

OCEAN VIEWS

A Newsletter for Ocean County College Alumni, Our College Family, and the Community
Summer-Fall 2019 ■ Vol. XIII: No. 2



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OCEAN NEWS

WHAT WE'RE PROUD OF



Success Seminar

Last fall, lecturer Madison Peschock's College Success Seminar (STSC 155) had the opportunity to Skype with a 12-year-old named Owen from London, England, who "shared advice on how to stay motivated and overcome challenges and use the creative mindset – a concept we study in this class," Peschock stated.

Owen has Schwartz Jampel Syndrome, a very rare genetic disease that causes extremely tense muscles. Because his muscles never relax, he uses a walker or a wheelchair.

As Peschock noted, Owen also suffers from severe depression. "In an effort to help him overcome his depression, Owen's father, Will, and stepmom, Colleen, adopted a six-month-old Anatolian Shepherd who had been tied to a railroad track and hit by a train," she explained. "The dog, Haatchi, survived the accident, but his back leg and tail were amputated."

The area SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) had been hoping to find a loving home for Haatchi. And as it turned out, said Peschock, "This dog dramatically changed Owen's life."

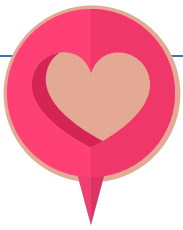
"As soon as Haatchi was adopted, Owen wanted to go outside to walk Haatchi, and he quickly noticed that the focus that he thought was on him shifted to Haatchi. Many people asked what happened to Haatchi and thought that this dog was amazing for being able to walk on three legs."

Soon after finding one another, in 2013, Owen entered Haatchi into several local dogs shows, and the duo won each show, including Crufts – the largest dog show in the UK – in a category called "Friends for Life." Owen and Haatchi faced some tough competition in the category, such as war heroes and disabled veterans who also had special four-legged friends. However, with 54 percent of the audience's vote, Owen and Haatchi took the top spot.

"Since then, they have been busy sharing their inspirational story with people and teaching others how to overcome depression and how to stay motivated," said Peschock, who pointed out that Owen's story is shared in the book *haatchi & little b: the inspiring true story of one boy and his dog*.

When the STSC class Skyped with Owen – along with Haatchi and Will – the students "learned about having a rare disability and the fact that everyone just wants to be treated the same. It was a wonderful experience that our class won't forget."

– JKH



THINGS WE LOVE!

Vikings Men's Tennis Team Takes 4th Place in Nationals

The OCC Men's Tennis team ended its 2018-19 season ranked 4th in the nation after a strong showing at the 2019 NJCAA D-III National Championship Tournament, held in Peachtree City, GA, from May 9-12.

The Vikings fought hard, with 1st Singles Sean Boyle advancing to the semifinal round, and Liam Raftery, Yanir Shriki, and Carl Genz winning their respective 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Singles consolation brackets. Tyler Laycock battled into the consolation finals round in 5th Singles, while 6th Singles player Robby Fuggi advanced to the finals before falling to Oxford Emory in a gritty performance that landed him 2nd Team All-American honors upon the tournament's conclusion.

"The men's tennis team did a great job this season," said OCC Men's Tennis Coach Alec Williamson. "Our competitors offered us a bundle of takeaways to further stoke our future success. I'm very proud of all team members and I can expect for next season to be just as good, if not better."

An OCC Class in Every High School

This year, Ocean County College's Early College program will expand to every public school in Ocean County. The Early College program allows junior and senior high school students to earn credits as part of their regular high school day. These courses are available through articulation agreements between OCC and individual school districts.

The Early College program gives students the opportunity to take 100- and 200-level courses that can be transferred to any public college or university in New Jersey. Students who participate in this program are more motivated to attend college and are able to save time and money in their pursuit of a degree.

"OCC's Early College program helps students graduate from college faster, get employed earlier, and improve their earning potential," said Dr. Anthony Trump, Director of Admissions. "We're very proud of the program's growth and success and cannot wait to see our students become the next generation of Ocean County leaders and entrepreneurs."

OCC Says Goodbye to Registration Fees

Starting in the Fall 2019 semester, OCC students can register for classes fee-free! In order to remove unnecessary roadblocks to student success from recruitment to graduation, OCC will no longer require registration fees for any courses at the College.

"When we first implemented registration fees, there were only three terms per year," said Sara Winchester, Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration at Ocean County College. "Today there are more than a dozen academic terms per year. OCC wants to encourage students to take advantage of multiple terms to help them reach their goals in a timely manner; having a registration fee that was contrary to this philosophy did not make sense."

The elimination of registration fees at OCC is one of the latest steps in our effort to provide the most affordable, high quality educational experience in the state of New Jersey.



OCC Care Package Reaches the 102nd Cavalry in Jordan

In June, the Ocean County College Veteran and Military Resource Center (VMRC) delivered a care package to the 1st Squadron of the 102nd US Cavalry Regiment. The 1st Squadron includes more than a dozen OCC students and alumni, as well as local military service members, currently stationed in Jordan.

The VMRC care package included many hygiene essentials that are severely limited at a Forward Operating Base, including shaving cream, razors, portable tooth brushes, sunscreen, lip balm, lotion, and more. The Student Life Center also sent hydro-bottles, beanies, t-shirts, and other OCC swag items.

"As someone who has served multiple tours down range, I know how valuable a care and relief package is once received," says Ryan Luurtsema, Veteran Coordinator for the VMRC. "The VMRC is dedicated to the success of personal and professional development of all the Student Veteran and Military Affiliated community members who attend OCC. We hope that this care and relief package will be received and welcomed by the 1-102D Cavalry Squadron, and we wish them a swift and steady deployment until they return home."

BBP Secures \$1.2 million in DEP Grants

The Barnegat Bay Partnership (BBP), an organization dedicated to restoring and protecting the Barnegat Bay ecosystem, has secured four grants, totaling \$1.2 million dollars, from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). These grants will help the BBP develop and implement plans to reduce the impact of stormwater runoff in the 660-square mile Barnegat Bay watershed.

BBP was awarded a \$220,000 grant for a watershed restoration and protection plan for Cedar Creek, a \$200,000 grant for Oyster Creek, and a \$700,000 grant for the Toms River watershed. The organization was also awarded \$100,000 in grants for its "Bay Friendly" stewardship program.

"The restoration, enhancement, and protection of a healthy Barnegat Bay is a DEP priority," NJ DEP Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe said. "Reducing the impact of stormwater runoff is one of the biggest challenges we face in the Barnegat Bay watershed. We applaud these grant awardees for the passion they have for enhancing and protecting a natural resource that is truly a New Jersey treasure."

Grace Rochette: Hitting the High Notes





Grace Rochette, 20, enrolled at OCC after graduating from Barnegat High School in 2017. She majored in Performing Arts: Music Option and earned her associate degree this May.

LEARNING TO LEAD Rochette served as Vice President of Service for Phi Theta Kappa, Tau Iota Chapter of OCC, and was inducted into PTK International's Distinguished Officers Hall of Fame.

ENSEMBLE She was also a member of the OCC Jazz Band for which she played alto saxophone and clarinet; the OCC Concert Band, where she focused on clarinet; and the OCC Music Club. As Rochette explained, "I started playing the alto saxophone in fourth grade. In middle school, during sixth grade, I switched to the bass clarinet. I played the bass clarinet throughout high school. During that time, I also learned the acoustic guitar and piano," which she likes to play in her free time.

OFF STAGE Rochette was significantly involved with the OCC Helping Hands Food Pantry, officially established in March 2018. "While the pantry is mainly food, I helped establish a hygienic section," she stated. "I felt that even though food was important, hygienic needs are also important. From there, I worked closely with OCC's Student Life to continue the pantry and help tackle food insecurity on campus. We've also talked with the OCC Foundation to strategize how to spread awareness about the food pantry." She added, "When I heard about the pantry, I felt it was important to get involved and volunteer because food insecurity is one of the biggest problems in the world. I feel that a way I can help tackle food insecurity is by starting small, like on a college campus."

IN TUNE "I've always felt that it was important to give back to your community," said Rochette. "I used to volunteer at my local library, and with my Girl Scout troop at a nursing home. When I got older, I started volunteering at my high school with a program called "Challenger League," which offers sports for children and adults with disabilities. Rochette taught tennis and golf – which she played in high school – for the league. In June, Rochette is participating in the Great Cycle Challenge, sponsored by the nonprofit Children's Cancer Research Fund.

HARMONY In March 2019, as Alison Noone, Assistant Director of Student Life, explained, Rochette was "the recipient of the Ocean County Personnel and Guidance Association's Caring Award, which recognizes students who have given of themselves to a person, group, or cause unselfishly and without an expectation of reward." Rochette stated, "I am honored to have received this year's award from Ocean County College. This was connected to my work at the Helping Hands Food Pantry."

SOUNDTRACK When she's not performing music, Rochette's days are filled with "volunteering, reading, watching movies, listening to music, and spending time with my friends and family. I also like to stay active by running, biking, and sometimes doing yoga. I like to listen to different types of music genres: mostly rock, punk, and pop. One of my favorite artists would have to be Taylor Swift. I have all of her CDs and became a fan with her first album titled "Taylor Swift." Rochette also works part-time at Kohl's in Manahawkin.

TAKE NOTE Rochette is transferring to William Paterson University to pursue a bachelor's degree in music, specifically in classical music education – alto saxophone.

– JKH



Jump Starting the Future

In May, twenty-two students from Lacey Township received their associate degrees from OCC – one month before their high school graduation.

These young men and women comprise the first cohort of the College Academy, initiated at Lacey Township High School in 2017 to enable select scholars to earn a degree from OCC, at a reduced cost, in addition to their high school diploma.

Dr. Henry A. Jackson, Executive Director of Academic Success at OCC, oversees College Readiness Now, which aims to improve the college readiness of graduating high school students; College Credit Now, a dual-enrollment program; and the College Academy. In 2016, OCC worked with twenty-five Lacey, Toms River, and Central High School students for College Credit Now; each student enrolled in six college credits. “The program offered high school students college classes for absolutely free,” Jackson said the following year.

Meanwhile, as Lacey District Supervisor William Zylinski explained, for years he’d communicated with Elaine Schardien, Assistant Director of Academic Success at OCC, for Jump Start – through which high school students can get a “jump” on their college education by enrolling as part-time college students at OCC – and dual enrollment.

Eventually, he and Lacey Principal Gregory Brandis had a “meeting of the minds” with Jackson. As they sat and talked about creating more “pathways,” Brandis noted, “Everybody said, ‘Let’s go for it,’” and the College Academy was born.

“It really was groundbreaking,” Zylinski remarked, adding, “OCC has been great about helping us through the pitfalls. OCC has been a great partner.”

As Zylinski said about the first cohort, “They’re definitely a core-motivated contingent of students. This is not for everyone; students have to be focused and able to plan.”

Now, he pointed out, “They seem like typical college students,” defined

by college-level semi-adulthood and college-level stress.

“Good stress,” qualified Brandis, who said he’s loved seeing the evolution of the program, and the students.

As the administrators noted, Lacey’s Cohort 2 has fifteen students, and Cohort 3 has more than thirty. Just as with Cohort 1, the students are supported by Jackson and Schardien, as well as the high school administration, and Margaret Rand, the College Academy-specific advisor at Lacey.

In addition, as student Elizabeth Fastow said in early May, when Cohort 1 gathered to speak about their experience, “All of our professors cared a lot about us.” This was vital because, she pointed out, “We have a lot on our plate. We’re still high schoolers.” (Although, as of now, the students are recent high school graduates with degrees from OCC!)

Fastow, who will enroll at the University of Virginia this fall, said she and a number of the other students took an environmental science class with Professor Jamie Ruttora, as she stated, “She just cared so much, and she’s probably one of my favorite people ever. She made me care a lot more about the earth and myself.”

Jordan Stracensky, soon-to-be a Charleston Southern University student, has fond memories of Professor David Lansing – “What a guy. He is very funny, and made history interesting.” – and of Professor Domenic Schiraldi, her instructor for anatomy and physiology. “He didn’t treat me like a high school student,” she stated.

Although many of those in the initial cohort were intrigued when they first heard about the College Academy – Monmouth-bound Chloe Seneca, for example “was immediately interested” when she attended the PowerPoint presentation in the school auditorium at the end of her sophomore year. There were, of course, some hiccups and challenges.



"In the beginning, it was chaotic because it was so new," said Valerie Meehan, who is also headed to Monmouth University, where she plans to pursue a degree in accounting.

"We were all just finding our way," Schardien concurred.

Plus, some students work, like Jacquelyn Asay, a lifeguard at the McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst joint military base who also takes EMS classes and volunteers for the fire department. Others play sports, including Courtney Jerabek and Erin Williams, who cheered for the OCC Vikings. (Asay will be at Rowan University in the fall, while Jerabek and Williams are attending SUNY Delhi and The College of New Jersey, respectively.)

For a young student, high school coursework, extracurriculars, family, and other activities are already a lot to handle – then, add college courses.

As Meehan noted though, Jackson and Schardien quickly helped them settle in right from the start and were there all along the way. "They're amazing," she remarked. She added, "It was cool to be in a college environment."

Christopher Locha said the program not only prepared him for college – he's enrolling at the University of Tampa to study criminology – but also will save him money in the long run.

When Chelsea Wheeler first learned about the College Academy, she stated, "I wasn't sure it was right for me ... but then I realized the opportunity." Wheeler wasn't sure what she might want to study in college, but then she took business and hospitality courses at OCC and something clicked. Now she plans to study hospitality at Stockton University.

"I think the transition (to a four-year school) is going to be much easier," said Meehan, who is also excited about one of the best parts of college: waking up later.

College Academy OCC Graduates + Their College Destinations: - JKH

- **Courtney Jerabek**.....SUNY Delhi
- **Elizabeth Fastow**.....University of Virginia
- **Marina Policastro**Stockton University
- **Valerie Meehan**.....Monmouth University
- **Francesca Biggs**.....The College of New Jersey
- **Jordan Stracensky**Charleston Southern University
- **Chloe Seneca**Monmouth University
- **Amber Marion**Widener University
- **Gabriella Lehto**.....Rider University
- **Christopher Locha**.....University of Tampa
- **Cameryn Cimirro**Georgian Court University
- **Chelsea Wheeler**Stockton University
- **Amanda Andrews**Stockton University
- **Kenny Horn**.....Rutgers University
- **Madison Troisi**Rowan University
- **Margaret Heckel**.....Georgian Court University
- **Mackensie Koelsch**.....Stockton University
- **Thea Reilly**Stockton University
- **Erin Williams**The College of New Jersey
- **Jacquelyn Asay**Rowan University
- **Rayna Sokolowski**Undecided
- **Hanna Wilson**.....Stockton University

OCC Graduates the First Cohort of the Ain Shams/OCC Partnership

In 2016, Ocean County College announced a new dual degree partnership with Ain Shams University in Egypt. This collaboration between OCC, Kean University, and Ain Shams in Cairo allows students in Egypt to take online classes at OCC and receive their associate degrees while studying at Ain Shams. Students can then receive their bachelor's degrees in two years from Kean University. In May 2019, the first cohort of Ain Shams students graduated with their OCC classmates. Twelve students traveled from Egypt to take part in Commencement before beginning their summer classes at Kean.

"We were extremely proud to see our first cohort of Egyptian students from our OCC/Ain Shams/Kean program receive their Associate in Arts diplomas," said Dr. Jon Larson, OCC President. "This milestone is attributable to the dedicated effort and enthusiasm from the faculty, staff, and administrators of both OCC and Ain Shams. It has been a privilege to work alongside Ain Shams University for this one-of-a-kind partnership."

"These students," Larson added, "are bright, determined, and inspired young people with limitless potential, and we look forward to following their success as they begin their journey to bachelor's degrees, and beyond."

Islam Elkotamy is a 21 year old student from Cairo. Their goal is to get a master's degree in human resources and use their education and experience to support others in Egypt.

Mariam Mohamed is 20 years old and from the port town of Safaga. After graduating from Kean, they hope to receive an MBA and a PhD, and begin a career at Egypt's Central Bank.

Shimaa Ali Ahmed is a 20 year old student from the city of Ismailia. They hope to start their own business after graduating from Kean with honors.



Shimaa Hamed Elmasry is 21 years old and hails from South Sinai. Their studies include accounting and finance, and they hope to travel the world after receiving an MBA from Kean.

Zeinab Ahmed Gamea is 21 years old and resides in the coastal town Marsa Alam. Gamea's favorite subjects are accounting, management, and marketing, and they plan to start their own business after college.

Asmaa Mansour is a 21 year old student from El Fayoum. Mansour is studying marketing at Kean University and hopes to work for an international company based in the Middle East upon graduation.

Sarah Khaled Ibrahim is a 20 year old graduate from Cairo. Her goals at Kean University are to continue getting high grades and receive her degree in Business Administration.

Ahmed Amawy is a 21 year old Marketing student. He enjoys

horseriding and hopes to receive a master's degree after graduating from Kean.

Aya Mohamed is a 22 year old student who loves to travel. They hope to improve their English speaking skills, attain a master's degree, and start a successful career in management.

Dalia Arafa is a 20 year old student from Cairo. They are studying Business Communications at Kean University and hope to learn about different cultures during their pursuit of a business degree.

Sarah Sameh Reyad is 20 years old and hails from Cairo. Sarah loves to travel and hopes to turn that passion into a career after graduating with a Bachelor's in Business from Kean University.

Alyaa Khaled Youness is 20 years old and an avid pianist. She has studied business communications at OCC and hopes to be recognized for her hard work and efficiency in her education and career.







Class President to Professor to Prosecutor

Ocean County's newest Prosecutor traces his roots back to OCC

"If I had a good arm, I could hit my old high school from here," says Ocean County Prosecutor Bradley D. Billhimer, gesturing to the windows behind him. "Having roots in this community means a lot to me." Billhimer grew up, studied, worked, got married, and chose to raise his family in Ocean County – and now finds himself in the unique position of keeping it safe. "I'm the top law enforcement officer in Ocean County. It still sounds crazy when I say it out loud."

Billhimer's path to the prosecutor's office criss-crossed the state and region, but ultimately began and ended in Ocean County. He grew up in Toms River and graduated from Toms River High School South in 1988 after being elected class president all four years – a feat which impressed some unexpected people.

"When I interviewed with the governor for this job, the first thing he said was 'am I to understand you were class president four years in a row? That's hard to do!' I still don't know how he heard about that," says Billhimer.

Upon graduation from high school, Billhimer registered for classes at Ocean County College. "My parents were divorced. My father lived in Maryland and my brother moved to Florida. My mother stayed here. I didn't want to leave her alone, so that was a big part of my decision-making process."

Figuring It Out

Like many college freshmen, Billhimer wasn't sure what he wanted to do in life and began studying as a liberal arts major. "I still remember my great professors," says Billhimer. "Dave Wolfe, my psychology professor, was one of the best teachers I've ever had." Wolfe now serves as the representative for the 10th Legislative District in the New Jersey General Assembly. During his years at OCC, Billhimer took an interest in psychology and broadcast and had a one-hour radio slot on the OCC radio station. "My one hour on the radio was the best hour of my week."

It wasn't until Billhimer graduated with his associate degree and enrolled at Stockton University that his interest in political science and criminal justice piqued. He interned with Senator Frank Lautenberg in Washington, D.C., graduated from Stockton, and worked various odd jobs until enrolling in law school at Widener University in Wilmington, Delaware. "At that point, I was committed to a career in law," says Billhimer.

After graduating from law school, Billhimer worked his way through the ranks of the criminal justice system – first, a clerkship with the Honorable Barbara Ann Villano, J.S.C., then an associate at a law firm. Billhimer spent a decade as a criminal defense attorney before opening his own practice in 2010.

However, it was in 2005 when Billhimer's path crossed Ocean

County College once again. He was approached by Bonnie Peterson, a former municipal court prosecutor and adjunct professor at OCC, and was asked to take over her class teaching Criminal Law and Procedure. "I was happy to teach a class on my lunch break and enjoyed it as much as practicing law," says Billhimer. "I loved teaching law to students using life experiences and providing a factual and legal perspective to my students." His students appreciated this style as well. "My class was always full – and I didn't know there was a rule you could only have 34 students! That got me into trouble sometimes."

A 24/7 Job

In September 2018, Billhimer moved on from teaching and was appointed and confirmed as Ocean County Prosecutor. Suddenly, his career path, and his priorities, changed dramatically. "I'm a two-phone guy now," says Billhimer, motioning to the smartphones on his desk as they lit up with new notifications. "I am duty bound to protect the safety, security, and quality of life of all the people here in Ocean County. It's a 24/7 job."

As Ocean County Prosecutor, Billhimer has several major goals. "We're making inroads against the opioid problem in Ocean County," says Billhimer. "We've stepped up enforcement and gotten better at sharing more intelligence. We're also working harder on drug education in school and trying to reach kids when they're younger. We are trying to make a connection before the addiction instead of combatting the addiction."

Protecting Ocean County families and children is another major priority for Prosecutor Billhimer. "There are lots of services here people just don't know about. We're working on a Cares Program to track and intervene on behalf of students suffering from adverse experiences at home. The Care Program will create a notification system between schools and police departments to address trauma with counseling and support." Billhimer's office will be the first in New Jersey to roll out this initiative at the county level after successful, yet small, pilot programs across the state.

A Future Return?

Billhimer's path may cross Ocean County College again soon. "I miss teaching. I visit OCC often for events and get to experience the campus now more than ever. I would love to come back. It's like an undiscovered gem."

His advice for prospective students? "OCC is a great place to figure it all out. You're not going to find a better place to get an education than OCC."

– KC

Maureen Halliday '16: Reporting Live from Lansing, Michigan

Not long ago, Maureen Halliday was set to take a job as a reporter in Alaska. Then, as she explained, “They called me and said they were going in a different direction. So I panicked because I thought, ‘Well, if I can’t get a job in Alaska, of all places, how am I ever going to get one at all?!’”

She stayed up late after work the next night and applied to a television station in Lansing, Michigan. A few days after Thanksgiving, she flew to Lansing for an interview; and the following day, she was offered the job – and now holds the title of multimedia journalist with station WILX.

Halliday, 23, grew up in Point Pleasant. Her senior year at Point Pleasant Borough High, she decided she wanted to pursue a career as a news reporter. She had committed to OCC “because it was a great way to figure out what I wanted to do as a career without spending money on a school that might not have had the program I needed,” and soon found her way to the digital mass media program, and to Professor Gary Shaffer and Professor Lee Kobus.

“Professor Shaffer always made class fun, but my biggest takeaway from his class was learning how to write,” said Halliday. “It sounds weird saying that because everyone knows how to write, but he taught me structure, and I think that’s one of the most important aspects to a news story. Professor Kobus taught me about editing stories and packages,” which was a terrific asset, she pointed out, once she’d graduated from OCC in May 2016 and enrolled at Boston University. Thanks to Professor Kobus, Halliday noted, “I was one of the only students in the classes that knew how to work the editing software.

“I think these professors, along with all of my other ones, gave me the tools to succeed at BU and within my career. I feel that since I went to both a two-year and a four-year school I’ve become more well-rounded because I have two kinds of education, and that’s not something a lot of people can say.”

She added, “I don’t think I would have been accepted to BU after high school, but having a great education at OCC and maturing as a person, I think I was able to stand out to BU and other universities.”

While at OCC, Halliday also wrote for the Viking News, including a popular entertainment column called “Happy Halliday.” When she wasn’t

busy with school work, she babysat and interned at Ocean Medical Center in both the public relations and communications departments.

Halliday is as busy now as ever, but her days are a bit differently rearranged. “I work the morning shift (at WILX) so I get to the station at 3:30 a.m. and leave around 11:30 a.m. It’s so great because I do my live shots from 4:30 to 7 a.m. and then I go off with a camera by myself to film an event or get an interview with someone for a package or soundbite

for the evening show. I think my favorite thing about this job is being able to explore this city, which I probably wouldn’t be able to do if I had a normal desk job working 9 to 5.

“But I really think the people I work with make my job so fun,” she added. “We’re all so close because, honestly, nobody wants to work at 3:30 in the morning, but we make the best of it and have the greatest time.”

In her spare time, Halliday is training for a marathon, and she spends time with friends from work, attending baseball games and social engagements in the area. “It’s an adjustment moving to a state you’ve never been to before without any family or friends living here,” she pointed out, “and it’s important to me to get out of my apartment and be adventurous and make friends.”

Although she lived at home her first two years of college, it didn’t take Halliday long to venture far beyond the borders of Ocean County, New Jersey.

Now, looking back, Halliday stated, “I would definitely recommend OCC to graduating high schoolers...I think there’s a lot of negative stereotypes about community college. I remember hating the idea of going to OCC, but once I started going to classes, I realized there’s nothing wrong with going there, or any other community college for that matter.”

OCC in particular, she remarked, “puts in a lot of effort to be a progressive college and update its infrastructure and curriculum, which makes it one of the best community colleges.”

[And now, back to your regularly scheduled programming.]

– JKH





Math Finds a Place for Matt

How an OCC alumnus discovered his love for Mathematics

Matt Johnson's college career began with a bet and not a lot of confidence. "My dad told me if I got better than an F in my first class, he'd pay for the next one," says Johnson, a first-generation student from Brick, New Jersey. Johnson went on to win that bet, and then some – this year, Johnson graduated with his bachelor's degree in mathematics from Kean University after restarting his education at Ocean County College.

Johnson's path through Ocean County College started tumultuously and with a shocking diagnosis. At the age of 17, Johnson discovered he had an inoperable brain tumor. "When I was diagnosed with a brain tumor, it rocked my world," says Johnson. "That existential fear just crept its way in."

After graduating from Brick Memorial High School, Johnson had no intention of going back to school. He struggled with course work and simply could not adapt to increasingly intensive courses in high school. "I just didn't really know how to be a student," says Johnson. Instead, he went straight into the workforce, working various jobs in construction, demolition, and a few stints in Walmart. However, his discontent with this work, coupled with the storm cloud of his diagnosis hanging over his head, convinced Johnson to forge a new path for himself. Despite his struggles with academics, Johnson enrolled at Ocean County College during the fall 2014 semester.

A Rocky Start

"I was 24 when I went back to school. I couldn't even add fractions when I first started at OCC," says Johnson. "I was not a math guy, and, in fact, I almost failed out." Johnson struggled at first to find his path and tried pursuing an interest in physical therapy before enrolling in engineering classes. That's where he met Theodore Gordon, a math instructor at Ocean County College, and everything started to click.

"Professor Gordon just had a way about him," says Johnson. "His class opens up your mind and teaches you how to think about life." It was during this time that

Johnson's passion for math sprung forth.

"Mathematics has a reputation for being austere and cold. It's really like art," says Johnson. Taking courses at OCC helped him better understand the world around him – and himself. "I really didn't think I was talented," says Johnson. "I learned at OCC that I was."

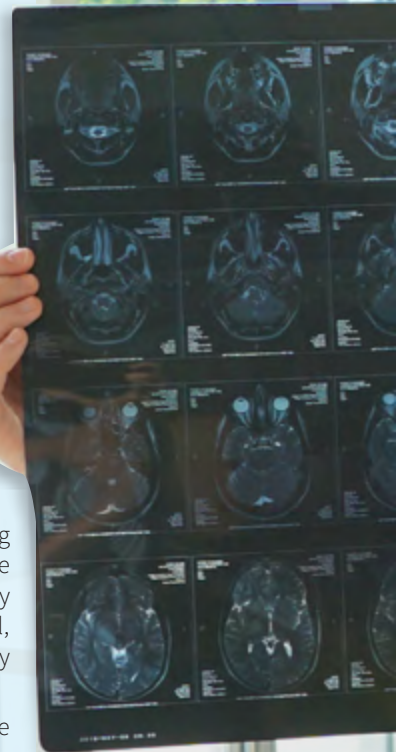
Learning to Learn

As Johnson's love for mathematics grew, so too did his capacity to learn. "Just because you can't learn something immediately doesn't mean you can't succeed," says Johnson. "I had to adapt how I learned. OCC considers that and really cares about it." Johnson credits his professors and his classmates for helping his successful adaptation. "I took a lot of evening courses," says Johnson. "They were just more supportive environments and diverse in life experiences. I really had world-class professors, too – Maryann Birdsall, Michael Pezzimenti, and Lynn Vazquez were particularly awesome."

Johnson's experiences at OCC have shaped a future he couldn't have imagined just ten years before. After graduating from Kean University, Johnson will attend Monmouth University to earn his master's degree in computer science and, after that, a doctorate from Perdue. Johnson currently works in Supplemental Instruction at OCC, helping students who, much like himself, need assistance in adapting to a new educational environment. He is a McNair Scholar and is currently heavily involved in academic research.

Johnson hopes his experiences can help others take the leap and challenge themselves, even if they have struggled in the past. "The things you love always have a place for you – even math," says Johnson. "Math found its place for me and if you never try, you never know what could be."

– KC







Future Health Professionals

The Future Health Professionals Club, also known as the Health Occupation Students of America, is a group of students looking to shape the future of the healthcare industry. This club helps soon-to-be nurses, doctors, physical therapists, and others win scholarships, network with industry professionals, and demonstrate their expertise. The Future Health Professionals Club meets weekly to share their experiences and prepare for competitions and conferences.

A Winning Lineup

In March, OCC's Future Health Professionals Club took part in the HOSA State Leadership Conference in East Brunswick, New Jersey, where four club members took home awards in some of the conference's competitive events.

- Leandra Bourdot – Medical Law and Ethics - 1st place
- Zachary Maynor – Extemporaneous Writing - 3rd place
- Chloe Page – Medical Spelling - 3rd place
- Oladotun Aluko – Nutrition - 3rd place

These winners went on to the International Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida, to compete against future healthcare professionals from the United States, Canada, and Mexico, where their winning ways continued. Leandra, Chloe, and Oladotun placed 2nd, 3rd, and 4th in their categories, beating out hundreds of competitors from all across North America.

"There are over 250,000 members of HOSA and our students have proven to be the best and brightest," says Scott Farrell, HOSA club advisor. "I am very proud of all of them."

– KC

"When I first came to OCC, I had no idea what career path I wanted to pursue. After hearing about OCC's Nursing program, I decided to give Nursing a chance. During my time as a Nursing student, I took a chemistry class with Professor Farrell. That is when I was introduced to HOSA and right away I was entranced by the opportunities presented. The ability to commune with like-minded students and enhance my learning in a competitive capacity was what really caught my eye.

Being the president of HOSA helped me understand the leadership role and create connections that I will cherish. I believe that the skills I have learned while being a member of HOSA will follow in many of my future endeavors. The ability to communicate with team members and establish a sound goal for an organization is incredibly valuable for any aspect of life. HOSA has already helped me take steps to better my future and I believe that it will continue to do so."

– Zachary Maynor, HOSA President



“I had intended my return to college to be a series of pragmatic steps to improve my life by better fulfilling my potential. Setting foot back in the classroom, however, viscerally rekindled my joy of learning, drive to push myself further, and need to participate in my community. I was lucky enough to have heard about HOSA from our advisor, Scott Farrell, in whose chemistry class I was enrolled in the fall. I got insight into the history of the organization and Ocean County College’s past participation with it. I was excited to engage with this intersection of academic competition and the community of my peers and future colleagues in the health field, which I aim to enter by way of nursing. The spirit and energy of the HOSA competition at the state level was truly rewarding to be involved in, and I’m thrilled to be going on to the international competition.”

– Lee Bourdot, HOSA Vice President

“Upon starting at OCC, it was clear to me that science would be my main focus. Knowing I was interested in the health field, I began looking for clubs that would allow me to integrate my interest into my everyday schedule. After a friend told me about HOSA, a club for future healthcare professionals, I was eager to join. The state and national competitions further enhanced my interest in the club as they provide an opportunity for me to expand my knowledge in a competitive setting. Being able to apply an acquired medical skillset in this manner was extremely intriguing to me.

In the future, I plan on continuing my education in biology at a four-year institution. After obtaining my bachelor's in biology, I plan on transitioning into a PA program. My goal is to be hands-on and active in a medical environment while continuing to let my competitive tendencies fuel my hard work. HOSA is undoubtedly a major contributor to my success and serves as an incredible stepping stone for anyone looking to be a member of the healthcare profession.”

– Genavive Napolillo, HOSA Future President

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Engineering Academic Excellence

Pamela Bogdon, Professor of Engineering, and Michael Pezzimenti, Professor of Mathematics – how their careers in engineering inform their teaching style.

HAILING FROM THE IDEA FACTORY

Michael Pezzimenti, Associate Professor of Math, has, over time, taught nearly all the mathematics courses offered at OCC. He now teaches calculus and differential equations, which focus on mathematics that describe natural phenomena and are a key part of the tool set used by scientists and engineers to describe and solve real-world problems. Pezzimenti was raised in Maywood, New Jersey, and currently lives in Wall Township.

Pamela Bogdan, Engineering Lecturer, has also taught a variety of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) courses at the College, including math, computer science, and currently engineering. Bogdan was born in Oakland, California, and grew up in a town there called Garden Grove. She now lives in Shark River Hills, New Jersey.

Prior to OCC, both Pezzimenti and Bogdan worked at AT&T Bell Laboratories, an industrial research and scientific development company now called Nokia Bell Labs, with headquarters in Murray Hill, New Jersey. Researchers at Bell Labs – founded in 1925 and referred to as “The Idea Factory” – are credited with the development of, among other discoveries, the laser, the transistor, the photovoltaic cell, radio astronomy, information theory, and the programming languages C, C++, and S.

BUILDING EXPERTISE

HE SAID: In the mid 1990s, AT&T Bell Laboratories, the research and development arm of AT&T, was split between Bell Laboratories and AT&T Laboratories. Bell Labs became part of the newly formed Lucent Corporation. I remained with AT&T as part of AT&T Laboratories. For both corporations, I mostly worked on projects responsible for the design and development of communication networks. Initially a working systems engineer, I eventually moved into technical management, leading engineering teams and interfacing with other organizations.

SHE SAID: I had many roles at Bell Laboratories. I started as a member of

technical staff doing data communications performance engineering. I was also a technical manager within Bell Labs, leading groups that did such things as early versions of commercial internet services and infrastructure. I worked in other parts of AT&T but ended my career back in AT&T Labs, where I was part of the team working on AirGig™ (part of an effort to accelerate internet connections to a gig or more through both wired and wireless solutions).

TAKING ON TEACHING

HE SAID: As a graduate student, I was provided an opportunity to teach several mathematics courses. From the start, I enjoyed both the challenges and rewards of teaching. I probably would have originally pursued an academic career if the Bell Labs opportunity did not present itself. After a few years at the labs, I applied to OCC as an adjunct instructor and worked part-time teaching evening mathematics courses. After retiring from the labs, I returned to academia as a full-time professor.

SHE SAID: It was always my goal to eventually retire and start a second career teaching math to those who think they can't do math. I get to do that as well as encourage a love for engineering here at OCC.

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DESIGNING A CLASS

HE SAID: It is essential that a professional engineering team fully understand the problems they are trying to solve. Miscommunications can be costly. I believe any learning environment needs to encourage questions. As a result, I prefer a lecture with significant student interaction.

SHE SAID: Bell Labs was all about innovation and ideation. As a result, I like to teach through exploration.

EXPERT INPUT

HE SAID: Technology skills are important, but technology is constantly evolving. In mathematics, we emphasize critical thinking and problem solving. Technology is information, but the ability to integrate information is a skill that employers relish.

SHE SAID: It is a great time to be a student in the OCC engineering program. We are expanding our courses, technology, and overall program experience.

HE SAID: [For students interested in a STEM career] along with excelling in their coursework, I strongly recommend completing an independent study or undergraduate research project. Also, try to

find a forum to present the work. Undergraduate research can be a differentiator when applying for a job or an internship.

SHE SAID: Students should be doing career-related activities above and beyond their courses, whether it be joining clubs, such as the new Engineering Club, Makerspace, and/or Computer Science Club; getting a summer internship; volunteering to be part of other school or community service activities; or joining professional organizations. Engineers are about applied theory and that is what should be happening both inside and outside of the classroom: applying theory to solve practical problems.

IN THE OFF-TIME

HE SAID: While at the labs, I considered teaching mathematics a hobby. I guess that no longer applies. In my spare time, I enjoy hiking and golf.

SHE SAID: When I am not working, I like to travel and visit with my family and friends, golf, play softball and volleyball, sew and do other crafts, garden, and perform community service through my church, such as at a community garden and with Family Promise.

– JKH



Ocean County College Foundation

SCHOLARSHIP Celebration

Annual Celebration Raises \$200,000 for OCC Students

The Annual Scholarship Celebration was held on Friday, June 14 in the Jon and Judith Larson Student Center. The sold-out event raised over \$200,000 in support of the students of Ocean County College through scholarships and special programs. This year, the Foundation thematically highlighted the Global Travel Experience, a long-standing program at Ocean County College encouraging students to broaden their horizons and minds through international and domestic travel/learning experiences.

"This evening brings together so many dedicated members of our community, united to promote higher education on the Jersey Shore and celebrate our students' success as well as our honorees," said Kenneth J. Malagiere, Executive Director of the Foundation.

For the first time in its history, the Scholarship Celebration recognized a Distinguished Organization of the Year for contributions to and participation with Ocean County College. That honor belonged to the Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Foundation, recognized for its support and contributions to the H. Hovnanian Health Sciences Building, which opened its doors in May 2018.

The Humanitarian of the Year award at this year's celebration went to Gale Glendinning Wayman for her philanthropic efforts at OCC and her dedication to bolstering women's rights and studies in New Jersey. Wayman, who has been a member of the Ocean County College Foundation Board for years, has been consistent in her focus to improve access and outcomes for women seeking to improve their education, their careers, and their lives. One program Gale has championed over the years is the 100 Women mentoring program.

The 100 Women program is an endeavor by the Ocean County College Foundation to bring together dynamic, innovative, and accomplished Ocean County women who will support each other's lives and career goals, share their insights and experiences, and encourage education through Ocean County College. "Since its inception, Gale has been one of 100 Women's greatest advocates," says Jan Kirsten, Executive Director of College Relations at OCC and Chair of the 100 Women mentoring program. "I have had the privilege of working with Gale for many years, and the time and dedication she continues to provide the 100 Women program is priceless. She has been a phenomenal mentor, leader, and friend, and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of recognition at this year's Scholarship Celebration."

"The OCC Foundation holds an unwavering belief in its mission by all who participate – including a dedicated Board of Trustees," said Noelle Carino, Chair of the Foundation Board. "We are so fortunate to have an amazing team and I would like to thank all of the support and administrative staff members here at OCC who help to make this event possible, year after year: from Facilities, Security, College Relations, Athletics, the Media Team, The Makers Club, volunteers, and, of course, the Scholarship Celebration event committee, led by our Manager of Special Events, Sherri A. Bray."

"The OCC Foundation Scholarship Celebration remains one of Ocean County's signature and stand out charitable events of the year. We hope to continue this tradition for years to come," added Ken.

– KC





Join Us at the 18th Annual Foundation Golf Classic

Tuesday, October 15, 2019

Pine Barrens Golf Club | Jackson, NJ

Registration Opens at 9:30am

Tee off with the OCC Foundation and help support the next generation of Vikings! Join us for a day of fun and golf and help raise scholarship money for current and future students.

Learn more at go.ocean.edu/foundation



Blauvelt Lecture Series

Fall events include:

- Jeh Johnson
- Between River and Rim
- Thomas Friedman

Visit grunincenter.org and purchase your tickets today!



Simi Clapman: She Gets Involved

Quick Stats

- Sports: Soccer, Basketball, Softball
- Hometown: Lakewood
- High School: Margolin Hebrew Academy (Memphis, Tennessee)
- OCC Class of 2020

Nothing But Net

I played basketball for two years in high school, but that is really the only sports background I had prior to OCC. After orientation, I went to the Athletics Department to introduce myself because I wanted to try out for the basketball team. I saw that our school needed more soccer players, so I decided to give it a shot. As soon as soccer season was done, basketball season started. My friends and I all joked about me playing softball and being a three-sport athlete, so I decided to just go for it. Softball season started before basketball ended, so I was going straight from basketball practice to softball practice. Although it was a little hectic at times, I'm extremely grateful that I played each sport.

Off the Court (and the Field and the Diamond)

Being a student comes before being an athlete, so I take my studies very seriously. I don't have too much free time because of everything that I'm involved in, so it was very important for me to quickly learn time management. A typical day for me is going to an early morning class, followed by work-study in athletics, then to practice, then to my waitressing job. Between work-study and practice, I typically go into the team room to do homework. I'm also involved in a volunteer fire department, so I try to respond to calls when I can. I serve as a member of the administrative review panel. When there is an appeal, I make sure to clear my schedule because it's very important to have a student representative to voice his/her views and help make crucial decisions.

The Keeper

My favorite moment was during soccer season when my coach told me I'm the goalie, a position I had no experience in – not even in practice. During the first half of the game, someone had a shot that I was told I shouldn't have been able to save, but somehow I punched it out of the mouth of the goal and it went over the crossbar. Everyone went crazy and the coaches jumped up and hugged each other. It gave me motivation and a bit of hope that maybe I could be a goalie.

Right Field Finesse

A memorable game I had in softball was when we played Sussex. I got put in right field and, like avid softball and baseball fans know, right field isn't that exciting. I definitely had one of the most exciting days that right field could ever have. There was a routine fly ball hit right to me, I caught it, and that's when I had my first putout. In the next inning, there were two outs and a ball was hit in the gap between right and center field, and I didn't realize it was coming to me until the center fielder said, "It's yours!" So I started running towards the ball, forgetting to tuck my glove, and I had to leap to catch the ball, a ball no one expected me to catch – but I looked in my glove and, sure enough, the ball was there.

Everyone was going crazy as if we had won a national championship. Moments like these make me so grateful for the team/family I have.

Vikings Family

Of course, I love the competition part (of athletics) because I am super competitive; however, I love being a part of a team. The girls on each team have become my family. We spend so much time together, from traveling to sleepovers to team pasta parties. I can honestly say I've made some of my best friends through sports at Ocean County College.

Studying Sports

I have only been involved in sports for a short amount of time, so trying to catch up on 18+ years of sports in just one year is difficult. When the team is on a trip and we are just hanging out in the hotel room, sometimes we have a game on and we watch it together. I am a visual learner so I never really focus on just one player but rather the overall picture. Whenever I catch myself watching a game, I try to pick up new skills or techniques so that I can continue to make myself better. Even though I've only played all three sports for a very short time, I've developed a strong connection and love for each sport individually. The coaches have really helped me improve my skills in all these sports through such a short period of time.

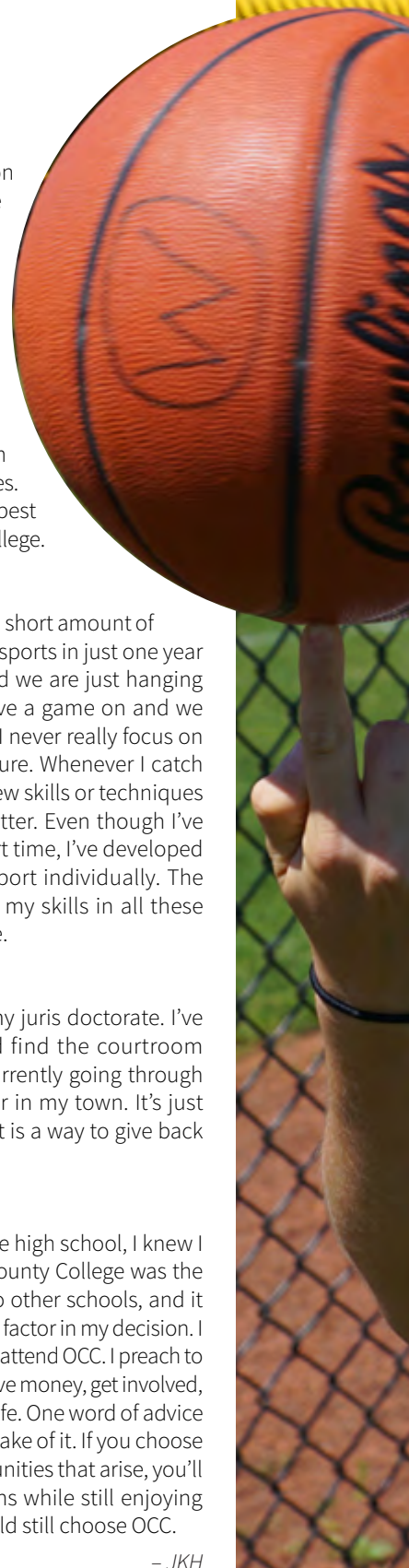
A Different Kind of Court

I aspire to go to law school and get my juris doctorate. I've always been passionate about law and find the courtroom extremely fascinating. Besides law, I'm currently going through training to become a volunteer firefighter in my town. It's just another hobby I decided to pick up, and it is a way to give back to the community.

Reflecting On OCC

As the first one in my family to graduate high school, I knew I wanted to further my education. Ocean County College was the most affordable option I had compared to other schools, and it was close to home, which was an important factor in my decision. I can't express how happy I am that I chose to attend OCC. I preach to everyone to start at a community college, save money, get involved, and you'll have the best two years of your life. One word of advice I tell everyone is that college is what you make of it. If you choose to get involved and jump on all the opportunities that arise, you'll make lifelong friendships and connections while still enjoying school. If I had to do it all over again, I would still choose OCC.

– JKH







Kyle Lauria: Undecided No Longer

Up To Bat

Baseball was always a big part of my life growing up. My dad is a huge fan of the sport and had me swinging a bat ever since I could walk. I have been playing baseball consistently ever since I was about six years old. I played all through high school, from freshman to junior varsity and on to the varsity team. I also played fall baseball on a travel team called the Point Pleasant Patriots until my senior year.

Outstanding In Their Field

I am a huge New York Mets fan and also a Tennessee Titans fan. My favorite players growing up were David Wright and Jose Reyes of the Mets. They brought so much excitement and fire to the team and made it incredibly enjoyable to watch. They both played their hearts out every game and left everything they had on the field.

Off The Sandlot

I first attended OCC unsure on my area of study. I knew what my interests were, so I decided to become a general science major to feel out different classes and to see what I really liked. It turns out I am a big fan of human anatomy and physiology. I really enjoyed all of my classes, but I found myself much more interested in the human body and how it works. I also took business classes that I enjoyed, and I would like to have a minor in business management. I feel that exercise science and business management are two areas that could help me find a job in the future.

Third Baseman

I decided to not only further my education but to continue my athletic career at OCC because I was not ready to give up on my favorite sport. I knew if I left my baseball career back in high school I would completely regret it. After receiving emails and letters from Head Coach McCrae, I decided I would play. I devoted all my time to being a student-athlete these past two years, and it has definitely paid off. I received honors of being named the team's MVP, First Team All-GSAC, First Team All-Region, and Third Team All-American. I was blown away after receiving these awards because it was something I never expected.

Go Vikings, Down South

Some of my favorite moments or memories were from taking 13-hour bus trips to Myrtle Beach, SC, and back the past two years. We spent five days and four nights each year in Myrtle Beach and played seven to eight baseball games during that period. It was such

Quick Stats

- Sport: Baseball
- Hometown: Point Pleasant Borough
- High School: Point Pleasant Borough High School
- OCC Class of 2019

an unbelievable experience and brought the team closer together.

The Heart Of Sports

There is no other feeling like competing on a team and playing with your friends. It is an experience that everyone will miss once they grow up and stop playing sports. I have always had a competitive nature and that is why I never wanted to give up on playing baseball. There is no better feeling than winning a game, and the sport has created friendships with people that will last forever.

Baseball Lessons Are Life Lessons

Baseball is a game of failure; the difference between a good player and a great player is someone who knows how to deal with failure and move on. The best part about baseball is that tomorrow is a new day with new and more opportunities.

Round The Bases

I am going to transfer to a four-year university to further my academics in the exercise science field and also continue my baseball career.

Reflecting On OCC

I was undecided about what I wanted to go to school for, so I went to community college to take different classes and give myself more time to think about what I wanted to do. My brother graduated from OCC and let me know that it was a great community college, and a good idea to stay home and save money. I am more than happy that I decided to spend the past two years here at OCC. I feel as though I have not only learned so much from the school, but I learned a lot about myself. I stayed close to home and was able to work, instead of spending thousands of dollars at a different school, not knowing what I wanted to do. OCC was an inexpensive choice and helped me decide what I wanted to major in. I have suggested OCC to all my friends or people I talk to who are considering it. OCC has a beautiful campus, you can live at home, work on yourself, and really find out what you want to do when you are older.

– JKH

SUPPORT the Future of OCC

Your investment in Ocean County College makes a difference for thousands of students.

To support OCC through donation, contact the Ocean County College Foundation at 732-255-0492 or visit go.ocean.edu/foundation



2019 Inductees

Louise Colie
Dan Crabbe
Clay Johnson
Peter Kellogg
Ed Vienckowski
Newt Wattis
Roy Wilkins

2019 Barnegat Bay *Sailing Hall of Fame*

Saturday, November 9
OCC Gym

*Join us as we honor our
2019 Inductees for their
contributions to the
sailing community!*

*For tickets or information, email
bbsailinghof@gmail.com*



Jay and Linda
GRUNIN CENTER
FOR THE ARTS



Savion Glover & The Ideal Ensemble

In his latest stage concert, the Tony Award-winning, tap-dancing phenomenon applies his unique sense of musicality and his incredible stage presence to familiar compositions all the way from exploratory classics by John Coltrane to original movements by Mr. Glover. While highlighting Tap as the leading instrument, Savion & The Ideal Ensemble will allow audiences the unavoidable celebratory experience through sound and abstract instrumentation.

Savion Glover made his Broadway debut at age 11 in *The Tap Dance Kid* (1985) before earning his first Tony nomination at age 15 for *Black and Blue* (1989). He worked with George Wolfe on *Jelly's Last Jam* (1992) and *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk* (1996), earning him a Tony Award for Best Choreography. Another Tony Award nomination followed in 2016 for *Shuffle Along*.

He conquered Hollywood when he appeared with Gregory Hines and Sammy Davis, Jr., in *Tap*; Spike Lee's *Bamboozled*; and the acclaimed Academy Award-winning 2006 Warner Brothers release of *Happy Feet* and *Happy Feet 2*, both choreographed by Glover. In his hometown of Newark, New Jersey, Savion Glover holds the honor of being on the Board of Directors at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, where he also serves as its Dance Ambassador.

Friday, October 4, 2019
8:00pm ■ Main Stage ■ \$57 - \$37 ■ Subscription Eligible
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OCC COMMUNITY AS SEEN ON *Social Media*

