



# **WOMEN KICKING GLASS**

## **Email Profile Archive #4**

**May 11, 2024 – July 13, 2024 (Issues 31-40)**

May 11, 2024: [From Love Affair to Legendary: NU Women's Rugby Program](#)

May 18, 2024: [Sisters on the Hill: Mary and Ellen Van Orden '79](#)

May 25, 2024: [A Force to Be Reckoned With: Wendy Sampson Bluemmert '89](#)

June 1, 2024: [A Trailblazer in Philanthropy and Leadership: Jennifer Pritzker H'07](#)

June 8, 2024: [A Literary Legacy: Celebrating Norwich's Women Writers](#)

June 15, 2024: [First Female Olympian: Emily Caruso '00](#)

June 22, 2024: [Shining Stars: Norwich's First Female Flag Officers](#)

June 29, 2024: [NU Women in Special Operations](#)

July 6, 2024: [Designing and Building: NU Women in Architecture](#)

July 13, 2024: [Creating a Safer World: NU Women in Criminal Justice](#)



# Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

MAY 11, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #31

## From Love Affair to Legendary: NU Women's Rugby Program



1984 NU Women's Rugby Team

Norwich University's women's rugby program is rooted in the daring dreams of Theresa Maggio '84, Sue Hall '85, and Betsy Pendergast VC'84.

Betsy and Sue were returning from a field hockey game against UVM when the idea bubbled up. They had seen NU's men's team in action and were fascinated by the sport. They noted that UVM had a women's rugby team. Theresa, who had played on Johnson State College's team, arrived at Norwich that fall to work on a master's degree. She was enthusiastic about recruiting a women's team as well, so the three hatched a plan.



2014 NCAA Div. I Rugby 7s National Champions - NU Women's Rugby

Over the winter of 1983-84, excitement began to build on both the Norwich and Vermont College campuses. While the women were eager to give the game a try, they faced some naysayers. Some scoffed at the idea of women playing such a physical sport. Others saw it as competition for the small pool of women athletes on campus.

Undaunted, the NU Women's Rugby Team was formed and played their first match in the spring of 1984. Theresa recalls, "We decided to wear black jerseys that first year because NU didn't want anything to do with us." She personally lined the pitch for the first home game due to the lack of support from the athletic department. "Once we were up and running, I never had to line the field again," she says.

Karen Abel '86, a member of the inaugural season said, "Betsy recruited players, organized practices and lined up teams for us to play against. We had an absolute blast and immediately fell in love with it." Their love affair laid the foundation for a program that is celebrating 40 years in 2024.

Fast forward twenty years and the club sport was a Division II team when Coach Austin Hall arrived at Norwich in 2004. Under his guidance, women's rugby garnered unparalleled success not previously seen by any NU team. With back-to-back top-five finishes in the

Division II National Championships, the switch to varsity status in 2008, and the selection of All-American Sybil Taunton '08, Norwich's program rose to national prominence.

The watershed moment arrived during the 2011-12 season when the Cadets secured their first of many national championships. The team showcased incredible resilience and skill, clinching the USA Rugby 7s National Championship in Texas. With key players like Katie Hathaway '12 and Hannah Bushey '12 leading the charge, alongside Rose Bernheim '14, Joya Clark '14 and Baylee Annis '14, the Cadets demonstrated their offensive prowess, paving the way for an era of rugby glory.

Building on that momentum, the 2012-13 team, captained by Emily Baugus '13, elevated the program to greater heights. The Cadets won the 2012 USA Rugby College 7's National Championship in Texas in December, defeating Sam Houston State, Ohio State, Stanford, Harvard, Texas, and Navy en route to the title. Although they fell short in the Division I 15s National Championship that year, the Cadets' indomitable spirit shone through. Their remarkable comeback victory against Stanford University in the semifinals was historic.

To date, the Norwich's Women's Rugby program has captured six national championships and finished second in two others. Five of those titles were won against Division I schools from the big Power Five conferences.

The program is now led by Head Coach Baylee Annis '14, a member of the 2011-12 and 2012-2013 championship teams and standout student-athlete. Coach Annis proudly states that "Norwich Rugby is steeped in incredible success, talented athletes, and at the heart of that are the incredibly good and kind people who are committed to be in service to others." Ashley Potvin-Fulford '11 summed up the team's ethos this way, "In rugby and life, you must be willing to do it all: carry the ball, support other people, ask for help and support when you need it, be someone to lean on, get comfortable leaning on others, be lifted and lift someone else."

---

*NU Women's Rugby will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the program during Homecoming Weekend (September 19-22) with a BBQ lunch and Exhibit at the Rugby Clubhouse on Friday, Rugby game on Saturday afternoon, and Scrum Alum Dinner and Anniversary Celebration on Saturday night.*



# Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

MAY 18, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #32

## Sisters on the Hill: Mary and Ellen Van Orden '79



Mary E. VanOrden

Mary Van Orden



Ellen M. VanOrden

Ellen Van Orden

1975 marked the first year of official rook training for freshman women at Norwich. The six female recruits in the Class of 1979 were Donna Lee Rix, Robin Bickford, Cathy Hall, Marie Zebrowski, Lynn Rowley, and **Mary Van Orden**. Mary was a history major in Army ROTC, a clarinet player and the first women in Norwich University's Regimental Band.

Mary's older sister, **Ellen, also Class of 1979**, was a civilian biology major and member of the Norwich Symphonic Band.

Making the Dean's List all four years, the Van Orden sisters were active at Norwich beyond academics. During her junior year, Ellen represented the university as a Maroon Key Student Ambassador. Mary was a literary contributor to the Chameleon for four years and editor for two. She was also a Guidon staff member and managing editor for the newspaper in her senior year. Both women were members of the Norwich Grenadiers Jazz Band.

The band brought Mary and fellow musician, Andrew Bibb '79 together outside of practice. They were married in 1979, had six children, and enjoyed 44 years together before Andrew's passing in 2023. Ellen married Michael Ammel, NU'78, also a member of Band Company.

Mary and Ellen may have inherited a love of music from their father, Carlos, who was a professor of business at Norwich from 1973-1979. According to Mary, "My parents loved anything to do with the band. My Dad was a clarinet player. My husband and I met because we sat next to one another in band. My sister, Ellen, played in the symphonic band and her husband, Mike, was in Band Company. My father was always interested in the march downs, probably because four out of five of us played an instrument at Norwich."

**More about the Regimental Band:** Formed by Captain Alden Partridge in 1820, Norwich University's regimental band has been an integral part of the daily life of cadets for more than a century. Partridge believed music was a critical aspect of education and provided scholarships for student musicians to play at mealtimes and events while having the "same chance for study and improvement." The first band included two drummers, two fifers, two clarinet players, one bugler, and one bass drummer.

Truman Bishop Ransom was one of the band scholarship recipients and eventually followed Partridge as the second president of what is now Norwich University. Since the 1920s, band members have been known as Zoobies. In its early days the band was housed in the lower floors of old Jackman Hall. It is generally believed that "the Zoo" came about because of the bars placed on the windows for security.

---

*Records documenting the history of women at Norwich and the Regimental Band are available through the University Archives. <https://archives.norwich.edu/>*



# Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

MAY 25, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #33

## A Force to Be Reckoned With: Wendy Sampson Bluemert '89



Wendy Sampson arrived at Norwich in 1985 with an Air Force ROTC scholarship. When she didn't have confirmation of continued funding following her freshman year, she enlisted in the National Guard and spent the summer in Army training. At the start of the fall semester Commandant Anthony Carbone heard she had enlisted so he called the Army and said Norwich needed her to return to college. He said they would find a way to help her with tuition. True to his word, they did, and so she came back.

The opposite of her high school in Union, New Jersey, Norwich had a very non-diverse population and very few students of color. "Parents put a lot of pressure on Black kids to go to college in the 1980s. Most of my friends went to HBCUs (historically Black college or universities). But I chose Norwich and there was no diversity." Wendy recalls that on arrival day there were eight Black students in her class but by graduation she was the only one remaining.



Self-discipline was her hallmark. "Say what you mean, mean what you say, and follow through," Wendy says. With that attitude Wendy threw herself headlong into Corps responsibilities, academic studies, playing rugby and being a Zoobie. Her perseverance and diligence were recognized.

In 1986, Wendy made Norwich history as the third female and first Black woman to earn the rank of Rook 5, leading freshmen rooks through their first year of Corps training.

She was held to the same standards and requirements as her male counterparts, with no exceptions. With fortitude and professionalism she led her freshmen with distinction.

Racist attitudes were more challenging than sustaining the position she held. Again, Wendy faced those situations with pragmatism. “It’s about understanding perceptions and trying to be an instigator for change through education. It’s important to recognize there are amazing people in all races, all religions, all walks of life.”

After four years at Norwich Wendy packed up the things she learned and went into the Army to apply them in life. She worked logistics and was stationed both domestically and overseas. After 30 years in the Army, she retired as a Lieutenant Colonel and is now a Civilian Program Manager for the Air Force at the Pentagon.

Reflecting on her time at Norwich, Wendy says “It was where I found my fit. Norwich gave me an opportunity that I would never have been afforded anywhere else as a young Black woman in the 1980s.”

“If I had one piece of advice to give young women today, it would be to be authentic. Don’t believe the hype, just be yourself.” In Wendy’s case, being authentic is a force to be reckoned with.

---

*Records documenting the history of women at Norwich are available through the University Archives: <https://archives.norwich.edu>*



# Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

JUNE 1, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #34

## A Trailblazer in Philanthropy and Leadership: Jennifer Pritzker H'07



In the realm of philanthropy and leadership, few names resonate at Norwich University as profoundly as Colonel (IL) **Jennifer N. Pritzker**, IL ARNG (Retired).

Colonel Pritzker is a distinguished entrepreneur and philanthropist. She is the CEO of TAWANI Enterprises, a visionary umbrella organization with an entrepreneurial outlook. TAWANI's portfolio of iconic brands includes the Pritzker Military Museum & Library, the TAWANI Foundation, and the Pritzker Military Foundation, Masterwings Publishing, Mission94 Firearms Education Center, and more.

A champion for the LGBTQ+ community, Colonel Pritzker is transgender and has blazed a trail for equality, inclusion, and acceptance of all people and inspired others to strive for positive change.

Her connection to Norwich University runs deep. The Pritzker Military Foundation and TAWANI Foundation have supported numerous initiatives, including the Sullivan Museum and History Center; the Center for Civic Engagement's service-learning trips to Tanzania; Mountain Cold Weather; and the Colby Award, a prize awarded annually as part of Norwich's Military Writers' Symposium. The Pritzker Military Museum & Library in Chicago promotes education, historic preservation, and military heritage and has hosted several Norwich events over the years. Colonel Pritzker was a Trustee of the University from 1997 to 2007 and holds an honorary doctorate in military history. She continues to serve as a Trustee Emerita.

"Colonel Pritzker embodies the best of what a civic leader can do to have a positive impact on students. She is a person of enormous heart and great integrity. We are deeply grateful for her extraordinary efforts and ongoing partnership with the University," said Norwich University President Emeritus Richard Schneider.

When Norwich embarked on the Bicentennial Campaign, the largest fundraising effort in the University's history, the focus was on creating a state-of-the-art learning environment, strengthening academic programming, and growing scholarship endowments. Fittingly, the largest campaign in Norwich's history began with the University's largest-ever gift. In April 2013, Colonel Pritzker committed to a \$25 million challenge match. The challenge was met,

and the campaign went on to exceed its \$100 million goal, raising a total of \$121,000,000.

In recognition of her unwavering philanthropic support, Colonel Pritzker was selected to be one of the 78 leaders, distinguished alumni, and others from military and civilian careers honored on the Bicentennial Stairs for making significant contributions to the development and legacy of the University in its second century.

President Emeritus Schneider said, "Her name memorialized on our staircase is a tribute and daily reminder of those who personify Capt. Partridge's ideals and exemplify Norwich's mission 'to make moral, patriotic, effective and useful citizens'."

"It is even more inspiring to be honored alongside others who have significantly contributed to the success and positive collegiate experience of Norwich University students," said Colonel Pritzker.

---

*Records documenting the history of women at Norwich are available through the University Archives: <https://archives.norwich.edu>*



# Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

JUNE 8, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #35

## A Literary Legacy: Celebrating Norwich's Women Writers

In the rich tapestry of Norwich University's alumni, the contributions of women writers shine brightly, illuminating the world with their words and ideas. Among these luminaries are Anela Arcari, Arnita Brown, Roxane Gay, Marjorie Welsh, and Nazanin Afshin-Jam, whose writing achievements have left an indelible mark on the literary landscape.



Anela Arcari '91

### **Anela Arcari '91: Literary Storyteller**

A gifted writer and storyteller, Anela graduated from Norwich University with a civil engineering degree and was commissioned into the US Army Corps of Engineers where she served for 28 years. The highest-ranking female Norwich cadet both her Junior and Senior years, Anela was the second woman to compete for the Regimental Commander position and among the top three cadets interviewed for the position. It would be seven more years before the first female Regimental Commander was selected. Arcari's literary works have captivated readers with personal stories about growing up and serving in the military. She is a two-time Amazon Best Selling Contributing author and an executive producer of a transformational documentary film. Anela's commitment to her craft exemplifies the values of excellence and perseverance instilled at Norwich.



Roxane Gay '99

### **Roxane Gay '99: Voice of Empowerment**

Roxane Gay has emerged as one of the most influential voices in contemporary literature. A graduate of Norwich's Vermont College creative writing program, Roxane's bold and unapologetic writing tackles issues of race, gender, and power, challenging readers to confront uncomfortable truths and engage in meaningful dialogue. From her bestselling essay collection *Bad Feminist* to her acclaimed memoir *Hunger*, Roxane's writing transcends boundaries, inspiring readers to



Marjorie Welish '03

embrace their complexities and advocate for social change. Her profound impact on the literary world reflects Norwich's commitment to fostering inclusive and diverse perspectives.

### **Marjorie Welish '03: Trailblazer in Experimental Poetry**

Marjorie Welish, a distinguished poet and scholar, is renowned for her innovative approach to language and form. Also a graduate of Norwich's Vermont College creative writing program, Marjorie's poetry defies convention, pushing the boundaries of what is possible on the page. Her work challenges readers to engage with language in new and unexpected ways, inviting them to explore the intersections of art, philosophy, and culture. Marjorie's contributions to the literary landscape have earned her numerous accolades, cementing her place as a trailblazer in experimental poetry.



Arnita R. L. Brown M'07

### **Arnita R. L. Brown M'07: "Imagination is a part of all of us."**

The lessons Arnita R. L. Brown took from her master's degree in justice administration have benefited both her career in law enforcement for the LA Police Department and as an author. Under the pen name Nita Nae, Arnita teaches life lessons by providing "Truthful Imagination" for those who love to read. Her books look inside the imagination of the writer and real life itself where life, love, forgiveness, murder, mystery, laughter, pain, dreams, passion, ministry, and purpose are all part of everyday living. Arnita says, "My ultimate hope and prayer is that by what I write, you can laugh and enjoy life more abundantly."



Nazanin Afshin-Jam M'11

### **Nazanin Afshin-Jam M'11: Advocate for Human Rights**

Nazanin Afshin-Jam, another alumna of Norwich's online master's program has leveraged her platform as a writer and activist to effect meaningful change in the world. As the author of *The Tale of Two Nazanins*, she sheds light on the plight of women facing oppression and injustice, drawing from her own experiences as an Iranian-Canadian immigrant. In addition to her work as a writer, Nazanin is a passionate advocate for human rights, dedicating her life to combating violence against women and promoting gender equality. Her tireless efforts to empower marginalized communities and amplify their voices embody Norwich's commitment to service and leadership.

These women exemplify the diverse talents and extraordinary achievements of Norwich's alumnae. As Norwich celebrates its rich heritage of academic excellence and innovation, the contributions of these remarkable authors serve as a beacon of inspiration for current and future generations.

*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!

JUNE 15, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #36

## First Female Olympian: Emily Caruso '00



When the world's top athletes compete for gold in Paris next month, rifle, pistol and shotgun will be among the 32 events in the 2024 Summer Olympics. Shooting is a sport that demands precision and focus, and is one of the original nine events dating back to the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896.

**Emily Caruso**, NU Class of 2000, is the only Norwich woman to journey from the Hill to the global stage as one of the most decorated shooters in U.S. history. She began shooting at age 11 as part of the Police Athletic League in her hometown of Fairfield, CT. While at Norwich she earned eight All-American honors and was crowned the 1998 NCAA Air Rifle National Champion, making her one of the most decorated athletes in the [NU Hall of Fame](#).



After graduating, Emily became a resident athlete at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. Over the next 12 years, the accolades piled up. She won four USA Shooting Air Rifle National Championships and was a bronze medalist in 2009. In addition to her individual championships, she took home first place finishes at the 2004 and 2008 US Olympic Team Trials, earning her a spot on the US Olympic Team.

As an Olympic athlete, Emily faced the world's best in the women's 10m air rifle event. She finished ninth in the 2004 Athens Games and 15th at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Emily has a wealth of international experience, having competed in 38 World Cups over the course of her professional career. She qualified for the World Cup Final Competitions three times, earning a silver medal in 2000 at the World Cup Munich. In total, Caruso took home six medals.

She was a gold medalist at the 2011 Pan American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico in addition to earning a spot on three World Championship Teams. Emily is one of only five US women to fire a perfect air rifle score in a USA Shooting competition and is the only shooter to have accomplished the feat twice.

Transitioning from athlete to coach, Emily joined the Texas Christian University staff as Assistant Rifle Coach in 2014 and has been the Assistant Coach at Ohio State University since 2017. Her knowledge and experience are a guiding light for aspiring shooters.

Emily's accomplishments are a testament to dedication, skill, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. She remains an indelible Norwich legend, inspiring generations of female athletes to aim for nothing short of greatness.

---

*Records documenting the history of women at Norwich are available through the University Archives: <https://archives.norwich.edu>*



# Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

JUNE 22, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #37

## Shining Stars: Norwich's First Female Flag Officers

General and flag officers (GFOs) are senior military leaders with a rank that entitles them to a flag to mark the position they command. This includes one-star, two-star, three-star, and four-star officers.

GFOs make up less than 0.4% of the officer corps. The first woman promoted to general and flag officer ranks did not occur until 1970. The following year, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) commissioned its first female flag officer. Both occasions represented a significant milestone in the evolution of military leadership. Nearly 48 years later, Norwich University's first alumna was promoted to general officer.



Brigadier General Kimberly  
(Jones) Baumann '87

When **Brigadier General Kimberly (Jones) Baumann '87** commissioned from the Norwich Air Force ROTC Detachment 867, many military career fields were not open to women. Kim

attained a significant 'first' for Norwich women when she was promoted to brigadier general in the Rhode Island Air National Guard in 2017, becoming NU's first female flag officer. Kim graduated with a bachelor's degree in mathematics and earned a Doctor of Philosophy in education technology management, specializing in cybersecurity education. As an Air Force combat communications officer, she served in 23 nations and was the lead forward communications planner for U.S. Central Command during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Kim held leadership positions at the squadron, wing, major command, and Air Force headquarters level.

In her assignment at the Pentagon, Kim served as Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force Chief Information Officer and the Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Cyber Effect Operations assignments. Today, she serves as the Assistant Adjutant General–Air and Commander of the Rhode Island Air National Guard where she commands over 1,000 airmen supporting federal airlift and cyber missions, as well as state emergency response. Kim is also a National Joint Cyber Task Force lead. In her civilian capacity, she is an information technology and cybersecurity advisor and small business owner. Kim and her husband, Phil, NU 1986, have two children, Philipp III and Katelyn, NU 2019.



Rear Admiral CJ Jaynes M'08

After earning a master's degree in business administration from Norwich's College of Graduate and Continuing Studies (CGCS) in 2008, **Rear Admiral CJ Jaynes** made naval history in 2012 when she became the Naval Air Systems Command's (NAVAIR) first woman flag officer, as well as the first woman aerospace maintenance duty officer to achieve flag officer rank. She became the Commander, Fleet Readiness Centers, for the Naval Aviation Enterprise. Before retiring from the Navy in 2016, CJ served as Program Executive Officer for air anti-submarine warfare, assault and special mission programs for Naval Aviation. CJ's career spanned 33 years beginning as a Line Division officer in Pensacola, responsible for 60 sailors and 30 aircraft, and culminating as PEO(A) responsible for 15,000 personnel, multiple aircraft platforms and a multi-billion dollar budget.

CJ says her Norwich degree was a stepping-stone to flag officer selection, providing the business background she needed to continue a stellar career through the Navy and beyond. She is currently an Executive Technical Advisor for Precision Navigation Systems at Raytheon.



Brigadier General Kimberly (Davis)  
Hamilton '96

In 2022, **Brigadier General Kimberly (Davis) Hamilton** became Norwich's first female Army general when she was promoted to Vice Commander of the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command (JECC) in Norfolk, VA. An electrical engineering major, Kimberly graduated from the Corps of Cadets in 1996. One of her first assignments was as a signal officer in the 11th Signal Brigade, Fort Huachuca, AZ. Using her technical and people skills, Kimberly later deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines as the J6, director of communications, Joint Special Operations Task Force. In 2007, Kimberly transitioned to the 2nd 398th Cavalry Squadron operations and later taught intermediate-level education for the Army Reserve at the Citadel.

After commanding the 2nd 337th Tactical Support Battalion, 157th Infantry Brigade, Kimberly served as a Joint Planner and Chief of Land Operations in the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command, U.S. Transportation Command where she mobilized as part of the Joint Alert Force to support U.S. Army Northern Command's Southwest Border Mission. Prior to her promotion to brigadier general, Kimberly commanded the 207th Digital Liaison Detachment at Fort Bragg, NC. When Kimberly's Norwich roommate, **Tracey Poirier**, was promoted to brigadier general in the Vermont Army National Guard in 2023, Kimberly and Tracey became the university's first female roommates to both earn the rank of general officer.

These alumnae have helped pave the way for future generations of women in the military.

Their achievements highlight the increasing recognition of Norwich women's contributions to national defense and security. Their dedication, leadership, and trailblazing spirit is truly inspiring.

*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!

JUNE 29, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #38

## NU Women in Special Operations

When the U.S. Army lifted the Combat Exclusion Policy in January 2013, it opened the ranks of Special Operations. Norwich women were ready to jump in and make their mark.



Alison Lanz '10

As a high school student from upstate New York, **Alison Lanz '10** attended a girl scout camporee at Norwich one summer and Future Leader Camp the next year. Following those experiences Alison says, "I was hooked and had to attend Norwich."

Entering the Corps of Cadets in 2006, Alison soon discovered opportunities to develop her leadership skills. In her senior year she was selected as Regimental Commander, the third woman in Norwich history to achieve that rank.

Graduating with a degree in Criminal Justice, Alison was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. She served six years as an intelligence officer and was selected for the Army's Cultural Support Team, an elite group of female soldiers that served on the front lines with Army Special Forces and Navy Seals. Alison spent her last two years in the Army as a Counterintelligence Special Agent and Special Agent in Charge of a Counterintelligence field office overseeing special operations, counterespionage and international terrorism investigations. She received the Bronze Star medal for her meritorious service duty as a Cultural Support Team Leader in 2011.

"Norwich taught me how to make mistakes with grace and rely on others for advice and guidance when needed," she says. "I can't think of a better way to test your leadership skills before joining the military."



Today Alison is on the Global Security Team for JPMorgan Chase & Co., focusing on mitigating workplace violence

A native of Memphis, TN, **Rebekah "Rose" Bernheim '14** embraced the challenges of the Corps of Cadets and Army ROTC that came with training in Vermont. "The terrain and unforgiving weather, combined with our instructors' high expectations, resulted in exceptional—albeit

Rebekah "Rose" Bernheim '14

demanding—training and honed the leadership skills I would need as an Army officer," Rose says.

Rose also gravitated to the no-holds-barred women's rugby team, where she was a standout player. She developed a relentless work ethic, a team-first mentality, and a strong sense of self. "The team encouraged women to play with the same ferocity as the men," says Rose. "I was surrounded by strong, confident, and capable people who made me want to be the best version of myself on and off the pitch."

It was that same level of determination that, in 2017, Rose became the tenth woman to complete Ranger School, the Army's premier combat leadership course. "Norwich prepared me well for the mental and physical challenges I faced there. I was often reminded of trying times during my freshman year or exhausted moments on the rugby pitch. Those experiences inspired me to focus on the task at hand and support my fellow Ranger students." During her nine-year Army career, Rose served at various organizational levels of leadership, meeting tactical and strategic requirements and garnering experience leading small unit teams. She is currently an operations officer in the US Army's Special Operations Command.

Alison and Rose represent a proud group of soldiers and alumnae, and their numbers continue to grow. They exemplify resilience, leadership, and unwavering pride in their Norwich roots.

---

*Records documenting the history of women at Norwich are available through the University Archives: <https://archives.norwich.edu>*



# Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

JULY 6, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #39

## Designing and Building: NU Women in Architecture

As an extension of Captain Alden Partridge's practical education plan, Norwich University first offered architectural studies in the 1880s. The program dissolved the following decade but was resurrected a hundred years later by a new generation of faculty and students.

President Russell W. Todd announced that Norwich would offer a five-year Bachelor of Architecture degree beginning in the Fall of 1990. The new program was housed in Vermont College's College Hall, which underwent a \$1.7 million renovation to bring the project to fruition. At the time, it was the only accredited Architecture program in Northern New England.

In 1993, the program moved to Chaplin Hall on the Northfield campus and became the School of Architecture + Art (A+A). It grew to its current structure in 1999: a five-year master's degree with the first four leading to a bachelor's in architectural studies.

Robert E. Schmidt, former Department Chairman and Project Director, stressed the program's holistic approach, saying, "Architects today are tasked with shaping not just buildings, but entire landscapes and communities."

Since 1999, female graduates of Norwich's A+A program have excelled in the field of architecture, embodying the university's ethos of leadership and distinction. Here are a few of our notable alumnae:



Jessica Randolph '99, M'00, MBA'03

### **Jessica Randolph '99, M'00, MBA'03**

As Director of Project Management at SGA in Boston, Jessica's leadership is evident in her ability to oversee complex design and construction projects. She ensures that each project is buildable and that the design integrity remains intact throughout construction. Her ability to cultivate stakeholder relationships and guide projects to successful completion highlights her professionalism and dedication to excellence.



Sarah Holton '99 & M'02

### **Sarah Holton '99 & M'02**

Sarah's role as Director of Campus Planning at Brandeis University showcases her expertise in creating functional and innovative spaces within educational environments. Prior to joining Brandeis, Sarah was the Manager of Planning at Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.



Lauren Claxton Brown '02

She is skilled in advocating for the user while also working to achieve leadership's goals. Through an iterative and consensus-building planning process, Sarah demonstrates her leadership and impact in the architecture field.

**Lauren Claxton Brown '02**

A Principal at VLK Architects in Dallas-Fort Worth, TX, Lauren leads the design and delivery of diverse architectural projects across various sectors, including education, healthcare, and commercial. Her commitment to innovation and accessibility in design underscores her dedication to advancing architectural standards and practices.



Kimberly Tuttle '05 & M'06

**Kimberly Tuttle '05 & M'06**

Kim's focus on nonprofit associations illustrates her commitment to nurturing emerging talent and advancing the field. In addition to her role as program manager for the Design Strategist Development program at Gensler, she teaches first-year design studios at the University of the District of Columbia. Kim is a recipient of the 2023 Young Architects Award for her impact as a mentor and advocate for the next generation of design leaders.



Katherine Beal '06 & M'09

**Katherine Beal '06 & M'09**

Kate's dedication as a Workplace Consultant for Red Thread emphasizes her innovative approach to commercial furniture design and workplace optimization. Her contributions continue to shape the future of workplace design by creating inspiring spaces that support culture, brand, and employee engagement.

Norwich's A+A program promotes the notion of the "citizen-architect" in the spirit of Alden Partridge's ideal of the "citizen soldier." These alumnae exemplify the tradition of producing innovative, forward-thinking, and socially responsible leaders.

---

**CORRECTION:**

Last week's Women Kicking Glass post was mistakenly titled "Women in Special Forces." Alison Lanz and Rebekah Bernheim served in Special Operations units, not in Special Forces, a designation reserved for the U.S. Army Green Berets.

*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!

JULY 13, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #40

## Creating a Safer World: NU Women in Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice, the most popular major at Norwich today, prepares students to lead and serve at every level of law, law enforcement, federal security, and corrections. Hundreds of women have graduated from the program since its inception, bringing the knowledge and training from their time on the Hill to positions on local, state and national levels. Here are a few of their stories.



Sandra J. Merolla '83

### **Sandra Merolla '83 — US Army Military Police**

Following in the footsteps of her grandfather, NU Class of 1922, and great uncle, Class of 1923, Sandy Merolla entered Norwich in 1979 and set her sights on becoming the best possible leader. Among her many activities were Mountain Cold Weather and Fire Brigade. She was the first female cadet to earn the M/SGT Clement J. Confessore Trophy, awarded to the “Cadet who demonstrated the best leadership skills as a First Sergeant in the Corps of Cadets.” Senior year, Sandy was a finalist for regimental commander, ultimately becoming the second female battalion commander in Norwich’s history.

Norwich leadership skills prepared Sandy for a life of service. One of ten female graduates from the Corps of Cadets in 1983, she was commissioned in the U.S. Army Military Police Corps. While serving in the Rhode Island Army National Guard (RIARNG), Sandy earned her master’s degree at Springfield College. Subsequent assignments included 8th Army HQ in Seoul, Korea and the National Guard Bureau, Pentagon. She was also an instructor in the West Point Department of Physical Education. After leaving active duty, Sandy completed her army career as the RIARNG state headquarters company commander and 43rd MP Brigade operations officer (S-3).

Following Army service, Sandy worked on local and statewide political campaigns, served on the Glastonbury (CT) Education Foundation Board, and was twice recognized by the Glastonbury school district for outstanding contributions. Sandy is Chair of the NU Women Kicking Glass Fundraising Committee and a new member of the NU Alumni Association Board of Directors.



Kellie A. Barhight '00

### **Kellie Barhight '00 — Massachusetts Police Lieutenant**

Entering the Vermont Police Academy at age 20, Kellie Barhight juggled a career in law enforcement with being a student at Norwich. She graduated in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and earned a master's in public administration in 2019.

Kellie worked for several agencies in Vermont before moving to Massachusetts and joining the Town of Ayer Police Department. For much of her 17 years there, she worked for victims of sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and domestic violence.

Kellie is currently Lieutenant of Operations for Stow (MA) Police Department. She is an instructor for the Massachusetts Police Training Committee where she advocates for sexual assault victims by writing curriculum for police officer response to victim crimes. Kellie is also an officer wellness advocate and a motivational speaker for women in leadership. She is the recipient of three lifesaving awards and FBI-Law Enforcement Executive Development Association recognition. She has been recognized for creating the "Bring Me Home" Campaign to register children and adults with cognitive disabilities at their local police departments.



Julie C. Scribner '15 & M'19

### **Julie Scribner '15 & M'19 — Vermont State Police**

When Julie Scribner was six years old, she was walking to a neighbor's house when a man pulled up, tried to coax her into his car and exposed himself to her. Scared and embarrassed to recount the event to a male police officer, a seed was planted in her mind that there should be more women in law enforcement. To reach her goal, Julie entered NU in 1989 as a criminal justice major but had to leave due to family and life commitments.

Julie ultimately became a Vermont State Trooper and over the next 25 years served as a Road Trooper and then as a Detective Trooper, primarily investigating crimes against children. She was promoted to Sergeant in 2010. In 2014, Julie transferred back to the Criminal Division as a Detective Sergeant, focusing on death investigations and major crimes.

Twenty-five years after first arriving at Norwich, Julie decided to finish what she started by completing her bachelor's degree online, graduating in 2015. She then went on to earn her master's degree from NU in 2019.

In 2021 [USA Today named Julie Woman of the Year for Vermont](#) for bringing the [30x30 Initiative](#) to the Vermont State Police, a national program to advance women in law enforcement by 30% by 2030. In doing this, she was able to make Vermont State Police a better place for women to work, have families, and rise through the ranks.



Jennifer D. Zarycki '20 & M'22

### **Jennifer Zarycki '20 & M'22 – US Department of Homeland Security**

As a high school junior aspiring to a career in law enforcement, Jenn Zarycki chose Norwich to shape her confidence and determination. She says her experience instilled the importance of selfless service and desire to “be the change.” She initiated the “Love Your Melon Campus Crew Program” at Norwich, now known as the Pinky Swear Pack, raising awareness of pediatric cancer and its implications on those it affects. Though the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly ended her senior year in 2020, Jenn continued her association with the university by enrolling in the master’s program and joining the NU Alumni Association Board of Directors. She enjoys networking with students and alumni to improve the Norwich Forever experience.

On the day she graduated from Norwich’s Master’s program in 2022, Jen received a job offer as a law enforcement officer with the Department of Homeland Security. She now works in the job she aspired to, helping to ensure the security and safety of the nation.

The leadership training and skills of Norwich’s criminal justice graduates are in high demand. From private industry to government, law enforcement, the military, and corrections, NU alumnae are on the front lines, serving and protecting our citizens and our nation.

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