Love Was in the Air for Mercer Aviation Couple

The MCCC aviation program is a great first step. I found the courses to be challenging and very rewarding. I also made many lifetime friends there, including my best friend and wife, Jennifer.” — Roy Johnson ’89

The students in Mercer’s Aviation Flight Technology program have so much in common, united in their love for flying and strong commitment to their education. It’s easy to see how they could end up as partners — in the sky and in life.

Introducing Roy and Jennifer (Agnostis) Johnson, Mercer aviation students who were married in 1997. Roy graduated from Mercer in 1989 with an Associate in Applied Science in Aviation Flight Technology. Jennifer started at Mercer that same year with her private pilot license already in hand, intent on pursuing a career in aviation. They met while he was an instructor for Mercer at Robbinsville Airport and she was looking for someone to help her finish up her instrument training.

“Some people are born with the natural ability to fly and she had that ability,” Roy recalls of Jennifer. “I was impressed with her smoothness, coordination and professional attitude from the first day we started flying together. We finished her instrument training in two weeks. That’s determination!”

They have, quite literally, been soaring sky and in life.

Roy and Jennifer Johnson, graduates of Mercer’s Aviation Flight Technology program, at their wedding in 1997.

Outstanding Graduates of 2001

Kim Thompson was one of 4,000 students chosen from 62,000 applicants nationwide for the Gates Millennium Scholarship. The award will cover her educational expenses through the Ph.D. level. She plans to teach in inner city schools and has a special interest in helping teen mothers and children. Thompson, a “Distinguished Scholar” and “All Star Academic Team” member, did it all while raising three sons. Her next step is continuing her studies at Rider University. “I am nervous to leave Mercer,” Thompson said. “I have felt really supported.”

Dennis Connaughton has won a full Phi Theta Kappa scholarship to Rutgers University. He plans to become a hospital social worker to counsel patients suffering from hepatitis, HIV and cancer. He began his college education around the same time his daughters were ready for college, after working as a truck driver for many years.

Connaughton leads a support group at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton for people affected by hepatitis and other liver diseases. He also maintains his own website as a resource for hepatitis patients. “Mercer’s a great school,” Connaughton said. “I don’t want to leave.”

Johannah Hutchinson, an honors graduate in fine arts, delivered a powerful address to students at commencement ceremonies on May 23. She encouraged them to take advantage of every opportunity, to take risks and to measure growth throughout life. She will be continuing her studies at Rutgers University’s Mason Gross School of the Arts.

Named “Student of the Year” by the Student Government Association, and winner of the Student Community Service Award, Hutchinson led the college’s Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, which won five-star status for its extensive charitable work and leadership development.
The Visual and Performing Arts Thrive at Mercer

With ten majors in the visual and performing arts, Mercer provides abundant opportunities for creative and talented students. Small group settings, individual attention, and state-of-the-art equipment all lead to a learning environment that puts students first.

Mercer offers majors in fine arts, art history, photography, illustration, ceramics/sculpture, advertising design, computer graphics, music, dance, and theater. Associate in Art and Associate in Fine Arts degree programs prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges. The college grants associate degrees in 62 major areas that are designed for transfer, in addition to associate degrees in applied science and certificate programs designed for career preparation.
At a press conference announcing the startup of the Central New Jersey Centers for Workforce Excellence in Information Technology are, from left, Congressman Rush Holt; MCCC Acting President Eric Perkins; Mercer County Executive Robert Prunetti; and Chairman of the Mercer County Workforce Investment Board Calvin Izard.

The IT Centers provide training for individuals and for businesses who need to broaden or upgrade the skills of their workforces, according to Ray Ingram, director. They are administered by MCCC’s Division of Corporate and Community Programs. “Our overriding objective is to create training programs that match the real world needs of businesses in the short and medium term,” Ingram said. “The programs are geared to real-world problems and solutions.”

The IT Centers were made possible through the resources of MCCC, Middlesex County College, and a Department of Labor grant awarded to the Mercer County Workforce Investment Board (WIB). To become a business partner of the IT Centers or to take advantage of its training opportunities, contact Ray Ingram at 609-586-4800 x3635, or email ingram@mccc.edu. More information is available at www.nj-itcenters.com.

Science Plus Soap Equal Success

Janssen Pharmaceutica staff members who acted as mentors, and high school students who participated in the Trenton Science Institute, James Kerney Campus, present a $770 donation to the Trenton YWCA. The money was earned through a soap manufacturing and marketing project. From left are mentor Kenneth Walton of Janssen; Trenton Central High School student Tolu Onigbanjo; YWCA Executive Director Sasa Montano; mentor Loye Rose of Janssen; MCCC Provost Beverly Richardson; and Science Program Coordinator Nadine Kaiser. Participating students, from Trenton Central High School and the Granville Academy, named their company “Paradise Essentials.” The project, which emphasized chemistry education, was funded by a Johnson and Johnson grant through the Bridge to Employment Program, with the goal of motivating high school students to pursue education and careers in science.
Spotlight on Faculty Authors

Mercer faculty members who have authored their own textbooks are, from left, Betty Cornelius, Edith Silver, Stephen Richman, Laura Knight, and Jim Franklin.

This is the first in a series focusing on full-time Mercer faculty members who have authored books.

Mercer professors will gladly tell you about the special satisfaction that comes with the teaching profession. But a particular group knows the even greater satisfaction of teaching from a textbook that they’ve written. Their subject areas differ. Their particular reasons for embarking on a textbook project vary, but Mercer professors say that teaching from their own textbook is the ideal instructional situation.

When Professor Stephen Richman began teaching his two-semester “Spanish 107 and 108” in 1975, he conceived the courses as “an alternative to the standard beginner language courses available at every college.” Designed especially for travelers and for practical situations like the workplace, “these courses emphasize oral communication – practical vocabulary in realistic situations,” said Richman, who has served as coordinator for Foreign Languages since 1990.

Using an original series of course handouts as his foundation, Richman published Conversational Spanish for Everyday Use in 1975. He took a one-semester sabbatical to complete the task, turning to the college’s graphic arts department to help with illustrations and the college print shop for printing.

Now in its sixth edition, the book’s material has been refined over the years. Activities and vocabulary have been added, and other material eliminated. Richman enjoys being the author of a textbook that is printed in-house. “When the need arises for a new edition, it can be carried out more often and with less expense,” he said.

For Math Professors Edith Silver and Betty Cornelius, the idea of writing a book together was a natural extension of their long-time relationship as office mates. They have been at the college for 34 and 33 years respectively, and have co-authored textbooks for two introductory math courses.

“When we moved to the West Windsor Campus, the original plan was to teach introductory math classes in a large lecture hall,” recalled Cornelius. “We envisioned being in a big room with 150 kids who didn’t like math. We decided to give students a textbook with a structured, systematic approach that would help them develop an appreciation of mathematics in their everyday lives,” said Silver.

Silver and Cornelius wrote Concepts of Mathematics in 1978, which covers number systems, set theory, math systems, group theory, and logic for a target audience of liberal arts and other non-science majors. Topics in Math picks up where the first book leaves off, giving non-technical students practical knowledge of useful math concepts including computer math, problem solving, statistics, and probability.

“We tell students that we will touch on many areas of math and hopefully they will find one they’re passionate about,” said Cornelius. Originally published in-house, Paladin Press began publishing the texts when larger quantities were needed.

“I liken our step-by-step approach to eating an apple,” said Silver. “You can’t put the whole thing in your mouth at once. You have to take small bites. Some students who started with this course have gone on to become math majors.”

As the textbooks’ authors, Cornelius and Silver are in a perfect position to enhance their material with each edition. “It’s ideal to have so much control over the material. Each time we teach the course we have better insight into what works. It helps me be a better teacher,” said Cornelius. “We’re proud of the fact that success rates in these courses are some of the highest at Mercer.”

For English Professors Laura Knight and Jim Franklin, it was frustration that led to their collaboration on And Your Point, a text for English 101 published by Windsor Press. “I was dissatisfied with the book we were using,” recalled Knight. Midway through the semester, she decided it was time to write her own and enlisted the help of office mate Franklin.

Their goal was to create one book that included challenging readings and useful grammar sections. “There was nothing on the market that satisfactorily combined the two,” said Knight, who has been at Mercer since 1982. “In addition, we were seeking to match our department curriculum with the level of mastery at the four-year schools.”

Before they started, Knight and Franklin consulted with instructors from Rutgers. “The idea was that the transfer school’s curriculum should pick up where ours left off,” said Franklin, a Mercer professor since 1968. “We wanted to hear directly from them what they were expecting from our transfer students.”

The first edition of And Your Point came out in 1997; the book is currently in its third edition. With each edition, the authors have fine-tuned their material. “We’ve had the opportunity to see what worked and what didn’t work,” said Knight.

The text is organized into five sections. Readings address a variety of stimulating topics from the sciences, literature, humanities and history. Featured authors include Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Shakespeare, Jamaica Kincaid, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Grammar sections cover such points as the writing process, improving sentence structure and punctuation.

“Since using this book, we’re getting more from our students,” said Knight. “The readings are more challenging, and they lead into harder readings and longer papers. Students feel that this course puts them on a solid college level and that they’ll be prepared when they transfer.” Knight and Franklin have gotten good responses from other faculty members who are using their book.

It took 15 months of nights, weekends and a summer break to complete, but Franklin and Knight say And Your Point was worth it. “Now we have a book we can really work with. Classes are much more enjoyable to teach. We are giving our students a chance to learn at a higher level.” And, according to these professors, most are succeeding admirably.

Mercer’s Communication Students Say It All!

Joseph Buckley is a communications major whose goal is a law degree. He is President of the Student Government Association. “I love taking part in all the activities Mercer has to offer. I also love the small class sizes.”

Mercer offers 62 majors including many options in communications, humanities and social sciences.

Register now for Spring 2001 Credit classes begin January 16

Mercer Makes It Happen!

Mercer’s spring ad campaign focused on some of our most successful students, representing their varied interests, majors, and career goals.
A Little Push Into A
Hot New Medium for Mercer Alum

reston Harrison ('73) is fired up about an art form that's popular in central New Jersey, especially in commercial settings. The new Marrazzo's Supermarket in Ewing features a 350-tile installation by Harrison.

Professor Mel Leipzig, coordinator of Mercer's Fine Arts program, has enthusiastic words for Harrison, who was one of Leipzig's first art students at Mercer in the late 1960s. "He is a terrific artist and a terrific person," said Leipzig. "He's immensely gifted. All these years later, I still remember his images so vividly."

Harrison remembers his Mercer years in downtown Trenton with fondness. "It was a golden time. Mercer's art program was blossoming with young talent," he said. "Several new art teachers had just come to Mercer from New York, including Mel," Harrison recalled.

"It was an inspirational time for me. There was a lot of energy and creativity at Mercer. We felt connected with the artistic history of Trenton. It was a very special experience." Harrison took additional courses at the Philadelphia College of Art and graduated from Mercer with an A.A. degree in Art and Design in 1973.

After graduation, Harrison got a job with Hill Refrigeration in Trenton, where he began a career in sales and store design for supermarkets. Currently he directs sales for Cold Technology in Blackwood, New Jersey, planning refrigeration installations in the region. As he settled into sales, Harrison's artistic endeavors came to a standstill. "Life got in the way," he admitted.

According to Harrison's wife Sharon, a visit to his former professor in the mid-1990s inspired Harrison to restart his art career. The couple had returned to the college to sit in on one of Leipzig's classes. Mel invited them to his office, where he pulled out a slide projector and began showing the slides he had kept of Preston's work from 30 years earlier. "Your husband is a good painter," Sharon recalls Leipzig saying emphatically. "Mel gave Preston the push he needed."

Tile painting has offered Harrison a sense of freedom and a more relaxed style than he had with his previous work in oils. His first tile painting was of "John and Peter's" in New Hope, where Harrison has performed over the years as a singer-songwriter. One owner bought his piece fresh out of the kiln, the other owner immediately ordered a second one, and the bartender ordered a third.

Other establishments quickly began to seek out his distinctive work, including Landolfi's Pasta Company, DeBruno's Cheese Shop, DeAnna's Restaurant, Go For Baroque, and Marzillo's Restaurant in just the past two years. Upcoming projects include work for Rossi's Tavern in Chambersburg, and Olives and McCaffrey's Supermarket, both in Princeton.

"So far it seems that my customers' attraction to the tile is simply that it is fun. The expectation of tile work is of something more carefree than other art forms. I've learned that sometimes you just don't think about these things, you simply do it and enjoy it. What more could an artist want?"

According to Harrison, working with tiles presents some advantages, along with some artistic challenges. "The colors can be tricky to work with," he explained. "They look chalky and pale before baking. You have to anticipate what they're going to look like after being fired in an 1800-degree kiln."

But once finished, tiles provide a very durable surface, he notes, making them ideal for a commercial setting. "They're different and there's an interesting esthetic. Sort of by accident, I've discovered a nice little niche." And his years in refrigeration sales are giving him an unanticipated pay-off as many of his clients are commissioning tile work for their establishments.

Leipzig is highly gratified to see Harrison's new endeavor bringing him so much success. "His works have a commercial appeal, but they're more than that. There's a sensitivity to them. Preston's terrific sense of design and color come out in these pieces."

Harrison had one of his works showcased in a Trenton Artists Workshop Association (TAWA) exhibit at the New Jersey State Museum this spring, alongside several paintings by his old friend and teacher, Mel Leipzig. "Mercer helped me get there," he said.

Horticulture Students Plan Landscaping
The garden area in front of Mercer’s library was beautified by members of the Horticulture Club, who designed the landscaping and planted new shrubs and small trees. The club secured funding from eight student clubs whose members also participated in the planting project.

There was a lot of energy and creativity at Mercer. We felt connected with the artistic history of Trenton. It was a very special experience." — Preston Harrison '73

Harrison's "Graham Car" was exhibited in a TAWA show at the N.J. State Museum this spring.

A section of Harrison's ceramic tile mural depicting the history of Marrazzo's Supermarket on display in Marrazzo's Thriftway in Ewing.

Horticulture Students Plan Landscaping
The garden area in front of Mercer’s library was beautified by members of the Horticulture Club, who designed the landscaping and planted new shrubs and small trees. The club secured funding from eight student clubs whose members also participated in the planting project.
2001 A Space Odyssey

Solar system visitors, MCCC students in disguise, add to an “out of this world” evening.

Dinner dance co-chair Scott Kent (’99) of Wawa thanks Mercer’s many generous supporters and welcomes all to the gala evening.

Foundation Board Generosity Made It Possible

MCCC’s Foundation Board members made it possible for two Mercer horticulture students, Nancy Bond and Nicole Solis, to join their class on an educational trip to Puerto Rico. Students in “Tropical Agriculture and Natural Resources,” in cooperation with Rutgers University/Cook College, visited a tropical rain forest, mangrove swamps, coral banks, an orchid farm, pineapple and coffee plantations, greenhouses, botanical gardens, a desert, and even a chicken processing plant.

Both students agreed that the trip not only gave them a first-hand view of what they were studying, but also was an experience they will never forget. They are grateful to the Foundation Board for making it financially possible. They also credit their professor, Amy Isenecker, with outstanding support. “She is really great. She will go out of her way to help you in every way possible,” Solis said.

Bond is pursuing a career in landscape design while Solis plans to continue her education after Mercer with the goal of owning her own horticulture business.

Graduate Charles Weatherspoon (’00) explains how Mercer put him on the road to success. He is now pursuing a bachelor’s degree at Rutgers University.

The Dinner Dance Committee
Scott D. Kent (’99), Wawa, Inc., Co-Chair
Richard P. Perlman, Borden Perlman Insurance, Co-Chair

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"Nontraditional" Student Excels in Classroom and On the Court

In community college circles, the term “nontraditional” applies to students beyond customary college age who return to school. In the case of Barbara Pleva, nontraditional applies in two categories: student and athlete. After all, how many 50-year-old mothers of three can say they’ve just finished playing two years for the top junior college women’s tennis team in the country?

Pleva’s decision to attend Mercer in 1997 was prompted by her third child going off to college. “I was the only one in the family with no college credits. I figured it was time for me to go too.” At the time she was office manager for her husband’s environmental business, Terra Nova Tech in Allentown.

Originally intending to “just take a few business courses,” Pleva found that college life agreed with her. “My professors have gone out of their way to make me feel like I belong here,” she said. “They are really encouraging. It makes you want to keep taking classes. This is what a community college is for.” She is currently nearing completion of her degree in Office Systems Technology.

Academic success, however, has not been Pleva’s only motivation for continuing at Mercer. Her first semester coincided with the reinstatement of the women’s tennis program after an 11-year break. A strong doubles player, Pleva offered to help out at practices. That she won two national championships, what is becoming a Mercer tradition, a rigorous practice schedule and a trip to the nationals in Tucson, Arizona.

It makes you want to keep taking classes. This is what a community college is for.”
— Barbara Pleva

For results on this year’s national tournament, see page 11.
Patrick Pittore ’69 has been recognized for community service by the New Jersey Department of Labor, where he is chief of occupational health. Pittore, a lifelong Lambertville resident, joined the Lambertville-New Hope Ambulance and Rescue Squad at age 15 and has continued his volunteer service for 35 years. He also co-founded the Palsades Search and Rescue Dog Association in 1995, which trains and uses dogs to find missing persons. Pittore received his B.A. from Rider College in 1978.

Abdul-Malik Ali ’72 has served as the “imam” (leader and teacher) at the Masjidut-Taqwa, an Islamic religious facility in Trenton, since 1979. He was recently honored by his followers for his many years of service. Ali has also served as president of the Trenton School Board and is actively involved in Islamic affairs in the state and nation. He earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Trenton State College and has a master’s degree in Islamic education and an honorary doctorate from the Virginia Theological University.

Betty Brown ’73 recently retired from Grant Elementary School in Trenton after 36 years of teaching. Brown spent much of her life at Grant, first as a student and then as a mother of four children who attended the school. She served 12 years as PTA president before returning to college at Mercer and becoming a teacher. Upon her retirement, she was recognized at a special ceremony, receiving a certificate from the mayor and a plaque from the school for her many years of dedicated service.

Sylvia Hadad ’75 retired in January from Capital Health Systems after more than 40 years’ affiliation. Most recently, she was the radiology administrative director at the Mercer and Fuld campuses.

Ralph Terracciano ’79 is a 20-year veteran of the Princeton Borough Police Force, where he is a detective sergeant. He received his bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Thomas Edison State College in 1996. He recently addressed a meeting of Business and Professional Women on personal safety.

Jane Lawrence ’81 earned the “Purchase Award,” the top honor from the Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission, for her painting “Pop Pie” in the “Mercer County Artists” exhibit at MCCC’s Gallery this spring. The exhibit featured the works of 67 artists selected from more than 175 submissions. Lawrence, who received her A.A. in Visual Arts, has taken numerous additional art classes at Mercer.

John Harmon ’81 is the president of the Metropolitan Trenton African American Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1997 to promote opportunities for minority-owned businesses in the wake of Trenton’s current redevelopment efforts. Harmon previously worked as a real estate loan officer for Chemical Bank. He owns a Trenton-based refrigerated trucking company. Harmon earned his bachelor’s degree in business management from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Tracy Destrubat ’84 is a community relations officer at Yardville National Bank. She received her bachelor’s degree from Rider University. She is the chairperson of Prevention Education Inc.’s Resource Development Committee, which serves the needs of abused children. She is also a board member of the American Cancer Society.

Daniel Contento ’86 is a police officer who is also a self-taught webmaster. Along with a partner, he has developed hotchubs.net, a website that provides entertainment and nightlife information for the under-30 crowd in the Greater Trenton region and beyond.

Trina Sargeant ’90 received her B.S. in Criminal Justice from The College of New Jersey. She has carried out administrative duties for civil and criminal judges, as well as assisted in the Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office.

Jeffrey Callahan ’97 is a licensed funeral director. He currently works in the MCCC Office of Academic Affairs and The Virtual Campus and is an associate with the Chiaccio Southview Funeral Home in Trenton. He is a member of the Mercer County and N.J. State Funeral Directors Associations.

May Humbard ’00 is the founder of Noel Fundraiser, which provides teddy bears for hospitalized children. Starting with a delivery of 300 bears to Children’s Hospital in Philadelphia, she plans to donate to every children’s hospital in the United States. She has received contributions from corporations, small businesses and individuals.

Todd Legenza ’00 has been named director of Wood Funeral Home in Jackson. He received his funeral director license after passing the state exam in October. Wood Funeral Home was founded in 1926 and has been owned by the Legenza family for 15 years.

Advertising Students Design for Nonprofit

The student team of Eric Steinberg, Maya Matasova and Joseph Penelli was one of two groups chosen as winners of an end-of-semester advertising design competition. Ad design professionals came to campus to judge the campaigns, which were developed for HiTOPS, a nonprofit organization that promotes adolescent health and well-being. Students designed posters, flyers, brochures, newsletters, billboards, radio spots, and even websites.
Kelly Williams, second-year head coach of the men’s basketball team, has at least three reasons to be satisfied with the season just completed. The Vikings made it to the Region 19 championship game against Lackawanna. The team gained national attention, ranking 14th at the end of January, and as high as 8th at the beginning of December. And the four freshmen who started for the Vikings were eligible both semesters, which means they were doing their work in the classroom as well as on the court. The team’s final record was 17-12.

Mercer closed out its regular season with a win over Lackawanna 91-90 on February 24. Mercer next faced Del Tech in the semi-final of the regional tournament, cruising to victory, 91-66. Then it was time to face Lackawanna again, this time for the championship. Despite a close game that was tied with just over a minute to play, Lackawanna came out the winner, 61-56. The game was played without the contributions of starting guard Joel D’Antignac, who sprained his ankle in the semi-final game.

Williams credits forward Zolton Walker, the Vikings’ leading scorer, as being a “catalyst for the team who really stepped up throughout the season.” He also notes the support of sophomore Jamaal Rowe, who was top scorer in the Vikings’ last game. “Jamaal really performed down the stretch,” said Williams. Walker was selected for the men’s All-Region 19 first team, while D’Antignac and Walker made the All-Garden State Athletic Conference first team.

“I’m a little disappointed we didn’t win the Region 19 championship,” said Williams. “That was my goal and the team’s goal, but we started four freshmen and only one sophomore. These players now know the type of coach I am and the type of program we have. I’ve still got my eye on the next step: a championship.” Williams received coaching assistance this season from Gary Williams, Tony Aviles, Greg Grant and Scott Nance.

Monroe returned to the NJCAA National Championship after losing in the final last year. Tenaglia completes his 11th season as head coach with 154 wins to his credit. He had help from Assistant Coach Tameka Turner and Volunteer Assistants Tonya Grant and Steve Rothstein.

The district championship was the last game for seven sophomores who have been the anchor of this Viking team: Vicki Fairbanks, Christie Ingling, Jackson, Jeon, Kristie Roche, St. Fleur, and Michelle Valentino. Jeon and Jackson have been nominated for All-American honors. They were also selected to the All-Region 19 and All-Garden State Athletic Conference first teams.

Mercer’s Athletics Department thanks the many people who supported the Vikings this season, especially local businesses: Auntie Anne’s, Bagel Street, Barbero Bakery, Brother’s Pizza, Butter-Me-Bagels, Digital Island, Downtown Deluxe Restaurant, John Hancock Mutual Life, Kitchen Kapers, KDD America, Kiddie Academy, Kramer’s Bagels, Liberty Impressions, Main Electric Supply Co., Palmer Hill, Park’s Taekwondo Academy, RJR Services, Rock Dreams, Tidghman’s Used Auto Parts, Trent Jewelers, Tri-State Metal Finishing, Inc., Wawa Food Markets, and World’s Finest, Inc.
Second-year Head Coach Joanne Harrison feels good about her team’s 20-10 season and its first place finish in the Garden State Athletic Conference among Division II schools. “We worked hard and played hard,” she said. Assisting Harrison was former player Julie Ross.

With only two returning players – Rita Scarlata and Christie Ingling – the women’s practice schedule started in January as the team began the process of learning to play together. Practice paid off, with the Vikings recording win after win. Harrison recalls two big victories against Brookdale and a split with Gloucester, another top team. At mid-season, the women enjoyed an 11-game winning streak.

Entering into the double-elimination regional tournament as the No. 3 seed, the battle was on. The women lost their first game to Del Tech-Owens, then turned around and beat Del Tech-Stan- ton. They needed a win against Del Tech-Owens in their second match-up, but that was not to be. Ultimately, it was Lackawanna that moved on, a team the Vikings had lost to twice during the season. “They were the team to beat this year,” said Harrison.

A number of players made key contributions. No. 1 pitcher Katie Banas was 5-0 when she was sidelined by an injury with three weeks left in the season. No. 2 pitcher Lisa Boothby stepped up and did well. Catcher Jamie Fusco came on strong, as did Danielle King, one of the best second basemen in the county, according to Harrison. Veteran Rita Scarlata was versatile at both second and third base, but was in- jured by season’s end. Kitty Stefanidou was “an unsung hero,” a utility player who earned the highest batting aver- age and excelled in every position she played.

Harrison sums up the season as “a very positive experience.” She recalls “Field Appreciation Day” before the tournament started, when team members came out and painted the dugout.

“They put real pride into it,” said Har- rison. “We’re there to teach these girls about softball, but we’re also molding lives. Sports is partly about succeeding in the face of adversity. You can use these same principles to be successful in life.”

The men’s baseball team ended the season with a 27-12 record, finishing 9-3 in Region 19. The regional tournament, held May 4 to 6 at Brookdale, was tough going for the Vikings. In the first game they were victorious against Brookdale for the fourth time in four consecutive match-ups. In game two, the Vikings were beat- en by a strong Del Tech squad. (Earlier in the season, the Vikings handed Del Tech its only loss in the region in a 10-4 win that included nine runs in the fifth inning.)

All that remained for the Vikings to move on to the district championship was to beat Brookdale again. Unfortunately Brookdale finally pulled one out against the Vikings on the worst possible day, as Mercer suffered a 12-1 defeat.

Despite a disappointing tournament, Head Coach Dave Gallagher reports that Mercer had both depth and talent, and plenty of notable achievements this season. The men finished the season with a .340 batting average. Sophomore Phil Holly led the team with 40 RBIs. Freshman shortstop Joe Hernandez finished the season with a .404 batting average. Sophomore outfielder Jamie Riese led the team in virtually every offensive category, including home runs and runs scored. Freshman Shaun Parker and sophomore Bryan Kelly tied for pitching victories with eight each, and Parker led the team in strike-outs and innings pitched. Freshman reliever Scott Marsh posted an incredible strikeouts-to-walks ratio of more than 5:1.

Against teams that were ranked in the Division II NJCAA poll, the Vikings posted a solid 7-3 record. One of the highlights was a doubleheader sweep of UConn- Avery Point. Pitcher Shaun Parker was selected to the All-Region 19 team. Parker, Kelly, Hernandez, Phil Holly, Pat Zegarski, and Keith Guthrie were chosen for the All-Garden State Athletic Conference team.

Gallagher completes his second season as Vikings head coach. He was assisted by Randy Voorhees, Gary Shunk, and Kip Harrison.

According to Head Coach Marc Vecchiolla, the women’s tennis team had a wonderful time at the NJCAA National Tournament in Tucson, AZ, May 6 – 11. They also came within 1-1/2 points of winning their third consecutive championship, edged out in the end by Montgomery College (Rockville, MD). Despite some poten- tially problematic injuries going into the nationals, all seven team members played – and played well. “They gave it their all,” said Vecchiolla. “They left everything they had right on the court.” Vecchiolla notes that, as two-time national champs, the women had their sights set on a “three-peat.” But they were content with their second place finish.

“Last year we were underdogs and won by one point. This year I thought we had the stronger team. It all evened out. I’m satisfied, as long as we learn and have fun,” he said.

Sophomore co-captain Ashley Clarke is credited with the longest day of tournament play. In temperatures topping 100 degrees, she played for seven hours in a three-hour, 45-minute singles match against the tournament’s eventual champion, followed by a consolation match, followed by a No. 2 doubles match with partner Sarah Bucon, which they won in a close battle.

Also extraordinary were the efforts of Jil Matasovsky and Heather Breining, who won in No. 5 and 6 singles flights for the Vikings and also teamed up to take No. 3 doubles. Bucon was also a finalist in No. 4 singles. Meredith Azarchi won a consolation match in No. 1 singles, while Barbara Pal won the No. 2 singles consolation tournament.

Janine Hicks and Azarchi were victori- ous in the No. 1 doubles consolation finals. Matasovsky, Breining, Bucon and Clarke have been named All-Americans by the NJCAA.

After four tournaments in Tucson, Vecchiolla says he will really miss it, now that the venue changes to Col- lege Station, TX, next year. Does that mean he’s already thinking about the nationals in 2013? “From the moment the last match is over, you start think- ing about it,” he said. Special thanks to assistants – Bencivengo and Barbor. PLe: “Without their help, the program could not maintain the standard,” said Vecchiolla.
Academic Calendar

AUGUST
21 Last day of registration for fall semester (late fees in effect Aug. 22-25)
27 First day of classes for fall semester

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