Interconnectedness at heart of first year program
You may have recently seen or heard about the movie “Waiting for Superman,” Academy Award-winning producer Davis Guggenheim’s probing journey of five young students in the U.S. public education system. The film portrays how a random decision combined with the inherent rigidity of educational system’s infrastructure can sometimes make all the difference in a student’s dreams, hopes and untapped potential.

Like the educational leaders in the film, over the last three years, Hilbert College’s faculty and staff have critically assessed the environment in which our students are learning and sought out best practice examples from other colleges and universities whose incorporation of innovative curriculum and advising strategies have produced positive results.

The education initiatives you will learn about in this issue of Hilbert Connections reflect the college’s commitment to address how we can enhance the probability of our students achieving their dreams of earning a college degree. The First Year Experience program, supported by a Title III grant, has transformed our students’ transition from high school to college. As a student in the “Foundations Seminar” course with 15 other freshmen and taught by a faculty member who will also serve as their academic advisor, these incoming students are provided with a supportive, nurturing “academic home.” The cover story also describes the Hilbert passport and mentoring provided by “peer leaders.” The early results are quite promising and we have just gotten started!

A second story describes the latest international trip led by Dr. Amy Smith to Kenya. This trip piloted Hilbert’s new service learning model, which will be launched with the 2011 class. As part of this trip, the Kenya Krew had the remarkable experience of erecting a bricks and mortar school to replace one constructed out of mud while being immersed in another culture.

Throughout Hilbert’s history, the college has lived out its Catholic Franciscan mission of helping economically challenged students of all backgrounds to achieve their college aspirations. This year, 59 percent of our freshmen are Pell grant recipients and 40 percent are first-generation college students. We provided more than $2.5 million of institutional aid within our $14 million budget.

This edition of Hilbert Connections also contains Hilbert’s Annual Report, which lists the names of all our partners in this important work. Your gift to the Hilbert Fund or fulfilling your capital campaign pledge makes it possible for us to provide the financial support so our students can realize their college goals. We are deeply grateful for your generosity. Your willingness to invest in Hilbert is making a difference in the lives of our students every day.

Please let me know if you would like to visit Hilbert’s campus and meet some of the students, faculty or staff who are engaged in this journey together. We are very proud of what we are accomplishing and would be delighted to have them share their stories with you.

Cynthia A. Zane, Ed.D.
President
The Secret of Student Success

One year since launching the First Year Experience program, Hilbert has put a comprehensive approach into action to help new students connect, engage and have a successful college life.

FEATURES

10 Into Africa
Blending academics and service learning, trip abroad to Kenya sparks hope and inspiration.

12 New Athletics Director on Board
Susan Viscomi discusses her path in collegiate athletics and building Hilbert’s sports program.

16 Annual Report 2009-2010
In this special section, Hilbert says thank you and recognizes the college’s generous supporters.

DEPARTMENTS

President’s View......................... 2
Around Hilbert......................... 4
In the Sports Zone..................... 12
Alumni News & Notes .......... 14
Faculty and Staff File............. 16
Remember When............... 24
Ann Swan, a community leader in many civic activities in Western New York and a longtime teacher in the Buffalo Public Schools, has been elected chair of the 2010-11 Hilbert College Board of Trustees.

Swan has been a Hilbert trustee since 2004. This year she is chairing the board’s executive committee, having formerly served as chair and vice chair of the student affairs committee.

In addition to her role as executive director of the William E. and Ann L. Swan Foundation, Swan serves on the boards of a number of local organizations, including the American Heart Association, Christ the King Seminary, Catholic Diocese of Buffalo Foundation, and the First Niagara Bank Foundation, among many others.

She’s been recognized with several honors for her community commitment, most recently with a Bishop’s Medal from the Buffalo Catholic Diocese and a Caritas Award from the Brothers of Mercy.

Swan received a bachelor’s degree in education from the University at Buffalo.

Other 2010-11 Hilbert board officers named are Phillip T. Catanese as vice-chair, and Michael Gacioch as secretary.

Catanese, a Hilbert board member since 2002, is serving his fourth term as vice-chair. He is vice president of retail stores at The Buffalo News and previously held various executive positions in the retail food industry.

He lends his support to many area organizations, including on the board of Homespace, Corp., and Olmsted Center for Sight. He’s been active with several other community groups, including Boys Town of Italy, which presented him the group’s Man of the Year Award.

Catanese received an associate’s degree in business from Bryant and Stratton.

Gacioch is president and CFO of National Property Management Associates, Inc., a family-owned and operated real estate investment company based in Orchard Park.

Involved with various organizations in WNY, he serves on the board of the Boys and Girls Club of Orchard Park and Buffalo Seminary, and is a member of the Evans National Bank Advisory Board.

Gacioch is also active with the St. Francis High School Alumni Association, from which he received the St. Francis Alumni Recognition Award.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in economics and finance from St. Lawrence University.

A Celebration of Support

One year since Hilbert College’s donor recognition wall was unveiled, college donors gathered in the William E. Swan Auditorium lobby, where the prominent oak board wall is permanently displayed, for the college’s Franciscan Cornerstone reception held to celebrate and thank donors for their generous support.

The fall donor appreciation event brought together Hilbert President Cynthia Zane, trustees, donors, friends and several Hilbert students, including criminal justice major Tyshon Williams, who personally expressed appreciation to the college’s supporters. In a heartfelt speech to those in attendance, Williams shared how important donor gifts have been to his college experience and those of many other Hilbert students.

“Every student who receives a scholarship (supported by your gifts) is more grateful than you know. You’re helping us become better people,” said Williams. “You’re helping us fulfill dreams we might’ve once given up on. When I look back on how I was so successful in college, what you did for me will always stick out in my mind.”
As of this fall, Hilbert College students have had the chance to experience the college’s newly renovated state-of-the-art biology laboratory, an important step in providing students with a solid hands-on science foundation.

Part of a two-phase project to upgrade Hilbert’s science facilities in Bogel Hall, Hilbert President Cynthia Zane, Ed.D., sees the improvement project as a tremendous academic asset for students.

“Scientific literacy is an essential component of a college education, particularly in today’s global society in which basic science skills have become increasingly important,” says Zane. “Exposing Hilbert students to this type of laboratory learning environment provides introductory science instruction that will benefit students in any of the college’s academic majors.”

A blessing of the biology lab by Father Michael Sajda, OFM Conv., Hilbert trustee and president of St. Francis High School, took place this fall with Hilbert board members and others from the college community in attendance.

The $1.25 million improvement project, which includes the latest scientific equipment, is being partially funded by a $200,000 state grant obtained by State Sen. William T. Stachowski. Additional support is being provided by the James H. Cummings Foundation, Inc., and the Booth Ferris Foundation.

Christopher Holoman, Ph.D., Hilbert’s provost and vice president for academic affairs, says “being involved in hands-on laboratory work in a high-tech setting introduces science to students in ways that challenges and engages them and is relevant to their educational experience as a whole. While improving their scientific knowledge, the lab activities also contribute to developing a student’s critical thinking, teamwork and professional skills.

Renovation of the physical, or chemistry lab is expected to begin next summer and slated to open in Fall 2011, which comes at a time when Hilbert will introduce a new general science curriculum. The curriculum will be structured around real world problems, such as global warming. Students will use a variety of scientific disciplines and, equally important, develop systematic, critical thinking that the scientific method is based on.

Overall, explains Holoman, the addition of the two modernized labs will create much more versatility in science instruction, allowing for the use of advanced teaching models and instructional approaches that will broaden the depth of learning for students.

“The changeover from virtual to hands-on science labs will greatly improve science teaching and learning at Hilbert,” says Holoman. “The labs will offer much more flexibility and are designed so that students can work effectively either individually or in small teams.

Christopher Holoman, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs, speaks at the bio lab blessing and dedication.
Designed to serve all first-year students, an ambitious initiative launched last year is already becoming a staple of the Hilbert experience, immersing students in an active learning community and laying new foundations for student success.

With her sunny smile and vivacious personality, Hilbert College accounting major Emili Ripley ’13 is the picture of an energetic, focused college student. “My mother always told me, ‘You get out of it what you put into it,’” says Ripley. What she’s putting into her college experience is the determination to make the most of the opportunities higher education offers.

Indeed, as Ripley soon discovered as a college freshman in 2009, while her next four years at Hilbert would be vital to having a successful college experience, the first year, starting right from the first day of classes, would be integral. It all begins at Hilbert with the college’s First Year Experience program, commonly known as FYE.

To establish the FYE program, Hilbert received a prestigious, highly competitive $2 million Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education. A pilot program now in its second year, FYE is a mix of academic and social support blended with the college’s well-regarded personal approach and connection to its students. The goal is straightforward – student success.

Students, like Ripley, are already well aware of the benefits they’ll reap. “First Year Experience definitely gives students the support and the message that they can do well and be successful in college. It also helps students realize they should get involved in campus opportunities because it’s all part of the college experience,” she says.

Statistically Speaking
Data on student retention firmly supports the conventional wisdom: Over the past 20 or so years, according to educational testing firm ACT, the number of freshmen who make it to their second year at four-year liberal arts schools like Hilbert is actually a little less than two in three or approximately 64 percent.

The factors that contribute to the drop-out (or attrition) rates are varied. For instance, nearly 40 percent of Hilbert’s incoming freshmen share Ripley’s status as a first-generation collegian. A recent study shows that, “after controlling for [other] factors, the risk of attrition in the first year among first-generation students was 71 percent higher than that of students with two college-educated parents.”

Other aspects of a student’s personal background, like a lower high school GPA or lower family income, also can contribute to the reasons freshmen might struggle with their transition to college. For these reasons and more, these students are much more likely to drop out of college after their freshman year and to never earn a college degree.

Yet, student participation in first-year enrichment programs is a huge boost to the odds that they’ll make it to sophomore year and complete their college degree.

Strengthening the Institution
Hilbert’s FYE program is being funded by a five-year Department of Education grant from a Title III program called “Strengthening Institutions.” The late Janet Facklam, Hilbert assistant professor of rehabilitation services, lit the initial fire under the college’s Title III efforts around 2003. Having worked on a Title III grant in a previous position, she had identified what she thought would be a perfect application for Title III funds at Hilbert.

Vice Provost for Leadership Development James Sturm lays out the issue simply: “We were seeing struggling students leave Hilbert and not achieving their college or career goals. Especially as a Franciscan institution, we felt that wasn’t right.”

Facklam’s thoughts on why Hilbert’s students would benefit from FYE hit the core of the program. “First-year programming has many benefits,” she said in 2008.
“Students who feel supported and engaged in college better manage the transition from high school to college, develop effective study skills and an enthusiasm for learning and have more meaningful interaction with their professors and other students.” Studies reveal that those are all predictors of first-year student success. That success, in turn, encourages freshmen to persist at college and earn a degree.

Hilbert’s FYE program is intended to improve personal and academic skills, and increase retention and graduation rates of under-prepared students. Title III grants, according to DOE, help eligible colleges become self-sufficient and expand their ability to serve such students by providing funds to improve and strengthen academic quality, institutional management and fiscal stability.

Programmed for Success
The year after Hilbert received its Title III award was devoted to developing the FYE program. Hilbert already held orientation for freshmen, but those involved in the grant and in creating FYE knew the program would go far further. They also knew that they wouldn’t have to reinvent the wheel. A body of research on how to boost retention lit their path, as did the best practices of other colleges. “We combined a lot of proven techniques,” says Sturm.

Hilbert structured FYE to offer personalized help to students and give them thorough knowledge of the academic demands of college. The program would also familiarize freshmen with the campus and its resources—academic, social and more. The focus was helping students to be academically successful and to have a well-balanced college lifestyle. Ultimately, FYE emerged as a multi-faceted, challenging but highly rewarding program that addresses three areas vital for student survival—academic engagement, attitude and interpersonal skills (see sidebar).

The centerpiece of FYE is the Foundations Seminar (GS 101). Full-time faculty and some staff teach the semester-long three-credit course, which is designed to ease the transition from high school to Hilbert. Many colleges offer expanded orientations or classes to introduce freshmen to campus,
but Hilbert’s efforts go beyond this. “We made an intentional decision to build our Foundations Seminar as a full credit-bearing, fundamental course,” explains Christopher Holoman, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs. “It clearly signals the importance that Hilbert places on this experience.”

Foundations Seminar covers topics ranging from basic communication and writing skills to examining personal values, career development and leadership. The seminar also includes a community service project and a yearly theme. This year’s is global citizenship, which ties directly to Hilbert’s liberal learning goals.

Marne Griffin, associate professor of English and co-activity director of the grant, oversees the academic side of the FYE equation. “The goal [of the course] isn’t a lecture,” says Griffin. “There’s no book. We feature active participation and critical thinking.” Students don’t take tests but complete plenty of academic work—readings, presentations, writing.

When it comes to active participation, take the scavenger hunt. Broken down into teams, students from Griffin’s class were seen one day dashing around campus as they set out to find answers to Hilbert-related questions and to bring back photographic proof they were present at the places designated in the scavenger hunt.

“It’s an interactive, fun way to familiarize students with Hilbert and to help them to get to know its history and services,” explains Griffin.

Elemental to Foundations Seminar are “passport activities,” an approved selection of purposely impactful Hilbert programs students attend during the semester, providing an ideal way for incoming freshmen to get involved in and connected to the campus community. With passports in hand, first-year students are required to attend four passport activities, such as the St. Francis Week Peace Walk, a professional success panel, a play performance, or a library research workshop. Passports are signed by the activity coordinator to verify students’ attendance, after which students write critical reflections about their experience.

On a more conceptual level, Hilbert’s Title III grant gave faculty an opportunity to learn more about engaging students in class in different ways. Kate Munroe is executive director of student success and retention and the grant’s co-activity director who oversees peer leaders and other outside-the-classroom aspects of FYE.

“Students are so bombarded with information,” she says, “you have to capture their attention.” For that reason, Foundations Seminar instructors use cutting-edge tools and technology to engage and stimulate students.

Ultimately, says Griffin, “We want to help each and every student, no matter where they are in their development, to achieve. I want the seminar and the First Year Experience in general to celebrate their differences and support that success.”

Seeing the Difference
As of this fall, FYE has seen its first group of participants become sophomores and welcomed its second class of new students. Planning, concepts and intentions aside, it’s the experiences of students involved in the FYE initiatives and the eventual outcome from these experiences that will determine the overall effectiveness of the program.

Among that first FYE cohort was Emili Ripley, who was nominated by one of her professors to be an FYE peer leader, a role she’s now gladly serving. What’s her perspective? “Professors and advisors are all putting their heart and soul into the program so freshmen can succeed,” she says.

In turn, adds Sturm, “Students have become far more active in class and engaged in...
the learning process."

Jerrell Mason, a sophomore criminal justice major, was also part of that first group of FYE students and is now a peer leader. Having taken college courses while in high school, he admits he "came in with a big head—’I know all this stuff.’ I was wrong. The program showed me I needed to work on developing better study habits and managing my time.”

As for the freshmen he’s working with as a peer leader, Mason says most “come from places where they feel they were OK, but they don’t think they can excel here. I tell them about my high school experience, which helps build their confidence because I went through what they went through."

Ripley and Mason both feel that freshmen year without FYE must have been a good deal more challenging. Students might have missed that first connection with their classmates and, Ripley says, “they might not have had the preparation to handle the workload required for classes.”

Faculty and staff also have witnessed FYE’s impact. Sturm teaches a section of Foundations Seminar. “Students start off wondering why they have to be there,” he says. “By the end, they realize the importance of why they took part.” He also has seen a similar shift with Summer Bridge Program participants, students who spend an intensive two weeks at Hilbert before they are formally admitted to the college.

Offered for the first time this summer, "the Summer Bridge Program was transformational," says Sturm. "The changes we saw in students from the beginning to the end of the two-week program were amazing."

The changes are not only on the part of students. Munroe believes faculty “now see freshmen more as a group and have rallied around them. We’ve always cared, but now we’re personalizing that approach even more, making sure it’s right for each student.”

Results Are In

The key quantifiable measure of FYE’s impact is student retention. The numbers are persuasive. According to Munroe, Hilbert’s 2007-08 first- to second-year retention rate was 64 percent. In 2008-09, it was 66 percent. She’s cautiously optimistic that the 2009-10 retention rate will be 69 percent once the final numbers are in.

“We’re very encouraged by the early results,” says Hilbert President Cynthia Zane, Ed.D. “The data is compelling about the positive impact FYE is having on retention and learning."

Most importantly, says Zane, is that FYE is part of "our ongoing focus on continuous quality improvement. With a comprehensive program like FYE, we’re taking Hilbert’s commitment to student success to a new level. It sets the foundation for first year students to be involved, engaged and active participants in their learning and, ultimately, to be successful in college." HC

Grace Lazzara is a freelance writer and public relations consultant residing in Buffalo, N.Y.

Hilbert’s self-proclaimed Kenya Krew went overseas in their quest to help poor Kenyans, learning that even in harsh circumstances, hope shines through.

After traveling a total of nearly 16,000 miles and flying for 32 hours, a Hilbert College group has returned to Western New York knowing their international journey has fostered a real change and helped improve many lives in poor African communities thousands of miles away.

The 13-member group, made up of students, faculty and family members, embarked May 20 on the ultimate service-learning opportunity. During the course of the nearly three-week excursion, the group visited three areas in Kenya, the first Hilbert service learning trip to the African country. They tackled major projects, including the reconstruction of a school and assisting in day-to-day operations at an orphanage. Hilbert’s self-proclaimed “Kenya Krew” came back enlightened.

“By being involved in this service learning opportunity, the students were exposed to an environment and culture they had never experienced before and, in many ways, they positively impacted the Kenyan communities where they worked. At the same time, they came back with a much better understanding of the advantages we have in the U.S. and that we are blessed with a lot of things that many people don’t have in other parts of the world,” said Amy Smith, Ph.D., director of Hilbert’s honors program who oversaw and participated in the trip.

The Kenya Krew journey was the focal point of Hilbert’s new “Service Learning Abroad” course, offered for the first time this summer, which combines in-class instruction with an experiential service learning component. As part of the course, before departing on the trip, participating students learned about Kenya’s history and culture, as well as political, economic and social issues the country is facing.

Smith pointed out that the students were then able to “see first-hand the ways in which these issues impact Kenyans. In this way, the course material became real for them and abstract concepts and ideas took on much greater relevance.”

As they prepared to depart, Kenya Krew participants thought of leaving family, friends and prized possessions behind and about the lengthy flight ahead of them, but those uncertainties were eased once they started their first day of work at a school in the rural village of Kaloleni.

“Everyone from Kaloleni was ready to work,” said Kelly Cline, a senior rehabilitation services major. “The kids were surrounding the school smiling and waving to us. That’s when I knew it was going to be worthwhile.”

The Kenya Krew endured days of difficult labor, placing bricks and mortar down to erect walls for the school. Residents had previously used mud for the walls, but severe winds and rain caused damages, at times preventing the children from attending school until repairs were completed.

After working all day, the Hilbert group returned to the village homes where they were staying with local families, who warmly welcomed them.

“As a group, we were well accepted by the Kenyans,” said Wyleia Guillaume, a junior majoring in paralegal studies. “They showed us they really appreciated our efforts. At times, they didn’t want us to do things other than be present. They wanted to talk to us and ask questions and offer their own perspective.”

Indeed, the group’s efforts in the Kenyan communities directly correlated with Hilbert’s Franciscan values of compassion, service, hope and joy, traits the Kenyans also reflected in their actions.

“From what we saw, it seemed many of the Kenyans were unaware they are living in poverty. Instead, they were grateful for what-
ever they had that allowed them to provide for their families, even if it was 20 cows in the backyard, 15 goats and a chicken coop full of chickens to give them food,” said Guillaume. “That’s how they measure economic success. A lot of what we missed wasn’t important to them.”

Once the school construction project was completed, the Hilbert Kenya Krew stepped in to assist with daily operations at the Lea Mwana Children’s Center, an orphanage in the town of Malindi. At the children’s center, the group of 13 built a keyhole garden, which is designed to withstand extreme weather conditions such as drought and heavy rains. With this, the garden will have a long-term impact after the Kenya Krew is gone by providing food and generating income through the sale of extra produce.

Indeed, the group’s efforts in the Kenyan communities directly correlated with Hilbert’s Franciscan values of compassion, service, hope and joy.

In addition to the garden project, the Kenya Krew assisted with repairs on a chicken coop at the children’s center that allows for another income source through the sale of chickens. Other assistance was provided with painting, preparing meals and laundry.

At times during the 20-day trip, the Kenya Krew was without water or electricity. However, even with these challenging conditions, their spirits were unwavering.

“The students were able to quickly adjust to the conditions and remained upbeat throughout the trip. They focused on the projects, the people we worked with and the ways we were helping the communities,” said Smith.

The trip culminated with a safari, where Cline and Guillaume said they saw elephants, lions, zebras and monkeys merely feet away.

Returning to WNY on June 8, the Kenya Krew participants were amazed at what they had accomplished. Hilbert had left a positive imprint on a poverty-stricken country.

“I will always remember why we were there – to assist the families and children,” said Cline.

Smith plans to organize another trip, maybe even a return journey to Kenya. Cline and Guillaume each expressed their desire to volunteer more for local projects. For them, this international service learning opportunity deeply changed their outlook.

“It was really a life-changing experience,” Guillaume said. “I walked away with a new perspective and it changed my core values after seeing what other people go through and deal with in their daily lives.”

In addition to Cline and Guillaume, the Kenya Krew included Hilbert students Lonna McCary, Christopher Spence, Susanne Schofield, and Kolleen Sullivan, as well as 2010 Hilbert graduates Regina Ernst and Scott Woodcock.

Other participants were Robert Cline, father of student Kelly; Sara Griffin, daughter of Marne Griffin, assistant professor of English; and Edward Pristach, Ph.D., Hilbert professor of psychology, and his wife, Cynthia. HC
New Athletics Director on Board

This veteran coach, administrator and professor weighs in on what led her to collegiate sports, her philosophy and goals, and the thrill of graduation.

By Max DelSignore

Susan Viscomi has witnessed plenty of highlights during her time in intercollegiate athletics.

A devoted head coach, Viscomi conducted spirited practices and helped guide teams to meaningful victories. She taught classes detailing the vital aspects of health, wellness and physical education. As an athletic administrator, she oversaw programs that captured conference championships and enjoyed successful NCAA tournament runs.

Yet, for Viscomi, the wins and thrilling made-for-YouTube moments doesn’t compete with one of the greatest college achievements of all. She is an ultimate fan of commencement.

“Sue has an extensive background in athletics as a coach and as an administrator,” says President Cynthia Zane, Ed.D. “We felt the vision that she shared during the interview process, as well as the fit with Division III was just outstanding. We were delighted when she agreed to come to Hilbert.”

Prior to her arrival, Viscomi served for 13 years at Hamilton in multiple roles. She was the college’s associate athletic director, senior woman administrator and a professor of physical education. As the interim athletic director, she oversaw 28 intercollegiate programs, intramurals, clubs and physical education classes. She also contributed on various panels, committees, conferences and teams at Hamilton and other institutions, including SUNY Oswego and SUNY Plattsburgh.

Now, it’s Viscomi’s vision to have a positive, lasting impact on Hilbert athletics.

“What’s exciting at Hilbert is there’s the opportunity to build. Even minor changes can have an impact and lay the foundation for more broad changes,” says Viscomi.

Finding an Inspiration

The required assignment seemed simple to Viscomi at the time. In eighth grade, a teacher asked for a paper about what her future profession would be.

The answer was an easy one for Viscomi. Her father was a veterinarian. Her mother was a nurse. Given her family’s medical background, Viscomi believed her future was in nursing. It suddenly changed when she met Shirley Rasbach.

Rasbach was the physical education teacher at Union Academy at Belleville, and she coached all sports. Viscomi was a soccer and basketball standout, but she participated year-round in every sport. Even when the athletic seasons ran together, Viscomi competed and absorbed Rasbach’s pedagogical methods.

“She was just an individual who I think was so dedicated to the profession and inspired us in such a positive manner,” recalls Viscomi.

Upon graduation from Union Academy, Viscomi turned down a nursing scholarship from SUNY Plattsburgh to attend SUNY Cortland so she could pursue a career in physical education and athletics. As a graduate student at Colgate University, she coached two sports she had not played – field hockey and lacrosse.

Two years later, SUNY Plattsburgh awarded Viscomi with the challenge of starting the women’s soccer program from scratch. At the time, she also was a physical education professor and an assistant coach for men’s and women’s track and field.

“Personally, I think every student-athlete deserves a great experience,” Viscomi says. “That sums up my vision. Whatever we can do as administrators or coaches to help ensure that part of the experience is the road we should be traveling down.”

Viscomi sees her direct influence when
Plattsburgh’s soccer program gathers for a summer reunion each year. Old stories are retold, laughs are shared and relationships are reconnected. Current Cardinals women’s coach Karen Waterbury, who has the most victories in the program’s history, played for Coach Viscomi. These gatherings are a consistent reminder of the career choice Viscomi made.

“When you see the successes that your student-athletes have had, you just feel like you’ve played a major role in their lives and have been able to be a positive mentor and role model,” she says.

At SUNY Oswego, Viscomi was a two-time State University of New York Athletic Conference Coach of the Year in women’s soccer. She continued to teach and work closely with student-athletes and her role and responsibilities expanded upon her arrival at Hamilton College. The lessons she delivered to student-athletes centered on resiliency, work ethic and time management, which are lifelong skills in any profession.

The search committee at Hilbert couldn’t pass up the breadth of Viscomi’s background in athletics administration, coaching and teaching.

“Running an athletics department is a very complex business,” Zane says. “The more experience you have with all aspects that are involved with those complexities, the higher the probability you’re going to be successful.”

Viscomi’s desire hasn’t dwindled and her vision remains clear.

“All of my work in athletics has never been about me,” says Viscomi. “To me, it’s about doing things for the student-athletes and your coaches. I’m here to serve others.”

Historic Hire

One night last May, Viscomi decided to take a walking tour of Hilbert’s campus. The pivotal job interview for the athletics director opening was the next day, and she wanted to give the college a good look. Almost instantly, particular objects captured her eye.

“The banners displayed in the campus quad with Hilbert’s core values really struck me. Certainly, the athletics mission is tied into that wholeheartedly. Those are the same type of values you try to instill in your athletes,” she says.

When the decision was made, Viscomi was appointed Hilbert’s first female athletics director. She is the third woman in the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference who currently holds that position. According to a 2008-09 NCAA report, out of 451 Division III athletics directors, close to 28 percent were women.

To Viscomi, what matters is the ability to do the job.

“A number of women have administrative roles at Hilbert,” she says. “I’m happy to continue that legacy.”

While cultivating a winning reputation is near the top of her priority list, Viscomi already has fresh aspirations for making a difference at Hilbert.

“Our number one goal is to produce responsible citizens who go out into the world and are productive in many ways,” she says.

Viscomi is committed to working with respective coaches and academic departments to retain student-athletes. An open-door policy was established from day one, creating a welcoming office environment for the students. She’s also been on the field since the fall season began, with rosters in hand, learning the names of Hilbert’s student-athletes.

When Viscomi’s first Hilbert commencement comes next May, she’ll likely know most, if not all, the graduating student-athletes.

“To me,” she says, “the most rewarding aspect of athletics programs is to see the growth of student-athletes from their first year to their senior year. The maturation that takes place is sometimes unbelievable. Certainly, it’s transformative and something that I believe athletics plays a large role in.”

-- Susan Viscomi

Max DelSignore is a graduate assistant at Hilbert College.

Peterson Selected as Head Women’s Basketball Coach

Rob Peterson, who has more than 15 years coaching experience in high school basketball, has been named head women’s basketball coach at Hilbert College, announced Susan Viscomi, director of athletics.

“As an experienced coach, recruiter and mentor for student-athletes, Rob has a wonderful combination of abilities and commitment that will be vital in building Hilbert’s women’s basketball program. We are confident he will develop a competitive team and welcome him to the Hilbert community,” said Viscomi.

Peterson has been assistant women’s basketball coach at the State University of New York at Geneseo for the past two seasons and helped lead the Knights to doubling its win total last season.

Prior to arriving at SUNY Geneseo, Peterson spent one season as interim head women’s basketball coach at the Rochester Institute of Technology, where he also served as assistant coach from 2006-08. While at RIT, he helped guide the team to its longest consecutive win streak and its first post-season play in the program’s history.

“Without question, I’m excited for the opportunity to be head women’s basketball coach at Hilbert,” said Peterson. “I look forward to the challenge ahead to build and grow the program and to take the steps needed to take the team to a successful level of play.”

Peterson’s head coaching career started when he was only 21-years-old when he took on coaching the varsity girls team at Homer High School. Other stints as high school coach have included varsity boys teams at York Central School, where he is a physical education teacher, and Marcus Whitman and Cincinnatus high schools.

In 2006, he received coaching honors as New York State Section V Class C Boys Coach of the Year and Livingston County News Boys Coach of the Year.

Peterson holds master’s and bachelor’s degrees in physical education from SUNY Cortland.
The Hilbert College Alumni Association has been very busy planning and hosting a number of events. This summer we held our ninth annual Hilbert Day at Coca-Cola Field, which was a friend-maker event. We hit a record high of 217 participants! Not only did the Buffalo Bison’s win the game, we met many people at the welcome table and the fireworks at the end of the game were spectacular.

The fourth annual Alumni Awards and Reconnection Dinner took place Nov. 12 at Romanelli’s South restaurant. With this special event, Hilbert alumni had an opportunity to reconnect with former classmates at the dinner and while in Hamburg had the chance to “come home to Hilbert” by visiting campus to see all the astonishing changes that have taken place at the college.

Congratulations to this year’s award recipients, who were honored by their peers for exceptional service to the college and the surrounding community:

Saint Francis Award for Community Service
JOHN FARRELL ’74 (post-humous award), former senior services director for the Town of Hamburg

G.O.L.D. (Graduate of the Last Decade) Award
AMY PFEFFER ’06, City of Rochester police officer

SARAH REYNOLDS-SEWERYNIK ’09, reporter at The Sun News

Sister Adrienne Faculty/Staff Lifetime Achievement Award
DANIEL ROLAND, Hilbert professor of business administration

Hilbert College Franciscan Values Award
KAREN GAUGHAN SCOTT, Hilbert trustee emerita past board chair and Hamburg attorney

Dominique Thompson Memorial Alumnae/Alumna of the Year
DONNA ZIMPFER ’98, Hilbert associate professor of criminal justice

The Hilbert Alumni Association strives to continue a sense of family after graduation and encourages you to stay connected to the college. Please check out our Web site at www.hilbert.edu/alumni to find out about our upcoming events. I hope to see you at our next function!

Amy M. Meisner
alumnipresident@hilbert.edu
KIMBERLY KAJDASZ BS ’02 is an accountant auditor in the Erie County Comptroller’s Office.

AMANDA (ELLIS) KINMARTIN BS ’07 was featured in an Olean Times Herald story on “Rushford Plaza Back in the Game” about her ownership in the Rushford Plaza. Ellis and her husband, Pat, own Fat Pat’s Pizza, Kinmartin’s Irish Pub and The Ice Cream Shoppe located in the plaza.

JOHN KORDRUEP BS ’06 has completed a year of service with AmeriCorps VISTA, having worked as service-learning assistant coordinator for Massachusetts Campus Compact that serves Northeastern University in Boston, Mass. After traveling to South Africa this summer between service terms, he’s now serving as partnership church and youth liaison for VISTA efforts with Habitat for Humanity in Buffalo.

LORETTA LABBY BA ’05 is a PACT therapist at Hopevale, Inc. in Hamburg, N.Y.

JESSICA MACRI BS ’05 was named Account Manager of the Year at Medtronic, Inc., in Rochester, N.Y. She’s also a 2010 inductee in the Hilbert Athletics Hall of Fame.

KATHRYN (MARAGLIANO) DUNLAP BA ’09 has been promoted to interim library director at the Ohio State University at Mansfield.

JANELLE MAIORANA BS ’04 is a surveillance supervisor for Delaware North Cos., at the Hamburg Casino in Hamburg, N.Y.

YVONNE (REED) PALMER BS ’00 is employed at San Diego County Child Protective Services where she is heading a new position that manages chronic AWOL teens.

LINDSEY RINDOS BS ’07 is employed by the St. Petersburg Police Department in St. Petersburg, Fla.

BONNIE ROLL BA ’03 received a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling from the University at Buffalo and is employed at Kaledia Health’s Continuing Day Treatment.

DILMA ROSALES BS ’08 is a paralegal/clerical supervisor for the ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project in Buffalo.

MICHAEL TYSZKA BS ’02 is a manager at Freed Maxick & Battaglia, CPAs, in Buffalo.

CHRISTINE WICKES BS ’01 received an associate’s degree in veterinary technology from Medaille College. She’s currently employed at Lancaster Small Animal Hospital in Lancaster, N.Y.

LAUREL WINDRUM BS ’04 works in paralegal services at Erie County Medical Center Corp., in Buffalo.

MARK ZANGHI BS ’00 is an attorney in the law offices of McDevitt, Mayhew & Malek in Mount Vernon, Ohio.

BRITTANY BARR BS ’10 has been named internal auditor at the Bank of Akron in Akron, N.Y.

LYNETTE MCDONOUGH BS ’10 has a paralegal position at the Erie County Department of Social Services.

TINA STOVER BS ’10 is a customer service representative in the claim group at Travelers Insurance in Buffalo.

ASHLEY TWAROZK BS ’10 has been promoted to paralegal to law partner Stanley J. Sliwa of the firm Sliwa and Lane in Buffalo.

JILLIAN DOWNS BS ’00 to Paul Harrigan

MINDY FOXTON BS ’95 to Jeffery St. John

DOMINICA LARUSCH BS ’09 to Joseph Stanz

JESSICA MACRI

Births

STACEY (WITTKIE) BALCOM BS ’04 welcomed a daughter, Kathryn Elizabeth.

THOMAS DOODY BS ’97 welcomed a daughter, Ava Bernice.

MICHAEL PINTO BS ’96 and CHRISTINA (FRATERRIGO) PINTO BS ’96 welcomed a daughter, Emma Elizabeth.

AMY (CUDMORE) VASSALLO BS ’01 welcomed a daughter, Averiana Josephine.

Welcome Hilbert College Babies!

Even the littlest Hawks can now show their Hilbert College spirit. If you are a Hilbert alumnus, share with us news of your birth announcement and we will send you a newly created one-of-a-kind Hilbert baby onesie or bib.

To have your new bundle of joy show their Hilbert pride, contact Deanna Messinger, assistant director of alumni relations and annual giving, at 716-926-8791 or e-mail dmessinger@hilbert.edu. We look forward to welcoming your new baby to the Hilbert family!
Wendy Edson, chairperson of the Professional Studies Division and associate professor of legal studies, presented on paralegal education at the Bar Association of Erie County Continuing Education seminar “Unlawful Practice of Law Update and Tips for Paralegal Utilization.”

Charles Ernst, Ph.D., has been appointed director of Hilbert’s Center for Excellence in Learning and will also continue as professor of English.

Chris Gallant, assistant professor of digital media and communication, served as celebrity judge for the second annual Hamburg Film Festival, a part of the Burgerfest celebration in the Village of Hamburg, N.Y.

Craig Harris, director of alumni relations and annual giving, has been selected for this year’s Senior Leadership Academy offered by the Council of Independent Colleges.

Andrew Kolin, Ph.D., professor of political science, will have his fourth book, State Power and Democracy: Before and During the Presidency of G.W. Bush, published in January.

Tim Lee, director of admissions, has received a 2010 silver Circle of Excellence Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education for Hilbert’s viewbook.

Edward Qualey, chairperson of the Criminal Justice/Forensic Science Division and associate professor of criminal justice, has been appointed to the Erie Community College Police Science Advisory Council.

Donald Vincent, assistant professor of digital media and communication, has received a doctorate in communication from the University at Buffalo. His dissertation focused on “Religion and the Decision to Donate Organs: Exploring the Behaviors of College Students and Religious Leaders.”

Alex Wilshaw, a 2010 economic crime investigation graduate, has been named help desk support manager, having previously been a help desk technician during his studies at Hilbert.

Hilbert President Cynthia Zane, Ed.D., will co-host a new presidents dinner at the 2011 Council of Independent Colleges Presidents Institute being held in January. HC

Holiday Pops Concert
A family-friendly event performed by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

Featuring: Conductor Paul Ferington
Soprano Emily Helenbrook

Tuesday, Dec. 7
Hilbert College
William E. Swan Auditorium
5200 South Park Ave.
Hamburg, NY 14075

6:30 pm Santa Claus Visits
7:00 pm Concert Begins

$20 Reserved Seating
$15 Seniors & Students

Tickets on sale now!
716-885-5000 www.bpo.org
Information: 716-926-8884 jdallas@hilbert.edu
A record-breaking 217 attended this year’s Hilbert Day at Coca-Cola Field as they watched the Buffalo Bisons take on the Columbus Clippers at an early-August game.

Attendees at the ninth annual event enjoyed a pre-game party with music, food and drinks and then took in the Friday evening game. Post-game fireworks closed out this popular summertime baseball outing, which is co-sponsored by the Hilbert Alumni Association and the college’s Office of Alumni Relations.

Be sure to check the Hilbert alumni Web site at www.hilbert.edu/alumni for information as it becomes available on the 2011 Hilbert Day at Coca-Field.

**Upcoming Events**

- **December 5**
  Christmas at Hilbert

- **March 25**
  Alumni Association Fish Fry Dinner

- **April 9**
  Memorial Miles 5K Race/1 Mile Walk

For information on these and other events, go to www.hilbert.edu.

**Photography Captures Hilbert to the Letter**

A new customized “word” artwork, comprised of photographed letters derived from recognizable Hilbert College campus architecture, has been specially created for the college.

Using architectural details found around campus, the alphabet photography incorporated in the piece forms letters that are joined together to spell out “Hilbert.” The building and architecture from campus used in this unique keepsake are identified under each letter, including the Campus Center and the San Damiano cross displayed in the Franciscan Hall Atrium.

Created by Faces of Buffalo, the one-of-a-kind Hilbert alphabet photography piece is available as a framed print suitable for a desk or wall display or as a matted print that’s ready for framing.

To buy the Hilbert alphabet artwork, which is available for $28, go to facesofbuffalo.com/hilbert.htm. Sponsored by the Hilbert Alumni Association, a portion of proceeds from sale of the artwork will benefit Hilbert students.
All gifts received from June 1, 2009 – May 31, 2010

**Assisi Society**

**Gifts of $25,000+**

- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Drago, Sr.
- John R. Oshie Foundation
- M & T Charitable Foundation
- Russo Family Charitable Foundation, Inc.
- U.S. Department of Education

**St. Francis Society**

**Gifts of $10,000 - $24,999**

- Barbara Conners
- Dorothy Ferguson
- William and Nancy Gacioch
- Daniel R. Gernatt, Jr.
- Elizabeth M. Kane
- Lorraine Sturdevant Hritcko '81
- Mary Ann Hobar '96
- Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Habib
- Cullen Foundation
- Biddle Family Foundation

**Gifts of $5,000 - $9,999**

- Dana Studevant Hritcko '81
- Elizabeth M. Kane
- LP Ciminelli, Inc.
- Dr. Anthony Ogorek
- Thomas Waring, Jr.

**St. Clare Society**

**Gifts of $5,000 - $9,999**

- Biddle Family Foundation
- Cullen Foundation
- First Niagara Bank Foundation
- Mrs. and Mrs. Anthony Habib
- Mr. and Mrs. Brad Hafner
- Mary Ann Hobar '96
- Lorraine Studevant Hritcko '81
- Elizabeth M. Kane
- LP Ciminelli, Inc.
- Dr. Anthony Ogorek
- Thomas Waring, Jr.

**St. Joseph Society**

**Gifts of $2,500 - $4,999**

- Anna U. Allen
- Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Courtice
- First Niagara Bank
- Five Star Bank
- Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph
- Freed, Maxick, Battaglia, CPA's, PC
- Goya Foods Great Lakes
- Lawley Service Insurance
- National Property Management Associates, Inc.
- Harriet & Vincent Palisano Foundation
- Rosina Food Products, Inc.
- Maureen Saab
- Patrick V. Scott, D.D.S.
- Arthur Sherwood
- Ann L. Swan
- Towers Perrin
- United Insurance Agency, Inc.
- Mr. and Mrs. John A. Wabick
- Wachovia Bank, a div. of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.
- West Herr Automotive Group
- Power Drives, Inc.
- Reeds Jewelry
- William D. Ryan
- Dr. Stanley A. and Karen Caughan Scott SIFE (National)
- Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Slon
- Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Soluri, Sr.
- South Towns Appliance, Inc.
- James Sturm
- Mr. and Mrs. George Thomas, '76
- Fran Vaughan
- Waring Financial Group
- Gretchen Wylegala

**President's Society**

**Gifts of $1,000 – $2,999**

- Ad Pro Team Sports
- John Babi
- Baillie Lumber Co.
- Bank of America
- Dr. and Mrs. Howard Benatovich
- Mr. and Mrs. G. Gary Berner
- Buffalo Truck Center, Inc.
- Mrs. Mary Lee Campbell-Wisley
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Clerici
- Carolyn Craig
- Creative Communication Associates
- Daniel & Flavia Gernatt Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Dommer
- Maureen English '83
- Jason D. Enser
- Feit-Albert Associates
- Mr. and Mrs. Michael Gacioch
- Daniel Gernatt, Sr.
- Marne Griffin '85
- H & R Block Foundation
- Patrick and Ann Heraty
- Hilbert College Alumni Association
- Dr. Christopher Holoman
- James '85 and Diana Iglewski
- Jaeckle, Fleischmann & Mugel, LLP
- Kathleen Kazmierczak
- KeyBank Foundation
- KeyBank of Western New York
- Lumsden & McCormick, LLP
- Jason Luna '96
- Paul Mansell
- Mr. and Mrs. Gerard Mazurkiewicz
- Milton Cat
- Mr. and Mrs. Eugene R. Mruk
- Multisorb Technologies, Inc.
- NOCO Energy Corp.
- NYBDC Charitable Foundation
- Roger and Carol '94 Palczewski
- Richard and Debbie Pinkowski
- Steven Hanson
- Mr. and Mrs. Craig Harris
- Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Heraty '97
- Michael Heraty
- Peter E. Heraty
- HSBC Philanthropic Matching Gift Program
- Ilio DiPaolo, Inc.
- Immaculata Academy
- George Johengen
- John Percy Services Automotive Lift Service
- Sirena Jones '07
- Karen Kazmierski
- Mr. and Mrs. Wayne N. Keller
- Mr. and Mrs. Francis Kerrigan
- Mr. and Mrs. John T. Kociela
- Eleonore E. Kolodziej
- Kraft Foods
- LaFarge North America
- RDMI Mary E. Landry
- Largo Real Estate Advisors, Inc.
- Leader Professional Services
- Timothy Lee
- Mr. and Mrs. George E. Lehman III '73
- M & T Insurance Agency, Inc.
- Manning & Napier Advisors, Inc.
- Heidi Marshall
- Mr. and Mrs. Terence G. McGuire
- McMahon & Mann Consulting Engineers, PC
- Charles McGuaid
- Brian M. Michalek '03
- Anne Marie Milazzo '66
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Minekime
- MOC Products Co., Inc.
- Moog, Inc.
- Joseph Mordino
- Mary K. Mosey
- Mr. and Mrs. Michael A. Murrin
- Anthony Musante
- Maureen R. L. Mussenden*
- National Fuel Resources, Inc
- National Grid USA Service Co., Inc.
- New York Life Foundation
- Dr. and Mrs. Carmen Notaro
- Nussbaumer & Clarke, Inc.
- Mr. and Mrs. Christ Pappas '00
- Pepe Construction Co., Inc.
- Pepsi Cola Buffalo Bottling Corp.
- Picone Construction Corp.
- Dr. Kathy Pierino
- Edward Qualey '74
- Richard V. Qualey '88
- R. M. Murdock Co., Inc.
- Joseph A. Rath
We are very grateful to the many donors who make an exceptional educational experience possible for all of our students. Every effort has been made to accurately list each donor. Please let us know if you note any errors or omissions.

*Deceased

We are very grateful to the many donors who make an exceptional educational experience possible for all of our students. Every effort has been made to accurately list each donor. Please let us know if you note any errors or omissions.

*Deceased
## Financial Highlights

### Revenues:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition &amp; Fees – Gross</td>
<td>$13,559,200</td>
<td>$13,956,600</td>
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<td>$11,187,500</td>
<td>$11,404,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gifts &amp; Grants</td>
<td>$1,186,800</td>
<td>$1,138,500</td>
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<td>Auxiliary Enterprises</td>
<td>$1,293,700</td>
<td>$1,725,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Realized</td>
<td>$(284,600)</td>
<td>$190,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrealized</td>
<td>$(953,800)</td>
<td>$545,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$337,400</td>
<td>$326,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Revenues</td>
<td>$12,767,000</td>
<td>$15,331,000</td>
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### Expenses:

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<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>$5,064,000</td>
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<td>Student Services</td>
<td>$2,660,100</td>
<td>$2,813,900</td>
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<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>$1,352,000</td>
<td>$1,551,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$4,809,300</td>
<td>$4,718,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$13,885,400</td>
<td>$14,112,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Surplus (Deficit)</td>
<td>$(1,118,368)</td>
<td>$1,219,000</td>
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### Other Highlights:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets</td>
<td>$19,305,800</td>
<td>$20,524,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>$6,710,800</td>
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<td>Endowment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>967</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuition and Fees</td>
<td>$17,350</td>
<td>$17,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room and Board</td>
<td>$6,950</td>
<td>$7,700</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
One Generation Helping the Next

A Hilbert College student scholarship is a gift of a lifetime. Thanks to the generosity and steadfast commitment of Hilbert donors, like those shown here with students benefiting from their support, scholarships have made it possible for many Hilbert students to achieve their college goals.

Aided by scholarship support, Hilbert students are distinguishing themselves through their academic accomplishments, contributions in the local and international communities, and, as graduates, achievements in their professional fields. Scholarships offer a personal, lasting way to keep college dreams alive for countless students. You too can make a difference. Whether you give to an already established scholarship or wish to create a new one, students will benefit from the Hilbert experience because of your donation to the college. Student scholarships also can be supported through the Hilbert Fund.

For your convenience, an envelope to send in your gift is enclosed in this issue of Hilbert Connections.

Fran Vaughan
Vice President for Institutional Advancement
716-926-8790
fvaughan@hilbert.edu
When
Remember

the ‘60s

A Hilbert College secretarial science student works in one of her classes at a time when the institution was on the cusp of several milestones – officially becoming known as Hilbert College, the opening of its original five-building campus and becoming co-educational. For students in the secretarial science program, typewriting, shorthand and accounting were among the required courses for the two-year degree. Outside the classroom, emphasis at Hilbert was placed on “developing a student’s personal life in its spiritual, social and cultural aspects,” including activities such as dances, a Glee Club and Moving Up Day activities.