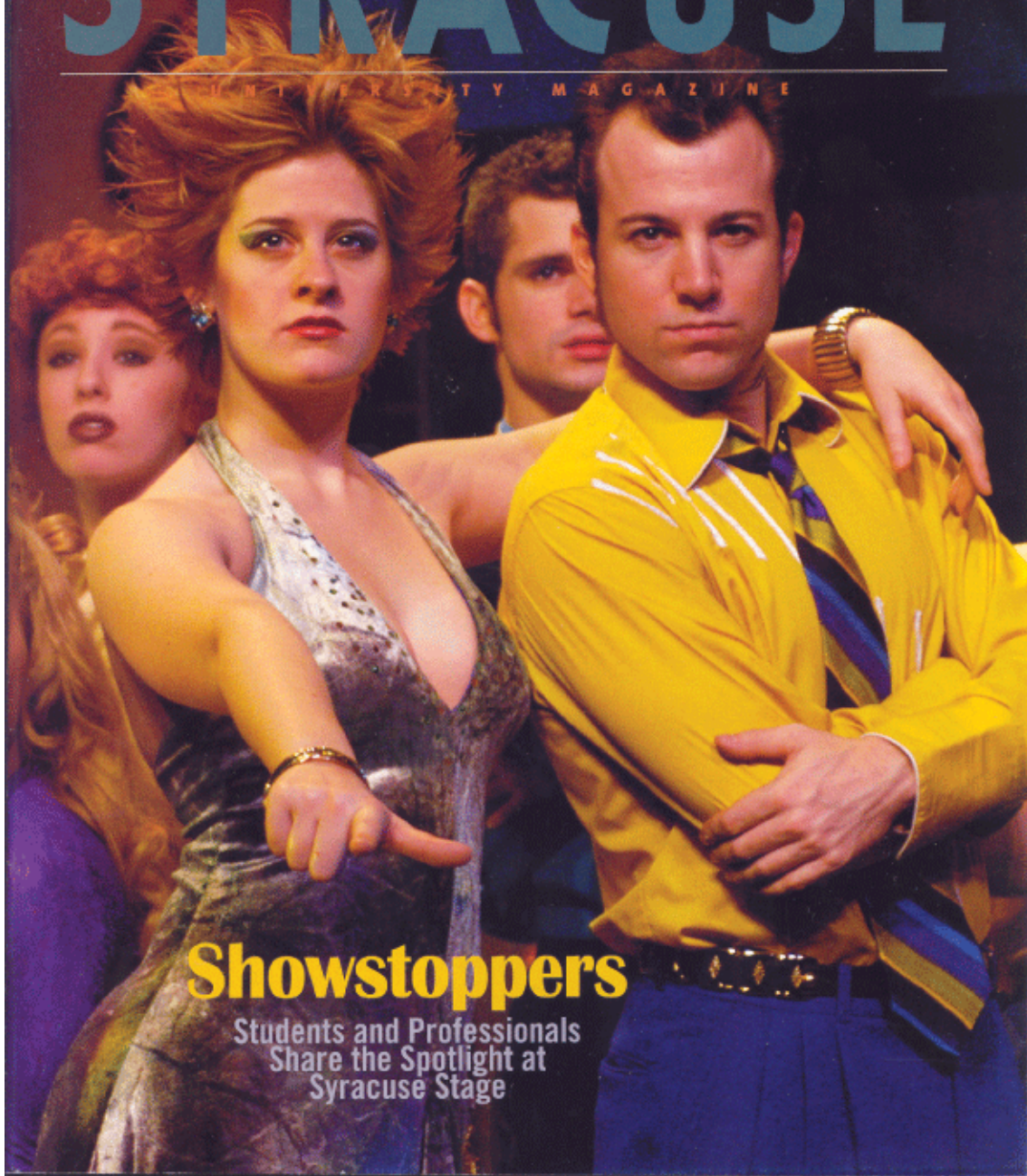


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SYRACUSE

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Showstoppers

Students and Professionals
Share the Spotlight at
Syracuse Stage

Worldwide Partnerships

In 1971, James J. DeCaro G'77 joined the faculty of a new technological college in upstate New York—the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at Rochester Institute of Technology.

At the time, DeCaro held bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering, and expected to stay at NTID for only a year or two before pursuing a Ph.D. in engineering. However, shortly after joining the faculty, DeCaro met and married Patricia A. Mudgett, an educator of students who are deaf. He remained at the institute and built his reputation as a respected teacher, instructional developer, department chair, and center director, and served as dean from 1985-98. "Destiny and luck played their hands and I found my life's work," says DeCaro, who earned a doctorate in instructional technology from the SU School of Education.

Today, after more than three decades at NTID, DeCaro knows his commitment to educating students who are deaf is far from over—and it now reaches around the globe. As a 1979-80 Rotary International Scholar at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in England, and a 1998-99 Senior Fulbright Scholar at Örebro University in Sweden, he witnessed the need around the world for educational technology for students who are deaf, and was inspired to become involved in international deaf education. He collaborated with Robert R. Davila G'72 (RIT vice president for NTID who was appointed to the National Council on Disability by President George W. Bush) to create partnerships with universities worldwide that will share knowledge for the benefit of students who are deaf studying in technological fields.

NTID pitched the pair's idea to The Nippon Foundation of Japan, which awarded the institute more than \$2 million in grants to create the



Postsecondary Education Network International (PEN-International). In turn, the organization has brought technology to thousands of students in Asia and the Pacific Rim. "Simply because of deafness, young people have been deprived of the social and economic benefits society has to offer," says DeCaro, the program's principal investigator and director. "PEN-International provides an opportunity to change those circumstances."

The grant program shares instructional technology and educational expertise with colleges in Russia, the Philippines, Japan, and China, where faculty members are being trained in educational technology. "Today we're faced with horrible events that are driving wedges between nations and peoples," DeCaro says. "Now, more than ever, we need multinational collaborative programming. We must work all the harder to build bridges for positive change."

—Kathleen S. Smith