge.

Where are you from? Fairhope, Alabama

What is your job title? Fire chief, City of Mobile

What organizations are you involved in?
The Way Community Church

What is your favorite memory about CSU? I ultimately pursued CSU for its flexibility and how firefighter-friendly it is. I needed to be able to study independently and around my own schedule but I always knew that if I had a question, I could pick up the phone and someone at CSU would be there with the answer. A lot of people at the station have also taken classes at CSU so we have been able to share our experiences with each other and those around us who are considering pursuing a degree.

How has your degree impacted your life? This degree was an opportunity to expand my knowledge of my profession. It also enabled me to compete at a higher level in promotional opportunities. Now, I have been able to show my kids and my fellow firefighters that if I can do it, so can they. As a leader, I want to always lead by example. How can I expect others to do something I haven't done myself?

CSU Degree Earned

B.S. Fire Science (2010)



NINA TAYLOR

Fire Lieutenant » Birmingham, AL

Nina Taylor loves to give back and break the mold. She has been able to do this in part through her work as lieutenant for Birmingham Fire and Rescue and as a fire science academy instructor at Midfield High School, where female student participation is at an all-time high thanks to Taylor. She uses each platform as a way to break the stereotype that women are "incapable of being strong and effective in the fire service."

What is your job title? Fire lieutenant, Birmingham Fire and Rescue; instructor, Midfield High School's Fire Science Academy

What organizations are you involved in? Special Toys for Special Kids, board chair

Awards: EMT Firefighter of the Year, Birmingham Fire and Rescue (2006)

What is your favorite memory about CSU? Fist bumping Oliver North (the keynote speaker, retired Marine colonel, television host and author) at the commencement ceremony in 2014. I hugged everyone on the stage that day; at first Mr. North was reluctant but it was either a fist bump or a big hug. It was hilarious and his smile was priceless.

How have your degrees impacted your life? I am excited to put the acquired knowledge in action. New opportunities are available with a degree in occupational safety and health. I am considering a different platform after retiring from the fire college and possibly pursuing a fire chief position. I am teaching at Midfield High School and would like the continuation of building that program.

CSU Degrees Earned

A.S. Fire Science (2013); B.S. Occupational Safety and Health (2014)





**JOSHUA
MCGINNIS**

Logistics and Recon Manager » Houston, TX

Joshua McGinnis spent three overseas tours as a firefighter in the U.S. Army. After transitioning out of the military and receiving three degrees, he has now begun a successful career in the oil industry. While the transition may not have seemed a likely course to other members of his fields, McGinnis took it in stride and has been able to apply leadership lessons he learned in the military to his budding civilian career.

What is your job title? Logistics and recon manager, Insite 360

Awards: » Military service award, two years spent in Iraq
» Department of the Army Fire Officer of the Year (2001)

What is your favorite memory about CSU? Submitting the last essay for my MBA, which gave me the relief and realization that I had achieved more education than anyone in my family had before. It gave me the confidence to do more than middle management. The goal accomplishment was the best memory. I enjoyed college, yet graduating is like finishing a major project that I can see immediate dividends for.

How have your degrees impacted your life? I was a firefighter in the Army and served three overseas service tours. I served as a rescue team leader in search and rescue ops in Iraq. My fire service assisted in the project management experience I received that directly applied to getting my MBA. The transition from military to civilian life was a complete change but it gave me experience to manage two departments of 21 individuals. My time at CSU has largely given me the tools I have needed to succeed professionally in the oil industry. It resulted in an excellent position for an outstanding company.

CSU Degrees Earned



B.S. Fire Science (2012); M.S. Occupational Safety and Health (2014); MBA Public Administration (2015)



**LARRY
W. RIDDLE**

Consultant/Industrial Hygienist » Franklin, TN

Larry Riddle is well known in the CSU alumni community, as well as in the environmental health and safety industry. He has dedicated his career to improving workplace safety. He owns Summit Safety, LLC, is the chairman and CEO of the Environmental Health and Safety Council of America, and travels the country speaking on EHS.

What is your job title? Principal consultant and industrial hygienist, Summit Safety, LLC; Master instructor and host site director, OSHA Education Center at Volunteer State Community College; Chairman, The Environmental Health & Safety Council of America

What organizations are you involved in? » American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists » American Industrial Hygiene Association » American Public Health Association
» American Society of Safety Professionals » National Fire Protection Association » National Safety Council » National Society of Leadership and Success » Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology

Awards: » National Health Educators honorary, Eta Sigma Gamma
» Professional honorary, Order of the Sword & Shield

What is your favorite memory about CSU? My favorite memories of CSU are of the staff and faculty and their warm, inspirational, commitment and dedication to students' success! Aside from my genetic family, there are no better personal cheerleaders than my CSU family!

How has your degree impacted your life? My degrees have afforded me the opportunity to save lives and serve others in ways I never thought possible.

CSU Degree Earned



B.S. Criminal Justice Administration (2015)

KNIGHT CONNECTIONS

Written by **CAROLINE WALTERS**

Associate Vice President of University Relations



Leading the University Relations team at Columbia Southern University offers the opportunity to travel across the country and meet many of our students and alumni. Through industry conferences, visits with Learning Partners and alumni chapter events, I have heard multiple stories of how CSU has changed lives. In reflecting on my recent travels, a couple of individuals stand out in my mind: Tim Smith and Angela Hoyt.

If you participate in the CSU closed Facebook group, you know Tim Smith. His kind heart is seen in every post he writes. Continuously encouraging fellow students on their journey to completing their education, Tim is the epitome of a Knight Ambassador. I had the pleasure of meeting Tim and his wife, Marlene this past June in San Antonio, Texas, at Safety 2018, a large, annual conference hosted by the American Society of Safety Professionals. Tim shared his CSU experience with fellow alumni and CSU representatives as we gathered at a CSU Alumni Association event to celebrate our safety professionals.

Tim credits CSU for putting him on the path that advanced his career; he enjoys sharing his success in order to encourage other CSU graduates and students.

Angela Hoyt is another Knight Ambassador who has CSU at heart. A 2013 graduate, Angela has volunteered with the CSU Alumni Association on several occasions and most recently, she agreed to serve as president of the CSU Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) student chapter. Angela joined us at the national SHRM conference in Chicago this summer. During the conference, the CSU Alumni Association hosted an event to highlight the new CSU SHRM student chapter and Angela did a wonderful job representing CSU. Learn more about Angela and her contributions to CSU on page 30.

Would you like to see CSU in your area?

The alumni team is in the process of planning the 2019 event schedule. If you would like to see us visit your area, please send an email to CSU-Alumni@ColumbiaSouthern.edu.



KNIGHT AMBASSADOR

Weathers Storms and Shares Triumphant Experiences

Written by **SONYA LAVETT**



Toya Simon knows a thing or two about weathering storms. A native of the U.S. Virgin Islands and one of nine children, Simon was determined to doggedly pursue an education and earn her bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in finance. Working her way through school was no easy task as she chose not to apply for student loans, but rather fund her courses one at a time.

A single mother, Simon has big dreams. She wants to be the boss; not just any boss, but a true leader who demonstrates compassion, trustworthiness and a spirit of generosity.

“ My hope and dream is to live a life of purpose. ”

"My hope and dream is to live a life of purpose," she said.

She lives in an area that could easily be described as paradise. Many vacationers travel to the Virgin Islands each year to enjoy the sand and surf, maybe do some snorkeling and relish some memorable sunsets.

The downside of living on these islands is that they are often in a direct path for hurricanes. In September 2017, the residents felt the full brunt of Mother Nature, being hit by not one, but two Category 5 storms. Simon's beautiful paradise was completely leveled. Many of her neighbors were not able to evacuate so there was the added trauma of riding out the destructive and violent storms.

The islands experienced massive flooding, missing roofs, decimated wildlife, no running water and prolonged power outages. Homes were completely wiped out, not to mention the loss of human lives. Because this is an island where new resources must be shipped over, the process to rebuild can take an excruciatingly long time.

Devastation is not a strong enough description for the intensity and the aftermath of these storms.

Still, despite the trauma of enduring these catastrophic events, Simon continues to demonstrate the kind of drive and

determination that only comes from someone who believes in a higher power and the beauty of her dreams.

A proud and devoted Knight Ambassador, Simon is always eager to reach out to others to share encouragement and knowledge. She understands that setbacks, even the most difficult ones, are the precipice to emerging stronger and wiser. She refuses to allow any roadblocks to slow her down.



Describing one of her setbacks, Simon said, "My greatest disappointment was in allowing my fear of failure to stymie my education; however, I overcame that by employing self-confidence."

Thus embodies the true spirit of the Columbia Southern University family.

A degree is so much more than the end of an endeavor and much more than just a document with the title of a degree. For Simon and her family, her education means something far deeper; an education means dispelling ignorance and garnering proficiency in order to pursue her dreams.

Simon has completed this portion of her journey when she achieved her degree at CSU. Yet, she knows this is only the beginning of many good things to come.

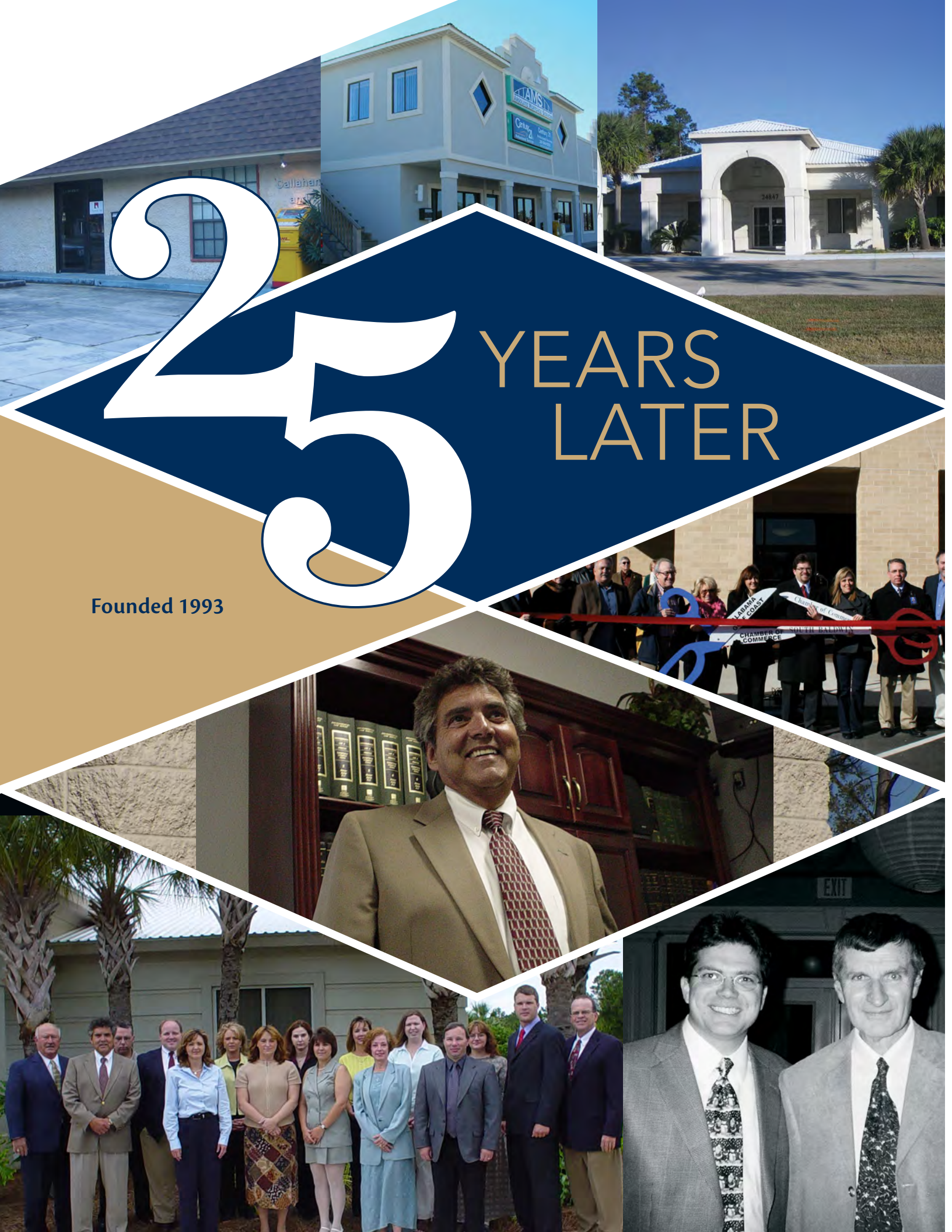
Our Knight Ambassadors take on many roles. They are here to encourage, provide resources, inspire and motivate. In sharing their stories, they connect with others who may be struggling or need a word of reassurance in order to recognize that they are not alone and that they can overcome anything that steps in their way.

If you feel that you embody this type of paying-it-forward spirit and are interested in learning more about becoming a Knight Ambassador, please reach out and discover how you too can contribute to bettering the lives of your fellow Knights. ■

To learn more about becoming a Knight Ambassador, visit ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Ambassador.

25 YEARS LATER

Founded 1993





Written by **LIBBY REILLY**

Building a University That Started as a Dream

Columbia Southern University began on a foundation of family values and big dreams. What began as an idea to streamline training for the occupational safety and health industry has since evolved into a leading university for safety and public service professionals.

Columbia Southern University began on a foundation of family values and big dreams.



It all started when CSU's founder, Dr. Robert G. Mayes, saw a need in the occupational safety and health industry. To fill this void, he began developing and distributing safety compliance training programs to small businesses. This led to establishing two certificate programs in the field, and later, the establishment of CSU in 1993.

In the early days, the operations were a family affair. The entire Mayes family—Dr. Mayes, his wife Minnie, daughter Chantell and son Robert—hit the ground running to get the school up and running. Tommy Cooley, Chantell's husband, also joined the team.

Dr. Mayes had a true “work hard, play hard” mentality. Many of the original team-building activities for employees are still alive today: fall bash, ice cream socials, Christmas parties, sports tournaments, community service projects and more.

When Dr. Mayes passed away in 2005, he left behind a legacy of setting lofty goals and working hard to attain them, a vision that still rings true to the university's values today.

“Keep everything going. Keep moving forward,” he said to Chantell.

So, the family did just that. Robert Mayes, Jr., began his tenure as president and CSU continued to grow and chart new territory while staying true to the vision and legacy of Dr. Mayes, Sr.

“And so, we moved it forward. Now, are up to 29,000 students...because my dad believed in bigger things than what we really were,” said Chantell.

Maintaining a family culture for the employees of CSU has always been a pillar for the growth of the university. A family culture, coupled with strong values, is what has helped the organization grow from a team of 12 to 1,000 faculty and staff across the nation.

“Keep everything going.
Keep moving forward.”

Dr. Robert Mayes, CSU Founder

“Columbia Southern is blessed in that we've hired a lot of great people,” said Robert Mayes, Jr. “The family's role has always been to set the foundation: We're going to be credible, we're going to treat people right and we're going to care about and respect each other.”

Expansion of degree programs, a growing student body, climbing numbers of employees and accolades are a humbling and encouraging reminder to everyone in the CSU family that when you stay true to a dream and keep people first, wonderful things can happen. And that's exactly what happened.

With all the change and growth that has occurred over the last 25 years, some things will always ring true. CSU will always stay dedicated to you, our students and alumni. ■

CSU's Outstanding Graduate and Famous Alumnus Recognized

The Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) recognized Columbia Southern University graduates as Outstanding Graduate and Famous Alumni during the commission's 92nd annual DEAC conference in San Diego April 22-24.

The annual conference features an awards ceremony that recognizes individuals and outstanding graduates from the DEAC's accredited organizations. CSU graduates Daniel Hughes and Howard "Skip" Elliott were recognized. The event honors recipients based on contributions to their career fields, public interests served and how they have used their degrees to advance their personal and professional lives.

Hughes, a division safety manager with Parsons, earned his bachelor's degree in occupational safety and health from CSU and is currently working on his master's in occupational safety and health at CSU and is studying to become a Certified Safety Professional® via the Board of Certified Safety Professionals. A dedicated humanitarian, Hughes was one of 11 Parsons employees selected for a bridge-building project in Rio Grande, Panama in 2017. Hughes has worked alongside regulating organizations including the Department of Defense, Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, OSHA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



“ I am humbled and honored to be the outstanding graduate. Distance learning and specifically

Columbia Southern has afforded me opportunities that a few years ago really did not exist, at least not for me. I will be forever grateful,” said Hughes. ”

Elliott, who holds a master's degree in criminal justice from CSU, is an administrator of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. He was nominated by President Trump and confirmed by the U.S. Senate for this position.

“ For 30-plus years, I told every new employee that education was a lifelong process and to start a degree, finish their degree or go back for another. Then it struck



me; I hadn't followed my own advice. CSU gave me the opportunity to fix that,” said Elliott. ”

A veteran of the U.S. freight rail industry, Elliott has been leading safety initiatives in the boardroom, city halls, state houses and on Capitol Hill for more than 40 years. As the vice president of public safety, health and environment for CSX, Elliott oversaw environmental, hazardous materials transportation safety, medical, occupational health and industrial hygiene, railroad policing and homeland security initiatives. Elliott retired from CSX in March 2017. ■

EVENTS AND CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Whether you are interested in networking with fellow Knights at events or using your alumni status to make a difference in your local community, getting involved is an excellent way to continue your Knighthood even after graduation.

ALUMNI EVENTS IN REVIEW

April 21 San Diego, California

I Love a Clean San Diego's Creek to Bay Clean-up & Luncheon
» **LOS ANGELES** CHAPTER EVENT
» 19 CSU student and alumni volunteers



April 23 San Diego, California

Networking social in conjunction with DEAC conference
» Featured CSEG CEO, Robert Mayes
» Also, featured CSU's 2018 DEAC Outstanding Graduate, Daniel Hughes and DEAC Famous Alumni, Howard "Skip" Elliott



July 4 Perdido Key Beach, Florida

Flora-Bama Shark Run Race
» Gulf Coast Chapter member, Toyka Roney helped volunteer with more than 15 CSU employees

July 28 Jonesboro, Georgia

Back to School Rally
» Atlanta Chapter members Octavia Zackery, Dorothy Williams-Dotson and Dee Mercadel and CSU representative, Theresa Enfinger participated in providing more than 700 filled backpacks for the community

August 29 Mobile, Alabama

The Salvation Army annual luncheon
» Attendees included Gulf Coast Chapter members Gamel Garrison, Angela Hoyt and CSU representatives

June 4 San Antonio, Texas

Networking social in conjunction with the ASSP SAFETY 2018 conference
» **SAN ANTONIO** CHAPTER EVENT
» More than 175 in attendance

June 18 Chicago, Illinois

Networking social in conjunction with SHRM18 conference
» **CHICAGO** CHAPTER EVENT
» 22 CSU students and alumni in attendance



EVENTS AND CHAPTER HAPPENINGS



KNIGHT SPOTLIGHT

Written by ELIZABETH MIMMS

Career Development Counselor

Working with Career Services can make a huge impact on your ability to land a job in your career field. Students and alumni who work with Career Services receive individualized assistance and resources in career exploration, job search strategies, interview preparation, networking advice and more.

Gary and Chad consistently utilized Career Services until they were able to find employment and a meaningful career.

CLASS OF 2017



GARY EDINBYRD

B.S. Occupational Safety and Health

“ My advice for anyone who has not utilized Career Services is to do so now. Get ahead of the situation and acquire all the knowledge that you can beforehand. The staff is there and willing to help you become successful. ”

How did you learn about Career Services?

I first learned about Career Services during the Open House event in October 2017 prior to the Commencement ceremony. I did not actually utilize Career Services until after I graduated and begin searching for a career using my degree.

What types of services did you use and how did these help you in your quest for meaningful employment?

I used the résumé writing assistance. This helped immensely and having a professional résumé made all the difference in the world for my job search. With my old résumé, I kept getting job rejection emails. With my new résumé, I was not only recognized by my current employer, but I am still receiving interview requests from other employers. The advice that Elizabeth gave me in regards to job applications and interviews also played a huge part in me getting my current job.

What is your current title?

Describe the kind of work you do.

My current title is site safety and quality control representative with Diversified Conveyors International. My duties include using my expertise and knowledge, along with the regulations of the company, to inspect the work being done for accuracy and quality. I also observe workers to make sure they are working safely and are in safe working conditions. I am in charge of completing paperwork that deals with any injuries or incidents that occur at the site. Overall, I am responsible for the quality of work put out by our subcontractors, as well as their safety and safe working conditions.

What advice would you have for those who have not yet utilized Career Services?

My advice for anyone who has not utilized Career Services is to do so now. Do not wait until you are finished with your degree or you have something lined up that you want to do. Get ahead of the situation and acquire all the knowledge that you can beforehand. The staff is there and willing to help you become successful; it's up to you to utilize them. ■



CHAD CRUMP

B.S. Occupational Safety and Health

“ My advice to other students, especially returning students like myself, is to take advantage of the Career Services offerings at CSU. They are there to help you.” ”

CLASS OF 2017

How did you learn about Career Services?

As a student at CSU, I learned about the Career Services department in my last semester. I was about to begin looking for a job after being laid off for a year. I needed some help understanding what employers were looking for as I had worked the same job for 20 years and was out of touch as to the qualities and skills employers wanted at that time.

What types of services did you use and how did these help you in your quest for meaningful employment?

I used the job finder and help with résumé building. The résumé building is where Career Services really shined. I talked to Robert Cunningham, one of the career development counselors, and he went well above what was required to assist me. We talked several times at length, even when I had not scheduled an appointment. Robert took the very basic résumé I had and helped me craft it into something I could be proud of. One aspect that really stood out was the fact that Robert did not just tell me what to write, but he patiently listened to me and helped me come to my own conclusions on what should and should not be included on my résumé. I emailed the working résumé to him on multiple occasions and he would get back with me each time to review and give additional suggestions. I am very thankful to Robert and the CSU Career Services department; I truly believe I would not be where I am now without their assistance.

What is your current title?

Describe the kind of work you do.

My current job title is safety coordinator at Kentucky Trailer in Louisville, Kentucky. I work in the paint, decal and truck body division. This facility has around 100 associates and I am in charge of all aspects of safety and training. This includes training both online courses and "town hall" type meetings on subjects like bloodborne pathogens, fork lifts, fall protection and heat stress. I conduct risk assessments and lead root cause analysis teams when an injury does take place. I work closely with workers' compensation to get them all the information they need in order to help take care of the employees. I order all personal protective equipment supplies and create and control the safety budget for the shop, along with other various duties on a day-to-day basis.

What advice would you have for those who have not yet utilized Career Services?

My advice to other students, especially returning students like myself, is to take advantage of the Career Services offerings at CSU. They are there to help you and they take a lot of pride in knowing someone they helped is able to find a job they love. It has been going on two years now and Robert still checks in on me every once in a while to see how I am doing. Take the time to learn about this important resource within CSU. 🇺🇸

CSU Career Services • 877.297.6192 • CareerServices@ColumbiaSouthern.edu

If you would like more information on gaining confidence in your career search journey like Gary and Chad have done, contact CSU Career Services. The services they provide are at no additional cost to CSU students and alumni. Career Services can be reached by phone or through email. Additional career resources and ways to connect with Career Services can be found at ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Support-Services/Career-Services.

CSU Creates First SHRM VIRTUAL STUDENT CHAPTER

Written by **SONYA LAVETT**

Columbia Southern University has begun the first Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) virtual student chapter.

In order to make this chapter official, the Baldwin County Society of Human Resource Chapter (BCSHRM) in Alabama kindly offered to sponsor the new CSU SHRM Student Chapter, knowing that the establishment of this chapter will grow awareness of the national organization, along with all of the benefits of becoming an active member.

This virtual student chapter will allow those CSU students who are pursuing careers in the HR field to network and collaborate with one another while becoming affiliated with this established professional organization.

“Anyone remotely interested in HR needs to be part of SHRM for networking and professional development opportunities.

Angela Hoyt, CSU SHRM Student Chapter president

The virtual platform allows students to connect with one another no matter where they currently reside.

Angela Hoyt, CSU SHRM Student Chapter president, lives in Mobile, Alabama and earned her MBA in human resource management from CSU in 2013. “I’m very excited that CSU has created this SHRM student chapter. Anyone remotely interested in HR needs to be part of SHRM for networking and professional development opportunities,” she said. “Becoming affiliated with SHRM and participating in the student chapter plays a huge part in helping students familiarize themselves



Angela Hoyt (left) at the 2018 SHRM Conference in Chicago.

with what to expect in the workplace. Additionally, their participation provides tons of networking connections that have the potential to help them advance in their careers.”

“Attending the conferences, participating in the CSU SHRM Student Chapter and becoming familiar with their local, regional chapters, such as the BCSHRM, puts members in contact with those in and around their areas. This is a huge advantage to joining and participating, especially if they are going to consider taking the SHRM-Certified Professional or SHRM Senior Certified Professional certifications.”

Regarding the SHRM 2018 Annual Conference & Exposition in Chicago this summer. Hoyt went on to say, “I’m extremely excited as this is my first time at the national conference.

There will be so many wonderful and highly renowned speakers, representatives from organizations such as Google and Amazon and more than 200 sessions planned. There is so much to be involved in with all types of knowledge being shared.”

HR is the people industry; without HR, businesses could not exist and thrive. With the newly formed CSU SHRM Student Chapter, along with sponsorship from Baldwin County SHRM, the student chapter holds promising opportunities for CSU students all over the U.S.

To learn more about this and other CSU clubs and organizations, visit the [student life page](#) on the CSU website. 🏳️‍🌈



Admissions Supervisor Jessica Pena Uses Personal Experience to **SUPPORT FUTURE MILITARY STUDENTS**

Written by **ANTHONY CORNEALIUS**

At Columbia Southern University, many of the staff and faculty members have served or live with someone who is, or was, in the military.

Take staff member Jessica Pena, for example. She works as a military supervisor in the CSU Admissions department and is a former military spouse.

“While my husband was in the military for his first couple of years, we were engaged and I was finishing my degree,” said Pena, who recently celebrated her fourth wedding anniversary. “I would say that my experience as a military spouse helped me to better understand what service members and spouses go through and the hardships they may face when trying to obtain an education.”

Pena supervises a team of 12 admissions counselors who work with future CSU students, both civilian and military. She explained that the admissions staffers inform and guide prospects about the many educational programs CSU offers.

“I coordinate with the Veterans Affairs certifying official and attend the monthly military support committee meetings to ensure the best service is being provided to our military students. Because my husband was in the military, I believe that I am able to relate and encourage my team to do the same so that we can have a great connection with our students when helping them with their education,” she said.

Pena wants all Knights to know that they always have an extra layer of support.

“Whether it is having the kids alone while your spouse is away, or not being able to attend a traditional school because of ‘permanent change of stationing,’ there is always something you can do,” she said. “To anyone that has a military affiliation, whether you are a service member, spouse or dependent, getting an education can be difficult while in the military. CSU works hard to ensure that getting an education is easy, affordable and flexible so that you can,” she said. 🇺🇸

HELPING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Written by **ANDIE BILLS**

“ Our goal is to help you impact your community. Just as we want to help those in need in our backyard, we want to help you support your local area and passions. ”



This year, CSU began to focus its efforts on opening our doors a bit more to show Knights how we give back in our community. Our hope was that, in return, we could start to do the same with the CSU regional alumni chapters across the nation. It has definitely been a year of success and we are seeing just the beginning for all of our chapters.

In January, CSU headed to Jacksonville, Florida, to support Hunger Fight, a nonprofit organization that raises money to help provide nutritious meals to children and families in the local community who are food insecure. The organization also emphasizes a school backpack program. With help from our students and alumni in the Jacksonville area, CSU was able to donate more than \$500 to the cause.

In April, both students and Los Angeles Alumni Chapter members joined forces with I Love a Clean San Diego's Creek to Bay Clean-Up to help make a difference in more than 100 locations around the area. More than 6,800 volunteers participated in this clean-up and the CSU volunteers were proud to be dressed in Knight garb, helping clean the area they call home.

Also in April, almost 500 on-site CSU employees participated in Feeding the Gulf Coast Foodbank's Backpack Program. Held on campus, the CSU team worked together to pack more than 2,500 bags of food for children in our local community. Each backpack included enough food for six meals and two snacks. Making an impact in the lives of those in our community is at the forefront of



2018 CHAPTER FOCUS



who CSU is and this amazing collaboration allowed so many CSU employees to make a difference.

For the past eight years, The Restoration of Life Church in Jonesboro, Georgia, has held a back-to-school event, which provides more than 700 filled backpacks for children in their community.

Atlanta Chapter members, Octavia Zackery, Dorothy Williams-Dotson and Dee Mercadel were joined with CSU representative, Theresa Enfinger on July 28 to help underprivileged children in Clayton County. The day was

full of family fun, including a petting zoo, face painting, free food and so much more.

In June, CSU representatives and alumni, Daniel O'Keefe worked together to help support San Antonio 100 9/11 Memorial Climb. This climb was to pay tribute to the 343 fallen firefighters who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

Our goal is to help you impact YOUR community. Just as we want to help those in need in our backyard, we want to help you support your local area and passions; however, it needs to come from you! We are always looking for chapter members to let us know what causes or upcoming event they are passionate about. It is then that we can work on making the idea a reality.

If you have a cause that speaks to you, please reach out on your local chapter's Facebook group or contact CSU-Alumni@ColumbiaSouthern.edu.

We look forward to changing lives with you! 🇺🇸





Some things will always ring true.
Columbia Southern University will
always move forward and stay dedicated
to our students and alumni.

Join fellow Knights for Webinar Wednesdays

Actively engage with members of the Career Services team on various career services topics in a live webinar format.

NOV. 14 | 12:30 PM–1:30 PM (CST) JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Attend this informative webinar to learn how to better connect with jobs, identify career opportunities, and network with the right people to help you get your foot in the door.

DEC. 12 | 12:30 PM–1:30 PM (CST) WRITING A WINNING RÉSUMÉ

Do you struggle to master the art of résumé writing? Do you want to make your résumé pop and sizzle? Attend this webinar to get tips on how to market yourself relevant to the position of interest.

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