

Alumni Spotlight — The 2000's



Alumni Spotlight: Adam Bowser '03

Adam Bowser graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2003 with a BA in history.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

I transferred to Pitt-Greensburg from another Pitt campus because it wasn't a good fit for me. I also had the opportunity to compete on the basketball team which was something that I always wanted to do.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

I was a commuter and resident.

What activities were you involved with as a student?

The men's basketball team and intramurals

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

I had a few very impactful people on campus who have helped me as a student in college and in my professional life. They are Karl Radday, Dave Washburn, Harry Bowser, Dan Swalga, David Nichols, Joel Sabadasz, Carl Poke, Beth Uhrinek, Kathleen Murray, and Heather Kabala.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

As a history major and political science minor, I enjoyed all of my Colonial American history classes with David Nichols. He had a dry sense of humor that I really enjoyed. I enjoyed my political science courses with Carl Poke, and I remember him walking into class with his

Styrofoam cup of coffee, and he also had a dry sense of humor. I think the social science courses are important for students to understand what has happened so they can try to avoid repeating events from the past, and I think it does a lot for critical thinking, which is important in today's workplace.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

I remember the road trips in the vans with my teammates and the bonds and friendships that were created. We had a good group of guys there who have all turned out to be pretty good men, fathers, husbands, and successful professionals.

What have you been up to since graduation?

I have been working in the education field, mostly in higher education. I have had the opportunity to work at Pitt-Greensburg and Point Park University. I am currently the Director of the Somerset Center for Penn Highlands Community College, where I was given the opportunity to open and grow a branch campus.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

I think learning how to communicate effectively, multi-task, use critical thinking, and build relationships have helped in my life going well after college. Being a student athlete, you needed to learn to juggle a lot, but you also got to meet many people and build a good network.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I have interviewed candidates for the full tuition scholarship, have attended a few alumni events, and have helped the men's basketball program, if possible.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Treat people the way you want to be treated, and be careful how much you give yourself to something because most places and people do not appreciate what you do.

For fun:

What is the last book you read?

The Carolina Way by Dean Smith

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I was recognized by two publications, a Top 10 Success Under 35 by *The Daily American*, and Foremost Under 40 by *Pennsylvania Business Central*, for my professional efforts and involvement in the community as a volunteer.
2. While at work, I'm in the public eye a lot and utilize my communication skills, but when I leave work, I like to do work with my hands.
3. I have never eaten a salad, but if you saw me, you could probably tell -- I am not a little fella.



Alumni Spotlight: Ashley Brocious '06

Ashley (Milchak) Brocious graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2006 with a BA in criminal justice.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

Several of my family members, including my mom and dad, were Pitt alum so growing up we always participated in Pitt events. When my great uncle went to Pitt, he was actually the Pitt Panther mascot! Since I can remember, I always wanted to go to Pitt, but did not want the large class sizes at the main campus so I chose Pitt-Greensburg.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

During my freshman year, I was a resident and lived in Robertshaw Hall. After my freshman year, I started working full time, moved off campus, and started commuting.

What activities were you involved with as a student?

As a student, I was involved in many of the art and drama activities and productions that took place on campus.

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

During my junior year, one professor, who no longer teaches at Pitt-Greensburg, stands out as one of my favorite professors. This particular professor taught drama/acting classes that I took while majoring in Art History. The professor not only made the classes fun, but she also encouraged and challenged me to step out of my comfort zone and try new things. If it was not for her, I would not have participated in many of the activities as I did while in school.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

I am not a fan of public speaking, and while in school I dreaded taking any public speaking courses. Looking back, I wish I would have taken more classes that involved public speaking, and would highly recommend everyone take one and push themselves to become comfortable speaking to large groups! Throughout my career, I have found that more often than not you will need to speak in front of groups, and this is a skill I wish I would have mastered or at least become more comfortable with before graduating.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

My most vivid memory from my time at Pitt-Greensburg was working on the set of *Faust* and making the costumes. It was such a fun opportunity, and I met and worked with so many talented people.

What have you been up to since graduation?

Since graduation, I married my husband Jesse (Brocius) '05, who I met at Pitt-Greensburg. We have two beautiful children, Evan James and Amelia Rose. I am currently employed as a Senior Cyber Defense Analyst for Citizens Bank and am the acting liaison with the National Cyber-Forensics and Training Alliance in Pittsburgh. In 2017 my husband and I, along with a long-time friend, opened an automotive garage, West Point Auto Works, in Greensburg PA.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

All of my experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg allowed me to quickly obtain a management position right after graduation in retail loss prevention. Due to the flexible class schedules I was able to work full-time while going to school full-time. Between the education I received and the real-world experience I obtained, I was well-prepared for my career.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

Over the years we have attended several events held on campus, and most recently, since we opened West Point Auto Works, we hosted a carwash with the Pitt-Greensburg Habitat for Humanity organization and plan to continue this in the future.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

My advice for current and future students would be to participate in as many activities as you can both on and off campus so you have the opportunity to meet people at school as well as in the community. The most important thing I learned along the way is that the connections you make both personally and professionally carry the most value. I would encourage any students to engage in the community and network with professionals as much as possible.

For Fun:

What series do you recommend alumni binge watch?

One of my all-time favorite shows that I recommend to binge watch would be *Psych* with James Roday and Dule Hill.

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. My husband and I currently own and are restoring a 1973 Datsun 240z.
2. I listen to Indie Hip Hop, and my favorite group is DoomTree from Minneapolis, MN. My husband and I have traveled all of the country to see them live, have met each member on more than one occasion, and are known as the “married couple from Pittsburgh.”
3. I saw 5 countries in 5 days and drove 1500 miles across Europe.



Alumni Spotlight: Dominick Domasky '00

Dominick Domasky graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2000 with a business management degree. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the strength of the business program, a sense of community, and the fact my sister who was a few years older attended Pitt-Greensburg and could be my tutor.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was ... beautiful campus with great people.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was ... without a doubt, hanging out with my friends, cramming for tests, and eating tiny pizzas at the Panther Paws.

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were ... Dr. Manning and Mrs. Kromer. Not only were they great teachers, but they took a personal interest in me. I can look back and admit I wasn't always the best student, but Dr. Manning and Mrs. Kromer always supported and encouraged me when I needed it most.

After Pitt-Greensburg ... I'm proud to say I've had a variety of careers. I started off working as a kitchen manager with the aspirations of owning my own restaurant. After some time learning

how to be a business owner at my father's landscape company, I took those lessons and my formal education and opened my very own restaurant.

That being said, I should have taken better notes. My restaurant closed after three years and that's when I started a career in sales. For nearly a decade I've been in commercial insurance sales, and I love working with passionate business owners to make sure their businesses continue to thrive.

My journey, my failures, my successes, and the lessons I learned from those who encouraged me, led me to pen my first inspirational book, *Don't Double Bread the Fish*, in 2013. Now, along with discussing proper insurance coverage with business owners, I can be found on the radio and television and speaking at special events about failure, persistence, and finding success.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association is ... my love for my school and my hometown. I am proud to have been born, raised, and educated in Greensburg. I know the students at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg have so much to offer the community, and I'm energized to be a part of it.

In my spare time ... I enjoy working on my daughter's jump shot (she's five) or playing sports and watching wrestling with my son. My wife and I took up golf for when we are not busy with the kids, which is never, so we also enjoy late nights watching recorded episodes of *Seinfeld* and *Jeopardy*.

My family and friends are ... the most supportive bunch. My family and friends are my rocks, and I can call any of them anytime and they'd drop everything to lend an ear or help me out if I was in need. My wife Liz (Atkison '00) doesn't get enough credit for all she does and has made me smile every day since before we walked the campus of Pitt Greensburg as students. Liz is the backbone of my family, and I'm honored and fortunate that she has stood by me and up for me through every decision I've made in the last eighteen years, good or bad.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... I'm additionally thankful to University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg for allowing JDRF to use its beautiful location for their annual fundraising walk. This means a lot to me because my son, Cameron, has been a Type-1 diabetic since he was three years old. I'd give anything to help my son and the little ones like him find a cure for Type 1. My gratitude for the University of Pittsburgh is unmatched because with support like theirs that dream will soon become a reality.



Alumni Spotlight: Timothy Fetter '02

Dr. Timothy Fetter graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2002 with a BS in Psychology and a minor in Sociology. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... I grew up in Greensburg and always liked the campus. I even played soccer there as a kid. I knew that I wanted to go to graduate school, so I wanted a big campus name. But, at age 18, I wasn't interested in living in a city or being on a huge campus. Pitt-Greensburg was a perfect fit. I got to have the big campus/city experience later when I worked on my master's degree.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg ... was being a place where I would be comfortable. Studying for me is a solitary activity, and there are many places on campus where you can sit alone and think without dealing with too much noise or distractions. It was great for me to have quiet spots available with some trees and scenery to study. I spent a good bit of time in the woods behind the sport's fields.

My favorite thing as a student was ... that the faculty was very accessible to the students. I'm not sure if it was the class size or the general atmosphere and culture, but I always enjoyed being able to have after-class conversations with the professors. Those conversations made learning very enjoyable and the material more applicable. Also, I met some of my best friends with whom I'm still very close with today at Pitt-Greensburg.

The faculty member who had the greatest influence on me was ... Dr. Daniel Milberg who was a psychology faculty member, now an associate professor emeritus, approached me during my freshman Intro to Psychology course to be his teaching assistant (TA). From my sophomore to senior year, I was his TA for four psychology courses. This not only allowed me to immerse myself in my major but also helped me gain teaching and course writing skills that would come in handy later as I started teaching at Pitt-Greensburg after completing my master's degree. It also allowed me to become closer to other psychology faculty, like Dr. Diane Marsh and Dr. Randi Koeske who offered me research opportunities with them during my senior year.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I ... moved to Pittsburgh to earn my Master of Social Work degree from the Pittsburgh campus. Upon my completion, I returned to Pitt-Greensburg to teach Introduction to Social Psychology for three semesters while working as a psychotherapist full time. During this time, I decided to change career paths and attend chiropractic school. I moved

to Davenport, Iowa, and attended Palmer College of Chiropractic. I graduated with a Doctor of Chiropractic degree in 2011. I then returned to Greensburg and opened my own practice, Trifecta Chiropractic and Wellness Center, LLC in 2012. My practice focuses heavily on neurological and stress-related conditions, in addition to musculoskeletal conditions and wellness lifestyle management. While starting my practice, I returned to psychotherapy and teaching psychology again at Pitt-Greensburg. So, even though I switched gears, my prior education was a tremendous help to me.

Currently I split my time between my practice and working for a company that teaches lifestyle management telephonically to people who are in chronic pain. While I don't have time to teach at Pitt-Greensburg anymore, I speak on campus approximately once a year to current and prospective students. I try to use my diverse background to show that not all paths are linear upon graduation and there are many exciting twists and turns in your future.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association is ... I feel connected to the University in a way that I'm not sure that I ever would have if I had lost contact after graduation. The campus has changed so much since I started in 1998. I find it exciting to see the campus grow in size, including new majors and the development of research centers. As a business owner in Greensburg, I am interested in the economic viability of this community, and I believe that Pitt-Greensburg is an invaluable part of the local economy and culture. The alumni association has many activities every year, and I love seeing some old faces and meeting new people.

In my spare time, I like to ... spend as much time in the woods and exercising outdoors as possible. One of the driving forces behind me living here is the Laurel Highlands. I spend a lot of time in the woods—hiking, running, mountain biking, and just enjoying the scenery. Beyond that, I stay busy with karate, strength training, yoga, reading, and weekly campfires.

My family ... is very active. I am very lucky to have married the love of my life and best friend, Gina Moon. I have two stepchildren and an Australian shepherd. An Aussie is a great investment if you want to ensure that you never fall out of shape or are looking for an excuse to start running.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... I was recently told that I'm middle aged. Although this is mathematically true since I'm half the average life expectancy for an American male, this shocked me because I don't feel that way mentally or physically. So, I will share my two new favorite quotes.

“How old would you be if you didn't know how old you are?”

-Satchel Paige

“Aging is inevitable, growing old is optional”

-Unknown, on a Buddhist temple in China



Alumni Spotlight: Kristin (Klocek) Guynn '06

Kristin (Klocek) Guynn graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2006 with a BA in communication. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... growing up in Mt. Pleasant, PA, I always knew about Pitt-Greensburg and frequently passed the beautiful fountain. But, I decided to travel a little further for school and attended Pitt-Johnstown for my freshman year. Over my first year there, I found that I wasn't completely happy. A few friends of mine attended Pitt-Greensburg, so I was able to visit them and see the campus. The campus was beautiful, the people were friendly, and it just felt right ... felt like home.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was ... the beauty of campus. It was also a perfect size – both the campus and the class sizes. I was also able to live in the Villages on campus. The Villages are such a beautiful residence hall unlike anything I had seen in colleges at that time. Then, once at the University, you realize how much the people care. The faculty and staff are all there to help you and guide you in the right direction through your college career. As I started my sophomore year, I realized that this place that once was considered “too close to home” was actually the perfect place to help me flourish as an individual and as a student.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was ... the time spent, adventures had, and relationships made with my roommates and friends. I have great memories of living in the Villages at both Athena and Apollo houses and late night trips to the Coffeehouse, especially for cold coffees. I also enjoyed my time as president of Lambda Pi Eta and working together with some amazing communication majors to plan a few great events on campus, in particular the Battle of the Bands and Art Show. Last, but certainly not least, having the first ever graduation to be held outdoors.

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were ... the communication faculty. They constantly strived to go above and beyond to ensure that we were prepared for our future in the field. Dr. Lillian Beeson was truly my mentor. She pushed me to be the best I could be. I feel that she helped me flourish as a student and kept me engaged in the classroom from day one. She also stressed the importance of acting as a professional and preparing quality papers and presentations. She truly wanted her students to succeed and also celebrated our successes. She encouraged me to pursue my internship and showed interest every step of the way.

Also, Dr. Anne Czerwinski was a great mentor both in the classroom and with Lambda Pi Eta, the communication studies honor society. Her Image Restoration course was by far my favorite class, and she was integral in helping me hone my analytical and writing skills. I am so grateful that I was able to have so many positive experiences in the classroom and for the faculty who pushed me to work hard to reach and see my potential.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... 84 Lumber Company to work in the marketing and promotions department. I then worked at Point Park University in public relations and also began my graduate studies. I obtained my MBA from Point Park in June 2009. In July 2009, I was blessed with the opportunity to work at Pitt-Greensburg as the on-line communications and development specialist where I helped to prepare, launch, and manage the website that you see today. I also worked on many of the social media platforms, on-line payments, and on-line fundraising. In September 2014, I began working as a sales manager at 1480 WCNS AM radio in Latrobe, PA. Then, in April, I transitioned to the station's parent company, Laurel Highland Total Communications (LHTC), to work as a marketing and promotions specialist. I work on marketing, social media, website updates, and special events for both 1480 WCNS and LHTC.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association is ... to not only give back, but what I gained at Pitt-Greensburg both as a student and past staff member is invaluable and I want to also share that sentiment with prospective students, current students, fellow alumni, and the community. It brings me great joy to come back to campus and participate in various events that make Pitt-Greensburg the special place that it is. I think it is important to stay engaged and to give back to the place that gave me so much.

In my spare time, I like to ... sing, typically at church for my parish in Mt. Pleasant, but I also sing for weddings. I enjoy photography. I love taking pictures of my daughter and family. I am also a senior independent Thirty-One gifts consultant, and I enjoy hosting parties and selling product. Most of all, I enjoy time spent with family and friends.

My family/friends are ... my everything! My husband Brian, 3-year-old daughter Gia, and my dachshund Rusty are my happiness in life. They certainly make my world go round. There is nothing better than experiencing life through the eyes of your child. Maybe she will even be a future Bobcat! I feel very blessed and am deeply grateful for the support and love from my parents, family, and friends!

Tell us something we didn't ask ... To students, enjoy every second of your time at Pitt-Greensburg. Respect and listen to your professors and take in as much information as you can. Don't be afraid to get involved. Pitt-Greensburg is a great place to flourish and grow. To alumni, stay involved after graduation. It is very rewarding to return back "home" and to work alongside fellow alumni and help impact young student lives as well. I'm so grateful that I was able to receive a college education and that I had such great experiences at Pitt-Greensburg. The experiences I had both in and out of the classroom helped make me who I am today.



Alumni Spotlight: Brandon Hreha '07

Brandon Hreha graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2007 with a BA in English writing.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was... the coziness of the campus. It's all neatly put together and gives this sense of closeness. Once I got here, I forgot about transferring to the Oakland campus.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was... that it has a wonderful atmosphere. Everyone I met during my tours were so friendly and informative.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was... Meeting up with friends before or after class. We had a big group, so we always found ourselves going to lunch, the mall, or studying.

The faculty member(s) who had the greatest influence on me was/were...most definitely Professor Vollmer (now retired) and Professor Jakiela. When either of them would speak, I made sure to listen. It always felt as if they cared so much about what they were doing.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to... become Assistant Manager of F.Y.E. at Monroeville Mall and then at the Westmoreland location.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University is... I was unhappy with the F.Y.E. job for various reasons and a friend told me that the Campus Store was looking to hire somebody so I applied. The rest is, as they say, history.

In my spare time, I like to... watch/discuss movies. I listen to records. I love to write short-stories and poems. I also love to read. I'm a low key kind of person.

My family/friends are... the most supportive people I know. I know they always have my back. I love them dearly.

Tell us something we didn't ask: My one big bucket list item is to see a baseball game in every MLB stadium. I have a few of them ticked off but still many to go. My two favorites so far have been Wrigley Field in Chicago and Fenway Park in Boston.



Alumni Spotlight: Gina Lauffer '04

Gina Lauffer graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2004 with a communication major and a psychology minor. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the option of obtaining a University of Pittsburgh degree close to home. Attending Pitt-Greensburg allowed me to save money while still receiving the recognition that comes with being a University of Pittsburgh graduate.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was ... that I felt instantly at home on the campus. The campus is beautiful but not intimidating.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was ... working on the student newspaper, which gave me a chance to meet people and to expand my writing skills. Seeing my articles in print gave me confidence, and I also had a lot of fun.

The faculty/staff members who had the greatest influence on me were ... Professor Lillian Beeson and Beth Tiedemann, director of Career Services.

Professor Beeson taught several of the courses required for my communication major, and she became a mentor to me. Looking back, so much of what Professor Beeson taught has stayed with me and helped me become successful. Along with Professor Beeson, Beth Tiedemann encouraged me to pursue my dream of becoming a lawyer, even though the process and cost of attending law school seemed to make that dream impossible at the time. Having these two amazing educators believe in me and encourage me made me start to believe that my dream could become a reality. Once I finally believed it, I started taking steps to make it a reality!

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... work as a paralegal at a law firm in Pittsburgh for four years. During that time, I gained experience in the legal field and it solidified my determination to apply to law school. I applied to Widener University School of Law in Harrisburg, PA, in 2007, and I attended that school as a part-time evening student from 2008-2012. As a student, I worked during the day and attended classes in the evening. My schedule was not easy, but it helped me develop the grit that has made it possible for me to succeed.

After graduating from law school, I worked as a litigator at a small private law firm in Harrisburg. As a new lawyer, I handled many types of cases, ranging from divorce and custody cases to real estate contract disputes. The skills taught in my communication courses at Pitt-

Greensburg proved invaluable as I began my legal career, because effectively communicating with clients, other attorneys, and with judges is an essential part of advocacy. By September of 2014, I accepted a position as a prosecutor in the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement. My current job has been both challenging and rewarding, but I can honestly say that it's a great fit for me.

My reason for staying connected to the University is ... that I realize how much I benefitted from attending college at Pitt-Greensburg, and I want others to have the same great opportunities that were provided to me.

In my spare time, I like to ... take spinning and kickboxing classes at my gym. I also love to spend time with my friends and family, to travel, and to participate in the activities and volunteer opportunities available at my local bar association.

My family/friends are ... big Pitt fans! My brother, Chad Lauffer, and two of my best friends, Kristin Snyder and Ali Bach, graduated from the University of Pittsburgh, and my fiancé, Ryan Miller, is a huge Pitt football fan.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... On October 22, 2016, I am getting married at the Pitt-Johnstown campus. Although I'm a proud Pitt-Greensburg alum, Ryan is from Johnstown, so we met in the middle and decided on UPJ. We are both extremely excited to incorporate Pitt into our big day, and our wedding colors are navy blue and gold.



Alumni Spotlight: Melissa (Brandt) Marion '05

Melissa (Brandt) Marion graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2005 with a history major and a secondary education minor. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the beautiful campus and that I had older friends who enjoyed attending Pitt-Greensburg.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was ... nervousness. I didn't enjoy my living situation at all and didn't feel connected. I made it a priority to meet other people and become involved. Eventually, I moved into a new living arrangement, which was much better—one of those roommates became one of my lifelong best friends. I quickly became involved, made many other friends, and felt "at home." I think many freshman students encounter this their first few weeks. It's important to encourage students to give it some time and find a way to become connected.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was ... my involvement with student activities. These are some of my favorite memories and the friendships from that are forever. Playing soccer (even though I wasn't very good) was one of the best things I could have done. I met my best friends and my husband through soccer. I was president of the Student Athletic Advisory Council for two years, and we created a pen-pal program with fifth graders that culminated with a field trip to our campus for a whole day of activities based around teamwork and athletics. I felt like that was one way we could give back to the community. I also loved being a part of the Student Government Association, movies on the lawn, sporting events, Village activities, and eating brunch on the weekends with friends.

The faculty member(s) who had the greatest influence on me were ... Dr. David Nichols, Dr. Pilar Herr, and Dr. Melissa Marks.

I absolutely loved Dr. Nick and his American history classes. Dr. Herr was phenomenal, as well, and I enjoyed learning so much about Latin American history. Lastly, Dr. Marks was and still is a great role model—her education classes were some of my favorites.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... obtain my secondary teaching certificate at St. Vincent College and student taught at Greensburg-Salem Middle School. While attending school, I worked part-time at the Greensburg YMCA, which I loved. When I graduated, I was offered a full-time job at my hometown YMCA in Cranberry Twp., PA, and worked there as the youth and family director for over seven years. During my time there, I fell in love with nonprofit work and fundraising. After I completed my master's degree in community leadership at Duquesne University, I was happy to take a position at Monongahela Valley Hospital as the director of fund development. My husband, Brett ('05), and I now live in South Park, PA, with our 2-year-old daughter, Mila.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association is ... to give back. When I think about the leadership skills and confidence I have, it is because of the person I became while at Pitt-Greensburg. I am so thankful for the opportunities I had in college, the lessons I learned, and the friendships I made. I am hoping I can give back to the school that helped make me the person I am today.

In my spare time, I like to ... travel. My husband and I have been to various cities in Europe, Africa, Mexico, Latin America, Canada, and the United States. I want to see the entire world one place at a time. I also like to host parties and enjoy time with friends and family. And, I'd like to think I'm pretty crafty.

My family/friends are ... my everything. I'm thankful every day for my family and friends. My husband is always supportive, and we always have so much fun together. My mom is amazing. She has and will always be there for me. She has taught me how to be a compassionate person, how to think about others before myself, and to work hard. She and I have the best time together, and she is the best grandma to Mila. Brett and I love spending time with friends—whether it's traveling, holiday parties, or getting together for our kids' birthday parties. We always enjoy time with friends.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... During one year at Pitt-Greensburg, I was actually asked to be the announcer for the basketball games! I knew very little about basketball, and it was definitely something that put me outside of my comfort zone. It taught me, though, to have confidence in myself and that I could do anything if I had to. I certainly was not the best announcer Pitt-Greensburg has ever heard (maybe even the worst), but I did make it through several games and had a few laughs about it!



Alumni Spotlight: Bryan McCarthy '02

Bryan McCarthy graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2002 with a BA in Humanities. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The things that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg were ... the need for a place that was both affordable and close to home and work. Since I had to pay for tuition myself and couldn't get any financial aid, I was working two jobs to make it happen. (I'm now recalling some funny memories of changing into work clothes while driving that are almost as bad as texting while driving, a problem the world didn't have then.) Living on campus somewhere just wouldn't have fit into that picture.

I also wanted very badly to be a writer and Pitt-Greensburg had the best programme in the area; I think it still does. That's what decided the question amongst the cheaper local schools.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was ... it was like a writer's retreat centre—pretty and quiet. I've always been a sucker for beauty, so I liked the trees and the stream. And, I loved Lynch Hall.

My fondest memory as a student was ... talking to professors in their offices. The chats burned into my memory are those with Dr. William Rued about religion, with Prof. Stephen Murabito about jazz and music in general, and with Dr. Richard Blevins (who's now retired) about God-knows-what crazy topic.

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were ... the three mentioned in the previous question, but I'd also have to add Dr. Nancy Estrada. I was really sad when she died. I was living out of the country at the time and wished I'd gotten to see her more recently. She was incredible: an indefatigable optimist, a joy to be around, fantastic at explaining things, and a tireless champion of student talent.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... a lot of things. I travelled internationally, went to grad school (two master's degrees—M.Div. and S.T.M.—at Yale and my D.Phil. is from Oxford), learned to tango, joined a yoga school. There are so many great things to do in life; it's sad that we can't do more of them.

My reason for staying connected to the University is ... I'm on the faculty.

In my spare time, I like to ... explore Asian philosophies and practice, so I devote quite a bit of time to that. And, I try to read everything I can get my hands on, plus go to the cinema and listen to music.

My family members/friends are ... conversation partners. Conversing is a pleasure that never gets old and at which you can never get too adept. I never feel closer to my friends and family than when I'm having one of those sparkling conversations with them.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... I'm reading Don Quixote at the moment. I think it's going to become my favorite book.



Alumni Spotlight: Jackie McGrail '02

Jackie McGrail graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2002 with a BA in Business Management. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... that my husband graduated from there in 1995.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg ... was that I felt that this was the right fit for me. I had recently moved to the area and would be a non-traditional student. Once I made my visit to the campus, everyone was so friendly and helpful it made finishing my degree easier.

My favorite thing as a student was ... the friends that I have made as fellow students, professors, and the staff at the college. I recently participated in a recruiting event at the campus, and I ran in to some professors that I had, and it was nice to reminisce with them.

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were ... a lot of great professors and staff members at Pitt-Greensburg who helped me prepare for my career. There were many at Pitt-Greensburg that had a great influence on me, such as Beth Tiedemann, Margaret Rechter, and Pamela Ondeck. I am very thankful for all the guidance that I received from the staff members, professors, and alumni during my time at Pitt-Greensburg and after.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... work as a Service Manager for FedEx Ground. I held the position for about seven years and then took some time off for my family. I am now currently working for Spherion Staffing as a Staffing Specialist. I have also volunteered at my church, my daughter's activities, and other charitable events in my community. I feel it is important to give back.

My reason for staying connected to the University is ... that I enjoyed my time at Pitt-Greensburg and wanted to give back. While I was attending Pitt-Greensburg, many different events were offered that helped me prepare for my career. So coming back to speak with students gives me the opportunity to give them some guidance for their future endeavors. I hope that the one thing that I can teach them is that it is so important to take advantage of the different opportunities that are offered and to "think outside the box."

In my spare time, I like to ... spend time with my family and friends. Also, I enjoy volunteering for different charities that benefit the community and youth. It is important to give back and to help others. I hope that by doing this it sets an example for my daughter, but also the other people that we help that they can come back and do the same.

My friends and family are ... why throughout my life I feel I have been very fortunate. I have a loving husband and daughter, family, friends, and some incredible people who I have met in my life. I am very thankful for the people who have helped me along the way and hope that I can do the same for others.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... mostly I am thankful for the sense of accomplishment I received from obtaining my degree at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg.



Alumni Spotlight: Michael Moore '08

Michael Moore graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2008 with a BS in Business Management. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... its proximity to Pittsburgh and the small campus.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg ... was how very friendly everyone was and that the students seemed to have great relationships with the faculty.

My favorite thing as a student was ... meeting new friends and developing relationships that I still have today.

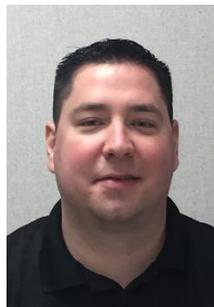
The faculty member who had the greatest influence on me was ... Pamela Ondeck. I struggled at the beginning of my accounting course. I spent some time with her and, after a couple sessions, I was able to fully grasp the concept. Accounting became one of my favorite courses.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... work for BNY Mellon as a trade specialist, then to Liberty Mutual Insurance as a sales representative. Currently, I am with Henderson Brothers where I sell personal insurance specializing in high net worth and affluent families.

In my spare time, I like to ... golf, cook, and read.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association is ... to give back to the University that gave me so much. I want to do what I can to help the students be stronger candidates for the workforce.

Tell us something about your recent experience as an alumni volunteer ... Participating in Mock Interview Night was an amazing experience. It was exciting to meet and discuss the goals of the students. It was great to be back on campus. It brought back great memories, and it was nice to see everything that has changed.



Alumni Spotlight: Scott W. Smith '05

Scott W. Smith graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2005. He majored in criminal justice and minored in psychology. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the small and welcoming campus. I wanted to go to a smaller university since I graduated from a small private high school with 19 other students.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg ... was the beautiful campus.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was ... building great relationships with several fellow classmates who I am still very close to this day.

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were ... Elizabeth M. Marciniak, Ph.D., and Franklin David Wilson, Ph.D.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... work for Buckeye International, Inc. Buckeye International, Inc. is a chemical manufacturer that makes floor finishes, cleaners, degreasers, hand soaps and hand sanitizers. I have been with the company for nine years now. I started as a sales representative then worked my way up to the manufacturer's representative for the Pittsburgh, northern West Virginia, and central Pennsylvania territory. Four years ago, I was promoted to my current position of general manager for the Buckeye Cleaning Center of Pittsburgh located in Export, PA.

My reason for staying connected to the University is ... I have fond memories of the faculty members and my classmates. All of the staff were extremely helpful in molding my career. I could see that they were there to not only teach but to help us become successful in whatever career our futures held.

In my spare time, I ... travel and play golf. I have travelled to many different countries throughout the Caribbean.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... Gaining my bachelor's degree was extremely important to my success with Buckeye International, Inc. Even though I do not work in the field in which I graduated, without having my degree, I could not work for Buckeye International. Buckeye does not hire anyone without a minimum of a bachelor's degree. So my advice to any student, especially those who are close to graduation, who may have a change of heart on the degree they have chosen or the field they want to work in—Do Not Worry. A degree shows that you have determination and that you can complete difficult goals and that is exactly what graduating shows employers.



Alumni Spotlight: David Tintera '05

David Tintera graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2005 with an applied mathematics major and a computer science minor. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the more personal class sizes, the chance to continue to play soccer, and that my brother was currently there.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was ... beautiful campus with very nice faculty and staff.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was ... meeting my wife Meghan (Ferris '05), playing soccer, and the informal study abroad trip to Scotland in the spring of 2004.

The faculty member(s) who had the greatest influence on me were ... Dr. Mary Grace O'Donnell and Dr. Dean Nelson.

Dr. O'Donnell happened to be the faculty member I met with when I took a tour of the campus, and then she continued to guide me throughout my four years there. She recommended me for a tutoring job at the Learning Resources Center, helped me get an internship, and then she played a part in me choosing my senior research project.

Another faculty member that had a great influence on me was Dr. Nelson. His statistics class was very beneficial to me for the career path I was hoping to take. Then after the class, I was able to take advantage of an internship opportunity analyzing data with Dr. Nelson and put to use the information I had just learned. Overall, the internship was a great experience.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... work at Westinghouse Electric Company as an electrical engineering aide in the fall of 2005. I remained there for about five years while still working towards my dream career, which is an actuary. I studied on my own and passed two of the actuarial exams. In 2007, I met with an actuary who owns the Hawley Consulting Group. I started doing little projects for him on the side, so I could learn the business and gain some experience for future job prospects. Then, in February of 2011, he offered me a full-time job, and I have been working there ever since. I am so grateful for the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg for expanding my knowledge in mathematics, which allowed me to pursue my dream career.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association is ... to support the University that helped me get to this point in my life, so that it can continue to provide a quality education to current and future students.

In my spare time, I like to ... spend time with my family, play soccer (still with most of the guys I played with at Pitt-Greensburg), golf, and, and get together with my Pitt-Greensburg friends for various parties, although they are mostly our children's parties now.

My family/friends are ... the best part of my life. I wouldn't be where I am today without everyone in my life. My parents have supported my soccer "habit" since I started playing at the age of four, and now I have the added support of my wife and daughter.

All of my family and friends are also willing to lend a hand. This is especially true right now since my wife, daughter, and I are in the process of moving into a new house, and we were able to count on our family and friends for help.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... Being at Pitt-Greensburg was four of the best years of my life. I think that there are several benefits of being a student on a smaller campus. I think the smaller class sizes help to provide a better education because there is more interaction between faculty and students. I also think a small campus provided an opportunity for me to meet and become friends with a lot more people. Because of the closeness that it provides, I am still friends with most of them today.



Alumni Spotlight: Jana (Giallonardo) Valentine '01

Jana (Giallonardo) Valentine graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2001 with a BA in communication. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the feeling of community on campus. The faculty and staff were always so friendly. You were more than just a number at an institution; you were an individual.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was ... that it was a beautiful campus, but I originally wanted to go to Oakland. After the end of my first semester, I no longer wanted to transfer. I had gotten involved on campus, and I loved the community. I commuted to campus for my first two

years before I became a resident assistant. It was great to experience both commuter and residence life.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was ... difficult to choose—there are so many great memories from being a student. But, one of my greatest memories was during my junior year and my first year as an RA in Rossetti International House. Dr. Estrada had arranged for a dance group from Guanajuato, Mexico, to perform on campus. She had also brought back costumes from her travels to Mexico. The Spanish Club and residents of the International Academic Village were able to dress up in authentic clothing to host the event. Afterward, the members of the dance group stayed in Rossetti International House with the residents. We were able to practice speaking Spanish and engage in another culture.

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were ... from the Communication program. Dr. Whatule, Dr. Beeson, and Dr. Waxwood challenged me to think more critically and to do my best work. Through their feedback, I became a better presenter and writer. They encouraged me to apply to graduate school, and I continue to use the presentation skills and communication theories that they taught in my career and in life. Furthermore, Dr. Estrada had a significant impact on me as well. Not only did she teach me in the classroom, but she encouraged my leadership development as the first RA in the International Village (originally housed in Rossetti House). Her ability to link classroom learning with co-curricular opportunities was second to none. The way she approached advising students has inspired the way that I work with students today.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... attend Indiana University of Pennsylvania for my master's degree in student affairs in higher education. My first professional position after graduate school was at the University of Pittsburgh (Oakland campus) as a resident director. I then returned to Pitt-Greensburg from 2006-2010 as the director of campus activities and Academic Village advisor. I left Pitt-Greensburg in 2010 to become the director of residence life at Chatham University, and I'm now at Providence College as the director of residence life.

I greatly enjoyed my time working at Pitt-Greensburg in campus activities. The Student Services staff lead by Rick Fogle is a talented team of professionals that truly have student development as the focus in all that they do. When I think back to my freshman year during the fall of 1997, I'm amazed at how much Student Services has grown over the years and how the department continues to advance.

My reason for staying connected to the University is ... that Pitt-Greensburg helped me find my passion in life. Before serving as a work study in the Office of Student Services, I did not know that student affairs even existed as a profession. Ginny Kemerer, who was formerly an administrative coordinator in Student Services, encouraged me to get involved on campus which made me step outside of my comfort zone. If the Student Services staff would not have encouraged me to join the Spanish Club, Presidential Ambassadors, and Lambda Pi Eta, or apply for the orientation leader and resident assistant positions, I would not have entered the field of student affairs. My goal is to provide the same support to the students that I work with that the Pitt-Greensburg Student Services staff did for me. I like to stay involved because it is a small

way of saying thank you. Since I'm no longer local, I'm also excited about the new opportunities that the PGAA provides for keeping those of us who are out of state connected.

In my spare time, I like to ... volunteer for the Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative by assisting adults in preparing for the citizenship test. A fun fact is that I kept my old Spanish book from Dr. Estrada's class, and I occasionally refer to it as I prepare for citizenship class.

My family/friends are ... my sister, Gina Coppula, who is also a Pitt-Greensburg alum!

Tell us something we didn't ask ... When I reflect on my experience as a student and former staff member at Pitt-Greensburg, I think about all of the wonderful individuals who make a difference. From the staff in the dining hall, to the physical plant workers who keep the campus beautiful, to those in academic advising, etc., etc., etc. Pitt-Greensburg has wonderful people who make the campus a great community to be a part of.



Alumni Spotlight: Jennifer (Beaver) '01 and Bill '99 Viola Jr.

Jennifer (Beaver) Viola graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2001 with a BS in Business Management. Bill Viola Jr. graduated summa cum laude in 1999 with a BS in Political Science and Sociology minor.

Recently celebrating their 10th wedding anniversary, Bill and Jenn met while students at Pitt-Greensburg. Bill said that meeting Jenn was his fondest memory on campus, along with the Spring Flings and school trips to New York City. Jenn added that the wedding party photos were taken in front of the campus' fountain.

Both Jenn and Bill were working when they were drawn to Pitt-Greensburg. Jenn said she had a "great job" as a manager at Comtel Communications, so she wanted to stay close to home. Bill was teaching martial arts full-time. He said the campus was "the perfect fit in proximity while offering me solid pre-law options."

Bill said the campus had a “hometown feel.” His first impression was the friendliness, as he saw a lot of familiar faces from the Norwin and Hempfield areas that made the transition very easy. Jenn agreed that the campus was welcoming and “not overwhelming.”

Ecology of the Rocky Mountains—a weeklong field study—with Dr. Tim Savisky was one of Jenn’s favorite memories as a Pitt-Greensburg student, which she was able to share with some of her closest friends, including now-husband Bill, Addie (Viola) Krisfalusy ’01, and Jenna (Reamer) O’Shell ’02. She also enjoyed her time in Japanese class with “Sensei” Vitaly: “He encouraged me to take a leadership role in the Bushido Club where I became president.”

“Without a doubt,” Bill recalled Dr. Carl Poke as the faculty member who had the greatest influence on him. “He inspired me to be a better student and set me up as an intern with Federal Congressman Ron Klink of the Pennsylvania 4th District in North Huntingdon,” Bill said. “Dr. Poke was a great mentor and advisor who helped me realize my potential.” He added that “you had to respect a man who could rock the bow tie like Dr. Poke!”

Immediately after graduation, Bill established his own production company, Kumite Classic Entertainment Corp. Under its umbrella, he produces fitness expos and martial arts events, publishes magazines and books, and offers talent management services in the Pittsburgh region. He earned membership into SAG-AFTRA (Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) and has had the distinction of being an Amazon-bestselling author. To this day, he still teaches at the same karate school (Allegheny Shotokan) that his father established in 1969 and loves being Sensei. He recently launched a life-skills based curriculum called *Sensei Says*.

Bill said that these days his biggest inspiration is his daughter, Gabriella (Gabby) Capri Viola: “She just started kindergarten and is active in karate, swimming, and piano.” Gabby inspired Jenn to start her own business, 123 Mommy and Me, a child-parent bonding class. Following graduation, Jenn continued her education and received a master’s degree in Elementary Education. Today, she teaches children social skills through music, movement, and art. And, in her spare time, she likes to stay active, stating, “I love working out and keeping up with the latest trends in fitness and nutrition.”

In his spare time, Bill likes to write. He said, “I have a new self-help book series in development called *CommonSensei* that offers advice to young people who are ready to take on the world. I also enjoy staying active in the film industry both as a writer, consultant, and producer. My most recent work is *Tough Guys* (2017), which was inspired by my book *Godfathers of MMA*.”

As to why Bill and Jenn are interested in staying connected to Pitt-Greensburg, Bill said, “The University represents my roots. I love Western Pennsylvania and the opportunities this region has given me. I own and operate Pittsburgh’s largest multi-sport convention and fitness expo, but few people know that my first Kumite Classic event was hosted at Pitt-Greensburg in the gymnasium. Pitt-Greensburg was my springboard.”

