

# SHEPHERD

## UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

VO. 31 | NO. 2 | SPRING 2025

### *Paul '74 & Pattie '73 Wilmoth*

ALUMNI OF THE YEAR





VO. 31 | NO. 2  
SPRING 2025



During the fall 2024 homecoming week, our campus community joined together to wish J.C. the Ram a happy retirement. **Read more on page 32.**

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Record-setting  
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# BOARD LISTS

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# SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

VO. 31 | NO. 2 | SPRING 2025

The Shepherd University Magazine is published by the Office of University Communications, Office of Alumni Affairs, and Shepherd University Foundation for the Shepherd University community—alumni, donors, current and prospective students, parents, faculty, staff, and friends of the University. A portion of the production cost is underwritten by the Shepherd University Foundation and Shepherd University Alumni Association.

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**Cover photo**  
(l. to r.) Katie Swayne, Pattie Wilmoth, Paul Wilmoth, and Hannah Brumbaugh stand on the sidelines after presenting the Alumni of the Year award at the fall 2024 Homecoming game. Find out more Paul and Pattie Wilmoth and their honor on page 20.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Spring is an exciting time for Shepherd University as we enjoy the natural beauty around us, bring another academic year to a close, and welcome new alumni who graduated on May 10 – accompanied by Commencement celebrations. This year is especially noteworthy as we marked the start of a new phase of growth at Shepherd when we broke ground on our new dining hall/multipurpose building on May 14.

The new building is funded using a large portion of the \$30 million Shepherd received from the State last year. This important investment occurred thanks to the special cooperative partnership among former Governor Jim Justice's office, the West Virginia Legislature, and the West Virginia Treasurer's Office, and Governor Morrisey has ensured that this commitment was honored. Their collective dedication to sustaining and growing Shepherd shows the importance of our University's role as an academic and economic hub for the Eastern Panhandle, West Virginia, and our region.

Our staff has worked with Bushey Freight Morin Architects and Waynesboro Construction to design a building that promises to enhance the student experience by offering a new primary dining hall near the residence halls on West Campus. They have also created important space for conferences and board meetings, together with room for our athletics department by including new offices, meeting rooms, training and treatment areas, and a state-of-the-art weight room for our student-athletes.

I am thrilled to share this news with you, our alumni, and friends. I look forward to sharing updates and future milestones as we continue our mission of preparing students for success.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Mary J.C. Hendrix, Ph.D.

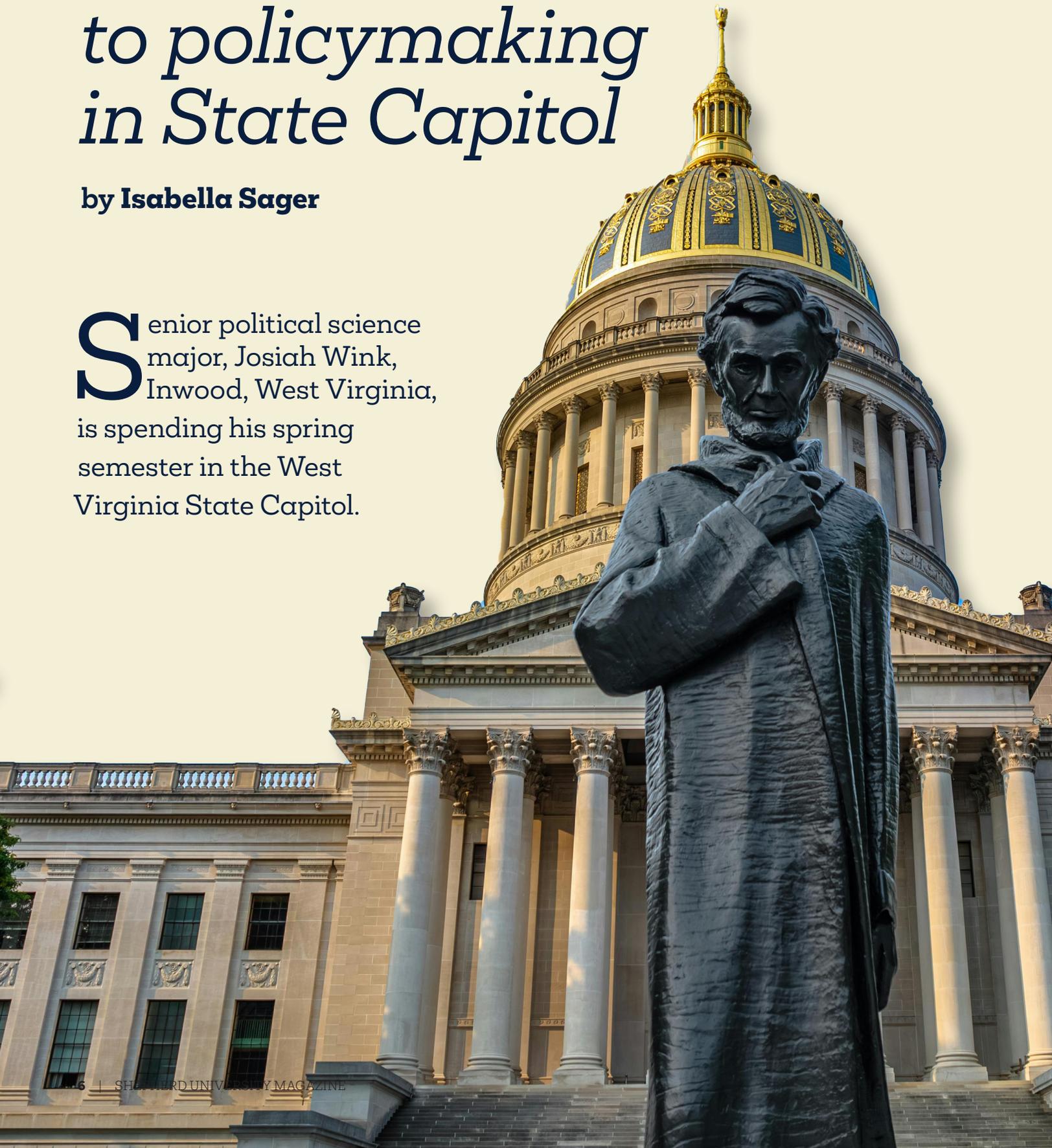
Read more about  
the Groundbreaking  
on **page 10**.



# POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR *takes a front-row seat to policymaking in State Capitol*

by **Isabella Sager**

**S**enior political science major, Josiah Wink, Inwood, West Virginia, is spending his spring semester in the West Virginia State Capitol.



In November 2024, Josiah was selected for the Judith A. Herndon Fellowship, a prestigious fellowship awarded to only 10 West Virginia students each year. The Herndon Fellows are then invited to Charleston, West Virginia, to participate in the 60-day legislative session, where they assist legislators from the West Virginia Senate or House of Delegates, fulfilling intern-level responsibilities and conducting research.

During this fellowship, participants experience the legislative process first-hand, learning about politics, research, and the bill drafting process.

Josiah's journey to the State Capitol began last fall, when Dr. Samuel Greene, associate professor of political science and Josiah's academic advisor, told him about the fellowship and encouraged him to apply.

Pictured left: West Virginia State Capitol in Charleston, WV; right: Josiah Wink on the floor of the WV Senate.

Greene saw potential in Josiah and thought the fellowship would be a good fit for him.

“Josiah is motivated to pursue a career in public service and is a strong thinker and determined student,” Greene said.

He said for students like Josiah, the Herndon Fellowship is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for undergraduate students.

“Students [in the fellowship] gain a front-row seat to the policymaking process,” he explained. “There is nothing like being ‘in the room where it happens’ to understand both how state government works and what a future career in this area might entail.”

The application process for the Herndon Fellowship is rigorous, requiring an impressive academic standing, letters of recommendation from professors, and a personal statement.



For Josiah, applying for the fellowship was formidable, but he persevered.

“The application process took me a few weeks to complete,” Wink said. “Albeit challenging, the application taught me some things about myself.”

Though for the professors and staff who have worked with Josiah, it’s no surprise that his application for the fellowship proved to be impressive. Throughout the Fall 2024 semester, Josiah interned for the Bonnie and Bill Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communications at Shepherd. Alison Mee, communications and event manager for the Institute, was thoroughly impressed with Josiah’s work ethic.

“His dedication, professionalism, and attention to detail have greatly contributed to the success of our events,” she said. “His enthusiasm for public service and commitment to fostering meaningful dialogue has been an important part of the behind-the-scenes support of the fall semester.”

In January, Josiah began working in the West Virginia Attorney General’s Office before the regular legislative session began in February. The first few days of the legislative session were relatively quiet for Josiah, apart from committee meetings, but with a new presidential administration, the year has become one of learning and change for everyone in the State Capitol.

For Josiah, this atmosphere has been exciting to navigate.

While the legislative session is in full swing, common tasks for the Herndon Fellows vary depending on where they are placed. Generally, they are asked to research for their supervising attorney.

“I am in charge of tracking bills, proofreading resolutions given to the Senate Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, as well as recording bill amendments passed or rejected by T&I and the other committees I work in,” explained Josiah.

Being a Herndon Fellow has also taught

Josiah about overcoming learning curves.

“Despite being part of Gen Z, one of my greatest weaknesses is using technology,” explained Josiah.

“Subsequent to initial challenges, I have gained soft computer skills and learned to conduct legislative research. Anytime I do not understand something, my supervisor has been happy to outline the process for me. She is amazing.”

One month into the fellowship, Josiah has already learned some valuable lessons that he will carry with him throughout his professional career.

“I’ve learned that it’s okay to start something not knowing what you’re doing,” he said. “Trust your capabilities and know when to ask for help.”

This experience also reaffirmed Josiah’s desire to enter a career in government.

“I do not see a future for myself where I am not working in government,” he said. “It is my passion.” ■

## Upcoming Alumni Events

### 1965-1970 Alumni Reunion Mixer

Wednesday, June 25 | 2 p.m.

Potomac Ridge Brewing, Sharpsburg, Maryland

This event is being organized by Pamela Link Wilmer '69, 304-671-3614, and David Little '68, 240-291-1743. Please contact either of them for more details!

### Emeritus Luncheon honoring the 50-Year Class of 1975

Saturday, October 11 | 9-11 a.m.

This event, traditionally held during spring commencement week each year, has been moved to the Fall 2025 semester as a breakfast event ahead of the first home football game. A letter noting this change has been sent to the Class of 1975 and all prior classes in March. Expect an official invitation to the event in August.

See our full schedule and get the most up to date information!



Scan the qr code or visit [www.shepherd.edu/alumnievents](http://www.shepherd.edu/alumnievents).

Privately funded scholarships and awards established through the Shepherd University Foundation build a lasting legacy that will impact future generations of Rams. The Scholar Spotlights below highlight some of the deserving students who have benefited from the generosity of Shepherd's donors.

Photos by Sam Levitan Photography.



**Grace Bittle**

CLASS OF 2025 | Elementary Education Major

"I am very thankful for the honor of being a recipient of the JoAnn Vincent Scholarship. This scholarship is allowing me to continue pursuing my dreams of being an elementary school teacher. Thank you so much to the people who have granted me this scholarship."

"It was an honor to receive the Golan M. Saufley and Virginia Rudasill Saufley Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is helping to pave the way to my future in nursing. Becoming a nurse is something that I have wanted to do since I was a teenager. While the road leading to my future career in nursing has had many ups and downs, it has molded me into the person that I am today."



**Amanda Derby**

CLASS OF 2027 | Nursing Major



**Paul Teter**

CLASS OF 2025 | Business Administration Major

"Receiving a scholarship from the Foundation is such an honor. My studies and academics in business are very important to me, and I am privileged to be able to do it at Shepherd University."

"This scholarship means a lot to me as it shows me that my hard work is not only noticed by friends and family, but by my school faculty as well. It motivates me more."



**Daejah Baldrige**

CLASS OF 2026 | Psychology Major

# SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

# BREAKING GROUND

## *On A New Dining Hall and Multipurpose Building*

by **Hans Fogle**

Photo by Ainsley Hall, Reporter with The Journal

**F**aculty, staff, and students gathered with community members, business leaders, and elected officials to celebrate the start of construction on the facility that is part of an investment in Shepherd's campus made possible through \$30 million from the West Virginia Legislature last year.

Shepherd University President Dr. Mary J.C. Hendrix said the money was identified thanks to collaboration involving state lawmakers, the West Virginia Treasurer's office, and the West Virginia Governor's office.

Hendrix said the investment demonstrates a recognition of the vital role Shepherd plays in the state and the region.

"We are profoundly grateful for the support of our state and national representatives and their confidence in Shepherd to continue preparing the next generation of leaders and model citizens for success -- here in the Eastern Panhandle, across West Virginia, and around the country," Hendrix said. "I am most appreciative for the efforts by [U.S.] Senator Jim Justice, [former] WV Senate President Craig Blair, House Speaker Roger Hanshaw, and Congressman Riley Moore, who worked

with Shepherd University representatives to identify and secure this critical funding."

In comments made during the ceremony, former West Virginia Senate President Craig Blair said the investment benefits the entire community and creates an opportunity for Shepherd.

"I want Shepherd University to continue to prioritize and invest in itself, to adapt and innovate," Blair said.

Eric Lewis, chair of the West Campus Enhancement Task Force, said the team that brought the project to this point has been incredible.



“It’s been a lot of fun,” Lewis said, “We’re going to have the best possible building for the best dollar value that we can, because we did it as a design-build.”

The new building on West Campus brings the University’s main dining hall to the same side of campus as the residence halls, thus facilitating student access.

“This new facility is part of our strategic plan to continue investing and improving our facilities to enhance the student experience and plant the seeds for the future of Shepherd University,” Hendrix said.

Bushey Feight Morin Architects and Waynesboro Construction are working with Shepherd on the project.

The new dining hall and multipurpose building includes a large dining room and commercial kitchen; offices and meeting rooms; new locker facilities; a state-of-the-art weight room for student-athletes; and special treatment areas.

Additional investments are being made across campus, including renovations in Potomac Place, Dunlop, and Printz residence halls, and the construction of a new maintenance facility to provide much-needed storage space for equipment, tools, and supplies. ■

Pictured left: (l to r) Dr. Scott Barton, vice president for finance and administration; Dr. James Cherry, chair, Board of Governors; Riley Keaton, district director for Rep. Riley Moore; Craig Blair, former West Virginia Senate president; Dr. Mary J.C. Hendrix, president, Shepherd University; Eric Lewis, chair, West Campus Enhancement Task Force; Chris Strovel, field representative for U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito; Alex Hewitt, field representative for U.S. Senator Jim Justice; and Richard Dennis, regional representative for West Virginia Governor Patrick Morrisey; right: Proposed building renderings for the Shepherd University Dining Hall/Multipurpose Building on West Campus.





# ***SUPPER CLUB***

brings unique dining experiences  
to the Shepherd community

by **Hans Fogle**



## A new program celebrating its first year in operation continues to generate excitement on campus by creating culinary experiences with unexpected flair and unforgettable cuisine.

In April 2024, Shepherd's food facilities provider Aramark and Shepherd University Hospitality started the Supper Club to provide a unique dining experience to Shepherd students, employees, and community members.

At first, the club welcomed guests to the Fireside Bistro in the Student Center, but they quickly found a new space in the former dining hall as demand for the experience grew.

The Supper Club continues to make waves across campus, something that Aramark's general manager of collegiate hospitality at Shepherd, Katy Mong-Waldeck, is happy to hear.

"Supper Club offers a unique, elevated dining experience for students, faculty, staff, and campus leaders," Mong-Waldeck said. "These events have been transformative, enhancing our dining services team's skills while uniting the Shepherdstown community and

students to expand their culinary flavor profile."

Aramark's campus chef manager, Todd Geisbert, leads the talented campus culinary team of over 50 food service workers with a passion for excellence and creativity that helps make these events possible.

Geisbert began his career with Aramark in 2022 and quickly developed into a leadership role as sous chef.

"Chef Geisbert is a talented and dedicated culinary professional," Mong-Waldeck said. "He enjoys showcasing his passion for cooking, especially in his favorite style, new American cuisine."

She also credited Aramark's catering and concessions manager, Tiffani Sheppard, for creating the dining experience.

"Tiffani's attention to detail is unmatched, and her dedication shines through in every event and interaction," Mong-

Waldeck said. "She brings a unique gift for creating an atmosphere where our students feel truly welcomed, valued, and encouraged to explore new things. The absolute essence of a successful Supper Club!"

Each Supper Club event includes time to socialize ahead of the meal with hors d'oeuvres and signature mocktails.

Guests are then seated family-style by a maître d' before the Shepherd hospitality team introduces the menu, shares the story behind each dish, discusses preparation techniques, and even provides guests with dining etiquette tips for some unique offerings.

Past themes include "Asian Made Amazing!" and "Wild Flavors of Fall."

Shepherd University Hospitality plans to continue Supper Club in the fall, with new menus inspired by different cultures, regions, and styles. ■

# The Alumni Association Membership program has a new look with an updated levels and benefits system!

We encourage you to transform your benefit experience with your alumni association! **Every graduate of Shepherd is part of the RAM FAM level** with the standard benefits listed below, but purchasing a Blue or Gold level membership gets you so much more!

	RAM FAM	BLUE	GOLD
Scarborough Library Borrowing	✓	✓	✓
Discounted Wellness Center Membership	✓	✓	✓
Access to the Handshake Job Portal	✓	✓	✓
Bi-annual Magazine	✓	✓	✓
Bi-monthly E-newsletter	✓	✓	✓
Access to Freewill Services	✓	✓	✓
TravelPerks Services	STANDARD	PLATINUM SERVICE*	PLATINUM SERVICE*
Working Advantage Discounts*		✓	✓
10% Kaplan Testing Discount*		✓	✓
Ticket to the Homecoming Football Game			✓
Regular Season Basketball Ticket Voucher			✓
Rental Discounts at the Shepherd University Student Center Games Zone and Event Rooms.**			✓
Special Pricing on New Cress Creek Memberships			✓
<small>*Working Advantage, TravelPerks Platinum, and Kaplan Testing access codes and instructions will be provided to members via their membership letter. ** To book your party, call 304-876-5497. Gold membership status will be verified with the alumni office prior to discount being applied.</small>	Free to all Alumni, considered this level upon graduation	<b>\$35 /YEAR</b>	SINGLE <b>\$50 /YEAR</b> JOINT <b>\$75 /YEAR</b>

Memberships run in accordance with our fiscal year, July 1-June 30; however, memberships purchased beginning March 1 are rolled forward into the next membership year.

Make memories, plan travel, build relationships,  
be engaged, and transform your future...  
**Once A Ram, Always A Ram!**

Learn more about membership benefits at [www.shepherd.edu/suaa/membership](http://www.shepherd.edu/suaa/membership).



## Alumni Association is accepting nominations for Outstanding Alum, Finest Under 40 honorees

The Shepherd University Alumni Association (SUAA) is always taking nominations for Outstanding Alum of the Year and the next class of Finest Under 40. The Alumni Association Board of Directors votes on nominations during their annual meeting in June. All nominations are due by June 1. Criteria and nomination forms can be found at [www.shepherd.edu/suaa/alumni-recognition-programs](http://www.shepherd.edu/suaa/alumni-recognition-programs).

## Meyer and Associates – Alumni Insurance Program

The SUAA sponsors an Alumni Benefits Program as a service to alumni. The program offers a variety of attractively-priced insurance products, most of which are available to alumni, students, faculty, and staff, as well as their spouses, domestic partners, children, parents, and siblings. Some insurance products include auto, home and renters insurance, life insurance, travel insurance, pet insurance, identity theft protection, student loan refinancing, and more.

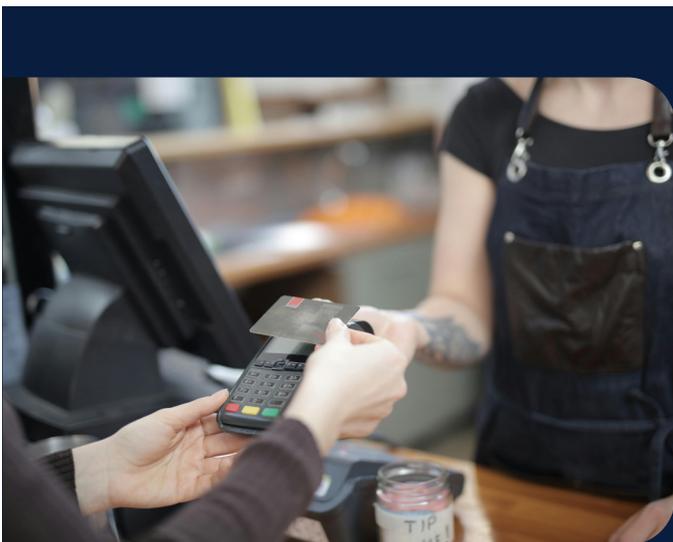
For more information, visit [shepherd.meyerandassoc.com](http://shepherd.meyerandassoc.com) or contact our program administrator (Meyer and Associates) at 800-635-7801.

## Update Your Information

Have you had a significant event, personal or professional, happen in your life? Maybe a new job or promotion at work? Have you been honored with an award? Did you recently get engaged, married, or have an addition to your family? We would love to share your happiness with the rest of the Ram Family in the bi-annual Shepherd University Magazine class notes! To send your information, visit [www.shepherd.edu/suaa/update-your-contact-information](http://www.shepherd.edu/suaa/update-your-contact-information) or email Katie Swayne, director of alumni affairs, at [kswayne@shepherd.edu](mailto:kswayne@shepherd.edu).

## Regional Alumni Communities: Stay Connected Wherever You Are!

Shepherd has active regional alumni groups in Eastern Shore/Delaware, Southwest Florida, and the DMV area, with more groups forming. Reach out to the ambassador nearest you to join or become an ambassador in your area. For more information, visit [www.shepherd.edu/suaa/regional-communities](http://www.shepherd.edu/suaa/regional-communities). Any questions can be directed to Katie Swayne at [kswayne@shepherd.edu](mailto:kswayne@shepherd.edu) or call 304-876-5524.

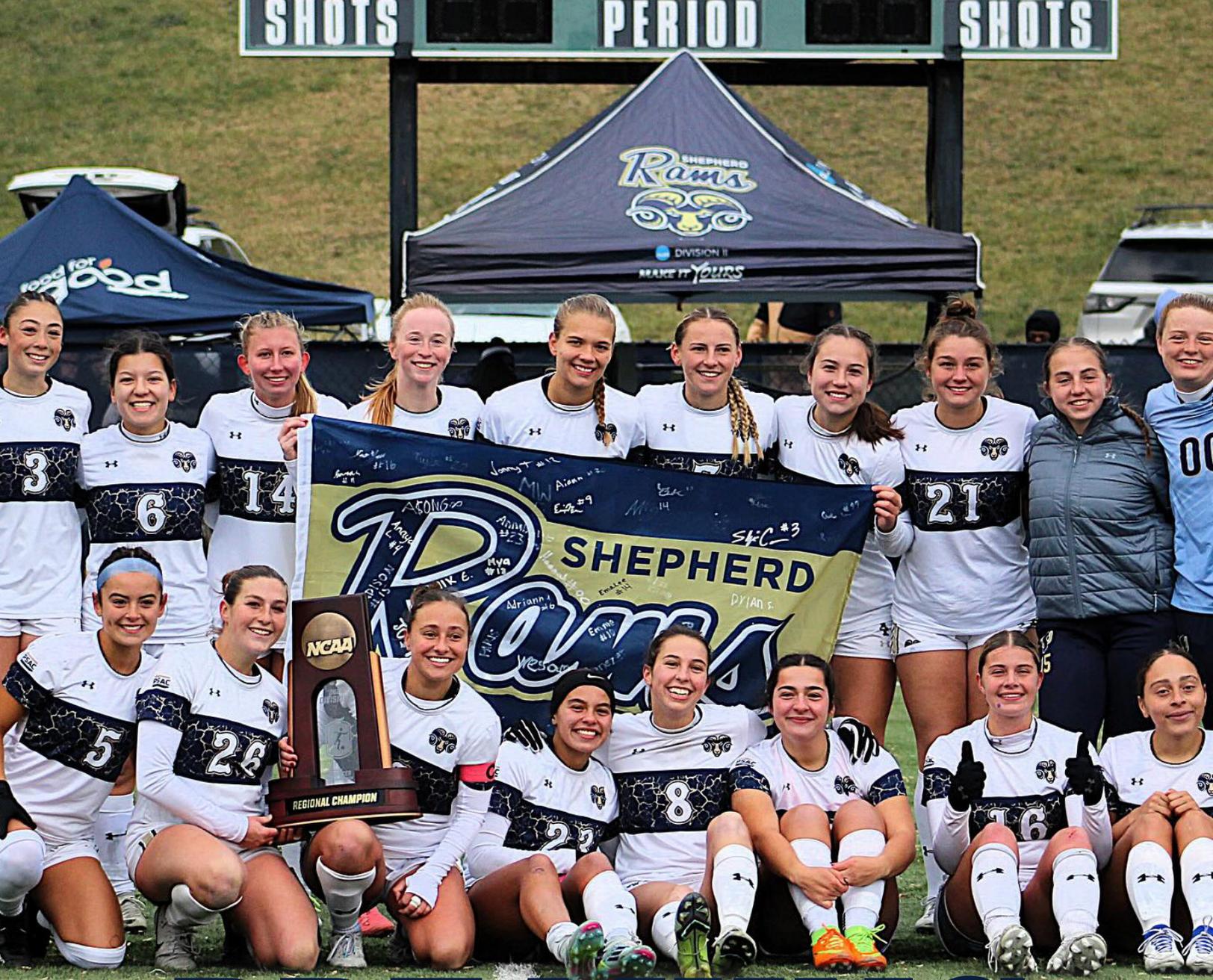


## Rams First: Alumni-Owned, Operated, and Affiliated Business Initiative

Rams First is a business directory designed for Shepherd University alumni who own or operate a business. Those whose job titles fall under any of the following categories are considered business operators: President/CEO, Founder, C-Suite Executive, etc.

The Shepherd University Alumni Association wants to connect you and your fellow Rams – students, alumni, and community members! By completing the form below, your business will be added to our network for Shepherd Rams worldwide to see. This is our way to always put Rams First!

Find more information, businesses already listed in the directory, and how to sign your business up at [www.shepherd.edu/suaa/rams-first/](http://www.shepherd.edu/suaa/rams-first/).



# BREAKING RECORDS

*A Legacy in the Making  
for Rams Women's Soccer*

by Hans Fogle

# 2024 was the year of the dragon in the Chinese Zodiac, but soccer fans know that 2024 was actually the year of the Rams!

The Shepherd University women's soccer team broke records in 2024, with an 18-2-4 overall record and a 13-1-2 record in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC).

These impressive stats are exactly what Sam Odell, head women's soccer coach, envisioned when he assumed leadership over the team in 2021.

"At the time, we were ninth out of nine teams in the PSAC and coming off a 1-15-2 season," Odell recalled. "I had a goal that we could win the PSAC and establish Shepherd women's soccer as a powerhouse on the national stage."

That's precisely what the team did during a remarkable 2024 season that saw the Rams garner the University's first-ever PSAC championship, an NCAA Division II Atlantic Regional Championship, and a trip to the NCAA Division II Elite Eight.

Odell said 2024 wasn't just a "good" season -- it was another step in a years-long learning process that started with recruiting players and coaches who play soccer the "right" way.

"We want to inspire the next generation

"I had a goal that we could win the PSAC and establish Shepherd women's soccer as a powerhouse on the national stage"

of players to learn to play this beautiful game in the way we believe it should be played — exciting attacking soccer with a large emphasis on possession combined with creative players with a license to express themselves on the field," Odell said.

Odell's vision appealed to players like graduate student and team captain Sarah Peternel (Wolfeboro, NH/Virtual Learning Academy Charter School/University of New Hampshire), who transferred to Shepherd from the University of New Hampshire in the spring of 2023 due to, in large part, the women's soccer program.

"The vision the coaches had for the future of the program really resonated with me and aligned with my personal

goals," she said. "From the beginning, they focused on building a strong foundation, fostering team chemistry, and pushing us to perform at our best."

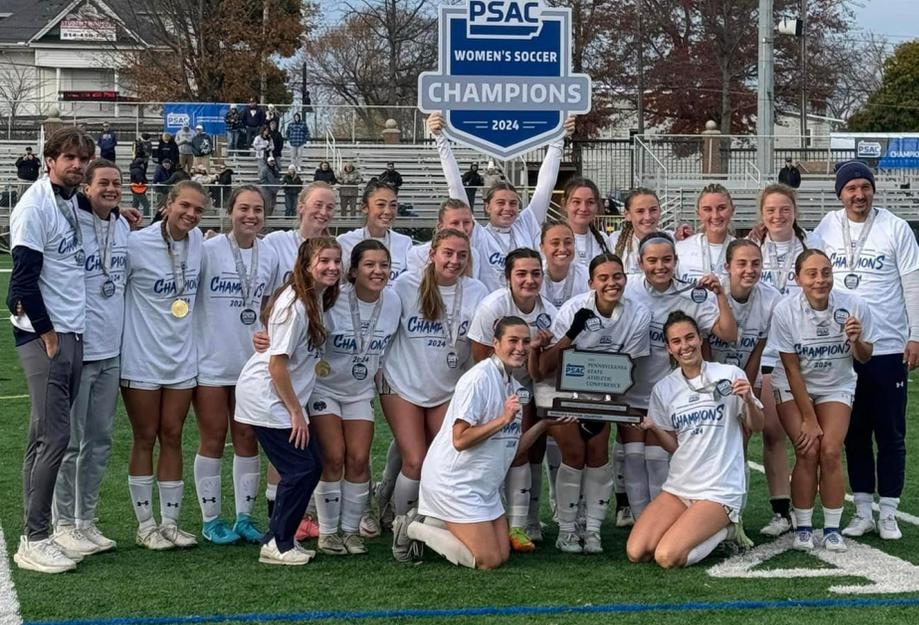
Peternel said she and her teammates take ownership of Odell's vision and are excited to see the success it has brought.

"It's been amazing to see all of our hard work pay off," she said. "Having an incredible season definitely reflects the coaching staff's vision for the team."

Junior midfielder Annabelle Wunderlich (Red Lion, Pa. Dallastown Area) agreed.

"He [Odell] had a big plan he proposed to all the recruits and players, and we were all really invested in it and wanted to be involved in it," Wunderlich said.





Even with that goal in mind, Wunderlich and her teammates were caught a bit off guard by how well everything clicked for 2024.

“Our goal was to win the PSAC and go from there,” she said. “But as the season went on, we realized we were really good, a lot better than we expected to be.”

And with four juniors and six sophomores on the 2024 roster, Odell has lots of returning talent next fall but said no one is taking success for granted, which he credits to what they have worked to build over the last four years.

“The best way I can explain the growth of the team and the accomplishments is that despite all the records set last season, the team was distraught to be knocked out of the NCAA tournament after coming so close to winning it,” Odell said.

Odell promised a return to the NCAA II Women’s Soccer Tournament in the fall following the Ram’s narrow 2-1 loss against Franklin Pierce in the quarterfinals, and he said they have wasted no time getting ready for next season.

“We immediately turned our focus to working toward winning the National Championship in the fall of 2025,” Odell said. “I think that speaks volumes to the drive and belief of the group.”

The team even shoveled snow off the field after several heavy winter storms so they could hold practice.

Wunderlich said everyone understands the expectations as they push each other to meet the challenge at every practice.

Pictured left: (top) The Shepherd University Women’s Soccer team, after a 3-2 win over Kutztown in the PSAC Championship game on Nov. 17, 2024; (bottom) team captain Sarah Peternel (Wolfeboro, NH/Virtual Learning Academy Charter School/ University of New Hampshire)





Pictured above: Junior midfielder Annabelle Wunderlich (Red Lion, Pa. Dallastown Area)

“We take it very seriously, especially our coach,” she said. “He does a different style of play and is very invested in us and our success.”

Peternel said that is the level of commitment necessary to be part of a championship team.

“It takes consistent hard work, day in and day out, even on days when you’re not feeling your best or the conditions aren’t ideal,” Peternel said. “It’s about resilience — never giving up when things don’t go our way and continuing to push forward.”

That championship mentality is part of what Odell said he looks for

when recruiting players, and now, with their sites set on an NCAA II Championship in the fall, it will be critical moving forward.

“This upcoming season, our goals are even bigger than last year, and that drives us every day to improve and surpass what we accomplished before,” Odell said.

Despite the intensity and resolve being put into the next season, the unprecedented success of the 2024 season was not lost on anyone involved.

“You get an innate sense when you are part of something special in life,” Odell said. “And the women’s soccer

program at Shepherd University harbors something special, and there is a belief and a determination meshed with quality and humility that makes this group so powerful.”

The players also know they are part of something special.

“I’m proud to be part of such a driven and talented team,” Peternel said. “But the most fun part of the program is winning with this group of girls.”

Wunderlich also expressed the importance of relationships she has built on the team, on and off the field.

“We meet up every morning at the Fireside Bistro and we eat breakfast together, get coffee, and spend time together,” she said. “We help each other a lot with school and do our work together as well.”

This team culture drew players like Wunderlich and Peternel to Shepherd, and it is their shared vision for the future that motivates them to keep aiming higher. ■

“Our goal was to win the PSAC and go from there, but as the season went on, we realized we were really good, a lot better than we expected to be.”

# SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY'S 2024 ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

have turned volunteering at  
Shepherd into a full-time job

by Hans Fogle





**I**t won't surprise anyone who knows Paul '74 and Pattie '73 Wilmoth that the Shepherd power couple is probably on campus more now than when they were students 50 years ago. But from Paul and Pattie's perspective, serving at Shepherd is not work, it is reinvesting what they gained at Shepherd for future leaders here today.

The Wilmoth's passion for giving back to the University began eight years ago when they were asked to help with restoration projects at Popodicon, the business residence of University President Dr. Mary J.C. Hendrix.

Pattie said that while she and Paul had often attended annual events and supported the football program and the Scarborough Library, what they do now is very different.

"Now, it's daily activities versus [annual] events," Pattie said.

For Paul and Pattie, that call almost a decade ago opened the door to volunteering at Shepherd at just the

right moment. Before retiring, they would not have had time to volunteer, as Paul and Pattie got to work as soon as they graduated from Shepherd.

Paul taught driver's education in Jefferson County before opening and running a successful home-building business. Pattie started her post-college career as an adjunct professor, then became a bank teller before starting a 25-year career as an educator with Jefferson County Schools, where she earned the Teacher of the Year distinction in 1999.

Paul said he and Pattie are "workaholics," but their drive for success — which they attribute to their Shepherd

education — compelled them to seek new opportunities. That drive did not go away once they retired in 2017, with the couple initially spending most of their time managing a family farm in Barbour County, West Virginia.

"We kept busy on it [the farm] quite a bit, but it's four hours away," Paul said. "It just got to be a challenge driving back and forth."

That's when another door opened at Shepherd, with Dr. Hendrix asking Paul to serve on the advisory board at the Agricultural Innovation Center at Tabler Farm.

"The first meeting there, I told the professors who work out there that if



Pictured above: (left) Paul and Pattie in the rennovated Popodicon kitchen; (right) Paul and Pattie in the Ram's Closet.

they needed help, to let me know," said Paul. "And finally, one day, they asked. That's all it took."

Paul and Pattie think that just asking is often all it takes to solicit help from alumni and friends of Shepherd.

"As soon as somebody sends a letter or a note asking for help, most of them are

going to help," Paul said. "But the right person has to ask."

Paul said even though a lot of people are willing to help Shepherd, getting the call from a former classmate, trusted friend, or the President carries a lot of weight. That's why Paul said it is so important to

maintain a strong alumni community.

"A lot of them [alumni] are gone from the area. They've lost contact," he said.

Pattie believes that many of them would not only agree to help but would jump in the same way they did once they met the current students.

"I think the students are awesome," Pattie said. "And it's rewarding for me because I think there's a need here."

Pattie said people would be surprised at the number of students able to overcome financial hardship thanks to the supportive community at Shepherd. In the eyes of Paul and Pattie, that resilience and community support is a big reason why Shepherd

**"My Shepherd family helped me navigate decision-making and survive all the challenges that one faces as a young adult."**



students succeed, a motto that Paul believes is as true today as it was when their classmates graduated decades ago.

“It seems to me that the people who came out of Shepherd at that point were successful,” Paul said. “I mean, Shepherd Students Succeed.”

Pattie added that she sees the leadership potential every day when she meets students through the clothing closet and food pantry.

“We’re going in the right direction,” she said. “There’s some real leadership going on.”

And, Pattie said, the University offers even more opportunities for student success than decades ago.

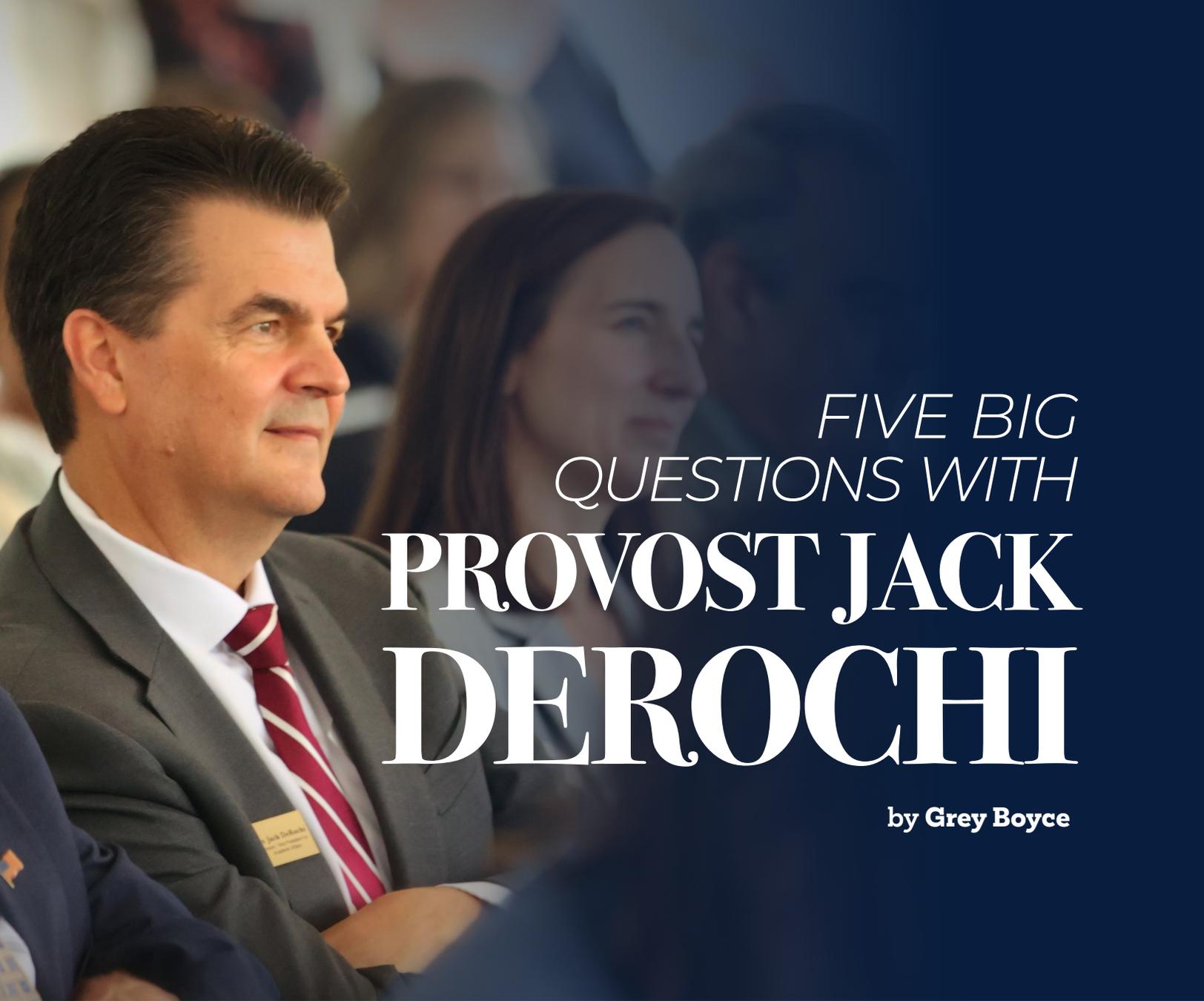
“They [students] seem to really be involved,” she said. “We did not have all the opportunities that are here today when we went to school. So it has grown a lot.”

Shepherd’s growth is another reason the Wilmoth’s dedicate so much of their time to Shepherd, to help young adults navigate those opportunities and turn them into successful careers. Paul said that was something Shepherd did for him when he came there to play football. Paul credits his team and coaches like Walter Barr for instilling the belief that he could accomplish anything with dedication and discipline.

Pattie also learned important lessons at Shepherd. Along with her degree, she learned how to effectively collaborate with others. She said she was especially close with the women in her residence hall, where she quickly established a Shepherd family.

“My Shepherd family helped me navigate decision-making and survive all the challenges that one faces as a young adult.”

Paul and Pattie not only survived those challenges, they turned them into successful careers. With that success, they’ve spent years giving back to Shepherd, establishing new funds and opportunities to help future generations of Shepherd students succeed. ■



*FIVE BIG  
QUESTIONS WITH*  
**PROVOST JACK  
DEROCHI**

by **Grey Boyce**

**S**hepherd University welcomed Dr. Jack DeRochi as the new provost and vice president of academic affairs in February. DeRochi was named to the position in November 2024 after a nationwide search, in part because of his extensive experience in higher education and his innovative ideas for meeting the challenges facing colleges and universities in today's environment.

DeRochi took time from his busy schedule to answer a few questions so the Shepherd community could get to know him better and get an idea about his vision for Shepherd, now and in the future.

## What made you apply to be provost and what was it about Shepherd University that made you accept the job here?

I have been fortunate to serve in a number of unique roles in higher education, which has greatly expanded my understanding of the academic enterprise. Serving as provost will enable me to leverage these diverse experiences in a most impactful way at Shepherd, as I work with faculty and staff in every division across the Institution.

Visiting Shepherd's campus was an amazing experience, and my wife and I both fell in love with the area and Shepherd community. Everyone was so welcoming and kind throughout the interview process—it was easy to want to join such a collegial community.

## What are the greatest opportunities you see for Shepherd University in the coming years?

Shepherd has many advantages, most especially its location and region. I look forward to working with our team to expand partnerships with regional industries, which can directly shape our academic portfolio going forward. I believe we also have an opportunity to expand access to a Shepherd education through online options, which will enable us to better serve adult learners and their families at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. That's in line with Governor Patrick Morrisey's WV POWER Tech Center initiative as well, which I believe will be a huge benefit to Shepherd and our students in the years to come. We need to continue working with other academic partners to ensure we're creating the right programs to enhance advanced training opportunities for our students. These programs will create and sustain jobs in technology and energy that we know are being developed here in West Virginia.

## What is your favorite part about being in a leadership role in higher education?

For me, the best part of serving in a leadership role is the relationships you develop with folks across the entire University. Everyone working in higher education is

inspired by the mission, so it's wonderful to work with so many diverse perspectives to solve problems and create new opportunities for students.

## How will you and your team help Shepherd University continue to meet the evolving needs of students?

I look forward to working with the entire Shepherd team, inside and outside of academic affairs, to build and sustain systems that support student success. Today's students are different from tomorrow's, so it will be essential for all of us to work together to evolve, to adapt, and to be open to innovative approaches to student success. As a teaching university so grounded in the liberal arts, Shepherd is ideally suited, I believe, to meet these challenges.

## What was your favorite part of your time as an undergraduate and how has that influenced you professionally?

My time as an undergraduate was life-changing, and I flourished in the student-first campus community of a small college. A desire to contribute to a similar community is unquestionably what brought me to Shepherd. I cannot wait to get to know our students more and watch their lives take flight.

“For me, the best part of serving in a leadership role is the relationships you develop with folks across the entire university.”

Before his appointment at Shepherd, DeRochi served as the dean of Graduate, Continuing, and Online Education at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina. DeRochi also served as a tenured professor of English at Winthrop, and as the associate dean at the College of Arts and Science. He is part of the AGB Institute for Leadership &

Governance in Higher Education's Cohort 6 – Class of 2024-2025, served on the board of the Council for Historically Black Graduate Schools, and was named a Fellow of the P3-Edu Organization, which seeks to develop best practices and expand the impact of public-private partnerships in higher education. In 2022, DeRochi gave a plenary address at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) Conference, where he previously served as president, focusing on the challenges impacting higher education. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina. ■

# Foundation announces four newly named funds

Privately funded awards created through the Shepherd University Foundation provide vital support for student scholarships, academic programs, and faculty excellence. This year the Foundation is pleased to announce four new awards. To learn more about these awards and the heartfelt stories behind them, please visit us at [shepherduniversityfoundation.org](http://shepherduniversityfoundation.org). For more information about creating a named fund, please contact Sherri Janelle at 304-876-5397 or [sjanelle@shepherd.edu](mailto:sjanelle@shepherd.edu).



## George and Barbara Stilwell Scholarship for Academic Excellence

The George and Barbara Stilwell Scholarship for Academic Excellence was established by George "G.W." '77 and Barbara Stilwell '80-'81, who attended Shepherd (post graduate) to obtain her teaching certificate. The endowed award will support students enrolled in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences or pursuing a degree in elementary education and is designated for graduates of a high school in Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, and Hampshire Counties, West Virginia.

**To thank you for supporting our future, we want to make it easier to support yours.**

The Shepherd University Foundation has partnered with FreeWill, an online estate planning resource, to help you write your will for free. Get started today! For additional information, please contact Sherri Janelle, executive vice president of the Shepherd University Foundation, at 304-876-5043 or [sjanelle@shepherd.edu](mailto:sjanelle@shepherd.edu).



**Learn more and get started today!**  
Scan or Visit [FreeWill.com/Shepherd](http://FreeWill.com/Shepherd)



SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY  
**FOUNDATION**

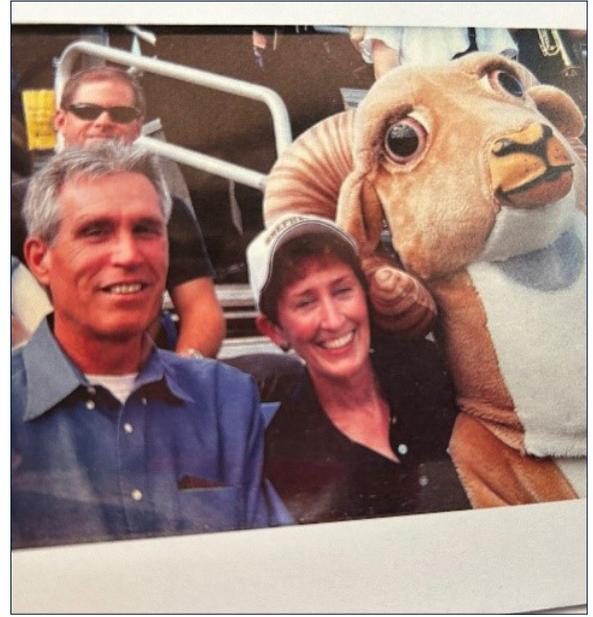
**FREEWILL** 



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### Scott Bradford Doleman '95 "Onward and Upward" Memorial Scholarship

Scott Bradford Doleman sadly passed away on December 21, 2023. His life was characterized by a deep commitment to family, community, and service, and his leadership was unmatched in both his professional career at FedEx and his work with Shepherd University Athletics. In an effort to honor those achievements, the Shepherd University Athletic Club and FedEx have created the Scott Bradford-Doleman "Onward and Upward" Memorial Scholarship. This annually funded award will be given out to one male and one female student-athlete who demonstrate strong leadership and a commitment to serve the Shepherd community.



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### Randall Wadsworth Music Scholarship

The Randall Wadsworth Music Scholarship was established by Randall Wadsworth, husband of former Shepherd University President, Dr. Suzanne Shipley. The annually funded award will support students studying music at Shepherd University.

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### Shipley Family Scholarship Fund

The Shipley Family Scholarship Fund will support talented students pursuing studies in the music field and women enrolled in the math or education fields at Shepherd University. The endowed award was established by former Shepherd University President, Dr. Suzanne Shipley. ■

**'18 Ashley Wilkins** has been named to the International Literacy Association's 2025 30 Under 30 list, which highlights emerging leaders who are transforming literacy education and promoting equity in classrooms, communities, and beyond. The list features change-makers from 12 countries, all under the age of 30, who are driving innovations and advocating for accessible, inclusive learning experiences. She is an English language arts teacher at Petersburg High School, West Virginia.



**'18 Maggie James**, received the "A Caring Educator" Award from Berkeley County Schools. As a family and consumer sciences teacher at Spring Mills Middle School, Maggie engages her students with lessons they can apply to their everyday lives. Beyond the classroom, she serves as the school liaison for the Student Assistance Fund, providing essential support through back-to-school supplies, Thanksgiving meals, and winter holiday gifts.



**'17 Cara Lowery**, CPA, was promoted to manager at SEK. Cara provides tax preparation, projections, payroll, and business advisory services to individuals and closely held businesses, including several multi-state clients. Cara supervises and trains staff, fostering the growth and development of her team. Cara is a certified public accountant in Maryland and joined the firm in 2017.

**'20 Sgt. Caroline Lee Robertson** plays trumpet for the Marine Corps Band stationed at the Marine Corps Recruiting Depot in San Diego, California. While serving, she is working toward her Master of Library and Information Sciences from Louisiana State University.

# SHEPHERD STUDENTS SUCCEED



To read more about Shepherd Students Succeed, use the QR code to visit our webpage at [www.Shepherd.edu/SUAA/Alumni-Highlights](http://www.Shepherd.edu/SUAA/Alumni-Highlights)



**'98 Bonnie Smith Hammaker** was promoted to vice president of finance on July 1, 2024, at Fil-Tec Inc. of Smithsburg, Maryland. Bonnie joined FTI in 1999 as an accounting assistant, covering A/P, A/R, payroll, and employee benefits. Bonnie was promoted to purchasing manager in 2009 and then to vice president of purchasing in 2021. Bonnie received her Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Shepherd.

**'15 & '18 Hussam Ouri** was promoted to assistant linebacker coach at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas, under head coach Rhett Lashlee. Hussam previously served as the senior defensive quality control analyst. He is entering his third season at SMU and brings experience from Louisiana Tech and Shepherd University, where he spent six seasons as offensive line coach before being promoted to run game coordinator. While at Shepherd, Hussam coached eight all-conference offensive line performers, two all-region selections, and three All-Americans. He also mentored 2018 NFL Camp invitee Lavonte Hights. He served as head football strength and conditioning coordinator and worked with baseball, men's and women's basketball, softball, and lacrosse.



**'20 Emily Grabill** was promoted to branch manager at Enterprise 16A8 in Winchester, Virginia. In October 2023, Emily earned a promotion to management assistant, bringing energy, a passion for sales, top-notch customer service to the position. Her hard work led to a promotion in November 2023 as the assistant branch manager of Martinsburg Enterprise. In April 2024, Emily was promoted into the role of assistant flagship manager of Winchester.



**'17 Daniel B. Sweeney, CPA,** was promoted to the position of member and audit director at Decker & Company, PLLC, on January 1. Daniel has consistently demonstrated exceptional expertise, commitment, and leadership in the firm.

**'15 Gino Sisco** is the new Shepherdstown town administrator. He comes to the position with extensive experience in political advocacy and financial due diligence. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Shepherd and a master's degree in public policy from American University in Washington, D.C.



**'69 Jim Auxer** was presented with the Jack and Martha Young Community Service Award at the Shepherdstown Area Independent Living's (SAIL) annual meeting in November 2024. Auxer was selected for the award due to his significant contributions to the community as mayor of Shepherdstown, and as Shepherd University's current liaison to the town. Along with his work as town liaison for the University, Jim is an active member of the Shepherd University Alumni Association Board of Directors and the Shepherd University Gridiron Club. He also serves on the Jefferson County Criminal Justice Board.



**'01 Judee Ann Williams** was named to the L'Oréal Group 2024 Worthy100 list. Judee Ann is the Global Head of Impact at CAA Sports. She is a leading strategist in aligning brand values with social impact, and for the past four years, she has collaborated with Walmart, launching campaigns to improve education and food security in West Virginia and South Carolina. In 2023, Judee Ann led a Save the Children gender empowerment campaign for the release of BARBIE, benefiting over 500,000 girls across the United States. Her work with the F1 Academy focused on increasing female participation in motorsports, and her ongoing partnerships with Wilson and the YMCA have funded \$1.5 million to provide sports access for underserved youth. Judee Ann holds roles on multiple influential advisory boards, including Save the Children's Board of Trustees and Maryland's Entertainment Council.

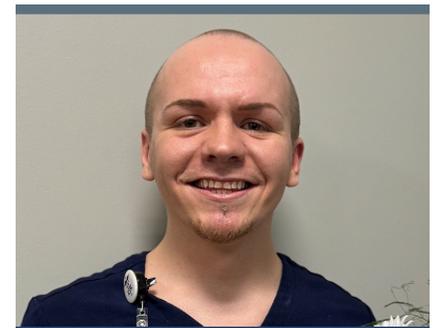


**'77 Berniece Collis** was named as the 30th Berkeley County Distinguished Citizen by the Potomac District Shenandoah Area Council, Scouting America. This award recognizes people in the community who have dedicated themselves to making a difference and gone out of their way as they represent Scouting America.

## '22&'24 Stephen Rivera

accepted a new position at the Local Emergency Planning Committee as a public affairs coordinator. He is a two-time graduate of Shepherd University, with a bachelor's degree in business administration, minoring in sociology, and a master's degree in public management.

**'04 Parker Whiteman** was named the assistant head strength coach and director of skill development for the football team at West Virginia University (WVU). Whiteman comes to Morgantown after serving on Rich Rodriguez's four previous stops. In 2024, he was the head strength and conditioning coach at Jacksonville State and was part of Rodriguez's staff at Arizona, Michigan, and West Virginia. Prior to Jacksonville State, Whiteman served a five-year stint as the head of football strength and conditioning at Sam Hudson, where the Bearcats were one of the most dominant programs in FCS. A Keyser, West Virginia, native, he spent 11 seasons with Rodriguez beginning prior to the 2006 season when he was hired as an assistant strength and conditioning coach at WVU. Whiteman played football at Shepherd. He started his career as a strength coach at Velocity Sports Performance and spent two seasons as a strength intern/coach for the Baltimore Ravens before joining Rodriguez's staff at WVU.



**'19 Aaron Robinson,** an R.N. at Meritus Health, earned the Daisy Award, which is given to nurses who make an enormous difference in the lives of others. Aaron is patient and thorough as families navigate emotional decisions for patients nearing the end of their lives.



**John Harry Wolff '88** of Hamilton, Virginia, passed away on August 19, 2024. John graduated with honors from Shepherd with a degree in business administration, which he credited as the foundation of his distinguished career in financial services. He remained deeply connected to Shepherd, serving as the financial investment advisor for the Shepherd University Foundation with Wealthspire Advisors, LLC. He played a key role in revitalizing the College of Business by serving on the Business 2020 Leadership Committee and the College of Business Advisory Board. During the successful “Create the Future” campaign, he and his wife, Lisa '87, established the Lisa and John Wolff Fund to support the business program. He served on the Alumni Association Board of Directors, sponsored the Women Investing in Shepherd (WISH) Grant Award Reception, and supported the Scarborough Society Gala. In recognition of their contributions, John and Lisa were inducted into the Joseph P. McMurrin Society in 2005, Shepherd’s most prestigious giving society.

John’s career was highlighted by his roles as Managing Director at Wealthspire Advisors and CEO & Founder of both Capital Fiduciary Advisors and Loudoun Insurance Group. He was widely recognized for his expertise and integrity, receiving many accolades and awards.

He was a pillar of the Hamilton and Loudoun County communities, serving on several boards, including the Board of Directors for Lead Virginia, 100WomenStrong, and YMCA Loudoun County, where he was chairman of the board. His community involvement extended to Loudoun Habitat for Humanity, the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce, and the Community Foundation of Northern Virginia, where he was the investment chair and part of the Executive Committee. He also co-founded the Loudoun Impact Fund through the Community Foundation for Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties. His most recent business venture included a partnership with cherished friends that flourished into the Euro-inspired Bia Kitchen Restaurant in Purcellville, Virginia.

His beloved wife, Lisa, three daughters, Madison, Hannah, and Emma, and much extended family survive John.



**Taylor Catherine Schweinebraten-Davis '22**, of Martinsburg, West Virginia, passed away on August 11, 2024.

Taylor was a 2017 graduate of Martinsburg High School, where she was a member of the cheerleading and tennis teams, played violin and cello, and excelled in academics. She graduated from Shepherd University with a degree in biology and was a member of the Rams cheerleading team and the Appalachian Leadership Education Foundation. Taylor was a biology lab research technician at the National Institute of Health in Frederick, Maryland.

On August 5, 2023, Taylor married the love of her life, Carter Davis, her soulmate and best friend. Taylor and Carter met while students in high school and had been inseparable ever since.

Her husband, loving parents Keith and Angel, devoted brother Nathan, and adored fur babies Luna, Meleys, Lucy, Duke, and Runtz survive Taylor, along with a large host of extended family and friends.

**DELMAS MONROE HUMPHREYS '68**,  
Williamsburg, VA, 9/21/2023

**MARY ETHEL MICHAEL RICKARD '58**,  
Thurmont, MD, 12/11/2024

**BETH PARKER BELLINGER '59**,  
Sharpsburg, MD, 10/10/2024

**JAY RIDENOUR EVERLY '60**,  
Hagerstown, MD, 1/8/2025

**CHARLES VARNELL BURKHART '61**,  
Berkeley Springs, WV, 10/10/2024

**RICHARD LEE TACEY '63**,  
Henrico, VA, 1/28/2025

**REV. GEORGE EDWARD “ED” GROVE '64**,  
Shepherdstown, WV, 6/4/2024

**LAWRENCE “LARRY” K. SPRINGER '71**,  
Hagerstown, MD, 9/13/2024

**ALDETH VALERIE (WADE) MOORE '72**,  
Boonsboro, MD, 9/18/2024

**MICHAEL W. TALHELM '74**,  
Chambersburg, PA, 9/19/2024

**BERNARD “BERNIE” GROVES '75**,  
Winchester, VA, 1/27/2025

**CAROL WARD '77**,  
Boonsboro, MD, 7/20/2024

**WANDA RENEE BOWMAN '79**,  
Rockingham, VA, 10/30/2024

**ERIC PETER HENRIKSON '84**,  
Greensboro, NC, 10/23/2024

**JOANNA MAXINE ABBRUZZESE '85**,  
Warner Robins, GA, 12/21/2024

**ROBERT CHARLES BOULAIS '89 & '95**,  
The Villages, FL, 11/9/2024

**REBECCA JANE (HOFFMAN) MCDANIEL '97**,  
Shepherdstown, WV, 8/19/2024

**JEREMY DAVID WARMAN '03**,  
Ashburn, VA, 9/16/2024

**BENJAMIN PATRICK ANDERSON '05**,  
Ranson, WV, 8/29/2024

**CHRISTOPHER L. BURG '07**,  
Martinsburg, WV, 8/12/2024

**JAMES J. CULVER '08**,  
Winchester, VA, 11/21/2024

**KEVIN MICKEY REYNOLDS '10**,  
Waynesboro, PA, 1/13/2025

**TIFFANY MARIE RIDER '15**,  
Berkeley Springs, WV, 11/16/2024

ANNOUNCING THE

# 2026 Roaming Rams Alumni Travel Program trips!

Choose from these awesome locations  
to travel with your Ram Family in 2026.  
We look forward to exploring with you!



### **Iceland's Magical Northern Lights**

January 30-February 5, 2026

Starting at \$3,799 based on double  
occupancy with airfare from  
Washington, D.C. included

### **Caribbean & Antilles Cruise**

April 4-11, 2026

Sailing on the MSC World America

### **Spotlight on Tuscany**

May 20-28, 2026

Starting at \$4,599 based on double  
occupancy with airfare from  
Washington, D.C. included

### **Canadian Maritimes & Coastal Wonders**

July 18-28, 2026

Pricing to be determined.

### **Alaska Cruise**

August 9-16, 2026

Sailing on the Star Princess.

### **Spain's Costa del Sol & Madrid**

November 7-15, 2026

Pricing to be determined.

**There are still opportunities to hop on a trip for 2025!**  
For details, visit [www.shepherd.edu/roamingrams](http://www.shepherd.edu/roamingrams).



# Campus Community Celebrates Retirement of J.C. the Ram

by **Isabella Sager**

As the campus bustled with homecoming festivity, sports games, and reunions, in the fall of 2024, the Shepherd community bid farewell to one of the most beloved members of the Ram Family, J.C. the Ram.

Throughout his career as Shepherd University's live mascot, J.C. was consistently regarded as an icon within the student population. In a 2023 TikTok from Shepherd University's Office of Admissions, students were asked what is the most "Shepherd-y" thing about Shepherd. The number one answer was J.C. the Ram.

J.C.'s fame was well deserved, appearing as a regular guest at campus events,

including home football games, homecoming parades, open houses, convocations, and commencement ceremonies.

For seven years, J.C. served as the University's live mascot as part of a long-standing tradition of hosting ram mascots on campus named after Shepherd University presidents. J.C. is named after current Shepherd University President Dr. Mary J.C. Hendrix. This tradition dates back to the 1960s, with former Shepherd University President Dr. Oliver S. Ikenberry and his ram namesake, Ike.

J.C. was purchased in the spring of 2017 with donations from dedicated

alumni, staff, and faculty: Al '67 and Sara '67 Lueck; Holly Morgan Frye '09, vice president of student affairs and director of community relations, and her husband Jim Frye; and Dr. Ben Martz, dean of the College of Business, Recreation, and Education.

J.C. was brought into the Ram Family with the intention of attending football games and campus events, but his level of impact on the students and community was unforeseeable.

"Shepherd University is full of unique and unexpected moments, and one of the most memorable for our new students was meeting J.C. for the first time," said Holly Morgan Frye,



vice president of student affairs and director of community relations. “With a personality all his own, J.C. would seamlessly transition from a farm animal to an ambassador of Shepherd.”

One Shepherd employee was particularly akin to J.C., Michelle Lawson, facilities office coordinator and the “Ram Handler.” Lawson could be found by J.C.’s side during every campus appearance, and she was honored by the responsibility.

“Being the Ram Handler for J.C. for eight years was more than just a role — it was an honor,” said Lawson. “Guiding him while on campus, witnessing the spirit he brought to every event and feeling the energy of students, staff,

and community members made it an unforgettable experience. J.C. wasn’t just a mascot; he was family.”

J.C.’s retirement was announced during the October 19 homecoming football game against Mercyhurst, with the Sara and Alan Lueck Scoreboard displaying a slideshow commemorating the time J.C. spent at Shepherd.

A few weeks later, Shepherd University’s Division of Student Affairs hosted a retirement party on the Scarborough Library porch — a frequent spot for J.C.’s birthday events. The front of Scarborough Library was decked out with cupcakes, refreshments, and J.C. bookmarks.

The students’ love for J.C. was evident as they lined up around the Scarborough Library to take some of their last selfies with him. President Hendrix presented J.C. with his favorite treat, peanut butter bars, as a birthday surprise.

The event concluded with students from the School of Music’s chamber singers ensemble gathering around J.C. to sing him Shepherd’s alma mater.

J.C. is now enjoying his retirement with his family on the farm where he stayed while serving as Shepherd’s live mascot.

Donations to support J.C. during his retirement are welcome and can be made by visiting [www.shepherd.edu/ram-mascot/make-a-gift](http://www.shepherd.edu/ram-mascot/make-a-gift). ■



# FALL

by Chip Ransom

# RECAPS

## FOOTBALL

The football team finished with a 6-5 overall mark with a 3-4 record in PSAC East action. Eleven members of the Shepherd University football team were named to the 2024 All-PSAC East Team. Additionally, redshirt freshman linebacker Brodie Carroll was named PSAC East Freshman of the Year.

Carroll appeared in 11 games with eight starts for the Rams. He recorded 52 tackles (31 solos) with seven tackles-for-loss (-21 yards) and a pair of sacks (eight yards). Carroll added a pass breakup and a fumble recovery.

Redshirt senior running back Malakai Brown, redshirt junior offensive lineman Brandon Carr, sophomore defensive back/return specialist Miles Greer, redshirt senior defensive lineman Matt Bednarski, redshirt sophomore defensive lineman Brett Kwoka, junior linebacker JT Kouame-Yao, and redshirt senior punter Ryan Barrick all earned first team honors.

Brown started all 11 games for the Rams. He had 113 carries for 681 yards and six touchdowns. He also added 40 receptions for 330 yards and two scores. Brown added four kick returns for 32 yards. Brown earned PSAC East Athlete of the Week honors for Sept. 9, when he rushed

for 163 yards in a win over Southern Connecticut State in the season opener.

Carr started all 11 games for the Rams. He helped key a Shepherd offensive line that helped the Rams accumulate an average of 338 yards of total offense.

Greer, a first team choice at defensive back and return specialist, started all 11 games for the Rams. He recorded 61 tackles (34 solos) with 4.0 tackles-for-loss (-17 yards). He tied for the team lead in interceptions with two (49 return yards). His five pass breakups led the team. He added 24 punt returns for a 12.8 average. Greer added four kickoff returns for a 36.75 average. He earned PSAC East Special Teams Athlete of the Week honors for Sept. 30 for his stellar play against Shippensburg.

Bednarski appeared in 11 games with eight starts for the Rams. He recorded 22 tackles (five solos) with 2.5 tackles-for-loss (-7 yards). He added a sack for minus six yards.

Kwoka appeared in 11 games with nine starts. He posted 35 tackles (20 solos) with 8.5 tackles-for-loss (-33 yards). Kwoka added 4.5 sacks (-18 yards).

Kouame-Yao appeared in 10 games with eight starts. He was second on the team in tackles with 62 tackles (34 solos). His 11.5 tackles-for-loss (-29) led the team. He added 3.5 sacks (-16 yards), a pass breakup, and a QB hit.

Barrick appeared and started in 11 games for the Rams. He punted 49 times for a 42.8 average. He had 22 punts inside the 20-yard line and 11 punts of 50 yards or more. Barrick had a long punt of 62 yards.

Redshirt sophomore running back Jordan Barnett, junior wide receiver Cameron Dorner, senior linebacker Harold O'Neal, and junior defensive back Donte Harrison were second team selections.

Barnett appeared in 10 games. He had 95 carries for 526 yards (5.5 average) and five touchdowns. He added three receptions for seven yards.

Dorner appeared and started in 11 games. He led the team in receptions (52), receiving yards (702), and touchdown receptions (5). His 13.5 yards per catch was the best on the team.

O'Neal appeared in 11 games and started in 10 for the Rams. He topped the team in tackles (77) and assisted tackles (51). He recorded 6.0 tackles-for-loss (-24 yards) and 2.5 sacks (-16 yards). O'Neal added two pass breakups and a QB hit.

Harrison appeared and started in 10 games. He recorded 19 tackles (15 solos). Harrison added four pass breakups and tied for the team lead with a pair of interceptions.

Additionally, five members of the football team have been

named to the 2024 CSC Academic All-District Football Team selected by the College Sports Communicators for their combined performances on the field and in the classroom. Redshirt senior defensive lineman Matt Bednarski, redshirt sophomore defensive end Vince Flook, redshirt sophomore tight end Brian Jester, sophomore defensive back Will Johnson, and redshirt freshman linebacker Brodie Carroll gained Academic All-District honors.

Bednarski, a first team All-PSAC East choice, appeared in 11 games with nine starts for the Rams. Bednarski recorded 22 tackles (five solos) with 2.5 tackles-for-loss (-seven yards). He added a sack for minus six yards. He boasts a 3.80 grade point average while pursuing an MBA.

Flook appeared in 11 games with one start. He recorded 13 tackles (six solos) with 2.5 tackles-for-loss (-20 yards) and a pair of sacks (-19 yards). He boasts a 3.56 grade point average as a business administration major.

Jester appeared in 10 games with three starts. He had four receptions for 28 yards on the season. He boasts a 3.77 grade point average as a sports marketing major.

Johnson appeared in 10 games. He recorded nine tackles (four solos). He boasts a 3.79 grade point average as a criminal justice major.

Carroll, the 2024 PSAC East Freshman of the Year, appeared in 11 games with eight starts. He recorded 52 tackles (31 solos) with seven tackles-for-loss (-21 yards) and a pair of sacks (-8 yards). He added a pass breakup and a fumble recovery. Carroll boasts a 3.90 grade point average as a sports marketing major.

To be eligible for Academic All-District recognition, student-athletes must be at least a sophomore with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher and have played in at least 90 percent of the team's competition throughout the season.

## MEN'S SOCCER

The men's soccer team recorded a 5-9-4 overall mark with a 2-6-2 record in conference play. Shepherd's five wins are the most since the 2014 team recorded six. Sophomore midfielder Donik Elshani and freshman defender Ebenezer Solomon were named to the 2024 All-PSAC East Team.

Elshani appeared and started in all 17 games for the Rams. He led the team in scoring with three goals and three assists for nine points. He scored the game-winning goal in Shepherd's 2-1 win over Wheeling. His stellar play in the game helped him gain PSAC East Athlete of the Week honors for Sept. 16.

Solomon appeared in 16 games with 14 starts, scoring one goal for two points. He helped anchor a Shepherd defense



that recorded four shutouts and allowed just one goal on seven occasions.

Additionally, junior forward Wesam Abu Rabia and junior midfielder Asong Nkemanjong have been named to the 2024 CSC Academic All-District Men's Soccer Team, selected by the College Sports Information Communicators, for their combined performances on the field and in the classroom.

Abu Rabia appeared and started in 16 games. He helped anchor a Shepherd defense that recorded four shutouts and allowed just one goal on eight occasions. He boasts a 3.69 grade point average as a business administration major.

Nkemanjong appeared in 17 games with 16 starts. He recorded two goals and one assist for five points. Nkemanjong scored the game-winning goal in Shepherd's win over Pitt-Johnstown. He boasts a 3.9 grade point average as a biology major.

## VOLLEYBALL

Five members of the PSAC Eastern Division Champion Shepherd University volleyball team were named to the 2024 All-PSAC East Volleyball Team. Additionally, Shepherd head coach Alex Hoekstra was named PSAC East Coach of the Year.

Hoekstra is the Eastern Division Coach of the Year after leading the Rams to an unbeaten 14-0 conference record (24-6 overall), an improvement over 2023's 9-5 PSAC finish and 14-15 overall mark.

Senior right side Joi Fairweather, sophomore middle hitter Rylee Lenz, and sophomore middle hitter/right side Sophia Ryan were first team honorees.

Fairweather led the Rams with 287 kills and a 2.54 kills per set average. She added 129 blocks (13 block solos) and 38 digs. Fairweather was named PSAC East Defensive Athlete of the Week (Sept. 9) and PSAC East Athlete of the Week (Nov.18).

Lenz recorded 250 kills, 119 blocks (20 solos), 16 digs, six assists, and a pair of service aces. Lenz was a two-time PSAC Athlete of the Week honoree.

Ryan has recorded 239 kills and a team-best 153 blocks with a team-best 21 block solos. She has added 15 digs and one assist. Ryan was named PSAC East Athlete of the Week for Oct. 7.

Junior setter Macy Buso and senior defensive specialist/libero Harli Zeitz were second team selections.

Buso has recorded a team-best 1,025 assists. She added 266 digs, 45 blocks (two solos), and 29 service aces.

Zeitz topped the team in digs with 435. She added 80 assists and 36 service aces. Zeitz was a three-time PSAC East Defensive Athlete of the Week.

Additionally, sophomore outside hitter Amya Davis and Lenz were named to the 2024 Academic All-District® Women's Volleyball Teams, selected by College Sports Communicators. The teams recognize the nation's top student-athletes for their combined performances on the court and in the classroom. The CSC Academic All-America® program separately recognizes volleyball honorees in four divisions — NCAA Division I, NCAA Division II, NCAA Division III, and NAIA.

Davis boasts a 4.0 grade point average as a nursing major. She recorded 237 kills with a .251 attack percentage. She added 94 digs, 19 blocks, 20 aces, and nine assists. Davis was also named to the Ram Rumble All-Tournament Team during the 2024 season.

Lenz boasts a 4.0 grade point average as a nursing major. An AVCA All-Region selection, Lenz recorded 250 kills with a .306 attack percentage. She added 119 blocks (20 solos), 16 digs, six assists, and a pair of aces. Lenz was a two-time PSAC East Athlete of the Week honoree this season.

## MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

The Rams competed in five meets and had three

participants at the NCAA Atlantic Regional Championships. The season was highlighted by a ninth place finish at the Galen Piper Invitational.

## WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

The women's cross country team competed in five meets and had four competitors at the NCAA Atlantic Regional Championships. The season was highlighted by a sixth place finish at the Don Cathcart Invitational.

## MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Rams recorded a 21-11 overall mark with a 14-7 record in PSAC action. The team posted a 12-3 record at the Butcher Center. The Rams recorded 20 wins for the first time since the 2013-14 season when they went 20-10. Shepherd hosted its first PSAC Men's Basketball Tournament Final Four. Shepherd handed California (Pa.) an 84-74 defeat in the semifinals before dropping a 74-58 setback in the championship game.

Graduate student forward Chase Paar and sophomore guard Marcus Banks were named to the 2024-25 All-PSAC East Team.

Paar, a first team selection, led the Rams in scoring (14.1 ppg), rebounding (8.3 rpg), and blocked shots (1.7 bpg). He topped the team in field goal percentage (.560) and his 11 double-doubles also paced the team. Paar gained PSAC weekly honors four times this season.

Banks, a second team choice, was second on the team in scoring (12.2 ppg). He topped the team in assists (4.2 apg) and steals (1.1 spg). He also averaged 5.1 rebounds. His 31 three-pointers were fourth on the team.

Additionally, senior forward Carson Poffenberger (Morgantown, WV/Morgantown) and redshirt freshman guard Brody Davis have been named to the 2024-25 CSC Academic All-District® Team.

Poffenberger boasts a 4.00 grade point average as a health promotion and exercise science major. Recently named the 2025 PSAC Men's Basketball Champion Scholar, Poffenberger averaged 9.3 points and 5.6 rebounds. His 38 three-pointers were second on the team. A 2024 CSC Academic All-District choice, Poffenberger finished his career with 1,002 points.

Davis boasts a 3.61 grade point average as a health promotion and exercise science major. He averaged 7.0 points and 3.9 rebounds. His 53 three-pointers topped the team.

The Division II and III CSC Academic All-America® programs are partially financially supported by the NCAA Division II and III national governance structures to



assist CSC with handling the awards fulfillment aspects for the 2024-25 Divisions II and III Academic All-America® programs. The NAIA CSC Academic All-America® program is partially financially supported through the NAIA governance structure.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Rams posted a 7-21 overall mark with a 4-17 record in conference play. The Rams finished the season with a 3-3 record in their last six games. Shepherd posted a 7-7 mark in games played at the Butcher Center.

Additionally, senior guard Annie Hunt, sophomore forward Jenna Liska, and sophomore guard Cassidy Rhodes of the women's team were named to the 2024-25 CSC Academic All-District® Team.

Hunt boasts a 3.63 grade point average as a nutrition major. She averaged 6.2 points and 1.5 rebounds. Her 30 three-pointers were third on the team.

Liska has a 3.67 grade point average as a nursing major. She averaged 6.7 points and 4.5 rebounds. Her seven blocked shots tied for second on the team while her 31 steals were fifth on the team.

Rhodes holds a 3.67 grade point average as a sports marketing major. She averaged 5.4 points and 1.9 rebounds. Her 35 three-pointers were second on the team, while her .733 free throw percentage was third on the team.

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## Bittner Earns CSC Academic All-American Honors

Senior defender Delaney Bittner of the Shepherd University women's soccer team has been named to the 2024 Academic All-American® Women's Soccer Team, selected by College Sports Communicators. Bittner gained Academic All-American® honors for the second time in her career as she was a first team honoree in 2022.

Bittner, a third team selection, boasts a 3.92 grade point average as a health promotion and exercise science major. She helped lead Shepherd to a record setting 18-2-4 season as she appeared and started in all 24 games. The 2024 PSAC East Defender of the Year recorded three assists for three points.

## More Honors for Bittner

Senior defender Delaney Bittner of the Shepherd University women's soccer team has been selected to the 2024 PSAC Fall Top Ten. The PSAC Top Ten Awards are designed to recognize student-athletes who excel in both the classroom and in athletic competition.

Bittner appeared and started in all 24 games for the Rams. The 2024 PSAC East Defender of the Year anchored a Shepherd defense that recorded a record 11 shutouts on the year and allowed just one goal in 10 other contests. She added three assists for three points this season. Bittner also garnered first team United Soccer Coaches All-American honors and third team CSC Academic All-American accolades.

Bittner joins Adam Stillely (football, 2022), Kyle Daggett (men's basketball, 2021-22), Ricky Robinson (football, 2021), and Deonte Glover (football, 2019) as Shepherd PSAC Top Ten Award winners.

## Poffenberger Named PSAC Champion Scholar

Senior forward Carson Poffenberger of the Shepherd University men's basketball team has been named the 2025 Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference's Men's Basketball Champion Scholar Award recipient as announced by the conference office prior to the beginning of Shepherd's 2025 PSAC Men's Basketball Championship semifinal game.

Poffenberger has maintained a perfect 4.0 grade point average through 128 credits in pursuit of a degree in health promotion and exercise science.

The PSAC Champion Scholar Awards are modeled after the NCAA's Elite 90 award and honor the student-athlete with the top grade point average who is competing at the site of each of the PSAC's finals sites. The selection criteria for the Champion Scholar Awards is identical to that of the NCAA Elite 90 awards, which honor the student-athlete with the top GPA at each of the championship finals sites of the 90 NCAA championships across all three divisions – I, II, and III.





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