



WOMEN KICKING GLASS

Email Profile Archive #3

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Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

MARCH 2, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #21

First All-American: Carolyn (Cunniff) Mullaney '84



In her time at Norwich, Carolyn Cunniff '84 emerged as a true force to be reckoned with, leaving an indelible mark on the university's athletic legacy. A dean's list student, secretary of the junior class, and a staff Sergeant in the Corps of Cadets, Carolyn's achievements extended far beyond the academic realm.

Carolyn showcased her versatility by excelling in various extracurricular activities. A member of the Spirit Club and the Outing Club, she demonstrated a passion for both community engagement and outdoor pursuits. However, it was on the sports field where Carolyn truly shone.



Cross-country and outdoor track—Carolyn conquered them with remarkable success. Her prowess in cross-country racing became particularly evident in the autumn of her first year, earning her All-New England honors. This achievement marked the beginning of a stellar athletic journey.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Carolyn continued to amass victories. Winning the Vermont Collegiate title in the 1500-meter event as part of the spring track team showcased her versatility.

By her junior year, she had earned national recognition, securing victories in the Vermont State and ECAC Championships. Her 15th-place finish at the NCAA National Championships made her Norwich's first-ever female All-American.

As captain of the cross-country team in her final year, Carolyn solidified her status as a trailblazer. A strong 11th-place finish at the New England Championships and a subsequent 16th place at the NCAA national event earned her All-American honors for the second time.

Post-graduation, Carolyn's dedication to road racing remained unwavering. Balancing her athletic pursuits with a degree in physical education, Carolyn's commitment to a healthy lifestyle and excellence in athletics serves as a beacon for aspiring athletes.

Beyond the track, Carolyn embraced family life with her husband, James, and their four children, Jake, twin girls Danielle and Briana, and Michael. Residing in Quincy,

Massachusetts, she continues to embody the spirit of a true champion on and off the field. Carolyn Cunniff's journey is a testament to the enduring impact of passion, determination, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

Records documenting women's history and experience at Norwich are available through the University Archives. <https://archives.norwich.edu/>



Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

MARCH 9, 2024

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A Cold War Education: The Russian School

Norwich University's Russian School stood as a beacon of cultural and educational exchange during the Cold War era, offering students a unique and immersive experience in Russian language and culture. Founded in 1960 at Windham College in Putney, VT, the program moved to Norwich in 1968 and thrived under the leadership of Dr. Marianna A. Poltoratzky.



The program awarded a Master of Arts degree in Russian Language and Literature, attracting students to the Northfield campus from across the country. The curriculum, inspired by the Army Language School, was designed to condense a year of college Russian into a seven-week session. While in attendance, participants took a pledge to speak only Russian. During its peak, enrollment reached nearly 300 students, including a significant female presence.



Seven of the eleven members of the inaugural graduation class were women. These pioneers not only excelled academically but demonstrated a communal spirit that transcended the classroom walls. The total immersion in the Russian language continued in extra-curricular activities such as Russian choir, folk dancing, theater performances, cooking and sports.

Each summer the Russian School presented a symposium on topics in Russian literature and culture, bringing internationally renowned scholars to campus. Most famously, renowned Soviet dissident and Nobel Prize-winning author, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (*middle photo, far right*) visited in July 1975. The exiled writer came to Norwich at the invitation of his friend Nicholas V. Pervushin, the then-director of the Russian school. Solzhenitsyn, who had endured eleven years in Soviet prisons for his criticism of the regime, settled in Cavendish, VT in 1976, where he raised his family until his return to Russia in 1994.

As the Soviet Union dissolved and interest in Russian studies waned, enrollment in the Russian



School declined, leading to its closure after the 2000 session.

The legacy of the Russian School and its impact on generations of students stand as a testament to Norwich University's enduring commitment to excellence, innovation, and global engagement.

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Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

MARCH 16, 2024

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Luck and Destiny: Beth Veach '92



The intersection of Norwich University and **Elizabeth (Carson) Veach '92** could be described as one part luck and two parts destiny.

Arguably, Beth's Norwich journey began with her father's death when she was five. Having never worked a day in her life, Beth's mother pursued a position as the first female Deputy Sheriff in Lorain County, Ohio. This pioneer not only provided for her brood, but she also instilled lifelong values that included a strong work ethic, respect for people and institutions, and a sense of what is fair and just. Daily, she left for work in uniform, wearing a badge on her crisp, white shirt and a gun on her hip. As a sign of the times, the girls adopted as the family song the hit tune, "I Fought The Law, and The Law Won".

Entering the workforce, Beth unselfconsciously believed she too could be as unlimited in her pursuits as her mother and early on was one of only two women in Columbus, Ohio, a city of nearly one million people, to become an investment broker. She was undaunted by traditionally male-dominated institutions. Like her mother before her, she performed with dignity, strength, and humility.

Time passed and a move to Vermont caused her to assess her future. Beth became aware of an innovative form of higher education, "adult distance learning." This revolutionary program offered by Vermont College of Norwich University provided Beth an opportunity to finish the degree she had begun at Ohio State University. She focused her studies on Communications, which would serve her well in business, volunteer work, and personally, for decades. Beth was described by a professor as a student who "learns for keeps," seeking complete understandings and authenticity where they could be found.

Soon after graduation in 1992, Beth was approached by Dr. Tony Caprio, NU Class of 1960, to serve on the Norwich Board of Fellows and that began her two-plus decades of service to the university. Following her term on the Board of Fellows, then-President Rich Schneider and asked Beth to join the Board of Trustees on which she served for 15 years.

"I consider trusteeship one of the greatest honors of my life. Norwich is a dynamic organization. During my service, we built the university brand, increased the endowment, expanded facilities, sold Vermont College, and grew both the Corps and Civilian populations."

As she was immersed in the business of the university, Beth started and operated a national business developing and distributing protective, technical apparel for the motorcycle industry. She, with the help of her husband, led that business from concept, to production, to distribution, to national brand and on to exit, completing the entire entrepreneurial cycle. She went on to create a robust business coaching practice, always seeking to arm others with strong entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.

“Throughout my journey, I have applied so many of the values and valuable lessons acquired from both a strong mother and Norwich University.”

In addition to serving on the Board of Fellows and Board of Trustees, Beth has conducted entrepreneurial workshops for both undergraduate and graduate students. She is the recipient of a Distinguished Alumna Award, a lifetime member and Two-Star General in the Partridge Society, and member of the 1819 Circle and Trustee Emerita.

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Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

MARCH 23, 2024

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Carol Todd: Norwich's Peace Corps Preparatory Program



In the summer of 1986, **Carol Todd** (left) returned to Norwich from a national conference on volunteerism with an idea for her husband, President W. Russell Todd. She enthusiastically shared a presentation she had attended by Loret Miller Ruppe, director of the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps was a program established by President John F. Kennedy to create opportunities for Americans to serve their country and the world. Rupp indicated the Peace Corps was developing an ROTC-like training program to recruit new volunteers. The timing was serendipitous.

President Todd had been searching for a way to expand volunteerism at Norwich beyond the tradition of national service. "There are two ways to prevent war," he said. "One is to make friends and the other is to be so strong that nobody wants to attack you. I see the Peace Corps program as being the first."

With Mrs. Todd's support and guidance, Norwich became the first college in the nation to offer the Peace Corps Preparatory Program (PCPP). Financed and administered by the university, the program launched in the fall of 1987 with fifteen participants.



Cadets could elect the PCPP training curriculum in lieu of the ROTC requirement and civilian students could also enroll. Courses included languages, community service, and the economics and politics of developing nations. Students were required to spend the summer between their junior and senior years as volunteers in Central or South America.

The Peace Corps was thrilled that Norwich's model could be replicated at other colleges and universities.

With the Peace Corps seeking to double the size of its volunteer force and reduce turnover, a student-loan forgiveness program was added in exchange for a Peace Corps service. Nursing and



PCPP student Tricia Featherstonhaugh helps homeowner prepare for winter, Fall '87

engineering students were specifically recruited to fill the high demand for trained leaders in those fields. **Patricia Featherstonhaugh '87** said, "I have never met anyone who had a bad time in the Peace Corps. Since I'm going to be a nurse and they are in such high demand, I wanted to experience more than one way of living."

At the turn of the millennium and new leadership priorities, Norwich's Peace Corps Preparatory Program phased out in the early 2000s. However, the dream of being the model for a national program was realized by the Peace Corps sponsoring a preparatory curriculum at about 50 partner schools.

President and Mrs. Todd's legacy lives on at Norwich as well. [The Todd Lecture Series](#) was created by Ellen and John Drew, the Todd's daughter and son-in-law, in recognition of their lifelong commitment to community and country. The series hosts the nation's foremost thought leaders from business, politics, arts, science, military and other arenas to engage the Norwich and Central Vermont communities.

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Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

MARCH 30, 2024

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Building Bridges to the Future: Patty (Romano) Leavenworth '87



Though her grandfather, father, and uncle all graduated from Norwich University with degrees in Civil Engineering, Patty Romano headed to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University after high school. "I thought I wanted to work for NASA as an aeronautical engineer", she recalls. However, her childhood years "building" roads out of sand, mud, and stones with Tonka trucks created a calling that was hard to ignore. Patty's father was a successful engineer with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) overseeing construction of the interstate system. "I was so proud of him and knew other engineers looked up to him. He always talked about Norwich, so I connected the dots and figured that was the place to be if I wanted to 'be like Dad!'"



Patty says she knew nothing of the military aspect of Norwich and may have been one of the worst recruits to go through the system. "I had a lot of growing up to do," she says. After graduating from Norwich University in 1987 with a B.S. in Civil Engineering (BSCE), Patty indeed followed in her father's footsteps and joined the ranks at MassDOT. In 2013, she became MassDOT's first female Chief Engineer and was named Deputy Administrator in 2018. Patty oversees 2,250 MassDOT Highway Division employees. She and her teams annually deliver a \$1.2 billion construction program that includes hundreds of projects in 351 towns and cities across Massachusetts. Patty is known for transforming the way MassDOT views female engineers. Her staff brags that she has broken numerous glass ceilings, and this has helped create confidence and hope in other women.



Patty provides her intuitive engineering skills to the National Long-Term Infrastructure Performance Committee that advises the Federal Highway Administration Infrastructure R&D Program. She also served as Co-Chair of the Federal Highway Administration's State Transportation Innovation Council. In 2020 she won the American Public Works Association Manager of the Year award. This international organization recognized Patty for her combination of leading by example, inspiration and grit.

Patty has been volunteering at Norwich for many years, first as President of the Sullivan Museum Associates, then as Chair of the David Crawford Engineering board. In 2023 she became the first woman to Chair the Norwich Board of Fellows. "I owe so much of my success to Norwich, the least I can do is to volunteer, give back, and pay it forward," she says. "The values and lessons I learned at Norwich really helped shape my leadership skills. The most important lesson I learned though is to not fear hard work and difficult experiences as these are what cause us to grow and learn."

Patty and her husband, Gary reside in Westminister, Mass. They have two sons, Anthony and Gary who graduated from Norwich in 2010, creating the fourth generation of NU graduates in the Romano family. Patty is extremely proud of this family legacy; grandfather Ralph Romano, Sr., NU1930 BSCE, father Ralph Romano Jr., NU1956 BSCE, uncle Peter Romano, NU1960 BSCE, Patty (Romano) Leavenworth, NU1987 BSCE, and son Gary Leavenworth, NU2010 BS Computer Security/Information Assurance.

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Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

APRIL 6, 2024

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Evolution and Excellence: Norwich University's Nursing Program



First class of ADN students – 1961

In the ever-evolving landscape of healthcare education, Norwich University's Nursing Program has not only adapted to the changing times but has also played a pivotal role in shaping the nursing profession in Vermont.

The roots of the program extend back to the nursing crisis that unfolded in Vermont during the 1950s. Faced with increasing demands on nurses' time and a shortage of trained professionals, the state sought innovative solutions. Enter Mildred Montag, a nursing education pioneer, who introduced the associate degree in nursing (ADN) in 1958. Vermont College was the state's first to offer the ADN in 1961, prior to merging with Norwich University in 1972.



The nursing crisis became even more pronounced during the Vietnam era, prompting Vermont College and Norwich University to respond dynamically. As the armed forces drew nurses into their ranks, both institutions innovated nurse education, addressing the nationwide shortage. By 1979, the collaborative efforts led to the introduction of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) completion program.



Dr. Jessica Wood M'09

In 2010, the nursing department found its place within Norwich's School of Mathematics and Sciences, offering a comprehensive four-year program leading to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). Additionally, an RN to BSN program caters to graduates of associate degree and diploma nursing programs, highlighting Norwich's commitment to accessible and quality nursing education.

Dr. Jessica Wood M'09, Director of the School of Nursing has been teaching at Norwich since 2008. A passionate leader for nursing, Dr. Wood is a testament to the program's dedication to excellence. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of New Hampshire, a Master of Science in Health Systems Leadership from Norwich University, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice from Duke University.

Her wealth of experience in the field of nursing is evident in her commitment to producing well-rounded professionals. Today's nursing students have access to new simulation laboratories on campus. Affiliations with academic medical centers, such as Dartmouth-Hitchcock and the University of Vermont Medical Center, provide students with real-world clinical learning, and opportunities to study in impoverished areas of Nicaragua provide hands-on experiences in global health and community engagement.

As Norwich's nursing program continues to evolve and thrive, it remains a beacon of excellence in nursing education. From its early days addressing Vermont's nursing crisis to its current status as a comprehensive and forward-thinking program, Norwich University's Nursing Program stands as a testament to adaptability, innovation, and a commitment to shaping the future of healthcare professionals.

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APRIL 13, 2024

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From Club Sport to Champions: Norwich Women's Hockey



Liz Kennedy '01

Liz Kennedy '01 was a sophomore in 1998 when construction of the Kreitzberg Arena was completed. A lifelong ice hockey fan-turned-player, Liz wanted to start a women's hockey team at Norwich. She requested a meeting with President Richard Schneider to make her pitch. "Women are going to be playing hockey in the Olympics for the first time this year and the sport is going to explode," she said to him. "Norwich should be on the forefront of that." A consummate fundraiser, Liz convinced President Schneider to allocate \$1,000 to launch the Norwich Women's Hockey Club.

"We held a meeting to see if anybody was interested in playing," Liz said. "That first rag tag group had four or five girls who had played hockey, two figure skaters we made into hockey players, and the rest were rugby girls we propped up on skates to be barriers."

Dana Bean, who worked as the equipment room manager for NU Athletics, volunteered his time to coach the team. They played two games in their inaugural season, both against St. Michael's College, finishing with a record of 1-1. That winter the U.S. Women's Olympic Hockey Team took their first gold medals and, as Liz predicted, women's ice hockey exploded.



2010-2011 NU Women's Hockey team

In 2002, Mark Bolding, who had been the assistant coach for Norwich's men's hockey program, took the reins of the women's club. With Coach Bean serving as Bolding's assistant, the team began to blossom. The 2007-2008 season marked a significant milestone on their journey when the team joined the ECAC Women's East Hockey League and achieved varsity status.



Sophie Leclerc '10

A short four years later the **2010-2011 team** clinched their first NCAA championship. With a stellar record of 25-4-1, Norwich defeated Rochester Institute of Technology in the National Championship Game in Rochester, NY.

No longer a team of novice skaters, the elite athletes on the championship team included the likes of Julie Fortier '12 and **Sophie Leclerc '10**. Both women set records and earned multiple awards including All-American honors and left an indelible mark on the team's legacy.

The [2010-2011 team was inducted into the NU Athletics Hall of Fame](#) in 2021. During the ceremony Coach Bolding said, "It's truly a credit to all our players who bought into their roles and sacrificed daily for the good of the team. The result was magical, and this group cemented Norwich Women's Hockey as one of the premier programs in the nation."

Coach Bolding went on to coach the Cadets for twelve seasons. In 2019, Sophie Leclerc was announced as the second head coach in program history.

Norwich University's women's ice hockey program demonstrates the power of dedication, skill, and teamwork. With the championship banner permanently hung above the Kreitzberg Arena, the legacy of this extraordinary program continues to be a beacon for female athletes aspiring to reach new heights in collegiate sports.

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Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

APRIL 20, 2024

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Building Resiliency: Michele Turner M'12



Michele Turner began her foray into business recovery in 1993 when she filled in for a colleague on maternity leave. Her immediate interest in systems and processes led her supervisors to say, “Since you have so much to say, why don’t you take over this area?” Since then, she’s become a pioneer in the field.

Business recovery is the process of maintaining or reestablishing continuity following a natural or human-induced disaster. At the start of her career, most businesses didn’t understand the need for such services. “What they did know was that they wanted you to fix their systems,” Michele said. She gained competencies in systems configuration, mainframes, and a host of other technical areas because she saw that employers wanted someone familiar with the technical side. “It just grew from there.”

Michele’s career has led her down many paths in the areas of governance, risk, and compliance. She worked as a consultant, spent time with Washington Mutual, worked at Microsoft where she founded its Operational Risk Organization, and at Amazon where she developed their global business resilience.

In 2012 Michele earned her Master of Science in Business Continuity at Norwich. Today, she is the vice president of business continuity for Marriott International. Teams under her include the Global Emergency Response for Marriott properties, Business Continuity Product Management, and Business Continuity Risk Mitigation. In addition, Michele is a course instructor and board director for Disaster Recovery Institute International (DRII), where she was the 2022 DRII Lifetime Achievement Award winner.

Recognizing that the improvements she devised for Fortune 500 companies throughout her career could be applied to various fields and life situations, Michele wrote [*Lessons Learned: Short Stories of Continuity and Resilience*](#). The book describes a methodology called PARSE (Prepare, Assess, Remediate, Sustain, and Examine).

“Sometimes it can feel like you are the only one dealing with a certain problem, and you may not know how to tackle it,” Michele said. “I wanted to make sure I documented certain things from a personal and professional perspective so if others are going through challenges, they know they are not alone.”

For the full interview with Michele, visit <https://online.norwich.edu/online/student-experience/student-stories/michele-turner>



Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

APRIL 27, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #29

Making the Grade: Tracey (Jones) Poirier '96



In 1996, Tracey Jones, now **Brigadier General Tracey Poirier**, became Norwich University's first student to receive a prestigious Rhodes Scholarship.

Tracey graduated from Norwich in 1996 with a Bachelor's degree in English and Communications. As a Rhodes Scholarship recipient, she earned two Master's Degrees from Oxford University in England, one in Anthropology and one in Human Resource Management.

The prestigious Rhodes Scholarship, established in 1902, is the world's oldest graduate scholarship. International Rhodes Scholarship recipients are selected based on a set of guiding criteria that include academic excellence; energy to fully use one's talents (as demonstrated by mastery in sports, music, debate, dance, theater, and artistic pursuits); and the moral force of character and instincts to lead.



Tracey began her professional career as a Marine Corps Public Affairs Officer. Following eight years of active military duty, she transitioned to the Army National Guard while beginning her civilian career. She was hired by Norwich University where she ultimately became the Assistant Vice President for Leadership and Student Experience, while still serving in uniform for the Vermont National Guard.

Tracey went on to become the first female army general officer in the Vermont Army National Guard.

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Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

MAY 4, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #30

Proving Herself: Irene (Nadeau) Mills '78



Irene Nadeau entered the Norwich University Corps of Cadets from Somersworth, NH in 1974 as an electrical engineering major. She was the recipient of an AFROTC scholarship which paid for three of her four years at Norwich. As one of the first eight women in the Corps, Irene said, "You have to prove yourself every day, that you can do a good job".

Competition was steep across the entire Corps of Cadets. In December 1974, just four months after joining the Corps, Cadet Nadeau was chosen as Regimental Rook of the Month, representing the Regimental Military Police Company (MP). Irene recalls the recognition was received with mixed reviews. "Some guys called it tokenism," she said, "Some said congratulations, and others said, 'You've made history!'"



In addition to MP Company, Irene kept busy by joining the Fencing Club, Junior Weekend Committee, and Big Brother/Big Sister Program. She also was one of the first women in Mountain Cold Weather which provides training in mountaineering and skiing, as well as survival and rescue techniques. Irene was recognized by the Arnold Air Society with the AFROTC Leadership ribbon. In 1978 she was the first woman to graduate from Norwich with an engineering degree, earning a BS in Electrical Engineering. She was commissioned as a 2nd LT in the US Air Force and stationed at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. Irene married her classmate, 2LT Orrin Mills in June 1979. Following their honeymoon in Prince Edward Island, Canada, Irene returned to the Air Force Institute of Technology at

Wright Patterson to complete work on a master's degree.

The Mills became a Legacy family when two of their children followed in their footsteps at Norwich. Thomas graduated in 2006 and Ambre in 2007.

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