The Community College of Rhode Island’s Alumni Association will honor eight individuals as part of its annual event on March 27 at Quidnessett Country Club in North Kingstown.

Six of the honorees will be inducted into the Alumni Association’s Society of the Knights. This honor is presented to CCRI alumni who have made extraordinary contributions to the college community. They are: Candy Castaldi ‘80, Sandy Sokoll ‘76 chief accountant at CCRI’s Dental Assisting lab at the Flanagan Campus in Lincoln; and the Newport County Campus capital campaigns.

“The Association believes that the library touches all faculty, students, alumni and the Rhode Island community,” said Alumni Association President Sondra V. Pitts, a member of CCRI’s first graduating class in 1966. “This donation is an investment in the future of the college.”

The college drafted a $500,000 plan to redesign the Knight Campus library in Warwick. The plan calls for refurbishing the library into an information commons that will be the learning-centered hub of the institution with construction anticipated to start this summer.

A major supporter of the new library is the Champlin Foundations. The nonprofit, which made valuable contributions to the Dental Assisting lab at the Flanagan Campus in Lincoln and the Newport County Campus capital campaign in 2004, has contributed $250,000 toward the library project.

The college drafted a $500,000 plan to redesign the Knight Campus library as a part of the college’s $5.5 million campus capital campaign, “Imagine: The Campaign for Endless Possibilities.”

The Community College of Rhode Island’s Alumni Association will honor eight individuals as part of its annual event on March 27 at Quidnessett Country Club in North Kingstown.

Six of the honorees will be inducted into the Alumni Association’s Society of the Knights. This honor is presented to CCRI alumni who have made extraordinary contributions to the college community. They are: Candy Castaldi ’80, Sandy Sokoll ’76 chief accountant at CCRI’s Dental Assisting lab at the Flanagan Campus in Lincoln; and the Newport County Campus capital campaigns.

“The Association believes that the library touches all faculty, students, alumni and the Rhode Island community,” said Alumni Association President Sondra V. Pitts, a member of CCRI’s first graduating class in 1966. “This donation is an investment in the future of the college.”

The college drafted a $500,000 plan to redesign the Knight Campus library in Warwick. The plan calls for refurbishing the library into an information commons that will be the learning-centered hub of the institution with construction anticipated to start this summer.

A major supporter of the new library is the Champlin Foundations. The nonprofit, which made valuable contributions to the Dental Assisting lab at the Flanagan Campus in Lincoln and the Newport County Campus capital campaign in 2004, has contributed $250,000 toward the library project.

The college drafted a $500,000 plan to redesign the Knight Campus library as a part of the college’s $5.5 million campus capital campaign, “Imagine: The Campaign for Endless Possibilities.”

The CCRI Alumni Association has pledged to contribute a minimum of $25,000 to the Knight Campus library as a part of the college’s $5.5 million capital campaign, “Imagine: The Campaign for Endless Possibilities.”

“The Association believes that the library touches all faculty, students, alumni and the Rhode Island community,” said Alumni Association President Sondra V. Pitts, a member of CCRI’s first graduating class in 1966. “This donation is an investment in the future of the college.”

The college drafted a $500,000 plan to redesign the Knight Campus library in Warwick. The plan calls for refurbishing the library into an information commons that will be the learning-centered hub of the institution with construction anticipated to start this summer.

A major supporter of the new library is the Champlin Foundations. The nonprofit, which made valuable contributions to the Dental Assisting lab at the Flanagan Campus in Lincoln and the Newport County Campus capital campaign in 2004, has contributed $250,000 toward the library project.

The college drafted a $500,000 plan to redesign the Knight Campus library as a part of the college’s $5.5 million campus capital campaign, “Imagine: The Campaign for Endless Possibilities.”

The CCRI Alumni Association has pledged to contribute a minimum of $25,000 to the Knight Campus library as a part of the college’s $5.5 million capital campaign, “Imagine: The Campaign for Endless Possibilities.”
Iowa resident Steve Lombardi ’75 is a personal injury lawyer with a passion for mountain climbing. The Bristol, R.I., native got into the sport to satiate his adventurous spirit and has climbed to Mt. Everest Base Camp in Nepal, Mt. Elbrus in Russia, Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa, and the Swiss and French Alps. In January, he added Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina to the list.

“Climbing reveals the character within,” he said. “The mountain doesn’t care if you prepare in advance. You have to have your head about you and be willing to do what it takes.”

Lombardi struggles with high altitude pulmonary edema, a condition where the lungs fill with fluid as a result of the body trying to adapt to high altitude. But that hasn’t slowed him down. In preparation for a climb he uses a special machine while sitting at home in Iowa that allows him to breathe deoxygenated air to acclimate to different mountain altitudes of up to 29,000 vertical feet.

“She isn’t about the first or last day of your life, it’s about the passion you have for living each day,” he said. “There are no guarantees in life, only opportunities.”

Growing up in Bristol had its challenges. Lombardi’s father died when he was 12 and the family, including his mother and four siblings, didn’t have much to spare. “When my father died, bills became real to me,” he said. “Whether or not we would have food on the table to feed all five hungry kids became a real concern for my mother. We didn’t have much but we were surviving.”

After graduating from Bristol High School in 1972, Lombardi attended Wentworth Institute in Boston to study architectural engineering. “I didn’t like it and I failed miserably.” He returned home after one semester and started working long hours at three jobs: baking bread, selling jeans and hauling luggage. “My mother, who didn’t finish high school, encouraged me to go back to college to fulfill my potential. On a Sunday, she told me she made an appointment at Rhode Island Junior College for the next day. With her by my side, I enrolled. She always was the gentle guide.”

Lombardi improved his writing and made the dean’s list three out of four semesters. Dr. John Fallon, a psychology professor, took an interest in Lombardi’s future, suggesting that he consider transferring to a four-year school in the Big 10. “Dr. Fallon saw something in me that I didn’t see.” Lombardi went to the University of Iowa and majored in psychology. He went on to study law at Drake University, earning a Doctor of Jurisprudence in 1981.

“I am very proud to tell people, especially young people, that I started out at RIC,” he said. “That experience gave me the opportunity to mature and get the air under my wings that took me to law school. My mother, along with Dr. Fallon’s direction, is the reason that today I am a lawyer.”

After five years of practicing in Waterloo, Lombardi set up his own practice in West Des Moines. He also started Summit Real Estate Investment Group, a commercial property business.

“Success is not achieved by buying a lottery ticket,” he said. “You have to keep putting one foot in front of the other because success is achieved one step at a time. I don’t hand out participation trophies; I believe success has to be earned.”

On July 5, 2008, Lombardi married Barbara Tubridy, his high school sweetheart, at the Chapel by the Sea in Bristol. Together they have six children and reside in West Des Moines.
1972
John E. "Jack" McLaughlin Jr. received a Bachelor of Science degree from Bryant College in 1974. After working multiple jobs in automotive-industrial sales, he changed careers to work in state service. In December 2008, McLaughlin retired with 20 years of service as a senior research technician at the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training. He and his wife, Karen, have been married for 29 years and live in West Warwick.

1977
After graduating from CCRI, Tom Dyer attended Grand View University in Iowa where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. He went on to complete two graduate programs in Public Health and Health Care Administration at Des Moines University. Dyer is the manager of health services at Nationwide Insurance. He and his wife, Debbie, live in Iowa.

1980
Walter Connolly received a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and political science from the University of Maine at Presque Isle in 1982. In 1990, Walter received a J.D. from Washington & Lee University School of Law in Virginia. He lives in Kentucky with his wife, Sarah, and their three daughters.

1981
Judith Bland and Neil Johnson were married on Oct. 13, 2007.

1986
Pam Bartley works as a senior research assistant at a local organization dealing with quality of life measurement.

1988
Andrea Young-DeCiantis has been a midwife since 1997 and has been in OB nursing since 1989. She has attended more than 1,400 births and loves being involved watching her patients and their families grow.

1990
Denise Forrest and Mario D. Prata Jr. ‘96 were married at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Providence on June 14, 2008.

1991
Yvette D’Elia retired from the state of Massachusetts in 2003 after 20 years of service. She went on to work in several long-term care facilities in Massachusetts and Nevada. She is now a minimum data set coordinator for a long-term care facility in North Kingstown.

1992
Steven Dulude is the director of finance for the Rhode Island Parent Information Network Network and is treasurer for the Academy Players in East Greenwich.

1993
Karen Chiello and Scott Huddleston were married at the Frontier Country Club on Sept. 6, 2005.

1994
Lori Ann Cabral and Rick Vaudry were married on June 6, 2008, in St. Teresa’s Church in Pawtucket.

1995
Ray Pingitore is lead investigator and co-author of the book “Thrill Killers,” a true story about the carjacking of two college students in June 2000. He graduated from Roger Williams University with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1997 and a Master of Science degree in 2005. Pingitore retired from the Johnston Police Department after 24 years of service and is the director of the members’ assistance program for Teamsters Local 251 in Providence.

1996
Claudia McCusker and Frederick L. Koehler were married in Las Vegas on Sept. 27, 2008.

1998
Frances Alpieri has been promoted to vice president/branch manager at NewportFdd in Westerly.

1999
Jeanne Hoxsie has been named manager of the West Warwick branch of Centreville Bank.

2000
Andrea Young-DeCiantis was appointed assistant head of the women’s basketball team at RIC. She previously held the same position at CCRI for five seasons and has been working at The Key Program for 10 years.

2001
Patricia A. Nunu was appointed assistant administrator of the financial management division of the Rhode Island Department of Corrections. Patricia previously worked as a fiscal management officer at CCRI for 15 years and has held positions at the state controller’s office, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Human Services. She received a bachelor’s degree in accounting from RIC and holds an associate degree in business administration from CCRI.

2002
Thomas W. Quinlan has been named vice president of small-business lending at Washington Trust in the Westerly office. He is responsible for developing and maintaining business and individual loans from application to closing. He also serves as the development chair for CCRI’s Alumni Association.

2007
Kristina Mutter and Christopher Mayer were married at St. Aidan Church in Cumberland on May 31, 2008.

Robert Gray Henderson, former executive vice president for business affairs at CCRI, died on Nov. 21, 2008, at his home in East Greenwich, R.I., after a long bout with cancer. He was 71.

Henderson retired from CCRI in December 2004 after 40 years of service to the college, the last of the original founding faculty and staff. After graduating from URI and serving a brief service in the U.S. Army, he started as a faculty member in the Math Department, teaching for one year and helping to establish an academic engineering department. He was then asked to take the position of development officer, becoming involved in the planning and construction of the Knight Campus in Warwick, the first permanent site for the college. He also played a lead role in the openings of the Lincolns, Providence and Newport campuses as vice president. Henderson was instrumental in securing Rhode Island higher education’s first technology bond of $40 million for the college and also helped to implement much-needed upgrades to its information technology centers.

Kristine Bonetti
Known to his CCRI colleagues as a thoughtful, steady and unwavering advocate for the betterment of the college, Henderson’s quiet and constant work ethic earned him a reputation as a “go-to” guy. Since his departure from CCRI, he was actively involved in activities at the First Evangelical Lutheran Church in East Greenwich, where he served as president of the congregation and president of the church council.

Henderson leaves his wife of 29 years, Charlene, and sons Robert Jr., Michael, Brett and Joshua. Donations in his name may be sent to the First Evangelical Lutheran Church Memorial Fund. Donations in his name may be sent to the First Evangelical Lutheran Church Memorial Fund, 118 Division St., East Greenwich, RI 02818.

2008
Michelle Ferreira and Joseph Bowah were married at Quaid-nessett Country Club in North Kingstown on July 26, 2008.

Jennifer Sinapi and Mark DiEla were married at the State House in Providence on Aug. 9, 2008.

What’s new in your life?
New job? Promotion? Retired? Relocated? Let your former classmates know what’s new with you! Fill out this form so your Class Note may be included in a future edition of the Green & White.

Name
Class
Address
City State ZIP
Phone number
E-mail
Is the above mailing address new? yes no

Please send your information to:
CCRI Office of Alumni Affairs
1762 Louisquisset Pike, Lincoln, RI 02865
or fax to (401) 333-7111 or e-mail to alumni@ccri.edu

What’s new?
Society of the Knights honorees

Sandy Burdett Sokoll ’76, ’01

CCRI class year: 1976, 2001; member of the Shielders, a now defunct student activities group; business manager for the Primus yearbook staff

Favorite CCRI memory: “The Shielders was an active student group that organized activities and fundraisers for the college. One of my favorite memories of being a student was participating in the female pin-up contest, a fundraiser the Shielders sponsored. The guys had their own version with contestants walking the runway on stage. Students lined the ramps to watch. The event was a bit provocative, and probably wouldn’t happen today, but it was the 1970s and there was a lot of school spirit and camaraderie behind it. It attracted a lot of attention and the local TV news came to cover it. All of the money we raised from the event was donated to the Rhode Island School for the Deaf.”

Additional education: Master’s degree in public administration, URI; bachelor’s degree in business administration, URI; certificate in office automation, CCRI

Occupation: Chief accountant, managing the Accounts Payable Office at CCRI. Serves as liaison between the State Controller’s Office and the college; supervises all facets of the college’s accounts payable operation and preparation of bond and Rhode Island Capital Plan Fund vouchers. Adjunct faculty member teaching in CCRI’s Business Department.

Accomplishment most proud of: “In 2005, I earned my master’s degree in Public Administration from URI. The graduation was scheduled for a Saturday, the same day as my daughter Rachel’s undergraduate commencement at RIC. Earning this degree was an accomplishment that was important to me, but it was more important for me to be there for my daughter. Unbeknownst to me, my husband, my daughter and a dear friend arranged for me to receive my degree with RIC’s master’s candidates the Thursday before. They told me I would be attending a dinner for my daughter, who was class secretary, but when we arrived, my husband pulled my cap and cowl out of the trunk and explained that I would graduate that night. Sol Solomon, a member of the Rhode Island Board of Governors of Higher Education, handed me my diploma that night. All of my friends were there and I was touched by the gesture my family made for me.”

Community involvement: Member of CCRI Alumni Association Board of Directors; chair of the association’s golf tournament committee and member of its development committee; member of the American Association of Women in Community Colleges; member of Rhode Island Women in Higher Education; chair of the CCRI Professional Development Day logistics committee; judge for Skills USA; represents Rhode Island as first lady of the state’s Freemasons.

Family: Husband Richard Sokoll; daughter Rachel Sokoll

Arno Lives in Cranston, R.I.

Candy Castaldi ’81

CCRI class year: 1981; played basketball, volleyball and softball

Favorite CCRI memory: “I came to CCRI with aspirations to make a difference by studying to become a teacher. A guidance counselor encouraged me to take courses in the college’s business program and then go on to complete a four-year degree. It was rather unique at the time for women to get involved in the business industry, but I discovered I loved it and decided to major in general business and minor in finance. CCRI got me started on the path to where I am today. Another great memory was playing basketball for coach Rick Sante ’73, who played for CCRI and Providence College. He was a terrible player and it was a great honor to play for him. Although we didn’t win many games, we had fun.”

Additional education: Master’s degree in business administration, organization and management, Johnson & Wales University

Occupation: Senior vice president of the circulator division, Taco Inc. Responsible for day-to-day manufacturing operation, which includes purchasing, quality, engineering and manufacturing engineering. Started her career at the company in 1989 as a product planner and worked her way up the ranks, being promoted to operations manager and vice president of operations before assuming her current position. Has represented the company in Brazil, China, India, Korea, Taiwan and Europe. Taco Inc. partners with CCRI to provide additional education and training opportunities for its employees.

Accomplishments most proud of: Being promoted to vice president at Taco Inc.; receiving master’s degree; completing five marathons.

Awards and honors received: YWCA Women of Achievement Award, 2008; West Warwick High School Athletic Hall of Fame, 2007

Community involvement: CCRI Foundation trustee; member of the CCRI ImaginE capital campaign steering committee; member of the RIC Advisory Board

Lives in East Greenwich, R.I.

Anne Sliney ’78

CCRI class year: 1978

Favorite CCRI memory: “Studying in CCRI’s rigorous academic program, which gave me excellent preparation for a professional nursing career.”

Additional education: Bachelor’s degree in nursing, RIC; received credentials to become AIDS certified registered nurse

Occupation: Chief nursing officer for the William J. Clinton Foundation partner HIV/AIDS Initiative. Oversees a team of physicians and nurses who provide clinical support and technical expertise to HIV/AIDS programs in 26 countries throughout the world. Consults with Ministries of Health in Clinton Foundation partner countries on issues related to nursing, training and health system strengthening.

Accomplishment most proud of: Establishing a community-based nursing program for care and support of people living with HIV in Rhode Island. “Before taking the chief nursing officer position for the Clinton Foundation, I served as an adherence specialist in the Brown University AIDS program. I designed a program to provide community-based adherence assessment and intervention. I saw patients in their homes, homeless shelters, coffee shops, drug rehab, methadone clinics, assisted living facilities and mental health centers. I served as a link and follow-up to the medical care patients received at local hospitals and clinics.”

Awards and honors received: Honorary Doctor of Science degree from RIC, 2006

Community involvement: Past president and current board member of the Rhode Island Association of Nurses in AIDS Care; chair of the association’s public policy committee

Family: Husband George Nee, secretary-treasurer of Rhode Island’s American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations; son Patrick Nee; daughters Katie Nee and Brigid Nee

Lives in Cranston, R.I.
Larry Gemma ’77

CCRI class year: 1977
Favorite CCRI memories: “I graduated from CCRI during the first year of the Lincoln campus and made many wonderful, lifelong friends. I served as vice president of my class in my second year and was involved in organizing student mixers and fundraisers. One of my most memorable experiences was acting in the Theater Department’s performance of ‘Guys and Dolls.’ I only had one line, but I enjoyed being part of the production. Professor Bert Silverburg would constantly challenge all of us to do our best. It was about the whole play, not just the actors with the main parts. In the classroom, I remember Joe Garvey, who taught my business law course. The subject was challenging and he made it exciting by presenting the material in a practical way.”

Additional education:
- Bachelor’s degree in political science, University of Connecticut
- Master’s degree in leadership, Nova Southeastern University
- Doctorate in youth studies, Florida International University

Growing up as one of nine children, Larry Gemma ’77 fondly remembers spending afternoons after school helping his father clean fittings in the garage to support the family. He worked a summer job for 60 hours a week, so working by his side gave Larry knowledge of the plumbing and heating industry and an opportunity to spend time with him. GEM Plumbing, Heating and Electric started in 1949 as a one-truck operation with Larry’s father at the helm and his mother, Gloria, dispatching service calls. In 1982, after graduating from URI, Larry, his twin brothers, Leonard and Edward, along with their younger brother, Anthony, guided the Lincoln-based company in a new direction. With a new mission to provide its customer base with 24-hour emergency service, each brother bought a truck and joined his father’s team. Fifteen years later, the company had doubled its work force and started tackling larger construction jobs. Their reputation for being punctual and tidy (GEM plumbers wear protective booties while in a customer’s home) began to spread. Today, the company has 300 employees and a fleet of 165 trucks, making it one of largest plumbing and heating companies in the United States. Growing up as one of nine children had its challenges, like sharing a four-bedroom house with 11 people, but it also provided a special bond and a core of values for the siblings. “Those were the wonder years,” Larry said. “We never understood we weren’t wealthy because we were rich with family.”

Those family values have played an important role in the business, too. The Gemmas are dedicated to education and giving back to the community and have launched several programs to support their employees and people in need, including a Worksite Wellness program.

Continued on page 8

Mary Ann Shallcross Smith ’82

CCRI class year: 1982
Favorite CCRI memory: “I recall the first time I was sitting in a CCRI classroom in 1980 and the professor announced an upcoming exam. I instantly got butterflies in my stomach at the thought of taking a test, thinking, ‘I cannot do this!’” The professor suggested forming study groups to prepare for the exam. Until that day I had never heard of study groups but realized the value of the concept and reached out to my peers to make a date to study. Our study group became very close socially which was great for the evening students and my grades soon became all A’s. CCRI professors were always there for the students and I felt very supported.”

Additional education:
- Doctorate in youth studies/leadership, Providence College
- Master’s degree in agency counseling, RIDC
- Bachelor’s degree in human services, URI

Occupations: Known as Dr. Day Care for 35 years of experience working in early childhood education. CEO/Founder of Kids Klub Inc., a nonprofit that provides child care for students at schools in Cumberland, Lincoln and Woonsocket; Dr. Day Care’s Child Development Center for Learning and Play with schools in Foster, Cumberland and North Smithfield; Be You Coaching and Counseling Agency; and Therapeutic Child Care Services. Rhode Island Representative of District 46 Lincoln/Pawtucket.

Continued on page 8

Socialie of the Knights honorees

Anthony (left), Leonard and Larry Gemma ’77 make up the leadership team at GEM Plumbing, Heating and Electric along with their brother Edward (not pictured).

David P. Monti ’72

CCRI class year: 1972
President of freshman class; president of student senate; member of Americans for a Peaceful Society

Favorite CCRI memories: “I was a part of the student body that selected Ed Liston as the college’s second president. Additional education: Bachelor’s degree in political science and journalism, URI Occupation: Senior vice president and partner at RDW Group Inc., one of the largest privately held advertising and public relations firms in New England; managing partner of RDW Group Inc.’s Worcester, Massachusetts, office; Manager firm’s Worcester office overseeing account service and directing planning on a broad range of accounts in health care, higher education and in the built environment; serve as a member of the firm’s management and administration committee. Accomplishments most proud of: Coaching and counseling hundreds of successful young people (employees and interns) in the advertising and public relations business over the past 35 years; chairing the Greater Providence YMCA board; serving on the national YMCA board and traveling to Armenia to help support the YMCA’s movement in that country; receiving a master captain’s license to captain U.S. Coast Guard inspected vessels; running four marathons, completing the most recent at the age of 50.

Awards and honors received: More than 20 advertising, marketing and public relations industry awards for creative and effective work including Publicity Club of New England Bell Ringer awards; Boston Ad Club Hatch awards; Society for Professional Marketing awards, YMCA of the USA marketing awards

Community involvement: CCRI Foundation trustee; commissioner of East Greenwich Housing Authority; president of Cove Homes, a nonprofit development company; president of London Bridge Child Care Center board of directors; chairman of the YMCA of Greater Providence international committee; Save the Bay Volunteer, working on their environmental initiatives.


Business Association’s Small Family Owned Business of the Year, 2004. In addition, the company has won several awards for their dedication to community service, including St. Mary’s Home for Children’s Philanthropist of the Year, and the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation’s Small Business of the Year and Local Hero Award.

Community involvement: Member of the board of directors at William M. Davies Jr. Career and Technical High School; member of the board of directors at Capital City Community Center; member of the board of directors for the Gloria Gemma Breast Cancer Foundation

Family information: Wife Susan; son Paul; daughters Jennifer, Ashley and Caitlyn Lives in Lincoln, R.I.
The CCRI Foundation will honor three extraordinary community leaders at its third annual Changing Lives Celebration while raising funds that will help students continue to change their lives and achieve their dreams. The Foundation will honor the employees of Amica Mutual Insurance Company, including its President Robert DiMuccio, VNA of Care New England President and CEO Nancy Roberts, and Rhode Island television journalist Karen Adams of WPRI Channel 12 as leaders in business, education and community respectively, during an event held from 6 to 9 p.m. on May 21, 2009 at the Liston Campus in Providence. The event will feature music, West Coast wines, hors d’oeuvres and silent and live auctions. Previous auction items have included tickets to sporting and theater events, weekend getaway packages and an assortment of wines. Tickets cost $65. Corporate and individual sponsorships are available. For tickets and more information, call (401) 333-7150 or visit www.ccri.edu/oia/foundation.

The CCRI Foundation has received a $276,000 grant from the van Beuren Foundation that will replace outdated computer equipment at the Newport County Campus. The van Beuren Foundation grant will increase the technology systems available to students. It will also encourage faculty to take advantage of multimedia and interactive materials designed to appeal to a wide range of learning styles and individual learning needs. The computers that are replaced will be distributed throughout the campus network. “These improvements will have a long-reaching effect on our ability to provide top-notch equipment for our students that will prepare them for a career or continued education,” said Stephen Vieira, the college’s chief information officer. “We are grateful that the van Beuren Foundation has recognized our need and will provide us with the means to improve our students’ experience with technology.” A long time supporter of the college, the van Beuren Foundation contributed funds to the Newport County Campus capital campaign in 2004 and provided a 2005 award to purchase adaptive equipment for students with disabilities.
Athletics

The Community College of Rhode Island Department of Athletics offered free admission to all members of the community and special recognition to local and high school teams and individual student-athletes during its home basketball games this season.

_called “CCRI Basketball Knights,” the college honored a student-athlete or team from an area high school at halftime of the men’s and women’s home games. Attendees were given free popcorn and have the opportunity to win prizes such as T-shirts and Knights memorabilia.

The Central High School girls basketball team was honored during CCRI’s contest against Mercer County College on Jan. 25. The team was recognized for practicing and playing all of its games on the road this season while its new home gym is under construction.

“Central’s girls programs have moved up a division, so to say that they are trying to build character during this time of transition is an understatement,” said CCRI Sports Information Director Dan LaCorbiniere during the halftime ceremony.

“These ‘road warriors’ have worked hard and will continue to work hard until they have a gym of their own.”

Other participating teams in CCRI Basketball Knights so far this season include Central High School’s boys basketball team and East Providence High School’s girls cross country team.

“Recognizing that these are challenging economic times, this is an opportunity for free and fun family entertainment,” said CCRI Athletic Director Joe Pavone, acknowledging that the CCRI men’s and women’s teams are posting winning records for their fans. As of Feb. 18, the men’s squad is 18-10 and the women’s squad is 19-6.

“CCRI has a wonderful tradition of producing All-American talent and championship winning teams Rhode Island residents can be proud of and we want to share that with the community,” he said.

All CCRI men’s and women’s basketball home games are played at the Vincent A. Culleen Field House at the Knight Campus in Warwick. For more information about the teams, go to www.ccri.edu/athl/sports.shtml.

Alumni Association scholarship helps student pursue law studies at CCRI

Paralegal studies major Amy Watkins ’09 learned how to build a case in Ira Schaeffer’s “Reading the Short Story” class. After getting a question wrong on an exam about a Russian story, Watkins realized she took the question literally, not the way it was intended. She believed that, even though she inadvertently misinterpreted the question, her answer was still correct and deserved credit, so she approached her professor.

“I stated the facts and developed my supporting points,” she said. After listening to Watkins’ case, Schaeffer was convinced of her stance and gave her credit for her response. “He said, ‘You’re really good at building a case’ and gave me the A.’”

Watkins is expected to graduate from CCRI in May with more than 90 credits. She completed two full-time semesters with a 4.0 GPA and wants to transfer to Roger Williams University to enroll in its law degree program.

But those dreams were nearly out of reach at the start of the Spring 2009 semester when the financial aid she was counting on didn’t come through.

“I didn’t have the money to stay in school,” said Watkins, the mother of Jhameson, 5, and Savanah, 3. With two young children to support, she needed financial aid she was counting on didn’t come through.

Amy Watkins children to support, she needed to keep her full-time job at The Peanut Gallery, a day care center in Warwick, to take care of her family.

Then came what Watkins calls, “the blessing” — a scholarship from the college’s Alumni Association. Bob Cipolla, assistant dean of student development and assessment in the college’s Advising and Counseling office, and Marisa Albini, director of Alumni Affairs and Alumni Development, helped her apply. Albini collaborated with the Criminal Justice and Legal Studies Department to help her secure a $250 award donated by CCRI Professor Joe Garvey to help pay for her books and supplies.

“Bob was in touch with me every day and, even though I haven’t met Professor Garvey, I sent him a thank-you note for helping me,” she said, adding that both gifts could not have come at a better time. “It was like a weight was lifted off my back.”

Watkins first took classes at CCRI during her senior year at Pilgrim High School. Her grandmother, Nancy Burdick, is a member of CCRI’s class of 1976. She transferred to Roger Williams University, but dropped out during her first semester. “I just wasn’t interested in an education at the time,” she said.

Watkins later returned to CCRI with renewed enthusiasm. With a number of relatives in the nursing field, including her aunt, Laura Burdick ‘03, and her sister, Nicole, who is enrolled in CCRI’s program, she thought she would give the profession a try, but she did not enjoy her classes or her job as a certified nursing assistant. After discovering legal studies, she has pursued the program with a renewed interest in education.

“Knowledge, you can’t put a price on it. That, and the love for your kids,” she said.

Watkins is taking six classes this semester at night while working at The Peanut Gallery during the day. Her mother, Nancy, baby-sits on Saturdays so Watkins can study at the library, and Sunday, she said, is a blank page.

Continued on page 8
Julie White-Gooding

Occupation: Director of development at Rhode Island Free Clinic, an organization that provides health care for the uninsured. Secures external funds in support of organization’s clinic expansion, to establish a free pharmacy and physician network; oversees external communications. Former dean of Institutional Advancement and director of Student Success and Minority Programs at CCRI.

Favorite CCRI memory: “Commencement. CCRI’s remarkable graduates overcome adversity and achieve extraordinary goals year after year.”

Accomplishments most proud of: Creating a model of student success for at-risk students; establishing the CCRI chapter of American Association for Women in Community Colleges (AWACC); securing funds for upgrading the dental and allied health labs, outfitting the Newport County Campus and improvements to the Knight Campus library; growing the CCRI Foundation into an active and effective board; and expanding development at the college to include the Changing Lives Celebration, Chafee Society, Crusaders’ Council and an annual report.

Education: Doctorate, University of Connecticut; master’s degree in education, Boston University; bachelor’s degree, Clark University.

Awards and honors received: Rhode Island Foundation Leadership Fellow, 2007; AWACC Woman of the Year, 2001.

Community involvement: Board member, Westerly Girls Softball League; development committee member, Westerly Land Trust; member of books and tracts committee, Westerly Friends Meeting.

Family information: Husband Antonio Gooding; sons Shann and Shawn Gooding; daughter Donna Lives in Westerly, R.I.

Ronald J. Caniglia

Occupation: President of Stand Corp., general contractor and construction manager; has been involved in the contracting and construction industry since 1964.

Community involvement: Started volunteering on behalf of CCRI in the early 1990s, and is a generous donor. CCRI Foundation trustee and past president.

How I became a CCRI volunteer: “I first got involved with CCRI as chair of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training Apprentice Council. I was working with staff from the Foundation and what is now known as the Center for Workforce and Community Education on a school-to-work transition grant. I got to know Rosemary Zimms, who was the director at the time, and she told me I would be a valuable addition to their board. The more involved I got with strategic planning, school initiatives and the people behind them, the more at home I felt.”

Why I volunteer for CCRI: “Faculty, staff and administrators are energetic and captivating, they are passionate about their jobs. At CCRI, there are many students striving to change their lives while juggling everything that life has thrown at them. When they approach me and tell me that they wouldn’t be where they are today without their CCRI experience I think that speaks volumes about the college. Students never just say it was one teacher who helped them. They talk about counselors, staff who also helped them along the way. I consider myself an average person and I relate to students and people in need. I’ve received breaks during my life that have made a positive difference and I am very fortunate to have been able to have the opportunity to give back to others.”

Family information: Wife Marilyn Hudson-Tremayne; daughter Joelle; son Douglas ’92; and stepson Jordan Lives in Cranston and War-wick, R.I.

Mary Ann Shallcross Smith ’82

Occupation: Law studies from the disease.

The company’s Random Acts of Kindness® program started by encouraging Gem employees to perform a considerate, unexpected deed for another person. A common example of an act of kindness is paying for a coffee for the person behind you in line. The company has expanded the program through its Web site by asking people to submit stories of hardship and stories of kindness.

As part of the company’s multi-layered education and training program, the Gem Institute for Performance Excellence hosts contractors from around the world to expose them to best practices in industry education. The second layer of the program focuses on growing the skills of their own employees. Gem technicians are matched with highly skilled master plumbers and the pairs ride together in an on-the-job mentoring arrangement. In addition, all technicians receive 60 more hours of training each year, with a focus on customer service, and all apprentices without a college education can enroll at CCRI, courtesy of the company. “It is our greatest reward to give back to the college that gave me so much,” Larry said.

Law studies

From page 7

“family day.” Watkins was one of eight students to attend a breakfast hosted by the Alumni Association on Feb. 10. The event, held at the Knight Campus in Warwick, gave recipients of the association’s scholarships and book awards an opportunity to meet and connect with board members.

Watkins is grateful for the efforts of the Alumni Association and the college’s faculty and staff. “They have shown me there is hope for anyone and second chances for everyone who wants it badly enough,” she said.

If you are interested in supporting an Alumni Association scholarship or book award, call (401) 333-7150 or e-mail alumni@ccri.edu for more information.