

# RUTGERS CAMDEN

MAGAZINE

VOLUME 1, FALL 2017

## **Camden Rising**

**Rutgers Students, Faculty,  
Alumni, and Staff Embrace  
the City's Resurgence**

*Improving Health, Changing Lives*

*Savage Ants?*

*Five-Star Support for Veterans*



# RUTGERS CAMDEN

*Rutgers-Camden Magazine* Vol. 1, Fall 2017



Rutgers expanded its campus footprint in the city of Camden when the 106,735-square-foot Nursing and Science Building opened for classes in September. The new building at the intersection of Fifth and Federal streets sits across from Camden City Hall. See pages 16-17 for more images, information, and a map.

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*Rutgers–Camden Magazine*

303 Cooper Street

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*We welcome your feedback on this inaugural issue of Rutgers–Camden Magazine. For questions or comments, please contact Sam Starnes at [sstarnes@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:sstarnes@camden.rutgers.edu) or 856-225-6857.*

# CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Rutgers-Camden Magazine*! We're proud to present a publication that spotlights the achievements of our active and supportive community of more than 6,900 motivated students; faculty committed to excellence in research and teaching; dedicated staff; and more than 50,000 proud alumni.

Rutgers University-Camden is a center for research, student life, and civic engagement with a national reputation that is on an upward trajectory. Our faculty produce cutting-edge research at a level that places them among some of the most productive scholars nationwide. The experiential learning opportunities for our students are growing and reflect their diverse career and service interests. And our alumni increasingly assume positions of leadership across virtually every sector.

Our cover story, "Camden Rising," explores a core value that connects every aspect of the Rutgers-Camden experience: a passionate dedication to applying our skills to help advance communities, families, and organizations. Some universities define this role as being an "anchor institution," a term that often focuses upon construction and economic investment. While those are important elements, they fail to capture the full spectrum of potential impact that a research university like Rutgers-Camden can make upon its host community. Innovative learning experiences for our students that also uplift communities are the essence of our civic engagement. I'm proud to report that Rutgers is making a difference in Camden and across the region.

There are many reasons to be optimistic about Rutgers University-Camden's future. Be sure to visit [camden.rutgers.edu](http://camden.rutgers.edu) regularly for the latest news about our campus.

*Phoebe A. Haddon*



Chancellor Phoebe A. Haddon, J.D., LL.M.

## THE BIG NUMBERS

50,036

RUTGERS-CAMDEN ALUMNI

6,927

TOTAL STUDENTS  
(AS OF OCTOBER 10)

99%

FACULTY WITH  
TERMINAL DEGREES

#5

BEST BANG FOR THE BUCK  
UNIVERSITY IN NORTHEAST  
-Washington Monthly

2,800

FIRST-GENERATION  
COLLEGE STUDENTS

89%

STUDENTS RECEIVING  
FINANCIAL AID

## ON THE COVER



Michelle Obasi, left, and Bielka Gonzalez, pictured on the Ben Franklin Bridge, grew up in Camden and are now excelling as students at Rutgers-Camden. Read about Rutgers' role in the Camden Rising effort on pages 10 to 17.

# ON CAMPUS

## Rutgers-Camden Knows How

If you've traveled by highway or train in the Delaware Valley, you've likely seen the signs.

The We Know How advertising campaign launched in October 2016 with roadside billboards and placards placed at PATCO train stops throughout South Jersey and Philadelphia with the intent of growing the profile of Rutgers University-Camden. The ads also appear in magazines and online.

The effort has made an impact. The enhanced awareness has contributed to an increase in the number of first-year and transfer students starting at



Rutgers-Camden in the fall to more than 1,600, making the incoming fall 2017 class Rutgers-Camden's largest ever. "We Know How really expresses the very best of Rutgers-Camden: our can-do spirit and our commitment to never backing down until we achieve our goals," said Michael Seganic, associate

chancellor for external relations.

The campaign, which features students, alumni, and faculty, emphasizes messages that articulate Rutgers-Camden's strengths. It earned national attention, winning a 2017 Gold Award for Outdoor Advertising in the 32nd Annual Educational Awards sponsored by *Higher Education Marketing Report*.

## A Welcoming Address

The newest Rutgers facility on Cooper Street in Camden opened in the spring when the Welcome Center launched to host prospective students and their families. The center at 330 Cooper Street sits between the Alumni House at 312 Cooper Street, which opened in fall

2016, and the 12-story residence hall that opened in 2012. The Welcome Center serves as the starting location for prospective students and their families to meet with admissions counselors and embark on tours of campus.

Visitors are welcome to drop in

between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Monday through Thursday and 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Friday. For information on visiting and to schedule an appointment, please go to the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Admissions website at [admissions.camden.rutgers.edu](http://admissions.camden.rutgers.edu).



From the right, Joseph Benton Jr. UCC'72, Camden Mayor Dana Redd SBC'96, and Chancellor Phoebe A. Haddon at the opening of the new Welcome Center.

# A Bridge Over Student Debt

Sierra Neal and her family evaluated tuition costs closely when she chose where to attend college. “It was very important that I get a good education while not taking out huge student loans and putting my parents or myself in debt,” she said.

Enter Bridging the Gap, a Rutgers University–Camden program that helps New Jersey residents reduce the cost of tuition up to 100 percent. “It was such a huge relief to my parents for me to be enrolled in this program,” said Neal, a sophomore psychology major from Willingboro, New Jersey.

Neal was among 254 students who participated in the program’s inaugural year in 2016. In fall 2017, more than 500 students benefited from Bridging the Gap. The program closes the gap between federal and state sources of financial support and the balance of tuition and the general campus fee. Rutgers–Camden automatically applies the Bridging the Gap grant to these remaining costs after any other need-based federal and state grants have been applied.

The program expanded in 2017 to include not only first-year students, but also transfer students from Camden County College.

The program intrigued officials at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia who conducted a study titled “Navigating the First Semester: How Students Get to and Get by in College.”

“First and foremost,” the report published in May 2017 reads, “Bridging the Gap does appear to have expanded access to a four-year college experience to students for whom this otherwise would have been infeasible.”



SIERRA NEAL

The report also said, “Reduced reliance on student loan debt has eased students’ and their families’ financial anxieties surrounding college.”

As for Neal, she said it certainly has given her peace of mind. “Bridging the Gap has definitely helped me enjoy

my college experience by not stressing about how I was going to afford to pay for school. I made the smartest decision by attending Rutgers–Camden.”

For more about the program, visit [admissions.camden.rutgers.edu/paying-for-college](https://admissions.camden.rutgers.edu/paying-for-college).



## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS LEADER HONORED AT COMMENCEMENT

Carla D. Hayden, the first woman and the first African American to serve as the U.S. Librarian of Congress, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Rutgers University–Camden and delivered the keynote address at the Camden College of Arts and Sciences commencement ceremony in May. She is pictured here with Rutgers University President Robert Barchi, right, and Dean Kriste Lindenmeyer, left.

## SCIENCE

## Science by the Numbers

### *Professor Uses Computational Biology Research Methods on a Host of Challenges*

What's the best way to determine the origin of a crime scene DNA sample?

How about improving the time it takes scientists to evaluate the chemical reaction rates in cells?

And while you're at it, how do you beat the average return rate for the stock market?

Desmond Lun, a computer science professor, has conducted research making significant progress on answers to all three of these questions. Lun, who was born in Hong Kong and grew up in Australia, earned his doctorate from MIT and did post-doctoral research at Harvard University before joining the faculty at Rutgers University–Camden in 2010. “My

academic work has focused on unraveling the complex interactions that underlie living cells using machine learning and other computational methods,” Lun said.

In short, Lun—who conducts his research as part of the Center for Computational and Integrative Biology at Rutgers–Camden—is at the vanguard of biomedical research generated by computer modeling.

Regarding DNA samples, he and other researchers won a \$1.7 million Army Research Office grant to create a software program based on a computational method for analyzing DNA evidence. “Our hope is that once it is developed, the software becomes the standard for crime labs everywhere,” Lun said.

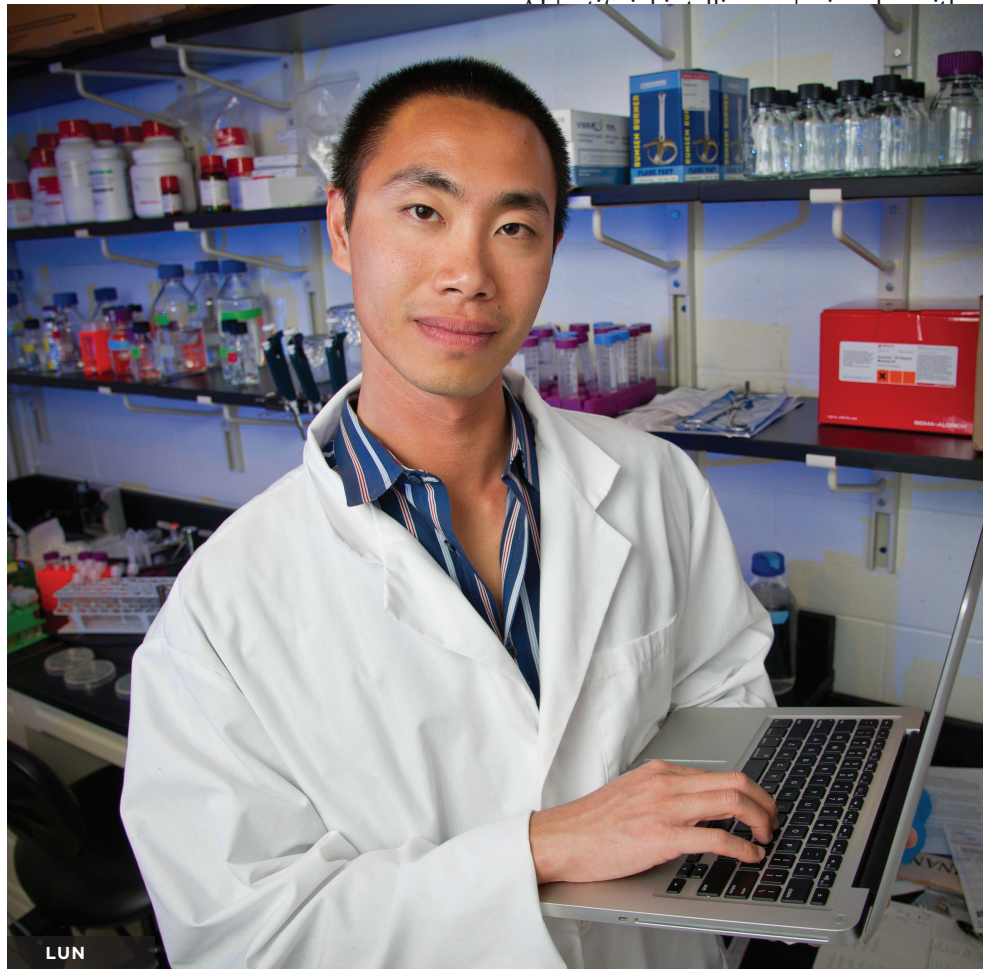
In the arena of determining chemical reaction rates in cells, he was among researchers who won a grant from the Samsung Advanced Institute of Technology to use computer modeling to uncover how fast reactions occur in cells. “If we are successful,” he said, “the applications for such a method are endless: biochemical production, biomedicine, bioremediation, and so on.”

And for the stock market? He's developed a system for that too. “It occurred to me that financial markets are similar to cells—both are highly complex systems that arise from

networks of interactions.”

Lun used ideas in computational biology to develop systems to predict the behavior of financial markets. After years of work, he developed an automated trading strategy in 2013 and tested it for three years, showing exceptional results.

In 2016, he established a hedge fund, Taaffeite Capital Management, named for a rare gemstone found in Australia. A *Bloomberg* article cited his firm's 21 percent return over the past four years as far superior to the S&P 500 and most hedge fund returns. It described him as “a new kind of quant [Wall Street jargon for quantitative analysts], combining



LUN

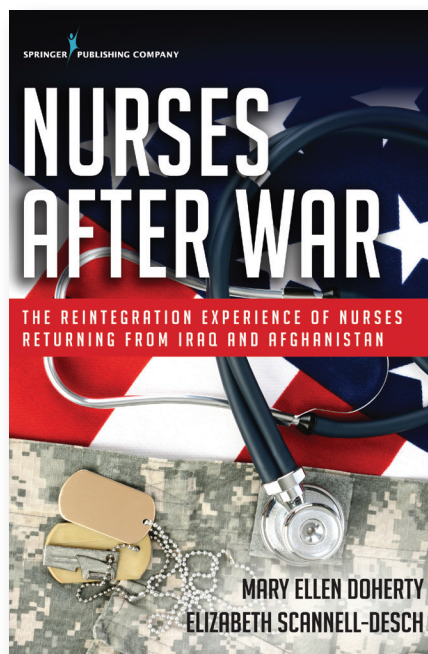


## FACULTY NEWS

## How the Trauma of War Affects Nurses

Soldiers aren't the only ones who go to war. They're supported by a vast network of "unsung heroes" who can suffer the same trauma that affects the women and men on the front lines. "People need to remember any time we deploy troops, the almost invisible support we deploy is our medics—the nurses, physicians, physical therapists, dietitians, psychiatric social workers, and pharmacists," said Elizabeth Scannell-Desch, an associate dean at the Rutgers School of Nursing–Camden and a retired U.S. Air Force Nurse Corps colonel.

With that message in mind, Scannell-Desch, who joined the Rutgers–Camden faculty in January 2016, co-authored *Nurses After War: Reintegration Experience of Nurses Returning from Iraq and*



*Afghanistan* (2016) and *Nurses in War: Voices from Iraq and Afghanistan* (2012). Both books were written with her twin sister, Mary Ellen Doherty, a professor of nursing at Western Connecticut State University, and published by Springer Publishing Company. Their newest title describes the homecoming experiences of 35 military nurses who cared for soldiers in combat. "Even seasoned trauma nurses from large urban medical centers expressed horror at what they saw and had to do to save lives, ameliorate suffering, and allow death with dignity," Scannell-Desch said. Scannell-Desch, whose military service of 25 years included active duty around the globe as a flight nurse and an assignment in the Pentagon crafting military health-care policy, was one of only three New Jersey nursing professionals inducted as a Fellow by the American Academy of Nursing in 2017.

## Happy Employees, Fewer Errors

Research by an assistant professor of accounting shows that how firms treat employees influences the accuracy of financial reporting. Jun Guo, who joined the Rutgers School of Business–Camden faculty in 2014, published her findings with three other researchers in a highly influential journal, the *Accounting Review*. Guo's interest in employee relations and corporate social responsibility is influenced by undergraduate and master's degrees in history she earned in China before transitioning to accounting for her doctorate in the United States. Distinct from other research on accounting practices that focuses on the role of top executives, Guo's study investigated the role employment policies play in accounting errors. "Financial restatements, especially those caused by unintentional errors, are less likely to arise in firms that invest more in employee benefits," she and her co-authors wrote.



GUO

## A Champion for Homeowners

When a homeowner suffers a loss and files a claim with their insurance company, companies often respond by raising the premium or refusing to renew the policy—a practice known as "use it and lose it." Research by Jay Feinman, a distinguished professor at Rutgers Law School in Camden, as part of the Essential Protections for Policyholders legislative reform project, revealed that 18 states have no explicit protection against the practice. "Homeowners shouldn't be penalized by their insurance companies because they actually use their insurance," Feinman said. Essential Protections for Policyholders, a project of the Rutgers Center for Risk and Responsibility in cooperation with consumer organization United Policyholders, recommends that "use it and lose it" be restricted and suggests measures to help consumers when buying insurance and filing claims. For more information, visit [epp.law.rutgers.edu](http://epp.law.rutgers.edu).

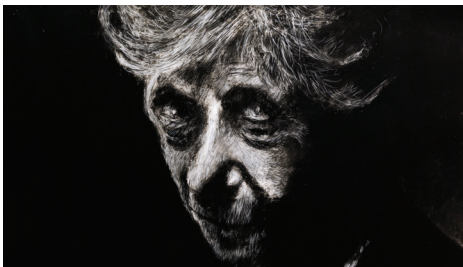


FEINMAN

THE ARTS



▲ GRANDMA MOSES, *IN SNOW DRIFT*

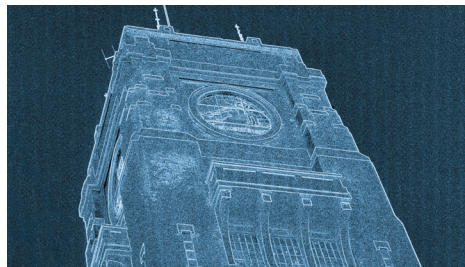


▲ GEORGE SEGAL, *LEE*

**AN GIFT OF ICONIC FOLK ART:**

A painting by Anna Mary Robertson Moses—more famously known as Grandma Moses—is part of the permanent collection of the Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts’ Stedman Gallery. Alumna and philanthropist Eleanor “Ellie” Cheney CCAS’66 donated the painting titled *In Snow Drift* to the university. “I wanted to do something with the painting so that it would never be forgotten,” Cheney said.

The painting, which was shown for much of 2017, is undergoing conservation but will be on display again in 2018.



▲ SHULI SADÉ, *ONE STEP—GIANT LEAP*

**SEEING SEGAL:** Thirteen sculptures and drawings created by George Segal, the renowned American artist and 1963 Rutgers University graduate, have been donated to Rutgers-Camden by the George Segal Foundation. Works by Segal are on display in the Welcome Center, the Nursing and Science Building, and the Paul Robeson Library.

**PICTURING CAMDEN:** New artwork commissioned from six contemporary artists reimagining the city of Camden is on display at the Stedman Gallery through December 8.

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 For all Rutgers-Camden arts and entertainment listings, visit [camden.rutgers.edu/arts-events](http://camden.rutgers.edu/arts-events).

THREE GUGGENHEIMS AND A PULITZER

Two poets and a nonfiction writer who teach at Rutgers-Camden hold some of the most coveted awards in literature. Patrick Rosal, an associate professor of English, and Gregory Pardlo, an assistant professor of English, were named 2017



LISICKY

John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellows for poetry. Paul Lisicky, an assistant professor of English, was named a Guggenheim Fellow for general nonfiction in 2016.



PARDLO

Pardlo, a 1999 graduate of Rutgers-Camden with a bachelor’s degree in English, also earned the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his poem collection *Digest*. Knopf will publish Pardlo’s *Air Traffic*, a memoir in essays, in 2018.



ROSAL

GREAT WRITERS GROW HERE

With a front door on Camden’s historic Cooper Street, the Writers House provides a welcoming space to celebrate writing across diverse disciplines, communities, and media. To learn more about this new campus and community center for the written word, visit [writershouse.camden.rutgers.edu](http://writershouse.camden.rutgers.edu).

## ATHLETICS



PHOTO BY CURT HUDSON

## Just a Phone Call Away

Wearing a cap adorned with the uppercase R of the Reading Fightin Phils, the minor league Class AA affiliate for the Philadelphia Phillies, Jeff Singer reared back and gunned a fastball past a swinging batter on the first crisp Friday night in September.

Two years prior, Singer wore another R on his cap—that of Rutgers University–Camden.

He has a chance of one day soon playing in the red cap of the Phillies. “Once you get up to double-A, you know you are just a phone call away,” Singer said.

If he gets that call, he would be the first player from Rutgers–Camden to play in the majors.

Singer transferred to Rutgers–Camden from Monmouth University for his senior year. After a stellar season, the management major worked at a Philadelphia car dealership while continuing to play baseball in a recreational league. Some good outings landed him on the Camden Riversharks where he impressed enough scouts to land a contract with the Phillies. Singer was promoted at the end of July to the Class AA team in Reading, Pennsylvania, where he finished the season.

Although he has a good shot to make the Phillies, he knows that there is no guarantee. “Some days you have those long bus rides and you think of every outcome,” Singer said. “The best-case scenario is stepping out onto that mound at Citizens Bank Park and getting to pitch there.”

◀ Singer in 2015

## In the Record Books

Standing 5 feet, 3 inches, Cortnee Wilkerson is far from the tallest player on the NCAA Division III volleyball court. But what she lacks in height, Wilkerson has more than made up for in performance. She is an outside hitter who ranks among Rutgers–Camden career leaders in numerous categories going into her senior season, including being sixth in the number of kills. “Playing against taller players is easy because they normally

underestimate small girls like me,” she said. A native of Los Angeles majoring in political science, she has twice made the Athletic Director’s Honor Roll. “My parents encouraged me to go to school out of state and Rutgers–Camden had exactly what I needed,” she said. “It feels like a home away from home. It is nice to have this piece of my life be in New Jersey.”



For more about Rutgers–Camden athletics, including news, schedules, and statistics, visit [scarletraptors.com](http://scarletraptors.com)

**R**  
CAMDEN

# CAMDEN

## RUTGERS STUDENTS, FACULTY, ALUMNI, AND STAFF EMBRACE THE CITY'S RESURGENCE

*By Sam Starnes*

Bielka Gonzalez's family settled in Camden when she was only a toddler.

Soon after, she enrolled at the LEAP Academy University Charter School, the school founded by Rutgers University Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, one block from the university's campus. "I started there in pre-school," said Gonzalez, whose family emigrated from the Dominican Republic before she was born.

Fifteen years later, Gonzalez, a 2016 high school graduate of the LEAP Academy, is a sophomore in the Rutgers-Camden Honors College. In her first year, she completed two internships in Center City Philadelphia with PricewaterhouseCoopers that the Rutgers School of Business-Camden and the Career Center helped her find. "I couldn't imagine being anywhere other than Rutgers-Camden," said Gonzalez, who is planning a career as an accountant. "I've been blessed with many opportunities to associate with

people I never thought I would have met."

But Gonzalez, whose family moved from the Fairview section of Camden to Pennsauken when she was 11, hasn't forgotten her roots. She volunteers each semester with Jumpstart, a Rutgers-Camden program for college students tutoring Camden preschoolers. "I love the children—I was in their shoes before," she said, adding that she will continue to volunteer after she graduates. "I want to give back to my community."

Gonzalez exemplifies the civic engagement spirit of Rutgers' role in Camden Rising, a multifaceted effort to promote growth and progress in the city. "I am the future," said Gonzalez. "And the children are the future. You have to give back to your community and help it to grow and expand."

Gonzalez, who lived on campus in Rutgers-Camden residence halls in her first year, keeps an eye on the buzz of construction on the riverfront and near City Hall, including the new 106,735-square-foot Rutgers-Camden Nursing and Science Building that opened in fall 2017. "The more buildings that are coming, the more companies are coming. It's nice to know that the city is

expanding. That's really cool."

While most see the "cool" transformation of the city's skyline, Rutgers-Camden Chancellor Phoebe A. Haddon said Camden Rising is a much larger movement that will uplift families and communities. "Camden Rising is a vast public-private partnership that will bring jobs, community resources, and ultimately, increased prosperity to the city," Haddon said. "As a state university and an anchor institution in the city of Camden, Rutgers-Camden is fully and enthusiastically committed to this cause.

While we certainly are growing our campus and expanding our physical footprint in the city with wonderful new facilities, this is ultimately about the university's efforts to serve our students, the residents of Camden, and all of South Jersey."

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**Rutgers University-Camden students Michelle Obasi, left, and Bielka Gonzalez on Cooper Street with the new Alumni House and 12-story residence hall behind them. Both have roots in Camden and exemplify the university's role in Camden's resurgence.**

# RISING



**“With Camden Rising, we are focusing collectively on all of these things that affect the city. It’s a new and multifaceted approach to full-scale redevelopment for Camden.”**

*–Nyeema Watson, associate chancellor for civic engagement*



## **A City Engaged**

Nyeema Watson, who has lived all her life at a Camden address, has witnessed previous projects that worked to improve her hometown. This time, however, is different, said Watson, Rutgers–Camden’s associate chancellor for civic engagement. “Camden Rising is a more intentional focus,” Watson said. “In the past, some efforts have just focused on businesses or economic redevelopment, some focused on trying to transform the K-12 school landscape, and some focused on crime and policing. With Camden Rising, we are focusing collectively on all of these things that affect the city. It’s a new and multifaceted approach to full-scale redevelopment for Camden.”

Watson grew up in East Camden, attended Rutgers–Camden as an undergraduate, earning a degree in psychology and African American studies in 2000. After earning a master’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania, she returned to work at Rutgers–Camden in 2004 and earned a doctorate in childhood studies. She has worked for the university’s Office of Civic Engagement since its inception in 2010 and has headed it since 2014. Initiatives by the office include providing after-school care to more than 400 children in North Camden, establishment of a Future Scholars program, and the creation of the Hill

Family Center for Educational Access, founded by two alumni from Camden—twin brothers Washington C. Hill CCAS’61, a prominent perinatologist, and George C. Hill CCAS’61, a renowned biomedical scientist. The office also has helped to create more than 140 community-engaged classes that allow students to earn credit while working on projects beneficial to the city.

The civic engagement efforts not only benefit Camden, she said, but offer educational opportunities to students to get hands-on, real-world experience. “We want to do this for the community, but we also use it for an opportunity for our students to learn,” Watson said.

## A Suburban Advocate

Colin Sheehan, a senior at Rutgers–Camden from Gibbsboro, New Jersey, who is working on degrees in political science and law, will never forget his introduction to Camden neighborhoods. As a Civic Scholar, a program run by the Office of Civic Engagement that requires students to complete 300 hours of community service work each year, he and other students were assigned to survey residents in East Camden. “We stood on a street corner and we had to ask people about their dreams for the city,” he said. The input received ranged from very positive dreams to negative feedback from those who had given up hope. “That was a very eye-opening experience for me,” he said.

Sheehan, who went on to be involved in many community projects such as working with homeless shelters and charter schools, said the experience shaped both his studies and how he has approached civic engagement. “If there is

going to be change in the city, it needs to start with the people who live here,” he said. “It can’t just be people like me who are coming in and saying ‘Oh, I know how to fix the city.’ We need to listen to people.”

A 2014 graduate of Eastern Regional High School in Voorhees who is on course to earn a Rutgers Law degree in 2020, Sheehan spent this past summer as a public policy intern on Capitol Hill for the National Network to End Domestic Violence. Prior to becoming a Rutgers–Camden student, he knew very little about the city. “Even though I lived so close, the only time I would ever go through Camden was to go over the Ben Franklin Bridge or to go to the aquarium. I had never really been in the city, and because of that, I had the idea, which I think many people have, that it’s a scary place. When I talk to people who have that idea, I defend the city. While it has challenges, there are many great things about it.”

## Three elected officials, all Rutgers University–Camden alumni, on Camden Rising and Rutgers’ role:



**Camden Mayor Dana Redd SBC’96:** “Camden has experienced some difficult times, but we are truly turning the corner and there are much brighter days

ahead...Rutgers–Camden has become the front door to the new and rapidly improving waterfront, and has developed a beautiful urban downtown campus. I think what makes me so proud to call myself an alumna is that the university remains community-conscious as the faculty, alumni, and student body continue to be impactful throughout Camden by embracing their role as a community partner. This has an immeasurable effect on the community, leaving a rich legacy and inspiring future Rutgers students to engage with Camden residents for years to come.”

### New Jersey Assemblywoman Patricia Egan Jones CCAS’94:

“The current work to see Camden City and its residents regain their leadership role economically, educationally, and socially—after numerous past efforts—is now moving substantially toward success. As a major research facility, Rutgers–Camden has become an integral player in Camden Rising.”

### Camden County Freeholder Director Louis Cappelli Jr. RLAW’87:

“What’s being done in the city right now is historically unprecedented and is going to have a tangible impact for residents far beyond the next five to 10 years... This won’t be done by corporations alone, but by the growth of the small business community, nonprofits, and public partners like Rutgers...It would be impossible to replace what the university is bringing to the table.”

**“It can’t just be people like me who are coming in and saying, ‘Oh, I know how to fix the city.’ We need to listen to people.”**

*–Colin Sheehan, a Rutgers–Camden Civic Scholar*



## A Hometown Perspective

Michelle Obasi, a Camden resident who attended St. Joseph Pro-Cathedral School in East Camden and Camden Catholic High School in Cherry Hill, had planned to go away for college. But when her father died during the summer after she finished high school, she decided to stay at home and commute to Rutgers–Camden. In her first three years, she has been a basketball standout and is on pace to be one of the program’s all-time leading rebounders and scorers.

A senior biology major with a minor in Africana studies who plans to pursue a doctorate in physical therapy, she is excited to be studying in the new Nursing and Science Building. “The new building is a great asset to the city of Camden,” she said. “Not only does it aid in the education of many students, it will enhance my education in my last year.”

Obasi, however, is cautiously optimistic about the changes in her hometown. “I love some of the things in Camden I’m seeing, such as the increasing care for the city and early and higher education being more of a priority,” she said. “I don’t like to call what is going on in the city an upsurge, though, until the concrete evidence of helping the citizens of Camden is evident.”

**“I love some of the things in Camden I’m seeing, such as the increasing care for the city and early and higher education being more of a priority.”**

–Michelle Obasi, biology major from Camden

## Engaging the Community

Helping the citizens of Camden is a primary goal of Rutgers–Camden’s civic engagement effort, which has the mission “to build a bridge between the campus and the community,” Watson said.

One organization helping Camden residents that has benefited from the work of Rutgers–Camden students and faculty is the Fellowship House of South Camden, a nonprofit that hosts academic, social, and athletic activities for children. “We work with a lot of Rutgers students who help us,” said Richelle Todd-Yamoah GSC’15, a graduate of Rutgers–Camden’s master of public administration program who is the executive director of the Fellowship House.

Students in business professor Oscar Holmes IV’s Organizational Behavior class in the spring 2017 semester analyzed the Fellowship House’s fundraising plans, gave advice on social media strategies, and helped create a fundraising guide. “They really help fill some of the gaps we have,” Todd-Yamoah said. “We have a limited capacity with a small staff. It has been very helpful.”

Kelly Kennedy, a student in Holmes’ class from Browns Mill, New Jersey, worked with Fellowship House staff to plan a 5K run as a fundraiser. Kennedy, a health sciences/public administration dual major, said she learned a great deal about fundraising through the project but also found the work very rewarding. “Places like Fellowship House fill an important need for the children of Camden,” said Kennedy, whose daughter is a student at Rutgers–New Brunswick. “As a mother and a student, I want to help.”

Holmes, an assistant professor of management whose classes have helped to raise more than \$30,000 for nonprofits, said the fundraising projects for students gives them exceptional learning opportunities. “Raising money teaches students so much about themselves,” he said.







Business professor Oscar Holmes IV, right, student Kelly Kennedy, center, and Richelle Todd-Yamoah GSC'15, director of Fellowship House, with children in the program.

**“This commitment on behalf of the university to be really closely aligned with the priorities of the city is something that will not change.”**


—Nyeema Watson

Holmes added that it also fulfills an important objective of serving Camden. “It is important for us to give back to a city that has given so much,” he said.

Rutgers–Camden’s support of Fellowship House extends beyond Holmes’ class. Carol Kaufman-Scarborough, a professor of marketing, is a board member, as is Anne Mallgrave RLAW’88, a supervising attorney with the Rutgers Law School Civil Practice Clinic.

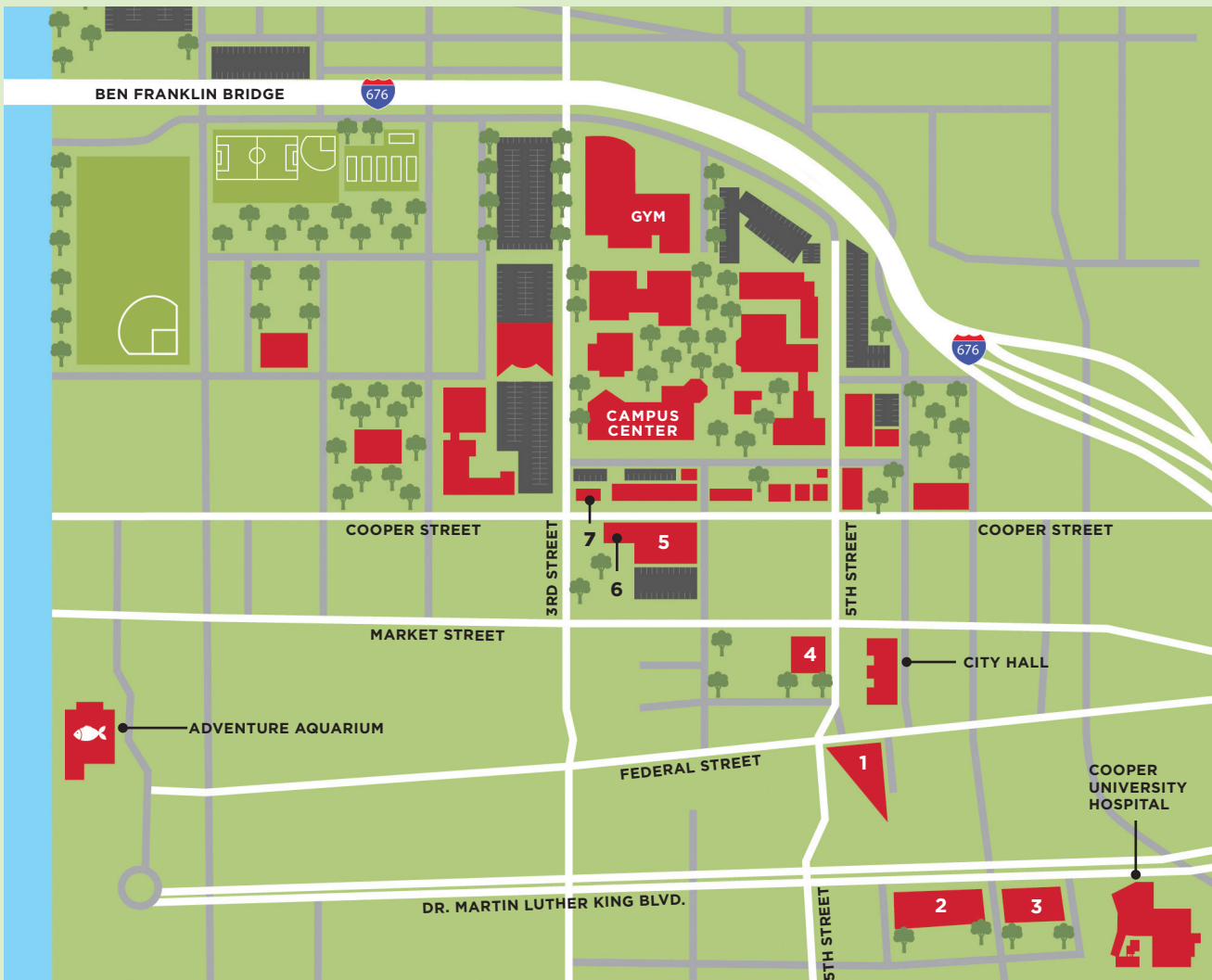
Like Holmes, Kaufman-Scarborough often assigns students to work with nonprofit organizations in Camden. In her fall 2016 class Marketing in the Social Media Age, students developed online marketing plans for five organizations in the city. “There’s a transformation that comes over a student when they apply the knowledge they’ve learned to a project,” she said.

The benefits, Kaufman-Scarborough said, run both ways. “It helps the Camden community because it was able to create strength for an organization. It also enriches us as a campus.”

Watson said such civic engagement work will remain a cornerstone for Rutgers–Camden faculty and students. “This commitment on behalf of the university to be really closely aligned with the priorities of the city is something that will not change,” she said. “It will prove successful, not only for the goals we have for ourselves as a higher education institution, but will assist the city in achieving the goals it has for itself more quickly by aligning Rutgers–Camden with Camden Rising.” 



*Pictured above, from the top: the Nursing and Science Building that opened in fall 2017; artist’s rendering of the Joint Health Sciences Center; the Alumni House. At left: the Writers House.*



## Rutgers-Camden Rising: New and Proposed Facilities

From a gleaming building newly opened next to City Hall to future hopes for expansion, Rutgers-Camden seeks to build a gateway to growth in Camden, expanding the university's footprint to serve both students and South Jersey residents. Here is a look at a range of projects:

### EDS AND MEDS

Four new buildings will establish the "Eds and Meds" corridor connecting Cooper University Hospital to Rutgers-Camden.

1. **Nursing and Science Building** The 106,735-square-foot building opened in the fall and is home to the School of Nursing, the physics department, and a wide range of classes across disciplines.
2. **The Joint Health Sciences Center** A collaboration of the Rowan University/Rutgers University-Camden Board of Governors (RURCBOG), this building is under construction and scheduled to open in 2019. Rutgers, Rowan, and Camden County College will share the space.

3. **Rutgers Health Sciences Building** This proposed building will expand research opportunities for faculty and students and will promote collaborations with Camden organizations.
4. **School of Business Building** This envisioned 100,000-square-foot facility will sit across Fifth Street from City Hall. It will include retail and office space as well as provide space for the School of Business-Camden. See page 32 for an artist's rendering.

### COOPER STREET ENHANCEMENTS

5. **330 Cooper Street** This 12-story residence hall that features a mix of apartments and retail opened in 2012.
6. **Welcome Center and Alumni House** The Welcome Center at 330 Cooper Street opened in Spring 2017; the Alumni House at 312 Cooper opened in fall 2016.
7. **Writers House** Conversion of the 1885 Henry Genet Taylor House into the Writers House was completed in 2015. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

# IMPROVING HEALTH, CHANGING LIVES

## How a Faculty Member's Research and Alumni Are Working with Camden Communities



By Sam Starnes

The first thing Kathleen Jackson did was listen.

A nurse practitioner and clinical assistant professor in the Rutgers School of Nursing–Camden, Jackson received a Take Care Health Promotion grant from the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, an organization that had previously honored her with its state excellence award. The small grant sponsored focus groups in Camden neighborhoods in 2015 to research the health-care concerns of residents.

**“We wanted to try to figure out a way that there could be continuity of care, not just a small bandage.”**

–Kathleen Jackson, nurse practitioner and clinical assistant professor, Rutgers School of Nursing–Camden. She is pictured above with a patient in the faculty practice clinic.

“That was really helpful in finding out from people what the issues were,” Jackson said.

The discussions revealed multiple health issues related to social conditions, such as poverty and a lack of jobs with a living wage. Jackson’s research, when coupled with collaboration with other Rutgers–Camden faculty and students and community organizations, made it clear there were two issues to work on straightaway: Camden families wanted better access to fresh produce for healthier diets, and many did not have access to consistent, quality health care.

## From Farmers to Camden Tables

Jackson, who with Rutgers–Camden nursing professor Janice Beitz is co-authoring a scholarly paper based on the data gathered in the study titled “Understanding Stories of Health and Healthcare in a Vulnerable Urban Population,” wasted no time in taking action based on the research gleaned from the community. In 2015, she formed a partnership with Farmers Against Hunger that began delivering surplus produce into two housing communities in the city.

Brian Strumfels CCAS’06, produce coordinator for Farmers Against Hunger, makes weekly deliveries to the Camden communities during growing season from mid-June through the fall.

The popularity of the deliveries to the housing communities has grown each year. Strumfels said each community receives about 500 pounds of seasonal fruit and vegetables weekly, including watermelons, corn, tomatoes, squash, and cucumbers. “I enjoy pulling up and seeing the people waiting,” said Strumfels, a fine arts graduate from Hainesport who now lives in Bordentown, New Jersey. “I get a cheerful greeting every time I go there.”

## Health Care for Those Without

Addressing the health-care issue took longer, but Jackson developed a program for that concern as well. Residents told Jackson they had difficulty finding readily accessible health care. “We wanted to try to figure out a way that there could be continuity of care, not just a small bandage,” Jackson said.

Enter Project H.O.P.E., a Camden-based federally qualified health center serving the homeless headed by Rutgers–Camden alumna Patricia DeShields SNC’99, SSW’00, and Cathedral Kitchen,



**From left, Project H.O.P.E. CEO Patricia DeShields SNC’99, SSW’00; Kathleen Jackson, clinical assistant professor of nursing; and Cathedral Kitchen Executive Director Karen Talarico, at Cathedral Kitchen, site of the faculty practice clinic.**

a mission that “uses food to change lives.” Project H.O.P.E. provides primary health and behavioral health-care services for the homeless. It served almost 4,000 patients in 2016 alone. Cathedral Kitchen prepares about 2,000 meals for the needy daily; most of the meals are delivered, but an average of 315 free meals are served on site each day.

Cathedral Kitchen, which is located only one mile east on Federal Street from the new Rutgers–Camden Nursing and Science Building, hosts a free dental clinic that has treated more than 800 residents. “The space had primarily been dental,” said DeShields, who has been CEO of Project H.O.P.E. since 2003. “Karen Talarico, executive director of Cathedral Kitchen, always envisioned having

primary health-care services on site. Kathy came along and said, ‘How can we make that happen now?’”

Project H.O.P.E. submitted applications to federal and state agencies to add Cathedral Kitchen to its approved scope of services and worked with Jackson and Talarico to utilize nurse practitioners from the faculty practice as staffing for the satellite site. Jackson and fellow faculty member Nancy Pontes, an assistant professor for the Rutgers School of Nursing–Camden, and Barbara Schwarz, a certified medical assistant for Project H.O.P.E., began seeing patients one day a week in the spring. “Even with the uncertainty of health insurance in this country, we see anyone,” Jackson said. “We don’t see you just one time—you become a patient of ours. We’ll provide preventative care and meet any other health needs you might have.”

Jackson added that this type of care for those unable to access it is a cost-savings benefit to the local health-care system by helping to prevent expensive emergency room visits or hospitalizations.

## A Patient’s Perspective

Mark Woodall is happy the clinic came along when it did. A 52-year-old Camden resident, he had been feeling bad for about two years. “I had problems breathing,” he said. “I would bend over and get shortness of breath.”

He let his symptoms go untreated for two reasons. “I was afraid to go to the doctor,” Woodall said. “I didn’t have insurance at the time, but my main concern was something being really wrong.”

Treatment at the clinic revealed that he had several treatable issues, and that a specialty referral was needed. Medication “cleared the issues up,” although he is still doing follow up. “I didn’t have to have surgery,” he said. “I feel much better.”



## Student Opportunities

Jackson recruits students to volunteer in the clinic, giving them an opportunity to learn about urban health issues. One who stepped forward is Elizabeth Okwamba, a 2014 alumna of the School of Nursing–Camden who is studying in Rutgers–Camden’s doctor of nursing practice program and works as a nurse at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

A native of Nigeria who moved to Camden in 2008 when she was 17, Okwamba earned an associate’s degree from Camden County College before beginning her studies at Rutgers–Camden. She was inspired by her participation in the service-learning journey course Health and Healing in Guatemala in her final undergraduate semester. Her work included educating

Mayan women on health issues and building stoves for them that alleviated smoke exposure common to outdoor cooking methods. “That trip was great,” she said. “We learned a lot. But behind it, the soul was there. We made a difference.”

Okwamba also has participated in public health outreach work with the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, so volunteering in the clinic Jackson established at Cathedral Kitchen came naturally. “Wherever I find myself, I want to get involved in something like this,” she said.

Project H.O.P.E.’s DeShields, whose first job after finishing her nursing degree at Gloucester County College in 1979 was as a nurse at Cooper University Hospital, said that the community health experience can inspire students

to fulfill a major need in urban health care. She added that through her work in nursing and later her graduate work in social work at Rutgers–Camden, she was motivated to help those in need. DeShields, who has spent most of her career working in Camden, said she is just one of many alumni who do so. “There are so many people who came out of the door of Rutgers–Camden who are here in the city and Camden County who continue to serve the community,” she said.

## Jackson’s Commitment

Jackson was working as a nurse practitioner in Mercer County more than a decade ago when she volunteered to help a van that went into Trenton to provide primary care to residents. “Until you really meet people and talk with



▲ Elizabeth Okwamba SNC'14, a nurse at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and student in the School of Nursing's doctor of nursing practice program, lives in Camden and volunteers in the faculty nursing practice clinic.

◀ Jackson's efforts to improve the health of Camden residents have involved many alumni, including DeShields, left, and James Comstock SSW'84, a licensed clinical social worker for Project H.O.P.E.

them—until you get touched by that—you don't realize how difficult it is to live on a day-to-day basis without resources.”

A native of South Jersey who lives in Medford Lakes, Jackson earned a bachelor's degree from the Thomas Jefferson University School of Nursing, master's degrees in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania and in sociology from Rutgers, and her doctoral degree from the Rutgers legacy University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. She has been working with people in Camden for eight years—with no plans to stop. “I like being able to help close to home and in South Jersey,” she said. “I want to bring people and resources together to improve health. Healthier lives are better lives.” **R**

## Law Clinic Seeks Justice for Immigrants in Trying Times



Above: Joanne Gottesman, left, director of the Immigrant Justice Clinic, and Julie Peterson, a third-year law student.

By Caroline Yount RLAW'05

A law school clinic in Camden gives students the unique opportunity to practice lawyering while helping protect the rights of immigrants at risk of being detained and deported. The Immigrant Justice Clinic at Rutgers Law School in Camden assigns students to represent immigrants seeking lawful permanent residence during a time of increased enforcement activity by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Julie Peterson, a third-year law student who was enrolled in the clinic last spring and is continuing in an advanced capacity this fall, said the work is “very emotional. We are dealing with people who are quite vulnerable.”

She is part of a group of eight students who work in teams of two for an intensive experience—a seminar where participants study substantive immigration law as they represent clients from all over the

world. “The clinic gives students a chance to feel the full responsibility of being a lawyer,” said Joanne Gottesman, clinical professor of law and director of the clinic. “I am a safety net, but they are on the front line.”

Gottesman and Peterson have seen more anxiety among their clients in the past year. The clinic has been involved with offering Know Your Rights presentations to community groups and helping clients prepare for possible contact with ICE officials. Peterson said knowing that the students are there to represent them helps the immigrants “feel a little bit safer.”

She also has found the work rewarding. “It has been an amazing learning experience and a great opportunity to give back to the community,” Peterson said.



# Savage Ants?

*Not at all, says  
Amy Savage, a  
biology professor  
leading a study  
of ants in urban  
ecologies*



By Jeanne Leong

The man walking down the 500 block of Cooper Street in Camden pauses. It's the middle of a red-hot summer day, but three women in the grassy median are kneeling in the bright sun, hunched over, pointing at something in the dirt.

"What are you doing?" he shouts.

Melissa Carpenter CCAS'16, now a Rutgers University–Camden graduate student, turns to answer. "We're studying ants," she says.

Amy Savage, a Rutgers–Camden assistant professor of biology who is directing the research outing, says she and researchers often are mistaken for surveyors. Instead, they are taking a closer look at what ants are eating as part of a major study on the nutritional ecology of urban ants and how it affects local ecosystems.

## Why Ants?

Although many think of ants as pests, ants and humans are intimately connected, Savage said. Ants perform an array of important ecosystem services in cities, such as helping to control bug populations and breaking down discarded food before it rots. The digging that ants do in the soil has a positive impact. "Their activities make it easier for plant roots to grow in the soil and to access water and nutrients," Savage said. "Their soil turnover also makes some nutrients more accessible because they are moved from

deeper parts of the soil profile to the surface."

Where there are ants, there are more desirable plants making the city a healthier place to live. "Plants can grow better and decomposition happens faster in those environments," Savage said.

## Groundbreaking Research

Savage, a Montana native who earned her doctorate at Rice University and did post-doctoral work at North Carolina State University, joined the Rutgers–Camden faculty in fall 2015. Previously, her study of ants on the streets of New York resulted in specimens that she had collected being the first Manhattan street ants included in the American Museum of Natural History, which holds more than 16 million specimens.

Her current research project has spanned two years and has studied urban ants in Camden, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Manhattan, and Chicago.

For the study in Camden, researchers set up feeding trials on the Cooper Street median, an island of green space in the middle of four lanes of asphalt. They offered water, fats, sugars, salts, and proteins to examine what foods the ants choose in urban environments. Carpenter, a biology graduate student from Haddon Heights and team leader for Savage, said the foods that the ants choose may indicate what might be lacking in their diets.

Another feeding trial involved offering actual foods the ants are likely to be exposed to—crickets and processed foods such as hot dogs, potato chips, and cookies. The trials allowed researchers to study how the ants are affected by consuming human food and how behavioral changes can affect the community and the ecosystem.

Savage and her team also are studying the removal of urban food waste on the medians, where people often discard food as they are crossing the street or stop to have lunch. She said if food waste stays on the ground for too long, it can attract and support the population growth of undesirable species and plant life, such as mold and rats, which are associated with risks to human health. "Camden is a place where people really interact with these small green spaces quite a bit," she said.

Savage said adding Camden to her research sites has helped her and her students to learn more about the city the university calls home. "In Camden, we have the opportunity to make decisions now about how green spaces and the organisms that they support will contribute to revitalization efforts," she said. "If I can do something to help people in the area while still answering my scientific questions, I think that that's a worthwhile goal." **R**



◀ Opposite page, the *Tetramorium* sp.E, known as the pavement ant, is common in Camden. At left, Amy Savage at work. Photos by Lauren Nichols of [yourwildlife.org](http://yourwildlife.org)

▶ Studying Camden ants, from left, Savage and biology graduate students Melissa Carpenter CCAS'16 and Megan Rhone CCAS'17.





## A FIVE-STAR

*By Michael Sepanic*

When Laura Tolver SNC'17 was honorably discharged from the U.S. Marines Corps, she carried a secret with her.

She ended her military service, where she had served admirably as an aircraft mechanic, to care for her ailing father, who had suffered a brain injury.

But that wasn't her secret.

It wasn't until after she enrolled in Rutgers University–Camden that she addressed the pain she'd concealed. "I was sexually assaulted while I was in the military," Tolver said. "I kept silent for such a long time, but the assault was like a thorn in my side that I needed to address in order to find peace."

She learned from the on-campus Office of Veterans Affairs that she could access support for many issues, including sexual trauma.

Fred Davis, the office's director, learned of Tolver's situation and connected her with a counselor in the Vet Center in Philadelphia. "They helped me with counseling, and that helped me to grasp and be vocal about what happened," Tolver said.

Tolver, who came to Rutgers–Camden with a bachelor's degree in liberal studies from Wilmington University, went on to be a star student, earning a bachelor's in nursing in May with honors. She landed a nursing position as a trauma ICU nurse at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, and also enrolled in the Rutgers–Camden doctor of nursing practice program. "She is a very strong and talented individual who has overcome tremendous obstacles to succeed," Davis said.

Her many accolades include being named a Tillman Scholar by the Pat Tillman Foundation. She is one of only two students in New Jersey to earn the honor named for Tillman, an Arizona Cardinals player who left the NFL to enlist after the terrorist attacks of 2001 and was killed while serving in Afghanistan.



# SUPPORT SYSTEM

## Veterans at Rutgers–Camden excel with specialized services to meet their needs

Tolver said her success wouldn't have been possible without the support from Rutgers–Camden, particularly Davis and the late Joshua Piccoli CCAS'14, a beloved staff member in the office who died in 2016. "The veterans services office at Rutgers–Camden took care of me," she said. "They showed me benefits for vets that I didn't even know existed, which made my Rutgers degree affordable and accessible."

### Serving Those Who Served

Taking care of more than 400 Rutgers–Camden student-veterans enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs is what the program is all about, said Davis, a Navy veteran and retired Camden police detective who has directed the office since it began in 2009. "The men and the women who serve in the military take away a piece of their life," he said. "They are giving up their time. We need programs like this to help them transition back into the civilian world."

Davis said the key elements of the Rutgers–Camden program are staff contacts familiar with issues specific to veterans, including matters of health and financial aid. Veterans also benefit from a lounge on campus where they can study or hang out and a special orientation session catering to their needs.

Rutgers–Camden has been consistently recognized as a highly ranked university for veterans to attend and has earned many distinctions: being the first college in New Jersey named a Purple Heart University by the Military Order of the Purple Heart; earning a Yellow Ribbon school designation; gaining membership in the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges; and repeatedly being named a "Military Friendly" school by *G.I. Jobs* magazine. *Military Times* magazine also ranked Rutgers University second in the nation in its Best for Vets 2017 rankings.



Fred Davis, center, founding director of the Rutgers–Camden Office of Veterans Affairs, with six of the more than 400 veteran students on campus, including Drew Bendler, third from left.

Mike Chewkanes CCAS'76, GSC'07 served eight years in the U.S. Air Force before enrolling at Rutgers–Camden in 1973. A retired Camden County prosecutor, he returned near the end of his career to earn a master's degree in criminal justice and has since taught in the undergraduate criminal justice program. A strong supporter of the Office of Veterans Affairs, he said the university's efforts are far-reaching. "Supporting veterans who live locally in South Jersey helps the campus, the alumni, and the community," Chewkanes said.

### A Combat Veteran's Perspective

Drew Bendler said the plaudits the university receives for its care for vets are

well-deserved. A U.S. Army veteran from Camden, he served from 1984 to 1987. He was working as a postal carrier in 2003 when he was inspired to return to duty. "When the war broke out in Iraq, I said, 'I've got to go back,'" Bendler said.

His return to duty lasted 10 years, and included 13 months as an infantry squad leader in combat. As a result, he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He said he has received much support at Rutgers–Camden with his treatment, as well as issues he faces in caring for his ailing mother. He said he is enjoying working toward a degree in mathematics education and psychology. "I love it here," Bendler said. "It has worked out to be the best thing I've ever done." **R**

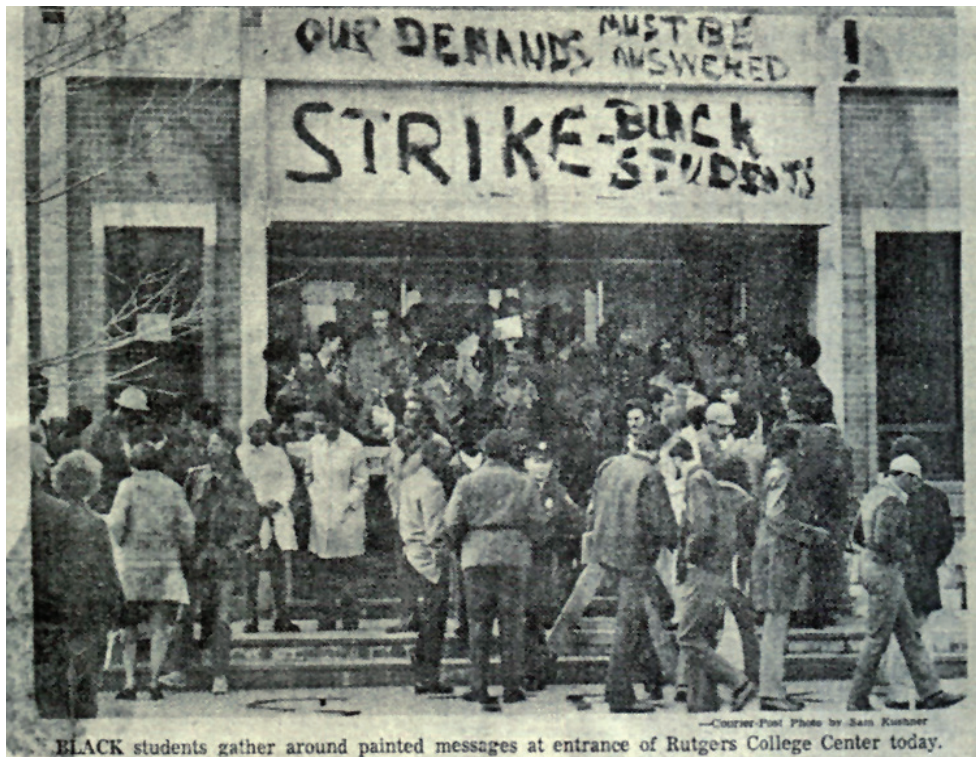


### VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

A number of scholarships support veterans at Rutgers–Camden, including the Jeremy Kane Memorial Scholarship, named for an alumnus killed by a suicide bomber in Afghanistan in 2010, and the Joshua Piccoli Memorial Scholarship, named for the U.S. Marine Corps veteran, Rutgers–Camden alumnus, and law student who worked in the campus Office of Veterans Affairs for six years. To support these and other Rutgers scholarship programs, contact Kate Brennan, interim associate chancellor for development, at 856-225-6577 or [katecb@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:katecb@camden.rutgers.edu).

# SCARLET PROFILES

## Locking Doors to Open Them



BLACK students gather around painted messages at entrance of Rutgers College Center today. —*Courier-Post Photo by Sam Kushner*



**“Our actions in 1969 served as a catalyst to move the university from an exclusive suburban enclave to an inclusive, very diverse urban university model.”**

—*Roy Jones*

*By Will Bunch*

With the clink of chains and the snap of a lock on a February afternoon in 1969, Roy Jones CCAS’70 and a small group of African-American classmates made a powerful statement.

Jones and the other students—including Malik Chaka CCAS’77, Cheryl (Edwards) Amana-Burris CCAS’73, Tom Warren CCAS’69, Myrna (Williams) Thompson CCAS’69, and the late Ollie Thompson CCAS’72—represented a healthy share of only two dozen or so black students on the Rutgers–Camden campus as the tumultuous 1960s wound down. They had entered the student center, shooed away a dozen or so white students who were inside, and padlocked the doors.

Armed with a list of 29 demands that included fully integrating the Rutgers–Camden student body, adding non-white faculty, increasing financial aid for underprivileged kids, and promoting better relations with the mostly black surrounding community, the civil-rights activists locked themselves inside for as long as it would take for university leaders to positively respond.

The occupiers had no idea whether administrators would negotiate with them—or whether they would be expelled for their rash protest. After the protest shut down the campus, Rutgers officials began a dialogue with the students and ultimately agreed to most of their demands. “It opened the door for a lot of things,” said Jones, who saw non-white

enrollment jump from that tiny handful to a couple hundred students by the following year. (In early October 2017, Rutgers–Camden had 1,197 African-American students and 952 Hispanic students enrolled.)

Jones stayed in Camden after graduating and watched the university faculty also grow more diverse as the school became a key mover in its hometown. Now an urban environmental activist heading the National Institute for Healthy Human Spaces based in Camden, Jones said that today “in terms of community needs and civic engagement, [Rutgers–Camden] is one of the best in the country.”

Jones has long felt that the 1969 protesters aren’t well remembered for the changes they wrought. To rectify that,

Jones was a main organizer of a daylong program on campus in March 2016 called *Beacons of Light: The Black Student Protest Legacy at Rutgers–Camden*. “We felt it was important to let this new wave of leaders at Rutgers and students know: How did the university get here?”

Attendees learned about Jones’s personal journey, which started in the still-segregated South when he was born in Fort Lauderdale in 1946 and turned toward activism after moving north and attending high school in Atlantic City. A term paper on lynching—and the graphic photos he saw—made him vow to fight for civil rights.

From that moment on, he said, sports and other activities would take a back seat to political activism. His passion was further fueled when several New Jersey colleges told Jones they could not admit him because they had filled their “quota”—a thinly veiled reference to limited openings that existed for black students in the mid-1960s. Finding his way to Rutgers–Camden after a stop at historically black West Virginia State University, Jones was in the right place at the right time to push for integration.

Looking back, he said the 1969 campus protest inspired him a dozen years later to run for mayor of Camden, albeit unsuccessfully, and ultimately get involved in the movement seeking environmental justice for pollution-plagued, low-income communities. “This event,” Jones said of the 1969 takeover, “shaped my life for the next 48 years.”

*A second Beacons of Light: The Black Student Protest Legacy at Rutgers–Camden is being planned for 2018.*



Rutgers Law Student Khushbu Solanki, a former James and Sharon Maida Public Interest Fellow, speaks with James Maida RLAW’90.

## Gift Endows Public Interest Law

Attorney Joshua Bauers credits the generosity of a fellow alumnus—one who attended Rutgers Law School in Camden 25 years earlier—for his current work ensuring access to housing for New Jersey’s low-income residents.

A staff attorney for the Fair Share Housing Center in Cherry Hill, Bauers RLAW’15 started with the center after graduating as a Fellow in the Maida Public Interest Fellows Program, which was made possible by a \$1 million gift by James RLAW’90 and Dr. Sharon Maida GSE’97. Bauers worked for a year at the center, which is headed by Rutgers Law alumnus Kevin Walsh RLAW’99, and was hired as a full-time attorney in 2016. “I truly feel that I am having a tremendous impact on the lives of thousands of people,” Bauers said.

Stories like Bauers’ were the motivation for the Maidas’ gift to the law school in 2015. In an effort to support pro bono and public interest initiatives, the Maidas provide a post-graduate fellowship, which funds the full-time salary of a selected fellow working in public interest law, and sup-

port up to 40 students each summer who are doing work for public interest legal organizations in positions that are normally unpaid.

The Maidas’ gift also funds the James and Sharon Maida Community Justice Suite where students and faculty handle cases involving domestic violence, immigration, and children’s justice. “I would not be able to do what I do today had I not attended Rutgers Law,” said James Maida, the founder, president, and CEO of Gaming Laboratories International, which has its global headquarters in Lakewood, New Jersey. “This gift allows the Rutgers pro bono and public interest program to have a national reach and allows students to give back to their communities before they leave law school. Everyone deserves access to justice.”

**To support programs such as the James and Sharon Maida Public Interest Fellows Program, contact Robin Todd, assistant dean of development, Rutgers Law School, at 856-225-6682 or [robin.todd@law.rutgers.edu](mailto:robin.todd@law.rutgers.edu).**



## A Family Legacy of Accounting

Daniel J. Ragone Sr. and his wife, Lillian, founders of the Daniel J. Ragone Family Foundation, along with their sons, Dr. Daniel Jr., Dean, and David—all three Rutgers graduates who are trustees of the foundation—have honored Ragone Sr. by establishing an academic center at the Rutgers School of Business–Camden that bears his name.

The foundation, led by Ragone Sr., his wife, and three sons, in 2014 contributed more than \$1 million to establish the Daniel J. Ragone, CPA Center for Excellence in Accounting. “The generous support of the Daniel J. Ragone Family Foundation establishes Rutgers–Camden as a hub for accounting expertise and skill that will benefit South Jersey and the Delaware Valley for decades,” said Jaishankar Ganesh, dean of the Rutgers School of Business–Camden. “We are indebted and deeply grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Ragone

**Pictured above: Lillian Ragone and Dean Ragone CCAS’81, seated; standing, from left, Dr. Daniel Ragone Jr. RC’77, Daniel Ragone Sr., and David Ragone CCAS’88.**

and their sons for their commitment to the sustained growth of Rutgers–Camden.”

Admiration of their father and his career inspired the Ragone brothers to honor him with the gift. In addition, Dean Ragone and his wife, Sharon, joined with the family foundation to give \$50,000 to restore the grand staircase in the Rutgers–Camden Alumni House.

Ragone Sr., who grew up in Camden and graduated from Camden High School in 1945 and La Salle University in 1951, formed his own accounting firm in 1960. That firm—Ragone, Lacatena, Fairchild, & Beppel—continues to represent some of Delaware Valley’s most successful entrepreneurs. “Accounting is a gateway to long-term professional success,” said Ragone Sr., who has served on many profit and nonprofit boards and has received many honors. “Regardless of your profession or industry, accounting is vital to the growth of your business and the overall economic health of our region and nation.”

For more, visit the center’s website at [ragone.rutgers.edu](http://ragone.rutgers.edu).

## Alumnus Supports Political Science

When Jeffrey I. Baron CCAS’69, RLAW’73 was growing up, he worked part-time for his father and grandfather in the grocery store they owned and ran only three blocks from the Rutgers University–Camden campus. Today, his father, Jacob Abraham Baron, and his mother, Mildred Amelia Baron, are the namesakes of a scholarship fund that Baron, an attorney and founding partner of Baron & Brennan in Voorhees, New Jersey, established in their memory. “Without them and Rutgers, I would never have realized the success I have been fortunate to achieve,” he said. The fund he endowed in 2010 supports a public lecture series, as well as student fellowships, research, seminars, visiting faculty, and academic awards.

Baron, a widely recognized authority in land use, zoning and planning, condemnation, and redevelopment issues, spent time with two of his scholarship recipients at the luncheon following the 2017 Baron Lecture: Tooba Hussain, a senior political science major and Colin Sheehan, a student in the dual-degree B.A./J.D. program. (Both are pictured below with Baron.) “Tooba’s and Colin’s achievements academically are extraordinary,” Baron said. “I am extremely proud of them and all the students our endowed fund has supported.”



**“AT RUTGERS, I WAS GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A WAY FOR MYSELF IN THE WORLD.”**

–Pamela Wright RLAW '91



## An Advocate for Children in Need

By Jeanne Leong

Pamela Wright had been working as a family law attorney in the Beverly Hills section of Los Angeles for 15 years when one day in court changed her life. “I was handling my first juvenile dependency law case representing a grandparent and saw an attorney give a child a teddy bear,” said Wright RLAW '91. “I found out that the person who gave the child a teddy bear was a children’s lawyer. I knew right then that I wanted to do that, too.”

Since 2012, Wright has been a children’s law attorney for the Children’s Law Center of California, which represents more than 30,000 children in foster care.

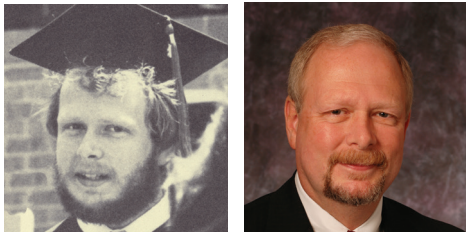
She has represented children born with a positive drug toxicology, as well as others who have suffered physical abuse or sexual abuse or witnessed domestic violence. “Their brave hearts inspire me to do what I do,” she said.

A Las Vegas native, Wright served in the U.S. Army for three years before she and her former husband moved to South Jersey. While Wright was in law school, her mother lived with her to help her care for her young daughter. “I learned a lot about being disciplined in the army and that definitely helped me in attending law school full-time as a single mom,” she said.

In addition to her legal work, Wright began writing children’s books when her two sons, now 20 and 16, were younger. *Albert the Grumpy Crocodile*, which part of the proceeds go to help children get adopted, was published in 2016 and *Albert the Alphabet Book* was published this year.

She credits her law school experience in Camden for enabling her to do the work she does. “At Rutgers, I was given the opportunity to make a way for myself in the world,” Wright said. “I received a world-class education at Rutgers and I use these legal skills every day to protect children and keep them safe so they can have a happy, healthy life.”

## Rutgers–Camden Alumnus the First to Chair University Board of Governors



STEWART IN 1981 AND TODAY

By Patrick Monaghan

Shortly after retiring from a successful career in the biotechnology industry, Rutgers University–Camden alumnus Sandy J. Stewart CCAS’81, GSC’87 decided it was time to give back—even if in a small way.

He wanted to serve Rutgers, so, in 2002, he asked to join the Rutgers University–Camden Alumni Association. “I did that and next thing I knew I was on the Dean’s [Leadership] Council, and next thing I knew I was on the Board of Trustees,” he said. “It just kind of kept rolling.”

His service to Rutgers has rolled all the way up to the universitywide Board of Governors, to which Stewart became the first Rutgers–Camden alumnus to be elected chair. His one-year term, for which he can be re-elected up to three times, began on July 1, 2017.

In the coming year, Stewart sees Rutgers solidifying Rutgers Health as one of the premier health-care delivery networks in the nation; initializing a successful partnership with the recently announced RWJBarnabas Health collaboration; and making strides to build Rutgers into one of the top academic research facilities in the nation. “That,” Stewart says, “is the goal.”

**“CAMDEN BECAME HOME FOR ME AND STILL FEELS LIKE HOME.”**

– Sandy J. Stewart CCAS’81, GSC’87

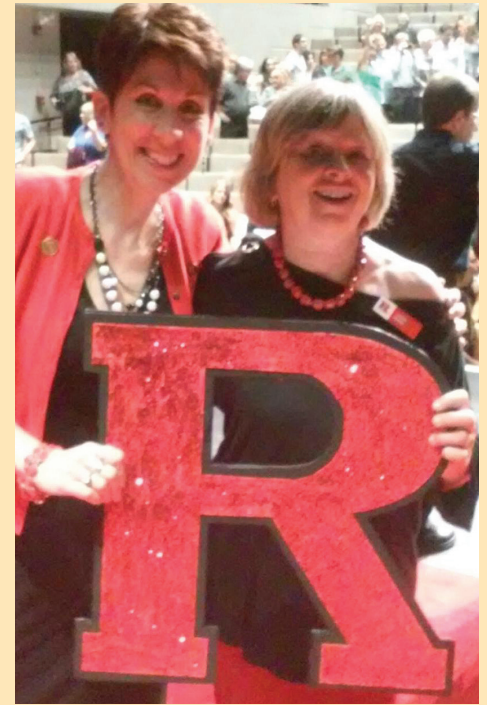
Stewart credits Rutgers–Camden—where he spent countless hours toiling in the Science Building—for an education that prepared him for his first biotech job at Ciba-Geigy/Novartis. At the time, Stewart said, as many as half the scientists hired by the company were international. It was an intimidating environment, but he was able to compete with some of the world’s best scientists “because I received such a tremendous education at Rutgers–Camden.”

Stewart went on to found or co-found several biotechnology companies, including Paradigm Genetics (now Cogenics Icoria Inc.) and Immunovation. These companies spanned functional genomics, proteomics, and metabolomics into drug development.

Formerly of Point Pleasant, New Jersey, Stewart now lives in New Hill, North Carolina. In addition to chairing the Board of Governors, he also is a member of the Rutgers University–Camden Board of Directors.

“Camden is a jewel,” he said. “There’s a soft spot in my heart for Camden because, as someone who went to high school in Virginia, I chose to be there. Camden became home for me and still feels like home.”

## Nurse Leading Change, “Saving Babies’ Lives”



Regina “Jean” Grazel SNC’81, left, and Linda Wray CCAS’74, SNC’76, at the School of Nursing pinning ceremony.

By Will Bunch

When Regina “Jean” Grazel SNC’81 was earning her nursing degree at Rutgers–Camden, one of the biggest takeaways was the notion that nursing isn’t just about collecting a paycheck, but a profession where one is expected to give something back. “That’s really rooted in me—that it’s not a job, but a profession,” said Grazel, who would go on to become the president of the National Association of Neonatal Nurses.

Those lessons were still ringing in Grazel’s ears three decades later when



officials asked her to play a key role in helping New Jersey become the first state in the nation to implement a program mandating for screening of newborn infants for congenital heart defects. As a program director for the New Jersey Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics since the mandate launched in 2012, Grazel's work with hospitals and staff to get the program running statewide was so successful that other jurisdictions came calling for advice as neonatal heart screening became commonplace from coast to coast. "It's a wonderful feeling to know we are saving babies' lives," said Grazel, noting that a study this year from the Centers for Disease Control credits screening for a 33 percent drop in deaths from congenital heart defects.

Meanwhile, because of Grazel's close ties with New Jersey hospitals, she was called again recently to play a similar role to coordinate educational efforts for health-care providers and tracking of mothers and newborns exposed to the Zika virus. That happened in addition to her work in 2015 and 2016, when she used her platform as president of the National Association of Neonatal Nurses—where she's still deeply involved as a board member—to advocate for better care for newborns needing intensive care and provide top-notch education.

But she said one of her proudest moments came through her work with Rutgers–Camden alumni groups, when she was invited back to officially salute new graduates. "That's been the mainstay of my career," she said. "Inspiring others."

## Show Your Scarlet Pride!

### Alumni Groups Offer a Variety of Activities, Networking, and Friendship

If you want to connect with Rutgers alumni who share your interests or live nearby, getting involved with an alumni group is a great way to do so. These groups are chartered organizations run by dedicated volunteers in affiliation with the Rutgers University Alumni Association (RUAA).

#### **RUAA Charter Groups at Rutgers–Camden**

- Rutgers University–Camden Alumni Association (RUCAA)
- Alumni Brotherhood of Kappa Sigma Upsilon
- Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority Phi Tau Chapter
- Honors College Alumni Association at Camden
- Rutgers Alumni Rowing Team at Camden
- Rutgers Club of Greater Philadelphia
- Rutgers School of Law–Camden Alumni Association
- Rutgers–Camden Education Opportunity Fund Alumni Organization
- Sigma Epsilon Alumni Association
- Sigma Delta Tau Alumni Delta Zeta Chapter
- Veteran Alumni of Rutgers University

Events include theater nights, rowing and regattas on the Cooper River, a St. Patrick's Day River Line Tour, Scarlet Knight game-watching parties, happy hours at local establishments, Homecoming, reunions, and many more. In addition, there are regular meetings and networking events.

For contact information and more about each charter group, visit [Ralumni.com](http://Ralumni.com).

If you are interested in volunteering at events or on campus, please contact the Rutgers–Camden Office of Alumni Relations at 856-225-6028 or email [alumni@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:alumni@camden.rutgers.edu).

#### **NEWS FOR CLASS NOTES?**

*Rutgers–Camden Magazine* is intended to provide an update about how our campus is moving forward. We also want to know what's new with you! Share your professional and personal milestones with *Rutgers Magazine*, the publication for all Rutgers alumni, at [Ralumni.com/mynews](http://Ralumni.com/mynews).

# THE BACK PAGE

## Homes for Business— Past, Present, and Future



### THE PAST—VICTOR HALL

A former RCA factory, the seven-story Victor Hall opened to Rutgers University–Camden classes after major renovations in 1966. Commonly known as “The Annex,” it hosted many business courses until it closed in 1989. It stood at the corner of Point and Pearl streets, a site now occupied by the Rutgers–Camden Community Park soccer and softball fields adjacent to the Ben Franklin Bridge.



### THE PRESENT—BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

In 1989, one year after the establishment of the Rutgers School of Business–Camden, the four-story building with its distinctive chevron-shaped glass front opened on the corner of Third and Penn streets. It remains the home of the School of Business, as well as other academic and administrative units.



### THE FUTURE—PROPOSED SCHOOL OF BUSINESS BUILDING

A 100,000-square-foot tower is proposed for the corner of Fifth and Market streets across from Camden City Hall and a block from the new Nursing and Science Building. The new building will be home to the School of Business classrooms and offices, the Financial Markets Lab, the Daniel J. Ragone, CPA Center for Excellence in Accounting, state-of-the-art business learning spaces, and retail space.



# CONNECT

WITH YOUR ALUMNI FAMILY

The **Rutgers University Alumni Association (RUAA)** is your lifetime connection to everything scarlet, and membership is free for life. Stay scarlet forever™ with these benefits:

- Insider communication about what is happening at Rutgers
- Rutgers group discounts on insurance programs
- A wide array of events
- Career and networking opportunities

[RALUMNI.COM/CAMDENALUMNI](http://RALUMNI.COM/CAMDENALUMNI)



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THE RUTGERS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

RUTGERS



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and turn POTENTIAL into PRIDE

## DESIGNATE YOUR GIFT

You can choose from a variety of Rutgers University Foundation funds, including the Rutgers–Camden Chancellor’s Fund, which supports students facing economic challenges. You also can directly support an individual college or school:

- Faculty of Arts and Sciences–Camden
- School of Business–Camden
- Rutgers Law School
- School of Nursing–Camden

## PLANNED GIVING

Planned gifts—such as bequests, trusts, income-producing gifts, and gifts of assets—support Rutgers while benefiting your financial situation.

## WAYS TO GIVE

To make a gift or for more information:

- visit [camden.rutgers.edu/giving](http://camden.rutgers.edu/giving)
- email [scowens@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:scowens@camden.rutgers.edu)
- or call 856-225-6028

If you prefer, you can send a gift to the Rutgers University Foundation, c/o Scott Owens, Office of Annual Giving, 312 Cooper Street, Camden, NJ 08102. Make checks payable to the Rutgers University Foundation.

