

FALL / WINTER 2017

FOCUS

NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf • Rochester Institute of Technology



On the Road to NTID's 50th Anniversary

“The Story of Beauty and the Beast”



PHOTOS BY MARK BENJAMIN

A Theatrical Fusion of Dance and Music The NTID Performing Arts adaptation of “The Story of Beauty and the Beast” brought together deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing actors and dancers. While this “tale as old as time” is one that many people are familiar with, NTID’s innovative performance brought new life to the story and delighted audience members of all ages.

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MARK BENJAMIN

ABOUT THE COVER

This fall NTID kicked off its 50th Anniversary Reunion Roadshow—a series of events in cities across the country designed to connect with alumni and build excitement for NTID's 50th Anniversary Reunion. This photo was taken at the roadshow event in Rochester, New York, in October. See the article on p. 3.

FEATURES

- 3** NTID's 50th anniversary reunion

- 4** Academic affairs leader: Gary Behm

- 5** New partnership expands access to STEM careers

- 6** Creating learning with impact

- 9** International students share their stories

- 10** Stephanie Albert: NTID's first diversity director

- 11** Tim Albert: NTID's new Student Life Team director

- 13** NTID faculty create online learning opportunities

DEPARTMENTS

- 2** From the president: Pride and gratitude

- 7** Co-op corner: Andrita Arefin, Megan Freeman, Adam Roach, Tiandr  Turner

- 8** Research, scholarship and grant-funded activities: Visual learning in deaf children

- 12** Athletics: Recognizing standouts

- 14** NTID history: NTID dance program

- 15** Alumni profiles: Samuel and Barbara Ray Holcomb

- 16** Advancing the mission: NTID history museum take shape

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Editor

Pamela L. Carmichael, '04

Associate Editor

Susan L. Murad, '01

Assistant Editor

Kathy A. Johncox

Writers

Ilene J. Avallone

Sean "Skip" Flanagan, '16

James McCarthy, '05

Art Direction and Design

Alice Hallahan-Soltiz, '13

Photography

Mark Benjamin, '76, '94

Rodman S. Reilly

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Communications, Marketing and Multimedia Services

585-475-6906

585-286-4015 (videophone)

585-475-5623 (fax)

NTIDMC@rit.edu (email)

Admissions

585-475-6700

585-743-1366 (videophone)

585-475-2696 (fax)

NTIDAdmissions@rit.edu (email)

www.rit.edu/NTID

The NTID Foundation

585-475-6836

585-286-5514 (videophone)

585-475-5949 (fax)

NTIDFDN@rit.edu (email)

www.rit.edu/NTID/giving

To subscribe or unsubscribe to "FOCUS" magazine or to update your mailing address, please contact NTID Communications, Marketing and Multimedia Services, 52 Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester, N.Y. 14623-5604 or visit www.rit.edu/NTID/FOCUS.

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MARK BENJAMIN

Pride and Gratitude

This fall we kicked off the NTID 50th Anniversary Reunion Roadshow—a series of events in cities across the country designed to connect with alumni and build excitement for NTID's 50th Anniversary Reunion. I have enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with so many of our alumni at each of these events, and I am looking forward to welcoming them and their families back to campus in June for the reunion.

NTID's 50th Anniversary Reunion will be the biggest celebration in NTID's history (see p. 3). The reunion committee has an exciting lineup of activities planned. One of the highlights will be the grand opening of NTID's history museum, which will recognize significant events and people in NTID's history (see p. 16). The reunion also will feature the release of NTID's new history book, "A Shining Beacon: 50 Years of NTID" (see p. 3).

As I have chatted with alumni at the 50th Anniversary Roadshow events, two themes have emerged: pride and gratitude. Our alums are proud to be graduates of RIT/NTID, and they are grateful for the opportunities their education has provided. For so many alumni, the pride and gratitude they feel fuels a desire to give back. Sam and Barbara Ray Holcomb, who were selected as the 2017

Distinguished Alumni for NTID, are shining examples of this (see p. 15). We are grateful for their support of RIT/NTID and for the support of all of our alumni who give back in so many ways.

Three of our alumni have been newly appointed to key positions at RIT/NTID. Gary Behm is interim associate vice president for academic affairs (see p. 4), Stephanie Albert is NTID's first-ever director of diversity and inclusion (see p. 10), and Tim Albert is director of the Student Life Team (see p. 11). NTID is fortunate to have accomplished alumni like Gary, Stephanie and Tim serving in these and other key roles. They are helping NTID advance its mission, and they are excellent role models for our students—the next generation of RIT/NTID alumni.

As NTID prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary, we remain committed to our mission of preparing students for career success. Our students continue to gain real-world experience through our co-op program (see p. 7), and we are expanding online education opportunities (see p. 13). We also have partnered with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind to establish the NTID Regional STEM Center—Southeast to help deaf and hard-of-hearing students get a head start on thinking about and preparing for a career (see p. 5).

No other college or university does more to help deaf and hard-of-hearing students prepare for a successful future. That has been true since NTID first opened its doors on the RIT campus nearly 50 years ago, and it will remain true as we continue to fulfill our mission, with pride and gratitude, in the years to come.

Dr. Gerard J. Buckley
NTID President
RIT Vice President and Dean

NTID's 50th Anniversary Reunion

BY JAMES MCCARTHY

“We’re less than a year away,” says Fred Hartman, SVP ’78, ’82, ’84. “It’ll pass in the twinkling of an eye.”

That sense of anticipation is running through the 50th Anniversary Reunion Weekend’s Core Team, a group of about 20 alumni, including Hartman, who are working to plan the three-day-long celebration of this significant milestone.

Headed by Christopher, SVP ’86, ’94, and Staci Wagner, ’92, and Loriann Macko, director of alumni and constituent relations, the core team encompasses 10 groups working on everything from coordinating volunteers to securing performers for various events during the weekend.

“It’ll be a wonderful mixture of old and young,” says Hartman, who is responsible for arranging entertainment during the weekend with Sean Furman, SVP ’93, ’06, who is a supervisor at the NTID Learning Center. “We want to show the diversity of NTID’s graduates in all its forms, from different generations to different walks of life.”

That diversity also is reflected in the core team, which sought to pair up alumni from “inside”—those currently working at NTID—with alumni from “outside.”

“When we put out the call for reunion volunteers, the response was overwhelming,” explains Staci Wagner. “In the end, setting up this kind of collaboration made sense. Each group has access to resources both inside and outside NTID.”

That approach to collaboration has already yielded dividends.

“Sean has access to students,” says Hartman, “while I have access to alumni who spent their time here in the ’70s and ’80s performing. It lets us get a broad range of talent.”

The reunion weekend itself will include workshops, social events, campus tours and plenty of nostalgia.

“I think reunion attendees will be overwhelmed with all of the changes on campus,” says Chris Wagner. “Especially if they haven’t been there in a long time. I’m excited about the opportunity to



MARK BENJAMIN

Mingling over High Falls Attendees enjoy an evening at La Luna during the Rochester Roadshow event in October.

show them that their campus is thriving, just like they are—and to let them find all the old landmarks that are still around.”

Leading up to the reunion weekend, the roadshow—a series of events in cities around the country hosted by NTID’s Office of Development & Alumni Relations—kicked off in Boston in September, and has since moved through Rochester, Philadelphia, Austin, Texas, and St. Louis, Missouri.

The roadshow will visit Tampa, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City and Chicago, before wrapping up in Washington, D.C., in May 2018, reminding alumni all over the country of their home at NTID.

The reunion also will see the launch of a new history book that covers NTID’s first 50 years. Titled “A Shining Beacon: 50 Years of NTID,” the book will include

chapters written by individuals who have witnessed decades of change at NTID, while others are written by recent graduates who are already looking to the next 50 years.

“This book isn’t simply a chronicle,” says Gerry Buckley, NTID president and RIT vice president and dean. “It’s a collection of stories about people, places and things that alumni will remember vividly from their time here.”

With a community of more than 9,000 alumni, the reunion weekend promises to be a celebration larger than anything in NTID’s history.

“I haven’t met an alum who says they’re not coming,” says Macko. “I really think this’ll be bigger than anything we’ve seen before.”

For more information, visit www.ntid.rit.edu/50reunion.

Academic affairs leader: Gary Behm

BY SUSAN L. MURAD



MARK BENJAMIN

An Innovator's Perspective Gary Behm holds 15 patents and brings an increased emphasis on innovation to academics at NTID.

When Gary Behm was a student at RIT/NTID, he never imagined he would become the college's interim associate vice president for academic affairs.

"To go from being a student, to teaching and then to heading up academics is like nothing I ever dreamed, but I want the opportunity to give back to NTID," Behm says.

In his role, Behm oversees NTID's academic departments, curriculum, course scheduling, degree certification, communication services and assessment, and faculty/staff professional development. NTID's academic departments include Liberal Studies, Business Studies, Science & Mathematics, Cultural & Creative Studies, Visual Communications Studies, Engineering Studies, Information &

Computing Studies, American Sign Language and Interpreting Education, and Master of Science program in Secondary Education of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Behm, an associate professor, also continues as director of RIT/NTID's Center on Access Technology Innovation Laboratory ("CAT Lab"), and serves as an engineering lead for the faculty, researchers and students in the conceptualization, design, development, building and testing of engineering solutions that address the accessibility needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals primarily in the postsecondary educational environment.

The "CAT Lab," a first-of-its-kind initiative, provides a place for students to get involved in the innovation process.

The lab brings together faculty and associate degree-level deaf and hard-of-hearing students to collaborate on multidisciplinary projects related to developing and adapting access and instructional technologies, health care technologies and services, and more.

"I'm excited to be part of the leadership team at RIT/NTID," Behm says. "As we celebrate 50 years of providing innovative educational opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, it's a great time to help set the course academically for the next 50 years and beyond."

After earning an associate degree in electromechanical technology and a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering technology at RIT/NTID, Behm went on to earn a master's degree in manufacturing systems engineering at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Originally from Mt. Morris, Michigan, Behm worked at IBM for 30 years in various locations throughout the country, serving as an engineer, project leader and project manager. He then moved into the IBM Faculty Loan program and served as a visiting scholar, lecturer, advisor and tutor in RIT/NTID's Engineering Studies Department.

Behm holds 15 patents, including, among others, one for methods and systems for early warning detection of emergency vehicles, another for an apparatus and method for enhancing field of vision of the visually impaired, one for method and apparatus for a tactile haptic device to guide in real-time obstacle avoidance and another for apparatus and method for sensing of three-dimensional environmental information.

"Gary has brought a wealth of practical and theoretical experience to RIT/NTID classrooms and the Center on Access Technology Innovation Lab," says Gerry Buckley, NTID president and RIT vice president and dean. "And he now brings the same innovative and energetic approach to this interim role as associate vice president for academic affairs."



PROVIDED PHOTO

Take a Drone Home University of Alabama Huntsville hosted RIT/NTID's Droids and Drones, a free summer camp for deaf and hard-of-hearing students who live in the Southeast region of the country. During the camp each student built a drone to take home.

New partnership expands access to STEM careers

BY KATHY A. JOHNCOX

Employees to fill jobs in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) currently are in high demand nationwide. However, many of the available jobs are going unfilled due to the lack of individuals trained to work in those fields. Research indicates that deaf and hard-of-hearing people, particularly, are underrepresented in the STEM workforce, and comprise an untapped pool of workers for these STEM positions.

To better prepare deaf and hard-of-hearing students to excel and find jobs in STEM after graduation, NTID entered into a partnership with Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) in Talladega, Alabama, to promote training and postsecondary education in STEM fields. The collaboration includes the establishment of the NTID Regional STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Center (NRSC) – Southeast, which serves nine southeastern states—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

For deaf and hard-of-hearing students in this region who traditionally may have been underserved, NRSC activities can make the difference for a successful

future. The center's activities focus on preparing secondary school students to be successful in STEM; providing professional development for middle and high school teachers, interpreters, counselors and other service providers; and developing relationships with business and industry to promote employment opportunities.

“This partnership with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind will help deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the Southeast region of the country gain experience in STEM-based courses and expose them to career paths,” said Gerry Buckley, NTID president and RIT vice president and dean.

As part of the partnership, activity in the Southeast has ramped up, and a number of outreach programs currently are underway:

- Droids and Drones is a summer camp where deaf and hard-of-hearing 10th – 12th graders learn about careers in the fields of unmanned aerial vehicles and robotics and learn to make their own drones to take home.
- FutureQuest provides a day of activities for deaf and hard-of-hearing high school students and their parents

to help them navigate the transition from high school to college or work.

- Raising Stars is an evening program for families of deaf and hard-of-hearing 7th – 10th graders who seek planning tips to help their student prepare for college.

Additional new programs—a technology competition, a marine biology camp and a STEM camp are in the planning stages.

“This partnership is assisting AIDB to meet our mission of preparing students to succeed at universities such as NTID, but more important, to have the opportunity to succeed in life,” says John Mascia, president, AIDB. “We are grateful to have the opportunity to partner with NTID, and there is no doubt that the students will benefit in ways that will have a positive lifelong impact on them and on society.”

With the outreach programs that are underway and the projects under development, the NRSC-SE is providing deaf and hard-of-hearing students the knowledge and opportunity to get a head start on career choices and learn what training will be required for that dream job in the future.

Creating learning with impact

BY ILENE J. AVALLONE

RIT embraces the concept of student service learning, a teaching and learning strategy that integrates community service with a learning experience as part of its curricula, a movement that has spurred faculty in various fields to initiate these types of programs as part of their disciplines. An example of this is NTID's American Sign Language and Interpreting Education Department, which has incorporated a service-learning component into one of the electives they offer—Introduction to K-12 Interpreting.

This service-learning initiative is a collaborative effort between RIT/NTID and Rochester School for the Deaf. It kicked off three years ago, and brings interpreting students who are enrolled in NTID's Introduction to K-12 course to RSD's campus to help tutor middle and high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"When RSD approached NTID seeking after-hours academic 'coaches' for their students during evening study hall periods, we knew this would be a great service-learning opportunity for our interpreting students," says Kevin Williams, coordinator of the initiative and a faculty member in the ASLIE Department. "This collaboration between two significant education institutions gives our interpreting students an incredible opportunity to develop their skills in an educational setting and integrate their classroom instruction with hands-on practice."

Isabel Snyder, a fourth-year interpreting student from Newton Highlands, Massachusetts, who volunteered at RSD, enjoyed the connections she made with RSD students.

"It was a great opportunity to interact with the type of students we were learning about in class and practice how to sign with young deaf individuals."

Fourth-year interpreting major Heather Barczynski from Wexford, Pennsylvania, gained a greater understanding of deaf students, their needs and their communication styles.

"Interpreting is all about the people we

work with and relationships we build, so learning about students' plans for their future and seeing them realize their potential was inspiring and uplifting."

"It was a great opportunity to interact with the type of students we were learning about in class and practice how to sign with young deaf individuals."

Kaitlyn Shirey, a fourth-year interpreting student from Ambler, Pennsylvania, said the experience opened her eyes to working with deaf students at various age levels with different linguistic abilities.

"The program is so valuable for interpreting students. It was an incredible opportunity for me to branch out, interact with the Deaf community in Rochester and develop my skills, all while having a great time!"

So far, more than 40 RIT/NTID interpreting students have participated in the program, and many continue to volunteer at RSD after they have completed the course.

"The interaction our students have with RSD students is as valuable as the academic learning that takes place in the classroom," says Williams. "The impact on our interpreting students has been significant. For them to see students learn, to be a part of their learning process, and to assist in shoring up concepts and content is amazing."



MARK BENJAMIN

Service Learning Fourth-year interpreting student Caroline Green (left) provides academic support for Rochester School for the Deaf students as part of an ongoing collaboration between RIT and RSD.

RIT's co-op program is a big draw for savvy students who know that getting real-world work experience while in college can confirm their choice of major and their future career. Co-op Corner introduces a number of students for each issue of "FOCUS" to give a snapshot of their co-op success.

BY KATHY A. JOHNCOX



PHOTOS BY MARK BENJAMIN

Andrita Arefin

Hometown:

Newton, Massachusetts

Degree program:

B.S., Computer Engineering

Employer: Financial

Recovery Technologies (FRT), Medford, Massachusetts

Job duties: I had two co-ops at FRT, one as a data and IT analyst and one as a security analyst. In the first, I analyzed databases to find mismatches between transactions and performed validation procedures for system development and integration. As a security analyst, I developed reports designed to show unanticipated network traffic and collaborated with the Information Security Steering Committee to analyze and review FRT policies and standards.

Benefits of co-op: The work ethic I developed at RIT that helped me overcome challenging courses in my major also helped me to be successful on co-op. The Computer Engineering Department does a great job of giving us challenging tasks to figure out on our own and instills a diligent attitude. I realized if I am able to accomplish those tasks, then I am able to accomplish anything that a co-op throws at me.



Adam Roach

Hometown:

Detroit, Michigan

Degree program:

AOS, Computer Integrated Machining Technology

Employer:

Toolcraft Products, Inc., Dayton, Ohio

Job duties: As a tool and die maker's helper, one of my responsibilities was making special tooling used in everyday manufacturing. I also was exposed to CAD (Computer Aided Design) and CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing) and learned how they were being applied to the products that this company manufactures.

Benefits of co-op: My co-op prepared me for what I'll be expected to do on a full-time job. For example, what I learned in my CIMT I & II, Precision Measurement and Blueprint Reading courses was reinforced every day on co-op. Also, I will be in competition for a full-time job against other people who don't have a degree, and my degree will give me an advantage over them. The skills that you learn here at NTID are really in demand once you enter the workplace.



Megan Freeman

Hometown:

Missoula, Montana

Degree program:

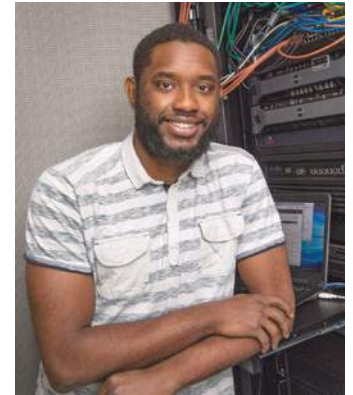
B.S., Management Information Systems

Employer: National Geo-

Spatial Intelligence Agency (NGA), St. Louis, Missouri

Job duties: In my position as a co-op in the information technology department at the agency, most of my work was classified. I gave briefings about my work to leaders in the organization, and I created a database to make it easier to identify assets and identify errors in records. I also spent time in the agency's areas of finance, research and resources, and visited NGA's support teams at the Pentagon, National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency and Central Intelligence Agency.

Benefits of co-op: I was able to put to practical use the database management systems, computer-based analysis and systems analysis and design courses to develop databases and Excel macros. My co-op will help me prepare for future jobs. I already have received a full-time job offer from NGA for after graduation.



Tiandr  Turner

Hometown:

Chicago, Illinois

Degree program:

B.S., Information Technology

Employer: The Infini,

Austin, Texas

Job duties: The Infini is an information technology and human resources consulting company. I worked remotely in Rochester for this company as a Web developer, and I developed and maintained the portal websites using HTML, CSS, PHP and Javascript. I used my skills to do the backend computing tasks, and they challenged me to use critical thinking and solve issues for my employer.

Benefits of co-op: My co-op required me to focus heavily on Web development and database management. My work for The Infini allowed me to experience the responsibilities of working, prepared me to develop more skills and showed me I had the ability to combine those skills into a job field that I will personally enjoy.

Visual learning in deaf children

BY KATHY A. JOHNCOX



MARK BENJAMIN

Matthew Dye (left), assistant professor in NTID's department of Liberal Studies, and Peter Hauser, professor and director of NTID's Center on Cognition and Language

RIT/NTID researchers Matthew Dye, assistant professor in NTID's department of Liberal Studies, and Peter Hauser, professor and director of NTID's Center on Cognition and Language, recently were awarded a \$450,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to study learning skills essential for deaf children. They will study 150 deaf children ages 6 to 13 years, attending schools for the deaf around the United States. The research will advance the understanding of how early sensory and linguistic experiences impact the construction of thought processes in deaf children.

Dye said the idea for the study arose from past research, some of which he conducted with Hauser. Dye and Hauser

noticed that previous studies were conducted with deaf children who had received cochlear implants and were

“Our project will identify which aspects of deafness—hearing and/or language—provide a strong framework for acquiring the skills that are essential for successful learning.”

learning a spoken language only. They decided to use the same tests of cognition with deaf children from deaf families, who grew up using ASL. The results of

that research led to the research team proposing that NSF fund a grant to conduct a longitudinal study on whether deaf children who learn ASL early in life understand the world differently compared to deaf children who receive a cochlear implant and use spoken language. Through assessments of each child's hearing levels, cognitive skills and fluency in ASL, scientists will determine how well these variables predict deaf children's processing of visual information.

“I believe the NSF was interested in funding this research because the foundation always has been a supporter of research into how deaf people learn,” says Dye. “They know that deaf students face barriers in attaining educational success. Our project will identify which aspects of deafness—hearing and/or language—provide a strong framework for acquiring the skills that are essential for successful learning.”

NTID is a logical place to lead a study like this because NTID researchers have extensive expertise in how deaf students learn, and a strong network of contacts with educational programs around the United States.

“My colleagues support this kind of research and understand the need for it,” says Dye. “Having such a supportive environment is crucial for ensuring the success of a large and complex project like this one.”

Thinking about outcomes, Dye says, “Psychological scientists cannot ‘prove’ anything, but we can carefully collect evidence that can be used to support or refute theories about the functioning of the human mind. The contribution of our project will depend upon the extent to which the evidence we collect helps us determine the relative contributions of access to sound and access to language to the development of thought processes in deaf children. Whatever the outcome, it will be one small piece of the puzzle, and needs to be considered within the context of a wider literature.”

To learn more visit: www.deafxlab.com.

International students share their stories

BY ILENE J. AVALLONE



PHOTOS BY MARK BENJAMIN

Jeanne d'Arc Ntigulirwa

Arturo Peralta Silva

Ping Liu

Clara Therese Marasigan

Jeanne d'Arc Ntigulirwa looked into the future and did not like what she saw. As a high-school student in Kigali, Rwanda, Africa, she dreamed of going to college and studying education.

"I was the only deaf person in my entire school. I didn't have any support services, and I had to try and figure out how to help myself," says Ntigulirwa, who currently is in NTID's master of science degree program studying secondary education of students who are deaf and hard of hearing. "Fortunately, I developed an interest in books, and my love for reading helped me persevere and graduate. My goal now is to become an itinerant teacher of the deaf and to establish a model bilingual school for the deaf in Rwanda, so that deaf children there can get the education they deserve."

International students come to RIT for many reasons, but oftentimes it all boils down to a single word—opportunity. Every year, RIT/NTID receives applications from deaf and hard-of-hearing students from around the world, and the number of international students that attend RIT/NTID continues to rise. Today, NTID has 49 international students, representing 23 countries.

"For many of these students, it's the beginning of a new start with exciting opportunities," says Jonathan Holmes, RIT/NTID international student liaison.

Arturo Peralta Silva, from the Dominican

Republic, decided to pursue a degree in computing at RIT because it will afford him better opportunities back home.

"I have access to outstanding support services at RIT that are lacking in the Dominican Republic, and I get to be part of a Deaf community," says Peralta Silva. "It feels like a family here because I can communicate in American Sign Language with other deaf people."

Thomastine (Tommie) Sarchet-Maher, director of NTID's international educational outreach program, says that the variety of resources available at RIT can be alluring to international students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"This is especially true for some of RIT/NTID's students who come from developing countries where students face significant barriers to accessing an education," says Sarchet-Maher. "What's most important, though, is that I see students from these countries who choose to study here are among the brightest and most highly motivated of the student-age population in their home countries."

Ping Liu, 24, is from a small village in northern China where her parents are farmers. Liu is getting her degree in applied computer technology, but then hopes to get her master's degree in human-centered computing. Eventually she wants to teach in China and one day work at the United Nations to help deaf people all over the world.

Like many international students, Liu arrived in the United States unaware of the hurdles she would have to overcome and adjustments she would have to make to be successful in the American educational system.

"When I first arrived at RIT, I didn't know American Sign Language, and I couldn't speak English, so I had a hard time communicating. On the first day of class, I did not think I could stay in the United States for one more day. I felt so lonely and nervous," she says.

Three years later, Liu is one of the most successful students in her major.

Likewise, when Clara Therese Marasigan, a transfer student from De La-Salle College of Saint Benilde in Manila, Philippines, arrived at RIT three years ago, she became homesick and overwhelmed by the differences in language, weather, food and culture.

Today, this young woman says she is stronger, wiser and a role model for other deaf Filipinos.

"Coming to RIT is my 'second chance at life,' and my ticket to my success back home," says Marasigan.

Explains Sarchet-Maher, "Coming to RIT/NTID gives our international deaf and hard-of-hearing students the opportunity to return to their home countries with prestigious degrees and the skills to help others in their home countries."

Stephanie Albert, NTID's first diversity director

BY SUSAN L. MURAD



MARK BENJAMIN

Upbeat Leadership As NTID's first director of diversity and inclusion, Stephanie Albert brings an upbeat leadership style to her work.

At the end of each day, Stephanie Smith Albert feels like a sponge. “I’m learning so much, I feel like I need to wring out my brain, so there will be room for more the next day,” says Albert, with the humor for which she is well known.

But as the first director of diversity and inclusion at RIT/NTID, she knows that planning, implementing and managing the college’s diversity efforts are serious business, and she’s up to the challenge.

Albert has more than 10 years of professional experience in the educational field as a school counselor at several schools for the deaf, and most recently was the director of student life at Ohio School for the Deaf in Columbus, Ohio.

In her new role, Albert is responsible for all NTID issues relating to diversity and inclusion, monitoring NTID’s progress on RIT-wide and NTID-specific initiatives and goals, and identifying issues to bring to the NTID president and his administrative council as well as the RIT vice president and associate provost for diversity and inclusion.

She also keeps current on regulations regarding diversity, inclusion, equal opportunity and access issues in higher education, and presents on these topics to internal groups of faculty, staff and students; and works with student leaders and other units within the college, including the NTID Diversity Group, to support diversity-specific initiatives.

“It’s an amazing opportunity,” says Albert. “My goals for the Diversity and Inclusion Office and for myself are to be a visible presence around campus—to go where the crowd is and meet NTID and RIT staff, faculty, students and community partners. I’m also working to familiarize myself with programs, trainings, activities, grants, events, committees and groups at RIT and NTID, especially those that are diversity-related.

“I’m also planning to teach classes and workshops at NTID, and, most importantly, facilitate more dialogue sessions among students, faculty, staff and administration during the spring semester and beyond. I hold daily open-door hours for people to come see me, seek out resources or just to talk.”

Albert earned a master’s degree in school counseling at Gallaudet University, a bachelor’s degree in marketing at Wright State University, and an associate degree in accounting at RIT/NTID. Additionally, she has held secondary school counselor certification in the state of Georgia and an alternative administrative specialist license in the state of Ohio.

When asked what has changed at RIT/NTID since she was a student, Albert is quick to respond.

“The size of RIT’s campus has grown immensely—it could have its own zip code,” she says. “There are so many new buildings, beautiful trails and eateries compared what we had in the mid-1980s.

“NTID students today are strong believers in social justice, equality and equity. I admire their courage in bringing to the forefront issues related to diversity and inclusivity. I believe collectively, with sincerity, respect, hard work and appreciation of our differences, we will continue our journey towards greatness.”

Gerry Buckley, NTID president and RIT vice president and dean, points to diversity and inclusion as top priorities for both NTID and the greater university.

“We all look forward to what Stephanie will bring to these efforts,” he says.

Tim Albert, NTID's new student life team director

BY SUSAN L. MURAD



MARK BENJAMIN

A Full Plate NTID's Director of Student Life, Tim Albert, provides training and support for a host of student clubs and organizations.

Tim Albert is a runner, and that skill and endurance has come in handy. Albert, most recently of Columbus, Ohio, is the new director of RIT/NTID's Student Life Team, and he truly has hit the ground running.

"In just the first few weeks after arriving here, I had the opportunity to attend my first Explore Your Future session; the Summer Vestibule Program, where I participated in various trainings; Latin American Deaf Club's welcome event for all SVP students, parents and guardians; and to celebrate the 20th Apple Festival, where I delivered a brief speech," he says.

Albert has more than 11 years of experience in the K-12 education field as a peer/school counselor, supervisor, student life coordinator and dean of

students. He earned a diploma in applied computer technology and an associate in applied science degree in imaging technology from RIT/NTID, and went on to earn both bachelor's

"I want to help provide the best resources to all NTID-supported students; develop activities and events they all can enjoy; and continue supporting and serving our deaf, deaf-blind, deaf-disabled, late deafened, hard-of-hearing and underrepresented students."

and master's degrees in social work from Gallaudet University.

As president of National Black Deaf Advocates and board member of the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD), Albert worked to make improvements to educational programs and schools for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

In his role as Student Life Team director, Albert supervises and oversees co-curricular events, including clubs and Greek life for RIT/NTID's 1,200 deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

His goals for the Student Life Team are to provide trainings and workshops for all RIT/NTD students, clubs, organizations and Greek-letter organizations and collaborate with different departments across the RIT campus.

"I want to help provide the best resources to all NTID-supported students; develop activities and events they all can enjoy; and continue supporting and serving our deaf, deaf-blind, deaf-disabled, late deafened, hard-of-hearing and underrepresented students," says Albert.

When asked what has changed at RIT/NTID since he was a student, Albert starts by recognizing what is the same.

"I'm glad to know that the four oldest NTID clubs and organizations—NTID Student Congress, Ebony Club, Asian Deaf Club and Latin American Deaf Club (formerly Hispanic Deaf Club)—are still going strong," he says. "And I'm thrilled to see new clubs such as Deaf International Student Association, Spectrum, Student Interpreting Association, Spoken Communication Club and Tiger Media, among others. They are great additions and represent more of our students."

Gerry Buckley, NTID president and RIT vice president and dean, is happy to have Albert back after being away from campus for 20 years,

"I'm pleased to welcome Tim back to the RIT/NTID community," Buckley says. "His national leadership experience, along with his love for the college and our students will usher, in a time of renewed vitality to the Student Life Team."

Recognizing standouts

BY SEAN "SKIP" FLANAGAN



Mia White



Otto Kingstedt



Michele Halleran

PHOTOS BY RIT SPORTS INFORMATION OFFICE

The NTID Athlete Development Program is starting its second full year, and we're off to quite the start! Our program saw an increase in size, with 23 varsity student-athletes across 10 sports. We've secured a stellar 2018 recruiting class, and we couldn't be any more excited!

Our student-athletes are dominating the competition this fall, and we haven't shown any signs of slowing down. During the week of September 18, RIT/NTID made history by naming Otto Kingstedt of men's cross country and Mia White of women's soccer the RIT Athletes of the Week, the first time RIT athletics named both male and female deaf athletes during the same week. Not only that, they were both named Liberty League Performers of the Week! White and Kingstedt are continuing their excellence on the pitch and the trails. White and the women's soccer team achieved an 12-4-3 record, while Kingstedt registered another first place finish at the Yellowjacket Invitational during the Homecoming Weekend and garnered more RIT and Liberty League Performer of the Week honors.

Other student-athletes followed suit, with Emily Lederman and Anna Johnson putting together a strong showing during

the swimming and diving meet. Lederman placed in the top three in all four events that she swam in, and Johnson made her collegiate debut on the diving boards, placing fourth.

The men's and women's indoor track and field started their pre-season training, and will be gearing up for another strong year. The women's team won the Liberty League Championship last year, and is looking to repeat, while the men's team is looking to take back the championship after finishing second.

Our program saw an increase in size, with 23 varsity student-athletes across 10 sports.

On the ice, RIT women's hockey freshman Baylee Trani saw a fast start to her collegiate career, scoring her first goal against the tough Holy Cross team.

During the men's Homecoming hockey game at the Blue Cross Arena, a softball alum, Michele Halleran, was immortalized as the newest member from NTID into the prestigious RIT Athletics Hall of Fame for her incredible softball run as a career .429 hitter with 21 home

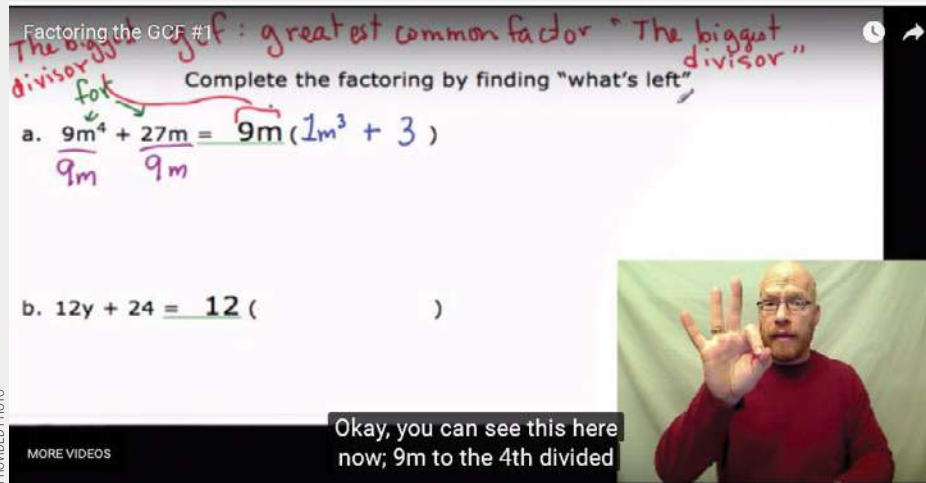
runs, 71 extra base hits, 128 runs batted in, and a slugging percentage of .721. Michele Halleran accepted the Hall of Fame award from her father, Dave Halleran, in a touching moment during the induction ceremony.

Off the field, the student-athletes are grinding away in the classroom. They registered a 3.14 grade point average as a group last spring, and the trend is expected to continue. Thanks to the crowdfunding campaign we started last spring, we were able to kick off the Relentless Tiger Leadership training program, improved our recruiting initiatives, which was evidenced by the number of verbal commitments from prospective student-athletes not long after that. Accessible facilities upgrades also have been completed or are in the works, with the addition of starting lights in the swimming pool, and planned new systems for multiple sports such as track and field and rowing. In addition, we received a gift from the Easter Seals to establish a co-op position to help support the NTID Athlete Development Program.

To get updates and learn more about what's happening with RIT/NTID student-athletes, follow us at RIT/NTID Athletics on Facebook, ritntidathletics on Instagram, and our website: www.ntid.rit.edu/athletes.

NTID faculty create online learning opportunities

BY ILENE J. AVALLONE



PROVIDED PHOTO

Creating the Virtual Classroom RIT faculty member, Gary Blatto-Vallee created NTID's first online math class.

Online learning has steadily grown in popularity among college students, and RIT has seen the number of students who take online courses rise by 30% since the college's conversion from a quarter system to a semester system in 2013. To meet the demand from NTID-supported students, NTID stepped up its efforts last year to expand its online and blended offerings.

"We want all deaf and hard-of-hearing students at RIT to have the option to participate in online learning—no matter what degree level they are in," says Linda Bryant, director of NTID online initiatives.

"Developing an online presence for deaf and hard-of-hearing students is not easy," says Bryant. "Additional considerations unique to deaf and hard-of-hearing learners must be addressed. Faculty must invest a significant amount of time transitioning their courses, which includes recording and editing video lectures, and designing the course so it is accessible and easy to navigate. At NTID, all online instructional videos are signed with spoken voiceovers, captions and supporting content."

Since fall 2016, Gary Blatto-Vallee has been delivering an online NTID math course, Applications of Algebra, in addition to offering a traditional in-class section.

"Developing an online course for NTID students has been a rewarding challenge, requiring us to understand the specific

needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing learners and ensure that an online learning experience is appropriate and effective," says Blatto-Vallee. "Students in both sections are evaluated in the same manner, and so far, student performance has been comparable between the online and in-person classes."

Melissa Youngman, faculty member in NTID's Business Studies Department, launched a blended course last year where the curriculum was delivered using a combination of in-person and online instructor modes. The biggest challenge to providing online learning for her Personal Finance class, according to Youngman, was figuring out how to get started.

"I had to figure how best to communicate the classroom curriculum online, decide how to group the material in separate videos, and learn how to use the software to make the videos."

Youngman says it took about six months of planning and an additional six to nine months to develop the course and get it ready to pilot.

Erin Auble, faculty member in NTID's Cultural and Creative Studies Department, developed an online Introduction to Performing Arts class. It is a popular general education course at RIT with a mix of deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing students.

"Since this is a large class with varied communication needs, the online

platform provides an excellent way to facilitate communication without needing an interpreter," says Auble. "Students have a chance to think about the topic and formulate their thoughts and develop responses before our weekly discussions are held via the online discussion board."

In addition to those faculty members who transitioned their classes to online delivery, many other NTID faculty are creating instructional video materials for their in-person classes. These videos are used as review materials (tutorials) or as replacements for in-class lectures, using a flipped approach where students watch videos before coming to class.

Taking online courses has become a popular option for NTID-supported students. More than 600 students every year enroll in online courses, and the number of students in NTID associate degree programs taking online courses has more than doubled over the past year. The trend is expected to grow as NTID continues to expand its online and blended offerings.

"Online education will never be a substitute for traditional learning, but it provides students with options," says Bryant. "There is great potential in offering online opportunities to other deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences in the future and using additional online formats to provide a variety of online learning options."



PROVIDED PHOTO



PROVIDED PHOTO

Faculty members Melissa Youngman (top) and Erin Auble (bottom) developed new online courses last year.

NTID's history is rich in milestones and achievements that have fueled the success of thousands of students and graduates. This "FOCUS" feature provides a look at some of the people and events that have been significant in the history of our college community.

BY JAMES MCCARTHY



RODMAN'S RELLY

Creative Dance Students in a Dance Performance I class in 1982 use an elastic band to experience "tension" as a creative movement.

Trivia Tidbit BY SAM HOLCOMB

Q: Have any famous deaf dancers worked at NTID?

A: Yes. For example, Michael Thomas, an internationally known dancer and choreographer, directed a production of "Cinderella" in 1994 and 1995.



MARK BENJAMIN

Sam Holcomb is a retired faculty member from NTID's American Sign Language and Interpreting Education Department.

The dance program has long been considered a mainstay of NTID's strong Performing Arts Department. The program formally saw its beginnings in 1975, seven years after NTID first opened its doors.

In 1982, the first full-time dance instructor at NTID, Susan Galligan, was hired. Also director of the RIT Dance Company, Galligan helped formalize NTID's dance program, which had until then been a selection of courses taught by consultants from RIT.

In spring 1982, Kathleen Sullivan reported in "FOCUS" that the program garnered increasing interest due to the success of dance-centered Broadway shows like "A Chorus Line" and visits to campus by stars like Mikhail Baryshnikov, the iconic Russian-

American ballet dancer. The program was so popular that students sometimes enrolled in multiple dance courses in the same quarter.

Today, the Performing Arts program offers courses in jazz, hip-hop, modern dance and ballet, and hosts one large production every year in addition to several smaller ones around campus. The Dance Lab also currently is part of a broader campaign to raise funds for renovations to NTID's theater facilities. More information can be found at: www.ntid.rit.edu/50reunion/5for50/theater.

Samuel and Barbara Ray Holcomb

BY JAMES MCCARTHY

Recognized as NTID's 2017 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients, Samuel "Sam," '77, and Barbara Ray, '74, '84, Holcomb have a long history with NTID—and a long memory.

Sam remembers a time before NTID existed.

"When I was growing up, my dad had what he called the 'Gallaudet test,' where to be a successful deaf or hard-of-hearing person, you had to go to Gallaudet," he recalls. "Now there are so many more choices for young people."

Barbara Ray adds, "It's not just that there are more schools, majors and careers out there. It's about access. There now are more interpreters and innovations like notetakers, C-Print and other technologies that open up the world. We didn't have that when we were students."

As tireless advocates for the formation of the Deaf Studies Archive at RIT's Wallace Center, the Holcombs' memories reach into a past that they've worked to keep alive for many years. Their combined 75 years of service at NTID has ranged from teaching American Sign Language and Deaf culture to RIT presidents to developing curricula for building bridges between Deaf and hearing colleagues and students.

"I used to dream about video phones while I was watching 'The Jetsons,' and, as it turns out, the first one used by deaf and hard-of-hearing people was invented here in Rochester."

Their service didn't end with their retirement and subsequent move to Arizona, however. It continues today with their support of the new NTID history museum, which will be unveiled during the upcoming NTID 50th Anniversary Reunion Weekend, June 28-July 1, 2018.

"NTID has such a rich history of innovation in providing access to high



Celebration The Holcombs enjoy an evening out during the 50th Anniversary Reunion Roadshow: Rochester event.

quality education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students," says Barbara Ray. "I used to dream about video phones while I was watching 'The Jetsons,' and, as it turns out, the first one used by deaf and hard-of-hearing people was invented here in Rochester."

"It was called the Vista Phone," Sam adds. "I saw someone getting rid of it one day while they were cleaning out their office. I thought they were crazy!"

"Sometimes when you're looking so much to the future, it's hard to remember the importance of recognizing where we came from," says Barbara Ray. "That's why we're working to build the NTID history museum. It's good for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to see the contributions of previous generations, and the 50th Anniversary is the perfect time for it."

The Holcombs aren't just being recognized for their advocacy for historical preservation; their many contributions to teaching and learning at NTID have served to further the mission of the college in new ways.

Sam and Barbara Ray co-authored and developed the "ASL at Work" curriculum with a team, designed to improve workplace communication skills for colleagues and employers of

deaf and hard-of-hearing employees. "More than anything else, I'm focused on accessibility," says Barbara Ray.

Accessibility is a recurring theme with the Holcombs. Sam taught Sign Language to two previous presidents of RIT, Albert J. Simone and William W. Destler, as part of a push for greater inclusion of deaf and hard-of-hearing students and employees on campus. That push also has seen the establishment of for-credit ASL courses for hearing RIT students as well as the formation of the RIT ASL and Deaf Studies Community Center at the Wallace Center.

Retirement hasn't been the end of their advocacy for maintaining a connection with history and the same is true of their drive to teach. Sam and Barbara Ray continue to host workshops and courses for fellow residents of their 55+ community in Surprise, Arizona, introducing their neighbors to iPhones, video relay services and other advances.

"Accessibility cuts across all generations," says Barbara Ray. "It's wonderful to see the fruits of my generation's labors being enjoyed by our children and grandchildren, but we can benefit from them, too."

"I'll always be teaching," says Sam. "I'll never stop trying to share knowledge with everyone I meet. It's a calling."

NTID history museum takes shape

BY JAMES MCCARTHY

RIT/NTID's 50th Anniversary Reunion Weekend will celebrate the past in many ways, but one is especially notable: the grand opening of NTID's new history museum.

Recognizing significant events and people in NTID's history, the museum's development is being spearheaded by NTID Development & Alumni Relations in conjunction with the Dyer Arts Center and the Deaf Studies Archive at RIT's Wallace Center.

"We want to recognize the achievements of our alumni," says Gerry Buckley, NTID president. "This is a great way to accomplish that while also honoring NTID's long history of innovation in higher education for deaf and hard-of-hearing people."

The museum will have two parts: a new glass-walled conference room on the first floor, between the entrance to NTID's Lyndon Baines Johnson Hall and the Office of NTID Admissions; and a cutting-edge display area on the second floor adjacent to the President's Office.

"We want to activate our space as much as we can," says Tabitha Jacques, director of the Dyer Arts Center and one of the collaborators on the project. "Museums these days are doing exciting things with interactive exhibits, developing new kinds of places for people to both learn and work together, and discovering new ways to showcase history."

The first-floor glass-walled conference room will feature a Hall of Fame, recognizing notable alumni who have contributed to the NTID community as well as a donor wall featuring the names of those who give \$1,500 or more. Construction is slated to commence this winter.

"More than anything else, we want this museum to place our alumni front and center," says Loriann Macko, director of NTID alumni and constituent relations. "They're doing great things, both out in the world and here at NTID, and we want to recognize that."

The second-floor section of the museum will feature several exhibits highlighting significant events, diversity and student life, among other things. Eventually, seating areas for relaxation and socialization will be added.

"This is a great way to accomplish that while also honoring NTID's long history of innovation in higher education for deaf and hard-of-hearing people."

"Our goal is to see a significant change in that part of the second floor of LBJ," says Jacques. "We want it to become a welcoming environment for our students, alumni and families, while displaying all the great things the people of NTID have been responsible for through the years."

The museum came about through the advocacy of Samuel, '77, and Barbara Ray, '74, '84, Holcomb and will feature

photographs and artifacts from the Deaf Studies Archive at The Wallace Center and alumni donations. There will be displays showing various aspects of NTID history, such as the covers of "FOCUS" through the decades, and the digitized issues themselves will be available for browsing.

"One of the things we hope to show is the evolution of NTID and its community through the years," says Buckley. "What was life like for deaf and hard-of-hearing students before the digital age? How did students become empowered to take on leadership roles here on campus before doing the same in the real world? And how did NTID support that process?"

The museum's grand opening is scheduled during the 50th Anniversary Reunion Weekend, which will take place on campus June 28-July 1, 2018. In the meantime, NTID's Development & Alumni Relations office is currently accepting financial contributions for the museum.

More information can be found at: rit.edu/ntid/museum.



From the Archive Front covers of "FOCUS" issues from 1970.



2017 Apple Festival

RIT/NTID's Student Life Team sponsored the 19th annual Apple Festival in the Frisina Quad this fall. The annual event is part welcome for new students and part informational resource fair. Student clubs and organizations are available to talk with students and recruit new members. Students also are treated to all things apple, entertainment and games as they start the fall semester.



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PHOTO BY MARK BENJAMIN

Showcasing Latinx Art This fall, RIT/NTID's Dyer Arts Center presented "Arte del Corazón"—the first exhibit of its kind to spotlight Deaf Latinx artists.