

MERRIMACK

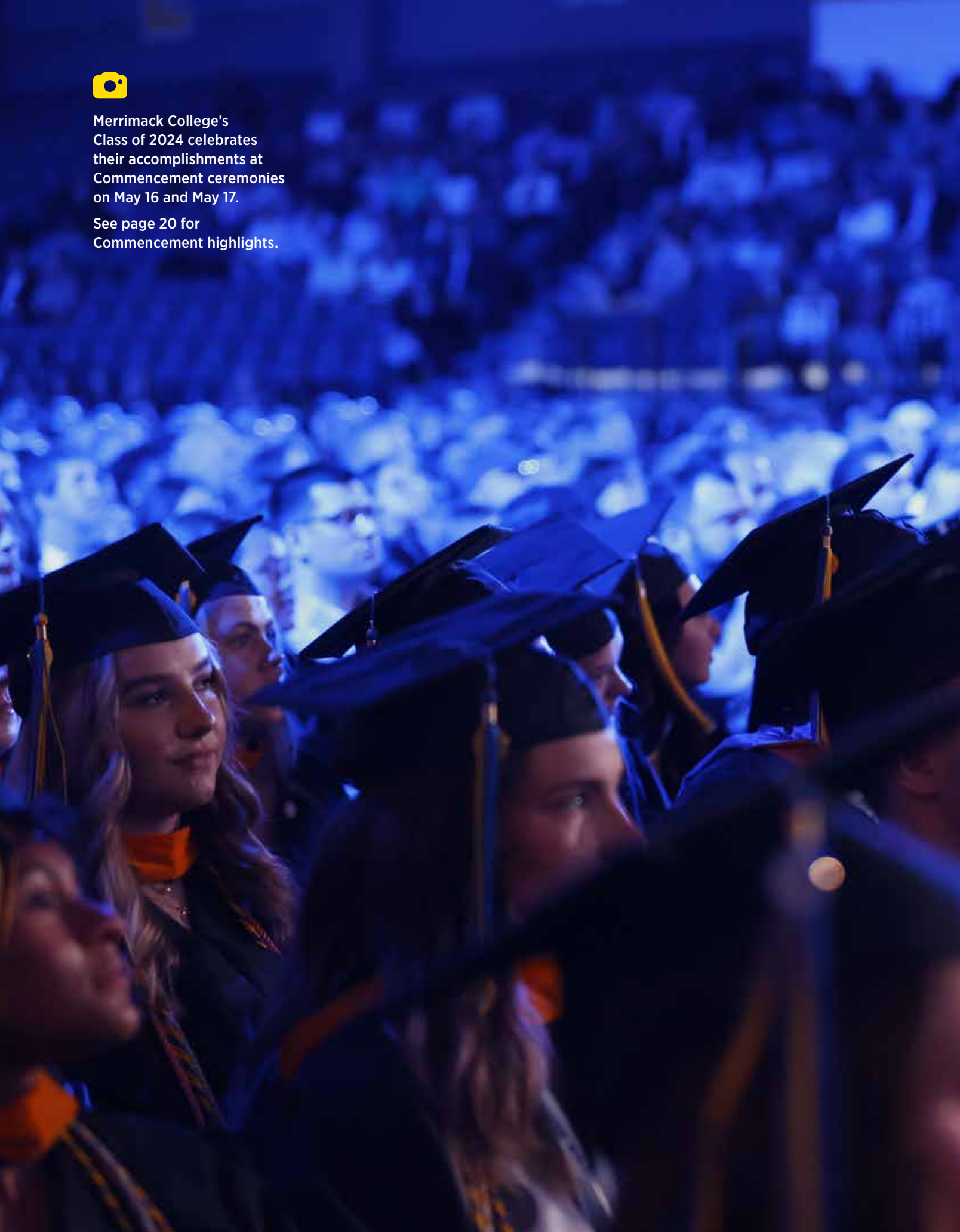
MAGAZINE | SUMMER 2024





Merrimack College's
Class of 2024 celebrates
their accomplishments at
Commencement ceremonies
on May 16 and May 17.

See page 20 for
Commencement highlights.





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FEATURE

The New Frontier in American Higher Education

Accessible and affordable, what a new three-year degree program will look like at Merrimack.

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FEATURE

Remembering Fr. Jim

Celebrating a great mentor, colleague and Augustinian.

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Women's Bowling Makes History

The women's bowling team is the first Merrimack team to make the NCAA Tournament.



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On the cover: The Class of 2024 marks the end of its academic journey at Merrimack during Commencement ceremonies.

“(Meeting Pope Francis) was a remarkably profound, humbling and spiritual experience. We will forever treasure having heard the Holy Father reflect on Merrimack’s educational mission rooted in the Augustinian Catholic tradition.”

– President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D.



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Feedback: We want to hear from you! Please share your thoughts, insights, recollections and photos. Include your name, graduation year, address and daytime phone number. Due to volume, we regret that we cannot respond to every message.

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MERRIMACK

A Magazine for Our
Alumni, Parents and Friends
Summer 2024

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MERRIMACK
COLLEGE



“Spurred by a passion for scholarship, a commitment to student growth and a deep understanding of the impact of Augustinian values, the accomplishments we mark today and the opportunities they will bear in the future will reverberate stronger and stronger across campus, the Merrimack Valley and the nation.”

Defying the Trends

Dear Merrimack College Community,

Once again, Merrimack College experienced a tremendous academic year that saw transformative growth across academics, research, student life, experiential learning and campus planning. And more exciting are the future opportunities and aspirations we are strongly positioned to pursue thanks to the accomplishments in 2023–24.

Of course, we as an institution are not immune to the numerous challenges colleges and universities face across the United States. But what differentiates us from the growing number of institutions merging or closing is our ability to respond, adapt and advance.

In this edition of the Merrimack Magazine, you will read about some of the ways Merrimack is forgoing outdated expectations for higher education and for the College itself. From new three-year baccalaureate-level degree programs to the opening of a state-of-the-art research facility, Merrimack is demonstrating the ingenuity and forward-thinking required for today's colleges and universities to thrive.

At the same time, we remain committed to the Augustinian Catholic intellect that is the ethos of our mission and was cultivated by incredible individuals such as the Rev. James Wenzel, O.S.A., whose life we honor and celebrate in this magazine.

Spurred by a passion for scholarship, a commitment to student growth and a deep understanding of the impact of Augustinian values, the accomplishments we mark today and the opportunities they will bear in the future will reverberate stronger and stronger across campus, the Merrimack Valley and the nation.

As wonderful as new programs, new spaces and new opportunities are, what they represent as a whole is far more significant. They are achievements earned through a collective understanding that in many cases, the limits of reason can be bent, pushed or even broken. Fearlessness, innovation and rejection of the status quo are the driving forces of Merrimack's rise in the echelons of American higher education.


These are the characteristics that make me proud to be part of this Merrimack community and grateful for everything that every Warrior does on behalf of the College.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Hopey', written in a cursive style.

Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D.
President

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Follow us:     

ANOTHER MEMORABLE SEMESTER

IN THE BOOKS!



Merri-ly We Roll Along

INSTAGRAM



Day With the Dean: Volleyball Edition

Follow along as @merrimackmbv teaches Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students Becky Jimenez a few things about the game!



Now that she has her bachelor's degree in biology, Sedona Gillard '24 plans on pursuing a master's in marine vertebrate ecology and conservation at the University of Exeter in London. Before graduating from Merrimack this May, she spent her final semester interning at @newenglandaquarium!

FACEBOOK



On **International Women's Day**, we recognize and celebrate the Warriors whose success has flourished in the classroom, the lab, the game and beyond. What you're doing today makes Merrimack students of the past incredibly proud and inspires the ones who will follow.



Merrimack's band, dance and cheer teams had another successful trip to **Daytona!** They brought serious Warrior spirit to the NCA and NDA College Nationals and earned some impressive results after competing at the Division I level for the first time. Congratulations, Warriors!



LINKEDIN



Thank you to Merrimack College alum Lauren Belmonte '05 and her team at **Change is Simple Inc.** for coming to campus today to showcase the SCiLL mobile learning lab!



THE NEW FRONTIER IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Affordability. Acceleration. Opportunity.
That is what the new three-year
baccalaureate-level degree programs
Merrimack College will soon launch
promise to provide to future students.

A throughline of Merrimack College's transformative success for more than a decade is a commitment to adaptability, innovation and progression. This is why it should come as no surprise that when the time came to seriously explore the next iteration of a college degree, Merrimack College took on the challenge to revolutionize American higher education.

Looking backward in American history and abroad to colleges and universities around the world, Merrimack College found inspiration to design a simple, but innovative, degree for today's modern college student.

After more than three years of hard work, research, curriculum design and accreditation review, Merrimack will soon launch four new 96-credit three-year baccalaureate-level degree programs, making it one of the first institutions in the United States to offer such degrees.

These programs will significantly increase access to higher education and substantially reduce the time and cost to earn a degree, while still providing a rigorous secondary educational experience for students that will translate to better outcomes. Known as applied bachelor's degrees, three-year degrees at Merrimack will be offered in business administration, psychology, criminal justice and communication.



3

year baccalaureate-level degree programs

100+

institutions will be recruited by the Exchange

75

colleges and universities in New England will be recruited by Merrimack

“Earning a college degree in four years is not canon,” said Merrimack College President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D. “Higher education must adapt to be a more accessible and affordable version of itself. Providing a rigorous and transformative academic experience that takes less time to complete will help to accomplish this goal.”

The journey to three-year degrees began in earnest in 2020 with the launch of College-In-3, an innovative endeavor developed by Robert Zemesky, a professor of higher education at the University of Pennsylvania, and Lori Carrell, chancellor of the University of Minnesota at Rochester. Dr. Hopey and Dr. Zemesky go back more than 25 years when Dr. Hopey was a doctoral student studying under Dr. Zemesky. This new initiative sought to bring a select group of higher education institutions, accreditors and organizations together to conceptualize and pilot three-year baccalaureate-level degree programs. Merrimack College became an early adopter and one of the original 13 institutions who agreed to this grand experiment in 2020 in the height of the pandemic.

For Merrimack’s part, a working group comprised of the Office of the Provost, deans, vice presidents and faculty was convened in fall 2021 with the charge from President Hopey that there were no restrictions when it came to designing a three-year degree model.

“This is the first real new credential in the United States since the associate degree,” explained Jonathan Lyon, executive vice provost for academic affairs. “At Merrimack, we had a collaborative and thorough process because everything was on the table. There were candid and thoughtful conversations, as we wanted to ensure from the student perspective that the student who gets this credential is positioned for success after college the same way a student with a four-year degree.”

As the conversations and curriculum modeling progressed at Merrimack, the working group found the best version for the College would be a 96-credit program that would include course requirements for majors, general education course requirements and experiential learning opportunities, Lyon noted. Unlike a traditional four-year

degree, which is 120 credits, Merrimack’s applied bachelor’s will have limited opportunities for electives, minors, double majors and study abroad, thus lowering the time and costs to a degree.



“ These conversations will be catalysts for reimagining undergraduate education using evidence-based practices to inform the variety of designs that are not only shorter and less expensive but potentially better.”

– Lori Carrell, chancellor of the University of Minnesota at Rochester

COLLEGE-IN-3 EXCHANGE

After significant advancement in the development of three-year baccalaureate-level degrees by the College-In-3 pilot institutions, a new national higher education innovation incubator was launched in April to provide support and resources for other colleges and universities interested in similar programs.

The announcement of the College-In-3 Exchange was made during a two-day conference hosted by Merrimack College that brought together higher education leaders from across the country. The Exchange seeks to recruit 100 or more institutions across the United States that are interested in developing and piloting three-year baccalaureate-level degree programs to improve access and reduce costs.

“These conversations will be catalysts for reimagining undergraduate education using evidence-based practices to inform the variety of designs that are not only shorter and less expensive but potentially better,” said Lori Carrell,

chancellor of the University of Minnesota at Rochester, during the conference. “And by better, we mean we aspire for more students to learn more deeply and to successfully complete their degrees and launch their careers.”

The College-In-3 Exchange will design, test and seek regulatory approval for programs that lead to a three-year bachelor’s degree. Some of these degree programs will require less than 120 credits, while others would retain the 120-credit requirement, but all would seek to deliver the promised savings in student costs and improved learning outcomes in three years or less.

The Exchange is organized by a regional host and cluster structure across the United States. Merrimack College will serve as the host institution for New England and coordinate the recruitment of about 75 colleges and universities across the region interested in developing three-year baccalaureate-level degrees.



“ We need to reduce the barriers of entry and make it easier for students to take our programs.”

– Ana Silva, associate professor of finance in the Girard School of Business



“ Our focus was to make these credentials student-centric so they have the flexibility to choose programs [where] the cost would be less but they would have similar experiences as students in four-year degree programs.”

– Jonathan Lyon, executive vice provost for academic affairs



“A three-year degree is not an option for everyone and every major,” Lyon said. “But for those programs where we can deliver the same curriculum, combined with general education to give students breadth, that would be the backbone of a 96-credit degree program. Our focus was to make these credentials student-centric so they have the flexibility to choose programs [where] the cost would be less but they would have similar experiences as students in four-year degree programs.”

After deliberation with the New England Commission of Higher Education, Merrimack’s institutional accreditor, the College received approval on April 19, 2024, for the four applied bachelor’s degrees. Merrimack is now waiting for final approval from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The first three-year degree cohort will be about 20 students across the four programs.

Ultimately, criminal justice, communication, psychology and business administration best fit the criteria for a Merrimack three-year degree. Ana Silva, associate professor of finance in the Girard School of

Business, was part of the group that developed the three-year degree in business administration and says she is excited about the opportunities the program will offer students without compromising on academic excellence.

“Most importantly, we are not sacrificing quality,” Silva said. “I think taking away the bells and whistles is perfect in this case because we are not taking away anything that would prevent students from getting a career. We need to reduce the barriers of entry and make it easier for students to take our programs.”

Laura Kurdziel, associate professor of psychology and neuroscience, worked on developing the applied bachelor’s in psychology that is geared toward students who want to enter the workforce quickly. As such, the three-year psychology degree will feature scaffolded internships that will give students expansive, real-world experience over three years.

“The students are going to get the same level of education with the same Merrimack professors — it is just accelerated,” Kurdziel said. “The

elements we are removing from the three-year degree — electives, study abroad, minors — are certainly valuable, so these programs won't be for everyone. It isn't better or worse than a traditional four-year degree; it is just different."

For the three-year psychology degree in particular, Kurdziel said she sees it being beneficial to three different populations of students: those who want to get their college degree as quickly as possible, those who don't think a four-year degree is worth the financial investment and those high school students who go through

Merrimack's Early College program. As part of Early College, students take Introduction to Psychology and become very interested in the major, Kurdziel noted, and since they are already part of the Merrimack community for two years, they may not feel the need to stay for another four years.

"I am really excited about it," said Kurdziel. "Educationally, it is the same [as a four-year degree]. I think it will be really helpful to students and allow them to access a rich academic opportunity."



“The students are going to get the same level of education with the same Merrimack professors — it is just accelerated.”

— Laura Kurdziel, associate professor of psychology and neuroscience

IN THE NEWS



INSIDE HIGHER EDUCATION:

April 12, 2024

Traction for the Three-Year Bachelor's Degree

A group of college leaders strategize about how to design a new undergraduate experience — and get an unexpected boost from an accreditor.



BOSTON GLOBE:

March 6, 2024

A bachelor's in three years? Colleges just got a green light to get in the game.

Merrimack College and New England College are working on shortened degree programs, and others should take a careful look at an approach that could lower costs.



FORBES:

January 2, 2024

Has the Time for Three-Year College Degrees Finally Arrived?

With the cost of college and mounting student debt continuing to be national concerns, and college completion rates recently stagnating, renewed attention is being given to an old idea — the three-year college degree.





REMEMBERING FR. JIM

This past spring, the Merrimack College community celebrated the life of the Rev. James Wenzel, O.S.A., the ethos of the College's modern Augustinian mission, who passed away April 24, 2024, at 94 years old.

The **Rev. James Wenzel, O.S.A.**, was a priest, an Augustinian, a campus minister, an aficionado of Italian heritage and culture, a jokester, a friend and a mentor.

But ask anyone who knew Fr. Jim, who worked with him, who socialized with him, who learned from him, who prayed with him: There is one word that best describes him.

Human.

"You never felt he was above you in any way, but at the same time, he had this incredible authority that we as students always respected," explained Christopher Vasta '04.

"You never felt any questions or topics were untouchable. You could go there with him and feel cared for and loved without feeling judged."

For Antonio Sordillo '05, it was Fr. Jim's ability to connect on a personal level that made him such an important figure for so many Merrimack students and staff.

"He was just an amazing man and a really special person," said Sordillo. "He knew his audience and he was genuine with each and every person he came in contact with."

This past spring, Fr. Jim's devotion to religious life, his impact at Merrimack College and his love of adventure were remembered and celebrated following his death on April 24, 2024. He was 94 years old.

In his homily at Fr. Jim's funeral mass at the Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher on Merrimack's campus, the Rev. William Waters, O.S.A., pastor of

St. Augustine Church in Philadelphia noted that Fr. Jim's humanity followed him wherever he went.

"I've heard so many stories about how Fr. Jim was with people in good times and bad, in sickness and in health. How he shared in that humanity of Jesus by enabling other people," said Fr. Bill. "He brought new life to so many people, places and situations."

That enabling of others led to Lisa Serino '05 taking on a role she never expected when she was a student at Merrimack. When Fr. Jim sought to launch a Best Buddies chapter at Merrimack, he saw in Serino the group's first director. Best Buddies connects volunteers with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to foster friendship and mentorship.



“ I’ve heard so many stories about how Fr. Jim was with people in good times and bad, in sickness and in health. How he shared in that humanity of Jesus by enabling other people. He brought new life to so many people, places and situations.”

– Rev. William Waters, O.S.A.,
pastor of St. Augustine Church in Philadelphia

“That was a big role,” said Serino, now the owner and lead cinematographer of Next Level Films. “I had never done anything like that before, but **Fr. Jim’s faith in me and encouragement was really helpful. And becoming a member of Best Buddies brought a whole new path in my life.**”

Fr. Jim’s impact on Merrimack College spanned more than 15 years and two continents.

On Merrimack’s campus, where he served in the Office of Campus Ministry from 1999 to 2014, Fr. Jim was the ethos of the College’s Augustinian mission at the turn of the 21st century and served as a spiritual counselor, mentor and teacher.

And more than 4,000 miles away in Italy, in the streets of Milan, San Gimignano and Rome, Fr. Jim transformed his doctoral presentation into Pellegrinaggio, which for nearly 25 years has immersed hundreds of Merrimack College students into the history of Saint Augustine’s life.

“Jim loved this College,” said Joseph Kelley, a former professor of religious and theological studies at Merrimack, who offered the eulogy at Fr. Jim’s funeral mass. “He studied here. He taught here. He was ordained a priest here. And the College loved him in turn. Through decades of growth and marvelous change, he planted the seeds of Augustinian values deep in the soil and in the soul of this campus.”

Kelley noted the greatest of Fr. Jim’s adventures was Pellegrinaggio, which more than 500 Merrimack students and staff have participated in over the years. Vasta was part of the first group of Merrimack students to go on Pellegrinaggio. He said the experience was so life-changing that with the help of Fr. Jim, he returned to San Gimignano the summer after his senior year to live with the Augustinian friars there.

“If it wasn’t for Fr. Jim, I would not have had that incredible formational experience,” said Vasta. “When I came back home, I had a teaching job lined up, but I knew in that moment that I wanted to become a campus minister.”

That job was teaching math at Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood, MA. Over time, Vasta not only served as a campus minister at Xaverian, but he also started the school’s annual pilgrimage to Italy, directly influenced by Fr. Jim.

It was an affinity for Italy and Italian culture that connected Sordillo and Fr. Jim during Sordillo’s first week of school at Merrimack. “With a name like Antonio Guiseppe Sordillo, it’s no surprise that Fr. Jim found me,” Sordillo, now vice president of investment at Raymond James, said with a laugh.

A transfer student from Suffolk University, Sordillo said he was drawn to Merrimack because of the close-knit Catholic community that in many ways Fr. Jim helped to foster and grow.

Sordillo said he was always struck by Fr. Jim’s ability to take Catholic teachings and make them relatable for college-aged students. It was Fr. Jim who encouraged Sordillo to get confirmed while he was a student at Merrimack, and it was Fr. Jim who presided over Sordillo’s marriage to his wife, Heidi, in 2016.

“Fr. Jim always had this warm magnetism to him,” said Sordillo.

“He truly loved what he did and really connected with so many people.”

James Andrew Wenzel was born on April 1, 1930, in Wakefield, MA. He attended Merrimack College from 1948 to 1950 and was received into the Order of Saint Augustine as a novice on Sept. 9, 1950. He professed his solemn vows on Sept. 10, 1954. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 26, 1956, in the same church where his funeral mass was celebrated. For his commitment to Merrimack and the Augustinian community, Fr. Jim was recognized with an honorary degree from Merrimack in 2010.

He was an Augustinian for 72 years and a priest for 68 years.

“For Jim, every day was an adventure,” said Kelley. “For those of us who knew him and loved him and worked with him, you had to be ready for that adventure. No matter the occasion, it was always exciting, occasionally exhausting, but always in service of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”



THE 1947 SOCIETY MERRIMACK COLLEGE



Do you ever dream about how to give back to Merrimack? Through a planned gift, you can leave a lasting legacy that ensures Merrimack is prepared for the future. Not only do you have options for how your gift will be used, but you also have options on what and how to give.

For Donna Manocchio '78, mission and ministry have long played a significant role in her life.

During her time as a student at Merrimack, she found the College's religion courses to be very impactful in shaping the way she examined and developed her own spirituality. After graduating with a bachelor's degree, Donna went on to earn a master's degree in pastoral ministry from Boston College. Following her time at BC, Donna worked for the Archdiocese of Hartford and several other religious organizations. She then discerned a call to ordained ministry and was ordained in the United Church of Christ 20 years ago.

Donna strongly believes in the importance of spiritual development and self-reflection and is appreciative of the many opportunities Merrimack provides for students to cultivate their spiritual and personal growth. She explains, "I feel it's important to provide students with space to examine their spirituality and engage in service to their community."

For years, Donna has made an annual donation to The Merrimack Fund specifically directed to mission and ministry that supports faith education, spiritual programs and community-based initiatives.

Recently, Donna and her husband decided to further extend their support by documenting an estate gift that will benefit mission and ministry at the College. Their gift will help ensure that Merrimack can continue to foster the spiritual development of students, faculty and staff for many years to come.

Like Donna's, your gift can help fund life-changing programs and experiential learning opportunities for future generations of Merrimack College students. To discover which planned gift is right for you, contact the Office of Development and Alumni Relations at giving@merrimack.edu.





The Merrimack Fund



ANY GIFT

Gifts of any size to The Merrimack Fund add up to create new opportunities for current and future students.

EVERY YEAR

Make a sustained impact on the College by giving annually and making Merrimack a priority.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Every student is impacted by your support. That's about 4,200 undergraduate students and 1,450 graduate students this year.

Annual gifts to The Merrimack Fund support every aspect of the student experience. Whether you choose to designate your gift to the area of greatest need or to a specific area, you play an important role in the financial health of Merrimack College.

VISIT [MERRIMACK.EDU/GIFT](https://merrimack.edu/gift) TO MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY!



➔ See what's happening at Merrimack right now — visit www.merrimack.edu/news.

Merrimack College Opens Shared Instrumentation & Research Facility

Merrimack College's new Shared Instrumentation & Research Facility (SIRF) is a game changer for on-campus research, according to faculty and staff.

"Having access to new state-of-the-art scientific equipment and being part of a supportive research community with other highly skilled researchers will no doubt enhance my ability to publish scientific papers and pursue competitive external funding opportunities," said Brandi Baldock, associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry.

The 7,000-square-foot space will serve as a hub for applied life sciences research for not only the College but also the Merrimack Valley.

"Top research faculty will want to work here," said Merrimack College President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., during the facility's opening ceremony on June 6. "Students will want to learn here. And external partners in government and

industry will look to Merrimack College to help solve significant challenges."

Some research faculty in the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Nursing and Health Sciences moved their work into the SIRF earlier this year, including Baldock; Leena Bharath, associate professor of nutrition and public health; and Charlotte Berkes, associate professor of biology.

"These researchers, as well as others, work closely with undergraduate and graduate students to advance scientific understanding of real-world problems that impact people and communities in the Merrimack Valley and beyond," said Merrimack College Vice President for Research April Bowling.



► **Fun Fact** The SIRF houses six separate laboratories dedicated to specific project scopes.

MERRIMACK CONTINUES RELAY FOR LIFE TRADITION WITH A BIRTHDAY-THEMED RELAY



Amber Bean '24 and the rest of Merrimack College's Relay For Life organizing committee worked hard this year to celebrate more birthdays for those diagnosed with cancer.

"The theme of this year's event was a birthday party," Bean explained. "We decorated Lawler Arena for a huge birthday party."

A national fundraising effort launched by the American Cancer Society, Relay For Life participants are sponsored by friends and family to walk as many laps as possible during the event. This year, Merrimack raised more than \$44,000.

This year's speaker was Tia Bee Stokes, who rose to popularity on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic. After being diagnosed with leukemia in 2020, she used TikTok dance videos to document each of her days battling the disease.

"She became a really inspirational figure to people, myself included, [through documenting] her entire journey, the ups and downs through all of it," Bean said. "She's in remission now, and she gave us an inspiring survivor speech during the opening ceremonies."



“No matter what your major or what your educational focus is, it’s such a life-changing experience to live in other people’s shoes and help out their communities.”

– Jacob Symmes '25



SEND TRIPS BRING MERRIMACK COMMUNITY TO SAN DIEGO, HONDURAS, SOUTH DAKOTA

Students and staff who have participated in a Merrimack College SEND trip will tell you it is a life-changing experience.

Each year, students, faculty and staff embark on a weeklong excursion during spring or winter break to immerse themselves in communities around the world through service-learning opportunities.

Students this year had the opportunity to travel to Honduras and South Dakota, with the majority traveling to San Diego, California.

Alexis Byrne '25, one of three student leaders on the trip, said they visited one of Via International’s migrant assistance stations located on the U.S.-Mexico border. Two families from Peru and Jordan, each with small children, were waiting at the tent since early

one morning. The students rushed to feed them, preparing snacks, soup and sandwiches.

“That was, for everyone, the hardest day and the hardest thing we had to do,” said Byrne. “It was a very emotional day, but it was definitely the most impactful. We were able to see what they were going through.”

Jacob Symmes '25 and Ally McKenna '25 led eight students in service work at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. “They have trips that focus on all different areas,” Symmes said. “No matter what your major or what your educational focus is, it’s such a life-changing experience to live in other people’s shoes and help out their communities.”

MATTHEW SLATER IMPLORES MERRIMACK COMMUNITY TO ‘BREAK THE HUDDLE’

In his keynote address during Merrimack College’s Unity in Diversity event on March 20, former New England Patriot captain Matthew Slater encouraged the audience to “break the huddle” when addressing social injustices. He touched on the importance of harnessing personal motivations, building relationships and finding the right time to interject oneself in pursuit of a more just and equitable society.

“We’ve done too much drawing of lines in the sand,” Slater told the audience at Merrimack College’s Rogers Center for the Arts. “And we have just totally given up on our ability to let our guard down and meet someone halfway. Don’t just stay huddled up. Don’t just keep living our lives the way we have been living them. We need people who are called to action, and I don’t see why it can’t be you guys.”

Slater was introduced by Grant Jackson '23, M'24, a defensive back on the Merrimack College football team, president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and member of the Athletic Diversity Committee. During a Q&A following Slater’s talk, Jackson asked the 10-time Pro Bowler, who recently retired, what advice he had for students in the audience facing similar pivotal moments in their lives.

“It is important to do it in community,” Slater said. “You can’t do it alone, no matter who you are.”





Student Snapshot

Photo by
Ermis Martinez '27



To be featured, submit your MC snapshots to communications@merrimack.edu.

Congratulations, Graduates



“Be the good luck that affects someone’s life that they couldn’t control themselves.”

- Erika Giampietro H’24, distinguished speaker, School of Education & Social Policy



“There is no greater reward in life than the self-satisfaction of knowing that you have, indeed, accomplished what you committed to do.”

- Dave McGillivray '76, H'12, distinguished speaker, School of Arts & Sciences

For most of the students in Merrimack College’s Class of 2024, the 74th Commencement Exercises were their first formal graduation ceremony since middle school due to COVID-19.

An estimated 15,000 people were in attendance for the five individual school Commencement ceremonies held at Lawler Arena on May 16 and May 17.

“If Merrimack has taught us anything... [it’s to] jump, run, throw yourself into the unknown,” Student Government Association President Maxwell Beland '24 said in a video message. “While it may seem scary and boundless, the opportunities it provides are far too impactful and important to pass up.”



CLASS OF
2024



“The challenges we face are not insurmountable if we approach them with empathy, understanding and a shared commitment for building a better future for all.”

- Joshua Dion '03, distinguished speaker, School of Engineering & Computational Sciences

SPRING CONCERT WELCOMES **FLO RIDA** BACK TO MERRIMACK

Merrimack welcomed Flo Rida to its house this past April for the College's annual Spring Concert event.

The chart-topping "Low" rapper entertained the crowd of students, staff and faculty at Lawler Arena. A number of lucky Warrior students even got a chance to go on stage and perform some of Flo's biggest songs alongside the man himself.

The night opened with a performance by social media star and singer-songwriter Alex Warren and a special set from Merrimack's own in-house student rock band.



MERRIMACK PROFESSOR PRESENTED FREE SCHOOL MEAL BENEFITS TO WHO, UKRAINIAN MINISTERIAL OFFICES

Juliana Cohen, Merrimack College professor and world-renowned universal free school meal expert, spoke at a conference presented by the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe to several Ukrainian ministerial offices this past April.

Implementing a nationwide universal free school meal program is a priority of Ukrainian First Lady Olena Zelenska, Cohen noted, and the conference was an opportunity to explore how the country can adopt such a program.

"[I was] excited to present this work because of its potential to impact the lives of millions of children who are especially suffering and facing food insecurity," said Cohen, who is the director of Merrimack's Center for Health Inclusion, Research and Practice. "It is particularly meaningful to think about how our research can translate into supporting the health and well-being of so many children."

For her work, Cohen was recently named to the Massachusetts School Meal Nutrition Standards Commission appointed by Governor Maura Healey.

ENGINEERING DIRECTED STUDY SEES STUDENTS RESEARCHING HUMAN-ROBOT INTERACTIONS



Groups were split evenly between four robots — a Fanuc robotic arm, humanoids Darwin OP2 and Pepper, and four-legged Spot by Boston Dynamics.

In April, students programmed a storytime routine with Pepper at Nevins Memorial Library in Methuen, MA.

“I’ve had an interest in robotics since high school,” said Trey Tankersley ’26, an electrical engineering student who is part of the Pepper group, “so this was a great opportunity to have a chance at working on robots and gaining new skills and experience in this type of environment.”

The future is now. One of Merrimack College’s latest research efforts featured 11 undergraduate students studying relationships between humans and robots and how robots can be better utilized in modern society.

“Really, this is a boot camp to get students ready for graduate school and experience what it’s like to do academic research,” said Rickey Caldwell, associate professor of mechanical engineering at Merrimack and founder of the study.

► Fun Fact

Merrimack students programmed the robot Pepper to read “Harry, the Dirty Dog” by Gene Zion.



MERRIMACK COLLEGE

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*Not all benefits apply to all programs. Please visit the website for full details.



Merrimack College Trustees, Senior Leaders Meet With Pope Francis

A delegation from Merrimack College, including President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., Father Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., vice president for mission and ministry, and members of the Board of Trustees, had the incredible opportunity to meet with Pope Francis during an audience in the Vatican's Clementine Hall on May 10. The pontiff spoke on the importance of the College's educational and spiritual mission.

"This was a remarkably profound, humbling and spiritual experience," Hopey said. "We will forever treasure having heard the Holy Father reflect on Merrimack's educational mission rooted in the Augustinian Catholic tradition. We are very grateful to Father Alejandro Moral Antón, O.S.A., prior general of the Order of Saint Augustine, and the entire Order for this unforgettable opportunity."

In his remarks, delivered in Italian, Francis spoke on the duality of Merrimack's mission to educate young people to face challenges together in order to grow in solidarity. He touched on the College's efforts in its first years to not only provide an education to veterans returning from World War II, but also to help "restore in them a sense of meaning, hope and confidence for the future, to enrich their minds, but also to warm their hearts and restore hope for a brighter future."

Francis also noted that it is important to teach students to face challenges together so they can be transformed into opportunities for growth.

"Dear friends, this is your responsibility, and it is a great one," the pope said. "I thank all of you for the valuable work you do and I give you my heartfelt blessing, entrusting you to the intercession of the Virgin Mary and Saint Augustine."

Following the pope's address, he offered blessings and met individually with those in attendance, as well as posed for pictures.

"It was a real honor and privilege to meet Pope Francis personally," said Fr. Dlugos. "His warmth and smile were just beautiful to encounter. I really appreciated his message calling us to educate ourselves and our students to see the many seemingly insurmountable challenges facing us in today's world as opportunities for love and solidarity rather than obstacles to them."

The Merrimack group was in Italy for Pellegrinaggio, the College's pilgrimage to sites of importance in Saint Augustine's life, as well as the origin and early history of the Augustinian friars. The papal audience was made possible by the Order of Saint Augustine's leadership.

“As I like to say, all education passes from the mind to the heart and from the heart to the hands. Three languages: the language of the mind, the language of the heart, and the language of the hands. The ability to think what we feel and do; the ability to feel what we think and do; and the ability to do what we feel and think.”

– Pope Francis



Read Pope Francis' complete remarks here.



Photos courtesy of Vatican News



As an assistant professor of practice in Merrimack College's Honors Program, **Chris Kronsted** does not get a lot of opportunities to pop and lock.

But he still finds ways to incorporate his first love — breakdancing — into his studies.

In his early 20s, Kronsted competed in breakdancing competitions across the United States and Europe. More recently, he hosted an embodied cognition and dance research conference at Merrimack.

"We want to make Merrimack College an epicenter for embodied cognition research in the Northeast," Kronsted said.

Q When did you first get involved in breakdancing? *When I was in my late teens, I was invited to watch a fashion show. The pre-event entertainment was a break dancer. It was love at first sight, the first time seeing someone spin on their head.*

Q How does it relate to your love of philosophy, if at all? *Throughout my studies in pursuit of a doctoral degree in philosophy, I found that a lot of classic thinking and research in the field is sedentary. This does not really illustrate life. You can see in all kinds of philosophical theories they were written by people who do not move much. So, I saw an opportunity to combine my academic passion with one of my first true loves.*

Q What philosophic meaning can you pull from breakdancing? *You can gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that facilitate human behavior by observing how groups work together to plan, practice and perform a dance, how they partner up and move together. We are working to take processes that seem abstract and explain why they are pragmatic.*

WHAT IS YOUR

FAVORITE CLASS AT MERRIMACK?



General Chemistry I
– Alex Insani '26



Molecular Biology and Biotechnology
– Anthony Gentile '24



UX Design
– Elsie Bennett '26



Crisis Communication
– Marissa Balbino '24



SPRING THEATER

The OnStagers spring production, "The Drowsy Chaperone," played for three days in the Rogers Center for the Arts.



What question should we ask next? communications@merrimack.edu



MATLAB and CAD
- Sam Barresi '24



The Exceptional Learner
- Caitlin Henaghan '25



Advanced Accounting
- Olivia White '25



Behavioral Neuroscience
- Brian Costa '25

MERRIMACK MOMENTS

MERRIMACK'S ANNUAL RESEARCH & CREATIVE CONFERENCE SHOWCASES CUTTING-EDGE WARRIOR SCHOLARSHIP

More than 200 students showcased research projects and creative works from over the past year during Merrimack College's annual Research and Creative Achievement Conference on May 2. The conference featured posters and presentations across campus.



MERRIMACK STUDENTS WIN SCHOLARSHIPS TO ATTEND NATION'S LARGEST MUSIC TRADE SHOW



What was engineering student Matthew Lanney '24 doing at the largest annual trade show for the audio and music industry? Considering an alternative career path at the suggestion of Andrew Cote, assistant professor of practice in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts and Merrimack College's assistant director of bands.

Lanney was one of five Merrimack students affiliated with the music program to get a scholarship from Lamond GenNext Awards for a free trip to the National Association of Music

Merchants (NAMM) Show in Anaheim, CA. NAMM's Lamond GenNext Awards, which Lanney received along with Dawson Medieros '26, Audrey McGill '25, Dawnisha Chavez '26 and Andrew Leuci '24, covered airfare, lodging and admission to the four-day event held Jan. 25 through Jan. 28.

"Dr. Cote brought up to me there is a whole field of people in the music industry that needs engineers to either do process engineering, design speakers and microphones and this and that," Lanney explained. "I am a [saxophonist and music minor] outside of my engineering major, and I love it with all my heart. So I thought it would be awesome to explore the potential of putting the two together."

The event features hundreds of exhibitors and vendors, lectures from industry experts and educators, and plenty of networking opportunities

for those looking to get their foot in the music industry door. It isn't all business, though.

"There's also hundreds of performances," Cote explained. "There are several stages that are actually at the convention center, and some are outdoors at the hotels that are next door. There's live music happening pretty much 24/7."

Cote attended last year's convention through a grant from the College Music Society.

At this year's NAMM Show, Cote participated in two workshops. The first was a panel discussion on designing a modern music technology and recording arts curriculum. The second was a solo discussion on how he helped to reinvent Merrimack's music program.

Cote said the five students were perfect fits for the Lamond GenNext Awards.

"I feel confident that it's going to open up more doors for them as they continue to pursue work in the music industry," he said.

MERRIMACK GRADUATE STUDENT HOPES TO HELP MORE STUDENTS OF COLOR STUDY ABROAD



One day, A'mari Bing-Way M'24 hopes to establish a nonprofit or foundation to help students of color pursue higher education abroad, just as she did for her undergraduate degree.

"At least from what I found, there's very limited financial support for the decision" to study abroad, she explained. "I also want to help families support students and give them financial support when they want to travel to see their [loved ones]."

Originally from Maryland, Bing-Way graduated from The American University of Paris in 2021 with

a bachelor's degree in global communication with minors in gender studies and socio cultural anthropology. At Merrimack, she's been taking courses on fundraising, nonprofit management and diversity, equity and social justice in community engagement.

"We're learning how communities are structured and what a nonprofit's role is in building communities," she said.

Bing-Way said despite almost sounding like a cliché in this day and age, diversity does matter especially in higher education. While pursuing her undergraduate degree, Bing-Way founded AUP's Black and Abroad Club.

"That was a lot of work, and I'm happy that it's still continuing into something even more than what I ever expected,"

she said. "There are students I met after graduating who said they decided to come to the college because they saw there is a club for Black students. Just seeing the representation and knowing that there's a community for you makes a very big difference."

Bing-Way sought to enrich a similar community while studying at Merrimack. As president of the Graduate Students of Color Association, Bing-Way collaborated on community building and professional development events alongside Merrimack organizations such as Merrimack Professionals of Color and the Unity House.

Engineering Student Helps Fellow Warriors Build Their Futures Through Innovation

As a lifelong tinkerer, Sam Barresi '24 felt right at home after enrolling in Merrimack College's School of Engineering and Computational Sciences. However, he couldn't help but feel that something was missing.

"I came in with a lot of design experience," he explained. "If I want to build something, I'm confident

enough in myself to think that I could. [I felt] a lot of other students didn't have that [confidence]."

So, during his sophomore year, he founded Let's Innovate, a club that gives Merrimack students the resources and expertise to get their engineering ideas off the ground. That next year, it won Student Organization of the Year at Merrimack's L.E.A.D. Awards.

"We will teach you how to build a prototype, build upon that prototype and eventually make a final product," he explained.

Barresi, who also serves as club president, has years of engineering experience to properly help students achieve their goals. At Longmeadow High School in Longmeadow, MA, he helped establish the school's robotics team.

"I believe that engineers are problem-solvers of the world," he said. "And I've been solving people's problems my whole life. So I thought, why not do that [in college]?"

This year, Let's Innovate hosted its first-ever design competition, Mack Attack — not to be confused with the Merrimack-themed beer released by RiverWalk Brewing Company. Thirteen students split into four groups and had their projects judged by a panel of local industry professionals.





MERRIMACK COLLEGE WOMEN'S BOWLING COMPETES IN FIRST NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP

When Jalen Scott-Jones became the first head coach of the Merrimack College women's bowling team in 2022, his goal was to establish a premier collegiate bowling program in the region.

It took just two seasons for the Warriors to make their mark on the national collegiate bowling stage and the pantheon of Merrimack College Athletics. The nationally ranked No. 16 women's bowling team earned an automatic bid to a Division I NCAA tournament.

"We worked really hard this year," said Scott-Jones. "The team got hot and gained confidence at the right time in the season."

The Warriors punched their ticket to the NAAs after going undefeated and winning the program's first Northeast Conference championship in March. At the NAAs, Merrimack opened the tournament by beating past national champion Vanderbilt.

"We're just trying to maintain our composure," Scott-Jones said, "and we had a very special group to do that."

"We worked really hard this year. The team got hot and gained confidence at the right time in the season."

- Head bowling coach Jalen Scott-Jones





LAMPKIN SISTERS' COMBINED SKILLS KEY TO MERRIMACK BOWLING SUCCESS

If twin sisters Olivia and JaZelle Lampkin, both members of the Class of 2024, combined their bowling skills into one person, it would create a near-perfect bowler.

But separately, Olivia's power and JaZelle's precision were integral to the No. 16 Merrimack College women's bowling team's bid to the 2024 NCAA Championships in April.

"It was really intense," Olivia, a rehabilitation sciences major, said of the Warriors' Northeast Conference tournament win that punched their

ticket to the NAAs. "As a team, we were trying to push ourselves, and in the last month and a half, things have really clicked."

The Lampkins have been participating in bowling leagues since they were 5 years old, learning the sport from their father, Larry, as well as their maternal grandfather.

"I've always enjoyed the team aspect of bowling," said JaZelle, a psychology major. "There is always someone to talk to whether you are at practice or out on campus."

► **Fun Fact** Olivia Lampkin was named a Northeast Conference Team Scholar-Athlete of the Year for 2023-24.

MERRIMACK WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY PLAYER NAMED HOCKEY HUMANITARIAN AWARD FINALIST

Raice Szott '24, a defender on the Merrimack College women's ice hockey team, said being named a finalist of the 2024 Hockey Humanitarian Award was "a huge honor."

"But a special part of it is it's not just about me," she continued. "It's about the people who have helped me get here like my family, my professors, coaches and teammates at Merrimack, and my teachers, coaches and teammates from when I was growing up."

Szott's service work at Merrimack includes the launch of the Merrimack College Women's Ice Hockey Community Service Committee, which has led to several volunteer and fundraising opportunities in the Merrimack Valley. She has also coordinated fundraisers to support local nonprofits, first responders and the Ellie Fund, a foundation that assists men and women battling breast cancer.

This past year, she helped organize an on-campus program dedicated to helping young girls build confidence through ice skating and mentoring.



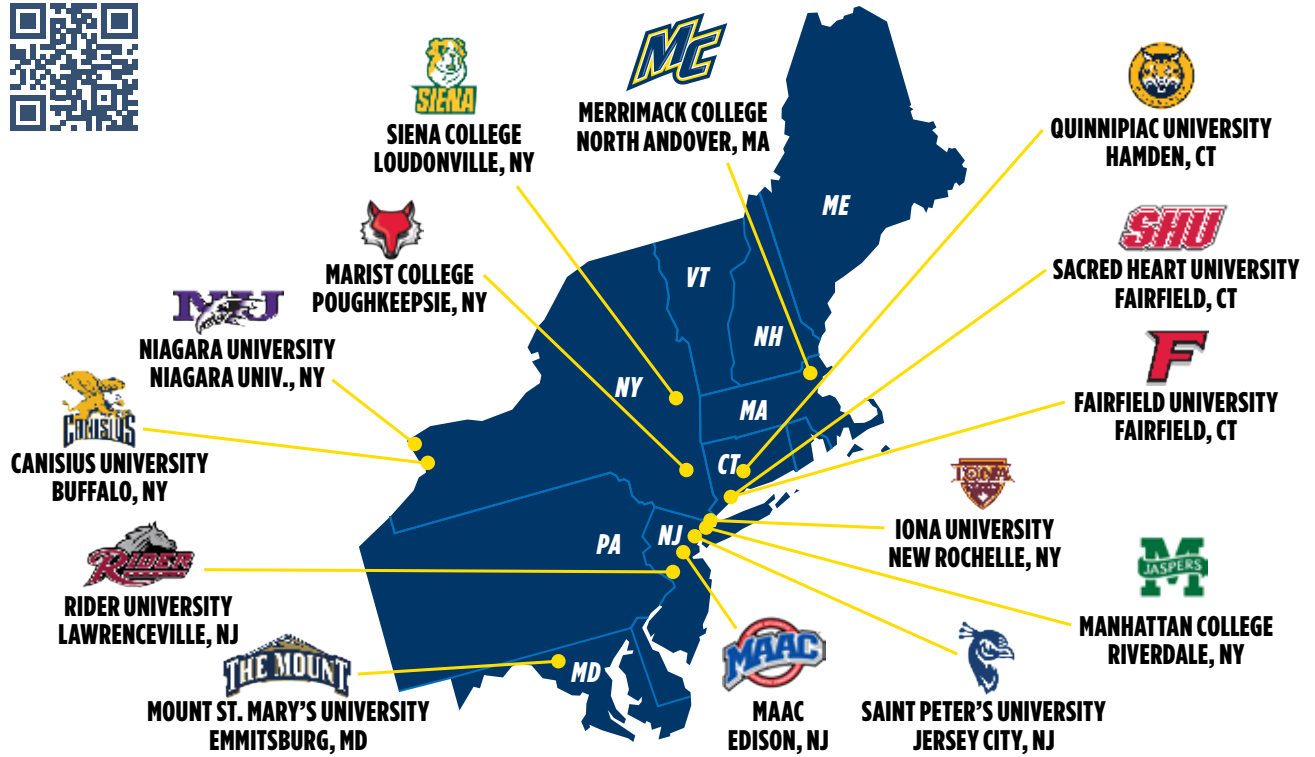
HOMETOWN:
Daysland,
Alberta, Canada

MAJOR:
Business
Administration

FUN FACT:
Named a 2024
American
Hockey Coaches
Association All-
American Scholar

THE METRO ATLANTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE, THE WARRIORS NEW HOME

Cheer on our Warriors at home or on the road as our students-athletes take on our new MAAC opponents. For tickets and schedules, visit www.merrimackathletics.com.



THE WARRIOR FUND



Champion the Warriors both on and off the field with a gift to The Warrior Fund.

Gifts to The Warrior Fund help to provide the highest level of training and equipment, out-of-region travel, leadership development and recruitment of the very best student-athletes.

Each year, over 750 Merrimack students participate in 28 varsity programs and 23 club programs.



4

MERRIMACK STUDENT-ATHLETES NAMED **ROOKIE OF THE YEAR**



WOMEN'S SOCCER Isabella Keogh

Isabella Keogh, a Plaistow, NH native, had a stellar freshman season: She played in all 17 games for the Warriors, making two starts and playing 710 minutes, scoring a team-high eight goals including a hat trick in the Warriors' final game that won them the regular season championship. She also collected one assist for 17 points, the second most on the team. Keogh's eight goals were also third most in the whole of the Northeast Conference.

8

goals — third most in the whole of the Northeast Conference



BASEBALL Dawson Bryce

Freshman phenom Dawson Bryce took home NEC Rookie of the Year after leading the conference in runs, hits, doubles and total bases. Along with leading the entire NEC, he was the nation's leader among freshmen in hits. The Taunton, MA, native hit .363 with 15 homers and 55 RBIs in his first season of college baseball. Bryce was perched atop the NEC in numerous other categories including home runs, RBIs, OPS, and slugging percentage. He was named to the NEC All-Conference Second Team as a third baseman as well.

15

homers in first season of college baseball



MEN'S BASKETBALL Adam "Budd" Clark

Philadelphia native Adam "Budd" Clark led all NEC rookies, averaging 13.1 points per game. Clark also led the conference in steals (77) and steals per game (2.57). He ranked second in assists (116), third in assists per game (3.87) and fifth in assist/turnover ratio (1.65). Nationally, Clark ranked sixth in steals, as well as eighth in steals per game. Clark also earned seven NEC Rookie of the Week honors and one NEC Player of the Week.

7

NEC Rookie of the Week honors



WOMEN'S LACROSSE Lindsay Atkinson

Lindsay Atkinson, from Franklin, MA etched Merrimack into the record books with the first-ever NEC major women's lacrosse award. Atkinson took home NEC Rookie of the Week six times. In addition, she garnered more honors than all players in all three weekly award categories. Atkinson compiled a hat trick seven times during her debut season. Merrimack's top scorer and leader in goals (31), assists (15) and points (46), Atkinson emerged as an offensive threat in conference play, ranking sixth in both goals per game (2.60) and points per game (3.70).

6

NEC Rookie of the Week honors

ALUMNI NEWS

1960s

DR. ARTHUR FOURNIER '69, H'15, has published his third book on Haiti, "Hope Makes Us Live!" Dr. Fournier received an honorary degree from Merrimack College for his humanitarian work and donates the proceeds from his books to his programs in Haiti.

1970s

BOB UNANUE '77, CEO of Goya Foods, received the Founder's Award from the American Cornerstone Institute, presented to him by Dr. Ben Carson.

BILL DUGGAN '79, P'18, attended the U.S. Naval Academy Scout Jamboree in the spring. Over 600 scouts from Texas to Maine attended this STEM-type merit badge University put on by the USNA Scouting Group.

1980s

WILLIAM HART '82 was appointed the new superintendent of Everett, MA schools.

COL. PHILIP MCGOVERN '86 started a new role as the veteran's services director for the town of Arlington, MA.

STEVE JASKELEVICUS '88 was recently named to the concurrent roles of executive vice president and senior credit officer at Pentucket Bank.

1990s

CAROLYN (QUILL) CARNELL '90 was announced as the new managing principal of Carolyn C. Quill, CPA, JD, LL.M., a leading public accounting and advisory firm, effective Jan. 1, 2024.



KELLY (WALTERS) KENNEDY '90 received a doctoral degree in Learning and Organizational Change from Baylor University. Dr. Kennedy is the director of transformative learning and career education faculty at the University of Connecticut School of Business. (1)

CHANGE IS SIMPLE



Lauren (Berg) Belmonte '05 is the co-founder and executive director of Change is Simple, a nonprofit organization that aims to cultivate social and environmental responsibility in children through hands-on environmental, sustainability and climate change educational programming.

Belmonte's interest in environmental issues began in elementary school. Inspired by her parents' efforts to be economically efficient and reduce waste, her passion for science flourished

during high school and continued throughout her studies at Merrimack, where she majored in environmental science.

After graduating from the College, Belmonte worked in environmental consulting. During a family dinner, she had a conversation with her brother-in-law, an elementary school teacher, about the challenges teachers faced finding enough time to cover a broad array of science topics, including environmental science, amidst the pressure to focus on other subjects like language arts and math.

Connecting her own childhood experience to this conversation, Belmonte realized that the key to instilling environmentally responsible values and habits in others might lie in early education — and knew there must be a way to bring it directly to the classroom.

Belmonte and her husband, Patrick, worked together to craft an educational program in waste reduction. They pulled together materials and brought a hands-on learning activity to a fourth-grade classroom in Beverly, MA.

Their first program was an instant success, and soon other classrooms began requesting additional programming. Belmonte knew they were on the right path: "I thought to myself, if I can inspire one or two students the way that I was inspired in elementary school, then this is worth it."

Change is Simple was officially established in 2011. The organization currently operates in 37 schools in the Greater Boston area, bringing environmental and sustainability education to over 8,200 students annually.

Change is Simple has grown to a team of more than a dozen staff members and numerous college student mentors. The team returns to each school between four and 10 times per year to continue building upon prior workshops. Topic areas range from sustainable food systems to energy conservation, climate change and more. Teachers are given supplemental learning materials so they can continue the students' learning between visits from the organization.

Building the organization from the ground up has been an incredibly rewarding experience for Belmonte, who noted, "It's really our hope to help inspire informed and empowered citizens who think about how their actions impact their health, their community and their environment."

MICHELLE (SURETTE) CRESTA '94 was named director of finance and operations for Manchester Essex Regional School District.

JUDITH O'CONNELL '95 has been appointed assistant town manager for the town of Wilmington, MA.

VALERIE (RHODES) GOLDSTONE '99 married Matthew Goldstone on June 12, 2021. The reception was held at Danversport Yacht Club on May 7, 2023.

BRENDAN MCPLOYE '99 of Princeton Global Asset Management has recently been recognized as a Five Star Wealth Manager Award Winner for 2024. This is McPoyle's 11th Five Star Award recognition.

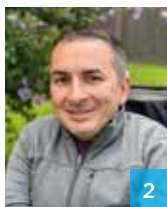
2000s

ELIZABETH CARDOSO '02, travel photographer, had an art exhibit of original photographs titled "Portugal Unveiled: Through the Doors of Time" on display in the Lunenburg Public Library in Spring 2024.

JOSEPH EXTER '03 has been named head coach of the St. Cloud Norsemen, a team in the North American Hockey League.

AMY (CULLIVAN) CZEKALA '04 was recently promoted to counsel at Offit Kurman Attorneys at Law.

JARED GRIFONI '05 was elected chair of the Marco Island, FL, city council.



MATT PELLEGRINO '06 was recently appointed executive director of the Northeast Independent Living Program, a nonprofit located in Lawrence, MA, that provides peer-to-peer support and services for people with disabilities. (2)

ANTHONY LIVELY '07 has a new role at Alliant Insurance Services as senior vice president in its Employee Benefits Group.

ANDREW KOKOSKA '08 has been appointed chief financial officer at Doxim.

DOUGLAS MUNRO '09 was promoted to vice president and chief accounting officer at Mercury Systems.

2010s

CHRISTOPHER ORECHIA '10 was selected for inclusion in "Marquis Who's Who" for his sports, marketing, sales and higher education expertise.

ANDREW REBELLO '10 was awarded the Massachusetts School Administrators' Association High School Principal of the Year.

COURTNEY PARKER '13 was recently promoted to varsity softball coach at Bellingham High School.

JORDAN (SCHNOPP) CHAUSSE '14 was inducted in to the Community Italian American Organization Berkshire County Soccer Hall of Fame.

CASSANDRA (MONIZ) MINIERI '14 and **MATTHEW MINIERI '14** got married in September 2023 at the Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher on Merrimack's campus. (3)



SAVE
THE DATE
12.13.24

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Hilton Park Plaza Hotel, Boston

Join fellow alumni and friends for a festive evening filled with holiday merriment and musical performances as we celebrate the Christmas season.

MERRIMACK COLLEGE

The poster features a large, glowing gold Christmas ornament hanging from the top. The ornament has the Merrimack College crest and the text 'MERRIMACK COLLEGE EST. 1947' on it. The background is a dark blue, textured surface with a faint, larger version of the college crest. The text is in a light blue, serif font.

ALUMNI NEWS

KIMBERLY BOURQUE '14 was one of four quarterbacks chosen to be among the Women's Football Alliance All Americans. The WFA is a semi-pro full-contact Women's American football league.

LI (WIGREN) VELONIS '15 and **SAMUEL VELONIS'S '14** journey started at Merrimack College in 2014, leading them to a heartwarming wedding ceremony in October 2022. The couple celebrated their special day surrounded by the love and laughter of their Merrimack College friends. (4)

ANDREW DRESNER M'16 was hired as the offensive coordinator, quarterbacks coach at the College of the Holy Cross.



AMANDA JACQUES '16 and Tom Clarke welcomed a daughter, Helene Clarke, on Oct. 3, 2023. (5)

DOMENIC DISISTO '17, M'18, celebrated his third year in business with Sheer Dominance Strength & Performance in Salem, NH. He attributes his success to the knowledge he gained and his love for rugby to his time at Merrimack.



ALLISON LUPPI M'17, volleyball coach at Tewksbury Memorial High School, was named the 2022-23 Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association Fall Volleyball Coach of the Year.

MEAGHAN (LOONEY) SCOTT '16 was appointed human resources director for the city of Utica, NY.

In Memoriam

Normand Gautreau '51

Fred Hoosick '52

Rev. James Wenzel, O.S.A. '52, H'10

Charles Mahoney '53

Frederick Kaminski '54

Robert Kane '54

Walter Crabtree '56

Thomas Tivnan '56

Thomas Davies, Jr. '57

Roland Grandpre '57

Joan (Chechowitz) Hegerty '57

Ann (Linnehan) McDade '57

Ernest Young, Jr. '57

Nancy (Mahoney) Duddy '58

Joyce (Cuddy) Lyon '58

David Twomey '59

Daniel Mulhern '60

James Ready '60

John Quinn, Jr. '60

Dr. Robert Steer, Jr. '60

Robert Brosnan '61

Frank Creegan, Ph.D. '61

Galo Emerson, Jr. '61

Robert Fittante '61

Barry Longval '61

Philip Mailhot, Jr. '61

William Walker '62

Fred Nasser '63

Michael Pezzetti, Sr. '63

David Prophet '63

Nancy (Burns) Urban '63

Thomas Dolan '64

Kathleen Hanna '64

Dolores Irolla '64

Robert Jervis '64

William O'Keefe '64

Walter Petreyko '64

Reginald Tardif '64

Raymond Tetrault, Jr.

'64, P'96, GP'19

Mary Anne (Moran)

Tetrault '64, P'96, GP'19

Frank Mahoney '65

Francis Melia '65

Robert Prior '65

Peter Davoli '66

Mary Louise (Donahue)

Edmunds '66

Sr. Donna Fannon '66

Shirley (Childs) Hey '66

James McGrath '66

Rosemary (Devaney)

O'Malley '66

Linda Willett '66

Peter Cunningham '67

Helen Curtis '67

Nancy (Brown) DeVito '67

Arthur Fossa '67

John Hannigan '67

John Kendrick '67

Roger Melanson '67

Jeffrey Suckow '67

Catherine (Ryan) Wallace '67

Paul Costa '68

David North '68

Courtney Atkinson '69

Janet Borowski '69

James Castonguay, Jr. '69

David Chessey '69

Stephen McKittrick '69

Paul Roma '69

Joanna DeFeo '70

Robert Gravel '70

Robert Lindley, Jr. '70

George Martin, Jr. '70

Francis Burns '71

Peter Doyle '71

Paul Sheils, Esq. '71

Kevin Hafferty '73

Brian Lally '73

David Shomphe '73

Mary Margaret Daly '74

Donald Donahue '74

Dennis Harrington '74

Joseph Malandrino '74

Charles Nicotra '74

William Stundza '74

Bernard Thabault, Esq. '74

Frances Socha '78

Pamela Capodelupo '79

Philip Fenton '79

Silvia (Silvagni) Von Sacken '79

Robert Fraser, Jr. '80

Marion (Burchsted) Higgins '80

Robin Menzies '80

Edwin Cassell '81

John Coveney '82

Robert David '82

Lynn (Pinell) Shea '83

Timothy Campbell '84

Steven Kurek '86

Charles Surat '87

William Woods, Jr. '89

Kevin Doherty '90

Judith Kelleher '90

John McQuaid '91

Thomas MacDonald '92

Nana Dunn '93

John Forsman, Jr. '95

William Cortright '98

Michelle Garland '99

Kyle Sweeney '23

GET CONNECTED, GIVE BACK AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your Merrimack experience does not end with graduation. Discover ways to stay connected to fellow alumni, parents, friends, current students and the College. Once a Warrior, always a Warrior!



CONNECT WITH AND BUILD YOUR MERRIMACK NETWORK

- ▶ **Follow Us on Social Media**
@MerrimackAlumni
- ▶ **Participate in Mack Gives Back**
Volunteer to support local organizations and community members in need. Email mackgivesback@merrimack.edu
- ▶ **Submit a Class Note**
Share your news about personal and professional growth and keep your contact information up to date by visiting merrimack.edu/update.



ATTEND AN EVENT TO SOCIALIZE, NETWORK AND MORE

- ▶ **Football Home Opener and Homecoming Alumni Weekend**
Come “back to the Mack” for two exciting weekends on campus.
- ▶ **Local and Regional Gatherings**
Be on the lookout for gatherings in your area.
- ▶ **Warriors Athletic Games**
Cheer on your Warriors.

Visit our website for more information about upcoming events.



CONNECT WITH CURRENT STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF

- ▶ **Volunteer at Networking Events**
Serve as an alumni panelist at events.
- ▶ **Work with Merrimack's Admissions Team**
Connect with prospective students about attending Merrimack.
- ▶ **Offer Opportunities at Your Company**
Share opportunities with students to work or intern at your company.

Email alumnirelations@merrimack.edu



GIVE BACK AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Make a donation to support generations of Merrimack Warriors to come.

- ▶ **The Merrimack Fund**
Support what you love.
- ▶ **The Warrior Fund**
Support your favorite athletic team.

Make a gift online. Your gift — combined with the generosity of others — has a powerful impact on the College.



MARGARET BYRNE '19 and **JESSE SNYDEMAN '18** were married in October 2023 at Grove at Briar Barn Inn in Rowley, MA. (6)

LINDSAY WERNER '19 has been named assistant coach of women's basketball at the University of Vermont.

ANDREW MURRAY M'19 has been named principal of Central Catholic High School.

2020s

KERIN COLEMAN '21 has been promoted to senior staff accountant at Gray, Gray & Gray LLP.

MATTHEW VERREAULT '21, M'23, was promoted to assistant branch manager at Port Credit Union's Middle St. branch in Portland, ME.

DARION MCKENZIE '22 has been signed to play in the NFL for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

ELIZA WHITFIELD '22 was recognized as an Innovator Under 25 by Albany Business Review in December 2023.

EVA PASTOR '23 has been hired as the town accountant/assistant finance director for the town of Newbury, MA.

KYLE QUINZANI '23, M'24, has a new role as a police officer at the Hopkinton, MA Police Department.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ...

Visit merrimack.edu/update to share life changes, employment updates, accomplishments and pictures.



Reunion 2024





CONTINUING A FAMILY TRADITION



Tim McCoy, president and owner of McCoy Associates Inc., is proud to continue his family's tradition of giving back to the Merrimack College community.

McCoy was raised in North Andover, MA, and his father was a local businessman who owned and operated several McDonald's franchises.

Living and working close to Merrimack College — the family also attended mass services at the Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher — McCoy shares that "Merrimack always had a place in the McCoy family's heart."

McCoy's father, Richard, strongly believed in supporting local institutions and consistently donated to Merrimack over the years, including establishing the McCoy Art Gallery in the Rogers Center for the Arts and donating the iconic Robert Frost statue located on Merrimack's campus.

Continuing the family tradition of supporting Merrimack, McCoy served as a member of the Merrimack College Board of Trustees (BOT) from 2008 to 2017, which he describes as "a great opportunity to give back." During his time as a BOT member, McCoy joined the facilities committee and witnessed an immense period of growth and development for the College.

In addition to his participation on the BOT, McCoy is a proud Merrimack parent. His son, Patrick, graduated from the College in 2023 and now works alongside his father at McCoy Associates. McCoy recalls, "My son had an incredible experience at Merrimack, and the school helped instill Augustinian values that laid a great foundation for him."

To honor his family's strong ties to the Merrimack community, McCoy recently made a gift to establish the McCoy Family Endowed Pioneer Scholarship. Named in memory of his father, who passed away in October 2023, McCoy explains, "My father wouldn't have wanted something in his name, hence the reason we chose to name the scholarship after our family. But it's really in recognition of my father and his love of Merrimack."

The scholarship will support students enrolled in Merrimack's Pioneer Scholars Program, which annually offers students from Lawrence, MA a full scholarship to the College covering tuition, room and board, fees and books. McCoy shares, "It's wonderful to see this program provide students from Lawrence the opportunity to enroll at Merrimack and continue their education, and hopefully after graduation they can give back to their community in some way."

He further reflects, "My family always taught me the importance of giving back what you can; donate your time and commit to the causes that make a difference and serve your community — and Merrimack certainly fits that advice in so many ways."

ALUMNUS ESTABLISHES \$1 MILLION SCHOLARSHIP TO 'GIVE A CHANCE' TO DETERMINED WARRIORS



Paul Cioffi '64 is grateful that Merrimack “took a chance” on him during his time as a student — and now looks to pay his gratitude forward and “give a chance” to deserving students through the Paul John Cioffi '64 Endowed Scholarship Fund.

After applying to Merrimack College, Cioffi was initially denied admittance. However, he explains that the College decided to “take a chance” on him and reconsidered his application at the recommendation of a priest who was familiar with Cioffi’s family.

Describing himself as “unqualified” for the College’s coursework, Cioffi struggled with a learning disability and faced the challenges of being a commuter student who was enrolled in a full-time class schedule while working a job.

During his junior year, Cioffi took an academic leave of absence from Merrimack. At the encouragement of Fr. Thomas Walsh, O.S.A., he later returned to take additional summer courses and wrote a letter to the College asking to be reinstated as a student.

Cioffi’s letter was successful, and he was accepted back to the College, which he describes as “the second time Merrimack took a chance on me.” Following years of persistence and hard work, Cioffi graduated with his bachelor’s degree in business economics in 1964.

After graduation, Cioffi secured a position in United Fruit Company’s training program, which served as a launchpad for his career. He credits his Merrimack degree with helping him earn a spot in the company’s highly competitive program.

Cioffi spent years working in the packaging field, progressing to senior management at Federal Paper Board Co. Together, he and a business partner purchased a division of the company and formed Oak Tree Packaging Corp. with plants in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and mainland China. In 1997, Cioffi and his business partner made the decision to sell the company, at which time he retired.

During his retirement, Cioffi enjoys a variety of hobbies, including volunteer work with several nonprofit organizations. He eventually decided that he wanted to find a way to give back to the institution that was instrumental in launching his career.

In 2023, he made a \$1 million donation to Merrimack to establish the Paul John Cioffi '64 Endowed Scholarship Fund. Each year, Cioffi’s scholarship — which he has aptly coined the “Give a Chance” scholarship — will be awarded to one student, who is eligible to renew the scholarship for four years.

Just as Merrimack took a chance on Cioffi, it was important to him that his scholarship do the same by supporting students who do not have an exemplary grade-point average upon admittance to Merrimack but demonstrate a commitment to developing their full potential through work with an academic support program. Recipients of the scholarship must live on campus and work to stay within good academic standing during their time at the College.

When asked what type of impact he hopes his scholarship creates, Cioffi reflected, “I hope this scholarship generates the same type of impact that my degree had on me — the ability to secure a good job and earn a good living. If you have a strong work ethic and the determination to work hard, opportunities will come your way. I want the recipients of the scholarship to have the same opportunity that I did at Merrimack.”



SAVE
THE
DATES

FOOTBALL HOME OPENER

**Saturday, September 21
vs. the University of Maine
Duane Stadium**

Join fellow Warriors for the football home opener vs. the University of Maine.

HOMECOMING AND ALUMNI WEEKEND

**Friday, September 27–
Saturday, September 28**

Alumni, parents and friends: Return to Merrimack for tailgating, friendship and fireworks as Merrimack football takes on Dartmouth College.

Visit our website for tickets and game information www.merrimackathletics.com



MERRIMACK COLLEGE



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WILL YOU RISE WITH US?

