



The GA-ZETTE

MAY 2023

The Campus Newspaper for Penn State Greater Allegheny

VOLUME 21



AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER
2023--Honorable Mention for Ongoing News Coverage, PA News Media Association Keystone Media Student Awards

THE GA-ZETTE
MAY 2023 EDITION

Lori Hepner Named PSU Laureate	Page 4
The Heart of PSUGA	Page 6
Opinion: My Parting Words of Advice	Page 10
"The End" Comic Strip	Page 11
In Memory of Dick Groat	Page 13
Graduation Memories	Page 15

Enrollment Challenges, Many Great Things to Come

CARLIN WHALEN

Managing Editor

cjw6426@psu.edu

One of Penn State Greater Allegheny's (PSUGA) biggest challenges involves enrollment, according to PSUGA's Interim Chancellor, Dr. Megan Nagel. This campus has continued to shrink over the years, which is not something to look past.

"Hopefully, this is the smallest we'll ever get," Nagel said.

As of May 4, there are a total of 117 new students committed for the fall.

"That number will mostly grow, but there will be some folks that will change their mind and melt away throughout the summer," Senior Director of Enrollment Manager, Dan Pinchot, said.

He is pretty confident that PSUGA will bring in at least 135 new students, which is where the campus was around this time last year.

He also mentions that one key strategy to increase Greater Allegheny's enrollment is to find ways to promote

unique campus programs throughout western Pennsylvania, which is expected to be employed for the next recruitment cycle in the fall.

Despite many of the challenges admissions has faced, Pinchot is optimistic for the future of enrollment at PSUGA.

"The fact that we have been able to hold our own, I think has been a tremendous sign," Pinchot said.

On the flip side, campus engagement has been trending in the right direction. Nagel expects this trend to continue into the fall semester. "One really good thing that happened this year was that Student Affairs partnered with our faculty for class-based excursions that were open to anybody," she said. This included trips to the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium, culture and the arts performances in Downtown Pittsburgh, and visits to Fallingwater.

Nagel believes this connection with Student Affairs is a great way to engage more students to partake of these adventures.

Many renovations are expected to be finalized

for students to experience during their future semesters here at PSUGA. This includes the brand-new sport court, a "maker space" in the library that will include 3D printers and related things, and the third floor of Frable, which will look similar to the second floor.

This year, PSUGA had a total of 35 students graduate in 12 different degree programs. Nagel

said each student put in a tremendous amount of work to get to this point in their careers and have great plans to come.

Nagel shares a personal motto of hers that she believes the graduates should take with them as they continue their

journey in life.

"You win or you learn," Nagel said. "You have to try things and if they work out, great... If not, what do you learn from that experience that you can use to help you the next time you try something."

Similarly, she thinks it's important to take chances, even if you might seek failure. "Accepting failure is a part of the process of learning new things," she added.

David Newell, also known as Mr. McFeely from Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, was this year's commencement speaker and he had a few words to share with the graduates, too.

"When you choose a career, be sure to choose something you love

(Continued on next page)



David Newell as he gave his commencement speech to the graduates.

(Photo courtesy: PSUGA Facebook page)



(Continued from page 2)

because you will never work a day in your life,” Newell said, “but you also love your life.”

After being named interim chancellor for the PSUGA campus almost one year ago, Nagel helped the campus keep trending in the right

direction. “I certainly enjoyed the experience,” Nagel said. “I hope that my decision making reflected my commitment to the students, faculty and staff on this campus.”

In fact, she created a list of goals at the beginning of the semester and achieved almost

everything she had in mind.

“Everything I wanted to do, I have now seen come to be,” Nagel said. Some of the major things included bringing back high school competitions, student success and career readiness plans.

She also created Rising Scholars and her Walk-n-Talks to increase student engagement in and out of the classroom.

As Nagel’s first-year interim term comes to a close, the nationwide search for a permanent chancellor has yet to begin. The job posting and application process will open sometime during this summer, with an

expected decision by the search committee and the Office of the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses (OVPC) to come by year’s end.



May is Older Americans Month

Established in 1963, Older Americans Month (OAM) is celebrated every May and this year is its 60th anniversary. Led by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), OAM is a time to acknowledge the contributions and achievements of older Americans, to highlight important trends about aging in America, and to help everyone strengthen the commitment to honoring older citizens.

This year’s theme, Aging Unbound, offers an opportunity to explore a wide range of aging experiences and to promote the importance of enjoying

independence as people age.

Here are some ways everyone can participate in celebrating older Americans and/or to support aging family members and friends:

- Embrace the opportunity to change. Find a new passion, go on an adventure, and push boundaries by not letting age be defined by limitations.
- Explore the rewards of growing older. With age comes knowledge, which provides insight and confidence to understand and experience the world more deeply. Continue to grow that knowledge through reading, listening, by tak-

ing classes, and engaging in creative activities.

- Stay engaged in the community. Everyone benefits when everyone is connected and involved. Stay active by volunteering, working, mentoring, participating in social clubs, and taking part in activities in the community.

- Form relationships. As an essential ingredient of

well-being, relationships can enhance anyone’s quality of life by introducing new ideas and unique perspectives. Invest time with people to discover deeper connections with family, friends and community members.

Information and logomark courtesy the Administration for Community Living, 2023.

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH



AGING UNBOUND: MAY 2023

Lori Hepner Named Penn State Laureate

Love of Art, A Lifetime of Unique Design, Brilliance of Light

BRANDON SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

bms6925@psu.edu

Lori Hepner has recently been bestowed the honor of being named the Penn State Laureate for the upcoming 2023 to 2024 academic school year. Hepner, a professor of integrative arts at Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSUGA), specializes in making digital art through her ongoing practice, “Drawing with Light.” Hepner’s unique art spans the genres of photography, performance and augmented reality through the use of custom, wearable LED devices that use the movement of the body to create digital light drawings.

As the Penn State Laureate, Hepner will represent the University by using her art to bring awareness of the value of the humanities and the arts.

Hepner was fascinated with art at a very young age, getting her start in a computer arts class while she was still in kindergarten, where she specifically made digital art. Hepner recalls that getting to make this digital art was also pretty unheard of, considering that this was

the 1980s and not everybody had access to technology.

Luckily for Hepner, her father was also big into computers and was working towards a degree in “instructional technology design”. He bought the family a computer, which allowed Hepner to delve even more into this craft.

“It’s really unexpected. I went to Pittsburgh



public school, and I don’t know how this happened because it was in the 80s. We had to draw using equations, there was no mouse, you had to type everything in. Somehow my art teacher had gotten this computer lab, so I had computer art class throughout elementary school,” she said

Eventually, Hepner’s art teacher assisted her

in getting a scholarship where she would go and take art classes every Saturday at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Oakland. This was the same art program that famous Pittsburghers—pop artist, Andy Warhol, and modern realist painter, Philip Pearlstein-- participated in when they were in school.

This program would then lead into

about photography, as well as take art lab classes.

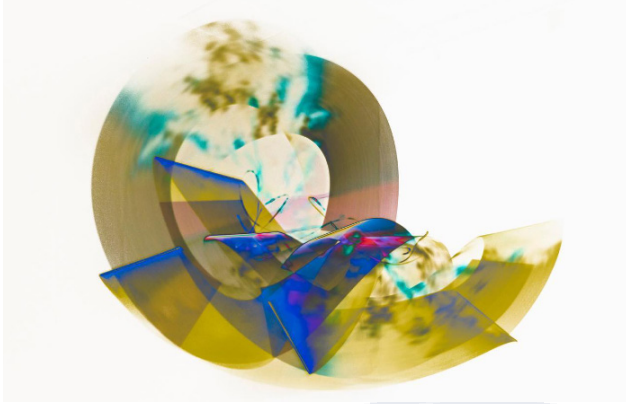
Hepner eventually went on to college, earning a Master of Fine Arts in Digital Media from Rhode Island School of Design and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Fine Art Photography from Rochester Institute of Technology.

Hepner’s current art is a great reflection and combination of all that she has learned throughout her journey. Hepner uses her photography skills to capture scenes of the real world and then is able to translate these digital photos into light with the use of an LED system and digital software.

The LED lights are able to translate the digital photos by recreating them “one column of pixels at a time,” she said.

Even more fascinating is how Hepner employs the LED system. By strapping the LED lights onto herself, she can then walk in front of a camera to recreate the original photos, but with LED lights. Instead of just recreating these digital images 1-to-1, she instead makes unique movements to twist the photos and

(Continued on next page)



(Continued from page 4)

bend the landscapes that she has captured.

In doing so, Hepner is able to create these abstract art pieces that are more than meets the eye. The abstract pieces that she creates are truly special since they are actual real places that she has been to and captured with her camera. Combining both the digital world and the real world, Hepner creates truly one of a kind artwork that is sure to leave people in awe.

A key feature of Hepner's art is how interactive and accessible it is.

"One of the things I've been doing with these last couple art projects is including people so they can participate. And it's one of the great things I've noticed because I don't have to explain to them necessarily how it works," she said.

Anybody can be a part of the process of creating it with how streamlined this process is. Hepner gets people to participate by letting them play around with the LED lights and letting them

take the reins in creating abstract images.

"I can hand them the LEDs and they just have to move and they're able to make art in front of their own eyes and that sort of joy I see on their faces makes it all worth it for me to sort of connect people in that way," Hepner said.

Hepner also enjoys taking her art to the local community and working with people of all ages in community-centered projects involving photography, new media performance, and public art. Two of the most recent projects included Larimer Caryatids, at Bakery Square in East

Liberty, and The Air Above Us, at the Carrie Furnaces in Rankin.

In a 2018 documentary called "Visible," produced by WQED Multimedia in Pittsburgh, Hepner was one of five women artists featured for their unique work and engagement with the community.

Hepner was quoted as saying, "For me, part of this work is also getting other people excited about making art. Drawing with your body in light is, I think, pretty magical... to see the joy people have once they realize they just made that."

Hepner is looking forward to bringing her art to more people at all of the places she will be visiting as the Laureate. She plans on doing interactive demos and hands-on activities with students where they can actually play a role in the art by interacting with the LEDs.

Hepner has been interviewed and featured in articles in Time, Wired,

and Next Level magazines, and her artwork can be found in galleries and museum exhibitions across the United States and around the world, including in Finland, China, the U.K., Spain, the Netherlands, Iceland, Norway, Canada, and Colombia, and at the Houston Center for Photography, and the Brooklyn Museum, to name a few.

Later this year, her work will reach to the moon when her abstracted landscapes-- which are engraved on a ruby disk inside of the Moon Arc, a mini museum--will be sent to live on the moon on Astrobotic's Peregrine Moon Lander. Hepner is very ecstatic about her artwork going to the moon.

A sample of Hepner's work can be viewed online at lorihepner.com.

Photos courtesy: Dr. Lori Hepner's Instagram page



Hepner's personal artwork displayed at Pittsburgh International Airport

A Deeper Look Into Mrs. Jenn: The Heart of PSUGA

ZACH PETRULAK

Contributing Writer

zkp5066@psu.edu

For many students at Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSUGA), their student ID is something that is renewed or replaced for a variety of reasons. When this happens, a student must go down to the housing and food office in the Student Community Center (SCC), where they will be helped by a friendly and familiar face.

While most students know Mrs. Jenn McCutcheon (more commonly referred to as Mrs. Jenn) as the employee who handles student IDs, they may not know much else about her.

Mrs. Jenn has a wide range of responsibilities besides ensuring students get a new ID card. As housing coordinator, it is Mrs. Jenn's responsibility to ensure that on-campus students are comfortably able to move into the dorms. She also manages the facilities on campus with the Director of Housing and Food, Jeremy Linder.

Her other responsibilities include, but are not limited to: helping the food department; being responsible for all the invoices sent to Housing and Foods Services; handling all the packages and

mail delivered to the campus; doing the payroll for the student employees; and running hire events with Housing and Food Manager, Anthony Orlando.

Like any job, Mrs. Jenn has certain joys and challenges that come with her integral role here at Greater Allegheny.

"My favorite part of the job is the relationships I have with the students," she said. "This is the hardest year for me because they are all leaving me and graduating. This is the first group I have seen the whole way through."

However, her relationship with the students may cause a challenge sometimes, especially when it comes to time management. "It's hard because I want to be there for them, but I also have to do my own job," Mrs. Jenn added.

Outside of work, Mrs. Jenn keeps a busy schedule. She is the proud mother of four children, with one of being a current student at Greater Allegheny: Korrine.

In addition, Mrs. Jenn was a foster mother at one point in time. "We had six kids living in the house, three boys and three girls," she said. "It was our own version of the Brady Bunch." She added that this experience gave her and her family a better



Mrs. Jenn accompanied by her youngest daughter, Kennedy, and senior, Adrian Eduardo Hiciano-Kingsley (Photo courtesy: Zach Petrulak)

perspective.

Also, it was during Korinne's search for a college to attend that first attracted mother and daughter to the PSUGA campus.

"We came here, and I totally fell in love with the campus. She was still a junior in high school. I applied for a job, got hired a month later and I have not left since," Mrs. Jenn said.

Mrs. Jenn is also a student here at Greater Allegheny, pursuing a degree in business. She says that it is sometimes hard to balance her job and being a student.

"People will complain that they lost their ID card and I'll say 'Hey, I can't help you. I am in class with you.'"

Even with these responsibilities, Mrs. Jenn still finds a way to have fun.

One passion that Mrs. Jenn pursues in her off time is coaching cheer, having been teaching it for 19 years. She is currently the co-owner of Competitive Cheer Xtreme with her daughter, Korrine, and it is located in Export, Pa. Earlier this year, *The GA-Zette* reported Mrs. Jenn served as the advisor to a cheerleading club on campus. ("Pep, Positivity at Greater Allegheny," by Melanie McGinniss, January, 2023.)

"I love cheerleading. It is one of my favorite passions. So, we now own a competitive cheer program," Mrs. Jenn said. Her business will celebrate its one-year anniversary in June.

For housing & food related-concerns, Mrs. Jenn can be reached through her email at jlm7696@psu.edu or by phone at 412-675-9103.

Road Closures Begin in South Hills for Next Phase of Mon/Fayette Expressway Project

Construction on Last Eight Miles First Work In More Than Five Years

Drivers through Jefferson Hills, Clairton and even through West Mifflin, may experience intermittent road closures for the next three years as the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) begins construction of the 53A1 phase of the Mon/Fayette Expressway project.

Portions of Clairton Road (State Route 885) in Jefferson Hills will be restricted to one lane, as needed, as crews begin building a temporary

Road between 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, but could extend until 9 p.m. weekdays, when needed, and Saturday work is possible, as well.

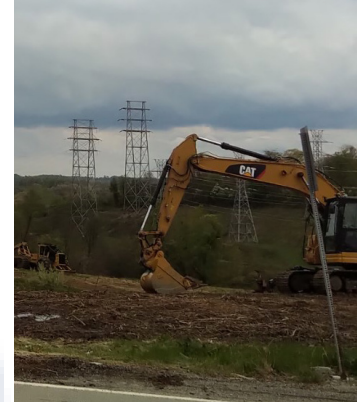
This first phase of the final miles of the Expressway will take three years, as *The GA-Zette* first reported last December (“The Long-Awaited Eight Miles: Economic Development in Mon Valley Rides On

Borough, to approximately three miles north of Coal Valley Road in West Mifflin. That’s the first piece of the southern section of the highway, which will eventually stretch to Route 837 in Duquesne, near the Penn State Greater Allegheny campus, at an estimated cost of \$1.3 billion.

The PTC estimates that Trumbull will excavate more than four million cubic yards of earth and build six bridges. Five of the bridges will be built as part of the mainline Mon/Fayette Expressway while the sixth will carry PA Route 885 over the Mon/Fayette Expressway. A cashless toll point will also be built within this section.

The remaining construction sections will go through the bidding process and begin construction as bids are awarded, the PTC said.

The extension of the highway through the Mon Valley has been a topic on the books for more than 50 years and mandated by the Legislature since 1985, but it has run into financial delays and opposition along the way. During that time, the PTC continued to acquire property



and worked to relocate utilities in preparation for when construction could begin again.

The Mon/Fayette Expressway (PA Turnpike 43) currently stretches 54 miles from I-68 near Morgantown, WV to its current terminus at State Route 51 in Jefferson Hills, and eventually the entire highway will connect with the current turnpike interchange in Monroeville.

For more information about the Mon/Fayette Expressway and the PA 51 to I-376 Project, visit paturndpike.com/monfayette.



roadway in this area to get around the construction zone where a bridge will be built over the future Expressway main road. The Commission stated in a press release that once the temporary roadway is built, the lane restrictions will occur less frequently.

The single-lane restrictions will take place between Sunset Drive and Miller Road to Clairton

Expressway Link,” by Melanie McGinniss, December, 2022.)

Earlier this year, the PTC announced that it awarded a \$214 million contract to Trumbull Corp. of Pittsburgh to build this section of the highway. Section 53A1 stretches from PA Route 51, where the Expressway currently ends, in Jefferson Hills



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

“The Crow”: Love, Loss & Revenge

BRANDON SCHUETZ

Staff Writer

bms6925@psu.edu

Thirty years after the passing of its main star, Brandon Lee, *The Crow* stands tall as a beautifully haunting tale about love, loss and revenge. Directed by Alex Proyas, the filming of the movie was plagued by many on-set issues and accidents, most notably the accidental shooting death of its star, which occurred during the final days of production on this film. Brandon Lee was the son of famous martial artist and movie icon, Bruce Lee.

While many look at *The Crow* as just being an action movie about revenge, there is quite a lot more to it than just that. Instead of just being a typical action-packed revenge film, *The Crow* is a brooding, gothic, philosophical movie that tells the story of true love persevering even after death.

The Crow is based upon comic books of the same name, written by writer and artist, James

O’Barr. While the movie stays mostly accurate to these comic books, some scenes depicting plot points from the comics had to be cut due to Lee’s untimely passing, as they had not yet been filmed.

The film follows Eric Draven, a musician who is brutally murdered by a band of criminals after being forced to watch the assault and murder of his wife, Shelly Webster, in front of his very eyes. Exactly one year after the murders, Eric Draven is brought back to life by a crow that guides him to the locations of the murderers.

In the name of love, Eric Draven seeks his revenge by going after each and every single one of the criminals with the intention of killing them all. Only after he has exacted his vengeance can his soul rest for eternity.

With only a few days left of filming at the time of his death, Lee’s remaining scenes were filmed with stunt doubles and computer effects were used to finish the small

amount of work that was left for the character of Eric Draven. This is considered to be a moment in Hollywood that paved the way for actors and actresses to have posthumous work completed after their deaths.

Besides Brandon Lee as Eric Draven, the film also stars Sofia Shinas as

The Crow is streaming now on YouTube, Apple TV and Amazon Prime Video.

A remake of *The Crow* starring *It* (2017) actor, Bill Skarsgård, and English singer-songwriter FKA Twigs, has recently finished filming and is set to release sometime within the next year.



Shelly Webster, Draven’s wife; Rochelle Davis as Sarah, a friend of Eric and Shelly’s; Michael Wincott as Top Dollar, one of the criminals; and Michael Masee as Funboy, another criminal.

Despite all of its dark themes and depressing nature, *The Crow* is truly an uplifting story about overcoming grief in the name of love. “Real love is forever.”

CLUB ADVERTISING

Does your organization want to promote its event or program in the newspaper?

The GA-ZETTE offers complimentary, no-cost display ads to any university sanctioned club or organization.

Space is limited! Contact the campus newspaper at ga-zette@PennStateOffice365.onmicrosoft.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The staff and management of *The GA-ZETTE* welcome letters to the editor by writing to rum31@psu.edu.

Please include your full name, PSU email, address, and phone number to verify.

Missing contact information will result in non-consideration of your article.

2023 WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
**JUNETEENTH
HOMECOMING
CELEBRATION**
PITTSBURGH



JUNE 16TH – 19TH | 11AM – 9PM DAILY

POINT STATE PARK & DOWNTOWN

FOR MORE INFO: WPAJUNETEENTH.COM | WPAJUNETEENTH@YAHOO.COM



Opinion, From Were I Sit: Parting Words of Advice from A Man of Many Words

CARLIN WHALEN

Managing Editor

cjw6426@psu.edu

College life isn't that much different than high school, except for a few exceptions. In college, you can sleep in (sometimes) and pick your own class schedules (all the time.) College is also very expensive, unlike high school.

After being a student at Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSUGA) for the past two years, I have re-used many of the skills from my high school days, but I have learned many others that will always be invaluable to me. Because I will be leaving PSUGA to transition up to University Park (UP), I want to advise any current or incoming students to take some of my advice into account.

Stay Organized

Nothing is worse than losing an assignment that is due, and that can affect your grade in the class. So, one of the best ways to combat that issue is to stay organized.

Personally, I use an agenda to jot down any assignments that are due each week. This allows me to successfully complete all my work on time. In addition, I like to have a separate notebook for

each of my classes, so everything isn't a jumbled mess.

As far as online documents, like Word or PowerPoint, I create a



folder for every one of my classes. This helps me stay organized and know exactly where everything is located.

Don't Get Behind on Classes

Procrastination is never a good option, and I am

speaking from personal experience. Letting all your work pile up can and will lead to a much stressful semester. I suggest that you get the work done as

soon as possible. In turn, this will eliminate the stressful late nights where you must complete multiple assignments at once.

Get Involved

Look and find any clubs/organizations that interest you. For me, it

was this newspaper, and it was probably one of the best things I did throughout my two years here. This has given me a lot of skills that I can take with me in the future.

If you don't like any of the clubs that already exist, you can always create your own and recruit students who share a similar interest. This can help you make new friends on campus and possibly lead to new opportunities during your time at Greater Allegheny.

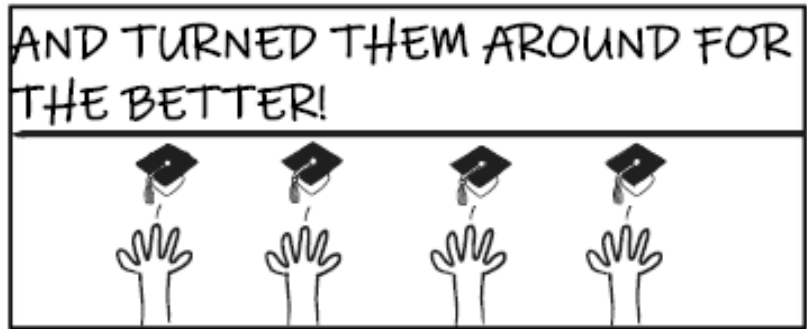
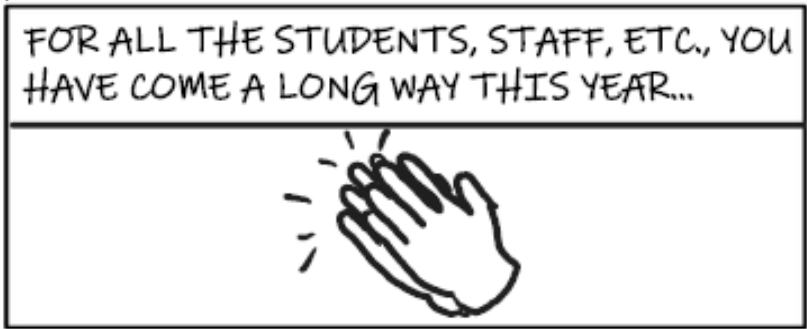
Have Fun

Most importantly, you want to have fun. You can't let homework take up all your time as a student. So, set some time aside and go hang out with your friends! Many students consider college to be the best years of their lives, so live it up.

Everyone will have a different experience in college and it's important to share what works and what doesn't to help yourself and the peers around you succeed. Just like I shared some of my advice, I'd like to hear some of yours.

I can be reached via email at cjw6426@psu.edu if anyone would like to share any of their input.

THE END
BY SAMUEL ADEKOLA



THE GA-ZETTE, the official campus newspaper of Penn State Greater Allegheny, is published by students for students, faculty and staff of the campus. The paper is printed seasonally, but is also posted and updated bi-weekly, on a digital platform at sites.psu.edu/gazette.

Address: 4000 University Drive, McKeesport, PA 15102

Phone: 412-675-9025

Managing Editor:
Carlin Whalen, COMM

Staff Writers:
Brandon Schuetz, COMM

Administrative Support:
Jayme Gralewski
Connie Surman

Contributing Writers:
Zach Petrulak, CRIMJ
Mariah Greene, COMM

Editorial Cartoonist:
Sam Adekola, MDS

Faculty Advisor:
Rosemary Martinelli

Production Support:
Nicholas Smerker, Media Commons

*The thoughts and comments of **The GA-Zette** are those of the individual writer and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the administration and management of Penn State Greater Allegheny or The Pennsylvania State University, at-large. Editorial decisions rest with the staff and management of **The GA-Zette**.*

SPORTS AND ATHLETICS

Joey Porter, Jr. Lands in Pittsburgh

CARLIN WHALEN

Managing Editor

cjw6426@psu.edu

There are plenty of big names for college athletes in this year's 2023 National Football League (NFL) draft. However, Pittsburgh Steelers fans had one name in mind... Joey Porter, Jr.

The Pittsburgh Steelers answered many of the fans' hopes. Despite many offers to trade down from other teams around the league, the Steelers opted to draft Porter Jr. as the first pick in the second round of the draft.

The Steelers were in need of a cornerback after



losing Cam Sutton due to free agency. However, being able to draft Porter Jr. will give the Steelers secondary a much-needed boost for the future.

Porter Jr. had a

spectacular four-season career at Penn State (PSU), with a total of 113 tackles throughout 86 games.

Also, he was named first-team All-Big

Ten in 2022 and was the Nittany Lions Most Valuable Defensive Player.

PSU and Steeler fans alike are happy to see Porter Jr. make a jump to the next level of ball and are excited to see what he can bring to the team.

More than two decades ago, his father, Joey Porter, Sr., was drafted to the Steelers. Now, Porter Jr. can continue in his father's footsteps as a Pittsburgh Steeler and start to craft his own legacy.

Photo courtesy: Barry Reeger/The Associated Press

Penn State Night at PNC Park on Aug. 27

Over the next several months, the Pittsburgh Pirates will be hosting University Nights at PNC Park.

Penn State's University (PSU) Night will be held on Aug. 27, where the Pirates take on the Chicago Cubs.

Not only do students get discounted tickets, but they also come with their own advantages.

Each ticket includes one drink, a cobranded Pirates/PSU bucket hat, and access to a pregame mingling event in the Left Field Lounge.

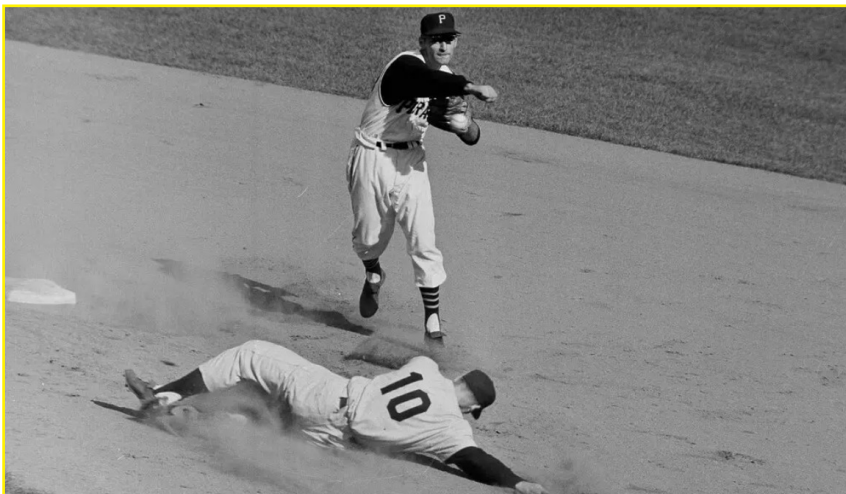
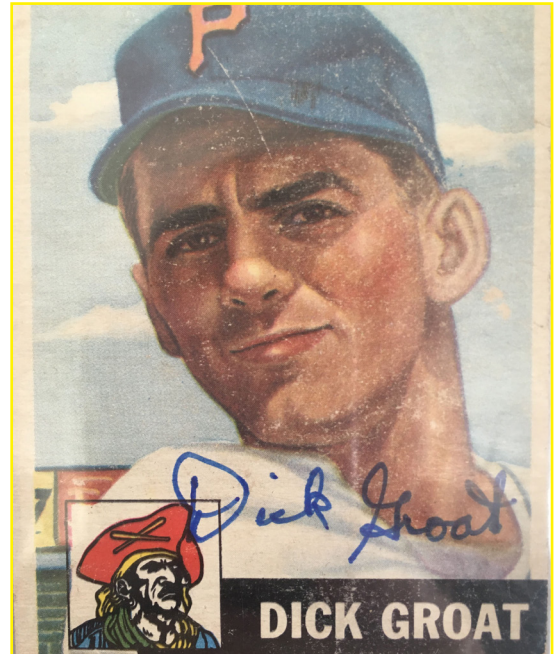
In addition, a portion of each ticket will be donated back to Penn State.

For more information, visit mlb.com/pirates or contact Nick Ramsey via email at Nick.Ramsey@pirates.com or phone at 412-325-4938.

Photo courtesy: Harrison Barden/Pittsburgh Pirates



Pirates Hall of Fame Star, Dick Groat, Dies at 92 (1930-2023)



Starting off playing basketball, Dick Groat eventually found his way to baseball. He first joined the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1952 before spending two years in the Army.

When Groat returned, he had to make a decision whether to play basketball or baseball. So, he returned to the Pirates in 1955. Five years later, he helped the Pirates win their third World Series.

He was then traded to the St. Louis Cardinals, followed by the Philadelphia Phillies and then the San Francisco Giants.

Throughout his career, Groat was named the National League Most Valuable Player (MVP), and led the League in double plays five times, and was an All-Star with the Pirates three times.

(Photos courtesy: Associated Press, Flickr, and Wikimedia Commons)

Pittsburgh Youth Football Team Teaches Life Skills On and Off The Field

MARIAH GREENE

Contributing Writer

mmg5949@psu.edu

“Coming home from prison, I figured I didn’t want the ‘youngins’ to make the same mistakes I did. It really started more as wanting to mentor youth,” said Antoine Lester, also known as “Fizzy,” who coaches for the miniature league East End Raiders in Pittsburgh.

After getting released from prison in 2008, Lester navigated his way to running his own football team. In 2010, he officially settled in Pittsburgh’s Larimer neighborhood, where he grew up as a kid. Lester mentioned that he was connected through a friend from his

neighborhood with the Kingsley Association, a Pittsburgh nonprofit that, for 129 years, has been “meeting community needs for organized social, educational, and recreational programming for children, youth and their families.”

Lester thought football would be a good experience for the youth in the East End of Pittsburgh.

“[Previously] not knowing about football, I thought I’d give it a shot,” Lester said. He expressed that he had paired with a few friends from his neighborhood to get his organization started.

“In 2009 we didn’t have anything together, and in 2010 we got all the paperwork started for it. That’s when I really got

into full coaching,” Lester said. “After that it just took off.”

The East End Raiders consist of youth from five to 14 years of age. Lester has coached every level.

He talked about having to look deeper into behavioral issues within a kid because some days they are their best and some days they are not. However, he said that the “majority of them will tell me if they have something going on at home.” Lester portrays tough love through his pep talks to his players to help them on the field. He would always remind them that they get what they put out.

“You give 110 percent you’re going to get 110 percent,” he said. “That was our motivation to win

the championship in 2021. At the end of the season I told them ‘y’all did it’ and I had a kid tell me ‘no coach Fizzy, that was you, you believed in us,’” Lester added. He smiled then looked out and said, “It was a surreal feeling. It was awesome.”

Lester said that the last championship on Oct. 30, 2021 against the Pittsburgh Kings “we were down at halftime. As coaches we are so passionate that it seems like we are screaming at them and we feel like they can do certain things so when they mess up we get mad, but it’s more of a passion,” he said. Then he paused and said, “I had to learn how to stay calm because I realized that they are going to react to my emotions. [For example], if I’m going crazy it could damage them. That is how we overcome challenging game situations.”

Lester often uses football as an analogy because football can be used for life. “No one is just going to give you anything,” he said. “Outside of that, it goes further because a lot of these kids don’t have father figures in their home, so I’m dealing with a lot of single mothers.” Lester extends his help a



*The East End Raiders celebrating their championship victory in 2021.
(Photo courtesy: Antoine Lester)*

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from page 14)

lot further than the field because “a lot of these kids will listen to the coach before they listen to their moms,” he said.

Antoine Lester wants to try to have a relationship with every young person who walks on the football field. “Sometimes I had a team full of thirty and I had a team of fourteen. But I just wanted them to know that off the field, I’m here,” Lester

said. He went on to say sometimes the kids call him to tell him good news like getting their driver’s permit or getting good grades, “but prepping on the field is all about repetition.”

Lester hopes that if the East End Raiders learn anything from him, it is that they would remember to “maintain your discipline, maintain your composure, put in 110 percent, always give it

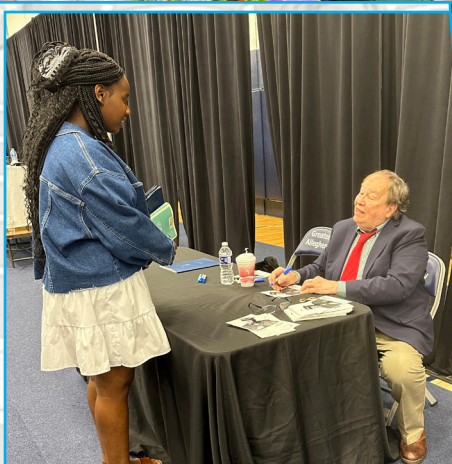
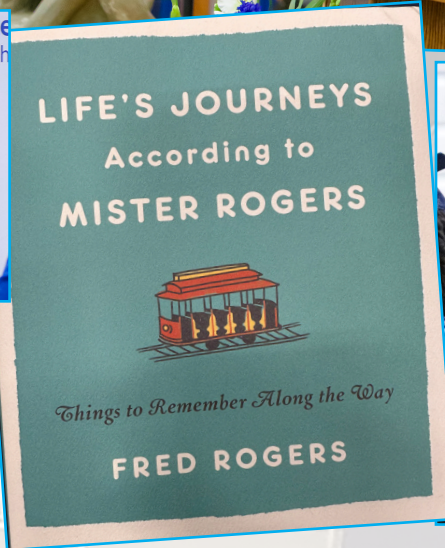
your all, and know that I love them,” he said. He added the most important thing he wants them to know is that everything he does for them was out of love and that “with all the craziness going on in the world, they have someone who will always show up for them.”

Looking into the future, Lester plans to have other activities for the youth in Pittsburgh. He said that he had been

planning to include “basketball, life skill classes and swimming.”

Parting words of wisdom to any youth, Lester says, from a coach’s point of view, “don’t give up, keep working. From a man’s point of view it’s the same thing but, stay true to who you are. Don’t be a follower, be a leader. Accept accountability, understanding the decisions you make can determine a lot of things in your life.”

Graduation Memories



OH, WHAT A DAY TO REMEMBER!!!

(Photos courtesy: Carlin Whalen and PSUGA Facebook page)

CONGRATULATIONS 2023 GRADUATES!

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE GRADUATES

Administration of Justice

Myairah Alaysia Rashell Carter

Communications

Yousuf Lachhab Ibrahim

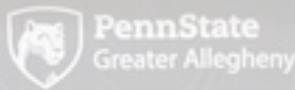
Psychology

Payton Bartek
Gustavo Delgado +
Raymond Santos Arroyo
Justice Smith-McDougal +
Kayla Steele +

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE GRADUATES

Business

Javanna Brodt *
Atiya L. Daniels
Jordan E. Francis +
Kennedy Noelle Henderson
Danijel Juric +
Collin McPherson
Samuel Parsons
Dylan J. Pulkownik
Marquest James Rainey Jr.
Ma'Nyah Faith Wright



Administration of Justice

Joel David Fordyce
Chyenne Renae Porter +
Taylor Sonita

Information Technology

Adrian Eduardo Hiciano-Kingsley

Criminal Justice

Jonathan Preece

Psychology

Margie Ree Harrison +
Brianna Nicole Moore

Cybersecurity Analytics and Operations

Raymond Joseph Kotewicz III

Information Sciences and Technology

Deyten Lawrence Hill
Sebastien Pamphile

Project & Supply Chain Management

Bradley R. Porter

Biobehavioral Health

Elijah Akinade
Alix Aleah Ellis
Armani M. Isaac
Sarah Kish
Onika Marae Miles ++
Neila Raveen
Teofil Wojnaroski

*Summer 2023 Graduates +
Summer 2022 Graduates ++
Degree Conferred Posthumously *
(Degree accepted by student's family)*

*The GA-Zette team
wishes you all the
best in your future
endeavors!!!*



PennState
Greater Allegheny