

SPRING / SUMMER 2014

FOCUS

NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf • Rochester Institute of Technology



Pursuing Success

In Memoriam



Robert F. Panara



E. Ross Stuckless

Remembering Founding Faculty Members RIT/NTID is mourning the passing of two of our founding faculty members, Robert F. Panara (left) and E. Ross Stuckless (right). Panara was NTID's first deaf faculty member, and Stuckless was the college's first hearing faculty member. Both began their careers at NTID in 1967. Panara passed away on July 20 at age 94. Stuckless was 80 years old at the time of his death on July 21. For more information on Panara, visit www.ntid.rit.edu/news/mourns-passing-deaf-pioneer-robert-f-panara. More on Stuckless is available at www.ntid.rit.edu/news/remembering-dr-e-ross-stuckless.

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MARK BENJAMIN

ABOUT THE COVER

Many students travel a great distance to attend RIT/NTID and prepare themselves for a successful future. Many also “go the distance” to complete co-op assignments and get experience that gives them a competitive edge in finding jobs after graduation (see article on p. 3).

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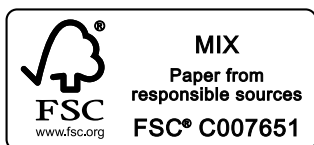
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MARK BENJAMIN

Past, Present and Future

Arrived at RIT/NTID as an undergraduate student in 1974, but what has not changed is the students' energy, excitement and enthusiasm to learn, grow and take advantage of the opportunities available to them here. Many of our students travel a great distance to attend RIT/NTID and prepare themselves for a successful future (see p. 3). They recognize the value of the career education and unparalleled services and support that we provide. They also understand that finding a community where they can fit in and feel comfortable is essential for an enjoyable and successful college experience (see p. 6).

One of the hallmarks of an RIT/NTID education is the diversity of our campus community. The broad mix of students, faculty and staff with varying ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds and communication preferences helps students find others

with similar backgrounds and experiences while also providing a rich environment in which to learn and grow. NTID, like RIT as a whole, is deeply committed to diversity and inclusion and to ensuring the success of all members of our community (see p. 15).

We were deeply saddened to lose two pioneering members of our community this summer: Robert F. Panara and E. Ross Stuckless (see inside front cover). We will forever be grateful to them for their many contributions to NTID. As we remember them, we also look ahead and continue to build on their work. When I look to the future, I see an increasingly diverse group of students, faculty, staff and alumni working together to enhance the lives of deaf and hard-of-hearing people nationally and internationally. As many of our long-time faculty and staff retire, we are preparing new faculty and staff for leadership roles (see p. 12). These talented individuals are bringing new ideas and energy into our community. They are helping us to advance NTID's mission and ensure the success of our students and graduates.

I continue to be very proud of our students, faculty and staff and all that we are accomplishing together. And I am grateful for our alumni and donors who provide vital support for our students and our work (see p. 9). I look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead as we all work together to ensure that NTID remains the leader in postsecondary education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Dr. Gerard J. Buckley
NTID President
RIT Vice President and Dean

Going the Distance for Career Success

by Kathy A. Johncox

Alaska. California. Florida. Hawaii. Massachusetts. New Jersey. Texas. These are just some of the states that RIT/NTID students call home. Hailing from all 50 states and 55 different countries, many RIT/NTID students not only make the choice to travel hundreds or thousands of miles for college, they also often travel across country, continents, even oceans to complete co-ops and get experience that will give them an edge in finding jobs. And then, after graduation, they go wherever the jobs are. At a time when higher education research shows that many students are choosing colleges closer to home, it's clear that many RIT/NTID students are ready and willing to go the distance—first, to get an outstanding education—and then, to forge a successful career.

“Student willingness to go the distance to complete co-op assignments or land their first job is the first big step to career success,” says John Macko, director of NTID’s Center on Employment.

How do RIT/NTID students from one area of the country find opportunities for co-ops and permanent jobs in another? Many tap into the NTID Center on Employment’s experience and relationships with employers as a good starting point for their job search. NCE’s ongoing relationships help employers understand that our students and graduates bring dedication, motivation, training and skills to their organizations. Students also access employment opportunities via the Internet and employ their developing networking skills.

Some students embrace travel because co-ops are required, and there may not be opportunities in their field of study close to home. Still other students want to try something and somewhere new.

Here is a sampling of students who have gone the distance—and found that it was worth the trip. ➤



MARK BENJAMIN

Jay Liu

Hometown: Taipei, Taiwan

Major and degree: B.S., Industrial Design, 2013

Employment: My first job after graduation was working as an industrial designer at KEM Studio in Kansas City, Missouri. I focused on design, drawing, doing CAD work and making prototypes.

Going the distance: Taiwan is 7,431 miles from RIT/NTID. My family still lives in Taiwan, and they sent me to the United States for a better education and more opportunity, so during high school, I lived in Madison, Wisconsin with my aunt. I have traveled a lot in my life, and so I was used to being apart from my family. Even so, I still miss them. After graduation, I didn’t limit my job hunt geographically at all. I was targeting New York City, San Francisco or Seattle, but got the job in Kansas City through networking with one of my Industrial Design professors.

The RIT advantage: I wanted to explore the eastern part of the United States, and RIT had the support services I wanted, plus a design-related major and a deaf community right on campus. I decided to major in Industrial Design, a field in which RIT is one of the top ranked colleges in the whole United States.

RIT in a word: Remarkable. I wouldn’t be who I am now if it weren’t for everything I had the opportunity to experience and to take advantage of at RIT.



A. SUE WESLER

Kjerstin Kantola

Hometown: Juneau, Alaska

Major and degree: A.A.S., Graphic Design, 2013, currently enrolled in Multidisciplinary Studies with minors in Deaf Studies and ASL

Going the distance: I was born in Oklahoma but moved to Alaska when I was two weeks old, so Juneau is my hometown. I travel 3,626 miles to get to RIT.

I took some classes at the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau, but realized they didn’t have enough support for what I needed. I was scared at first being so far from home because everything was so new, and it was overwhelming to be so far from my family and hometown. I couldn’t go home for a day whenever I felt like it. It’s better now because I have made friends, and I have a fiancée I met at RIT who grew up in Upstate New York, and I can spend time with his family and friends.

The RIT advantage: My teachers and speech therapist in Juneau encouraged me to apply here. I did my research and learned more about it. I came to an open house with one of my teachers from Juneau, and when I first stepped on campus, I thought “This is where I need to be.” That is why I’m here, and I wouldn’t change it for anything.

RIT in a word: Remarkable. It’s worth it to come to RIT/NTID where they have everything. The services are just what deaf and hard-of-hearing people need, and you can choose from so many clubs to get involved in and events to go to.

 **TRAVELED FROM TAIWAN**
7,431 MILES TO RIT

 **LONDON** CO-OP WAS **3,500** MILES FROM HOME

TRAVELED TO **CHILE** **5,457** MILES FOR AN RIT/NTID STUDY ABROAD CLASS 



PROVIDED PHOTO

Kevin Merrick

Hometown: Ocean, New Jersey

Major and degree: MBA with a concentration in Technology Management, May 2014

Co-op: I was a financial analyst at a marketing firm called Method Two, in London, England.

Going the distance: RIT is 368 miles from home. My co-op in London was 3,500 miles from home.

Life is all about our experiences and what we do with those experiences. I knew that life outside New Jersey held other experiences for me. I've always wanted to visit Europe, and I loved living in London during my co-op. It was one of the best experiences I have had so far in my life. I was able to travel and see so many different things in London, Dover, Oxford, Bath and Stonehenge. It's one thing to say you've been to certain places, like London; however, it's a whole other thing to say what you've experienced, learned from that experience and how that experience shapes your life.

The RIT advantage: My focus for college was to receive an excellent education and be in a supportive environment. Everything RIT/NTID offered—great education, co-op opportunities, etc.—was due to the support system behind each opportunity.

RIT in a word: Caring. RIT/NTID has the desire to see its students be as successful as they can be. Support and opportunities are there for students to take advantage of, and professors and academic/co-op advisors make sure they're provided.



MARK BENJAMIN

Jonathan Cabrera

Hometown: Boston, Massachusetts

Major and degree: A.O.S., Computer Integrated Machining Technology, 2015

Co-op: This summer I'll be creating precision parts and working with blueprints in machining and assembly at G.E. Aviation in Cincinnati, Ohio,

Going the distance: RIT is 392 miles from Boston. My co-op in Cincinnati is 868 miles from home.

When I first started thinking about college, I wanted to be close to my family and friends. But my dream was to experience life. At first I felt homesick, but after meeting new people, I began to want to travel around the world and experience more and meet and network with people who would be willing to help me in the future. This will be my first time visiting Ohio, and I am looking forward to the experience.

The RIT advantage: I'm getting a good education in a career that I've always wanted, which will help me to enjoy life.

RIT in a word: Impressive. Everywhere I go, people ask me where I go to college, and I say RIT. Everyone seems to know about it or to have a relative who goes here or teaches here, and this connection makes opportunities for me to meet more people and talk about jobs.



A. SUE WESLER

Davina Johnston

Hometown: Honeoye Falls, New York

Major and degree: B. S., Psychology, May 2014

Co-op: My first co-op was at the Deaf Wellness Center at the University of Rochester, and I completed a second one at University of Michigan's Kresge Hearing Research Institute in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Going the distance: My home is only 18 miles from RIT, but I have traveled 377 miles to Michigan for a co-op, and 5,457 miles to Chile for an RIT/NTID study abroad class.

It was not my intention to stay close to home while going to college, but RIT is so phenomenal and is coincidentally right by my home. I was a little apprehensive to travel so far from home for my co-op, but I'm elated to have had the experience. One of my favorite quotes is, "A ship is safe in harbor, but that's not what ships are for." I believe in venturing beyond my comfort zone. It is time for me to sail!

The RIT advantage: RIT is academically challenging, has phenomenal access services and incorporates both hearing and deaf communities.

RIT in a word: Inspirational. I was surrounded by positivity and good role models at RIT/NTID. I made progress as a student here, and everyone's encouragement made me strive for even more.

 NOW WORKING IN
COLORADO 1,032 MILES FROM HOME



PROVIDED PHOTO

Nigel Evans

Hometown: Pensacola, Florida

Major and degree: A.A.S., Applied Computer Technology, May 2014

Going the distance: Pensacola is 1,214 miles from Rochester.

This is definitely the farthest I have been from home, and I loved traveling so far from home for college. I have lived in the south all of my life, and I wanted something new, and to learn new things as well. I went to mainstream schools all my life, and my biggest reason for coming to RIT/NTID was to learn about Deaf culture and sign language. I still have a co-op to complete, and I am looking for one related to computers, smart phones, tablets, etc. I am an entrepreneur in network marketing and business investing, and I will start my own business someday.

The RIT advantage: I was able to learn about Deaf culture, and I knew that would help me understand myself better. The teachers use sign language, and that is something I have never seen before. I just loved how determined the faculty were to help me succeed.

RIT in a word: Life-changing. It's a one-of-a-kind experience, and I knew coming here to RIT was one of the best decisions I could have made.



PROVIDED PHOTO

Rachel McAnallen

Hometown: Riverwoods, Illinois

Major and degree: B.S., Environmental Technology and M.S., Environmental Health and Safety Management, 2013

Employment: I am an environmental program manager for the United States Air Force, Air Force Space Command at Peterson AFB, Colorado.

Going the distance: Riverwoods is 625 miles from RIT. The air force base is 1,032 miles from Riverwoods.

Going to college away from home was a very exciting time to have some freedom from the norms and everyday life in my hometown outside of Chicago. When I started looking for co-ops, I wanted to go anywhere. For my first co-op, my choices were to work with the Army Corps of Engineers in Seattle, with the Environmental Protection Agency in California or to accept a Department of Defense assignment in Michigan or Colorado. I had already been to California and Washington, so I chose Colorado. Now my training is based in Colorado.

The RIT advantage: The co-op program is a huge advantage. RIT truly is anticipating employers' needs when they require that students complete internships in their field of study before graduating. For my program, they required four co-ops. Once I graduated, I was getting offers for jobs that required three or more years of experience.

RIT in a word: Unconventional. RIT prides itself on its unconventionality. RIT has a uniquely blended and concentrated population of scientists/engineers and artists. Amazing things happen when you mix the left- and right-brained populations.



Ongoing relationships with employers

who know RIT/NTID and have seen students bring their dedication, motivation, training and skills to bear, help provide opportunities for students who are ready and willing to relocate for a number of weeks on co-op to get experience in their field and a taste of working in the real world.

Some of these employers are:

- Air Products and Chemicals, Allentown, Pennsylvania
- BNY Mellon, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- City of Los Angeles, California
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Rome, New York
- The Dow Chemical Company, Midland, Michigan
- G.E. Aviation, Cincinnati, Ohio
- Gleason Works, Rochester, New York
- Highmark, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- IBM, Armonk, New York
- Microsoft, Redmond, Washington
- Naval Supply Systems Command, U.S. Navy, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania
- National Security Agency, Fort Meade, Maryland
- PrintWorks, West Hartford, Connecticut
- Solar Turbines, San Diego, California
- TESLA, Palo Alto, California
- Toyota, Erlanger, Kentucky
- Tufts University, Boston, Massachusetts
- University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
- University of California at San Diego
- U.S. Department of Defense, Washington, D.C.
- ZVRS, Clearwater, Florida

Finding Their Fit

by Ilene J. Avallone

Choosing the right college is a big decision. There is no magic formula, and students must consider a number of factors when making their choices. Available majors, class sizes, extracurricular activities, campus size, rank and cost all can be variables. But they are only part of the equation.

Finding the right fit is important and warrants careful consideration because when the fit is right, students are more likely to accomplish their goals and flourish both inside and outside the classroom. But what does “fit” mean?

College-bound students need to consider how they will feel socially on campus. Will they feel like they belong and be part of a community? Will there be people on campus who share their beliefs

and interests? Will the college’s culture support the kind of college life they want to have over the next several years? Questions like these are important for students to consider.

“At RIT/NTID, most students find that they fit in right away because here they have the opportunity to meet and connect with other students who have shared similar experiences growing up,” says Dr. Linda Bryant, interim associate dean for Student and Academic Services at NTID. “In fact, many of our students say they knew RIT/NTID was the right fit after their initial visit to campus. The connection happens that quickly.”

With more than 1,200 deaf and hard-of-hearing students from across the United States and other countries,

RIT/NTID welcomes students with varying life experiences. Some students attended mainstream schools. Others attended schools for the deaf. Many grew up in families and communities where they were the only deaf person. Others came from culturally Deaf families. Some prefer to communicate using spoken English. Others prefer sign language or a combination of speaking and signing. The bottom line is that while backgrounds may vary, RIT/NTID students all have one fundamental thing in common—they chose to come here because it was the right fit for them.

Meet some RIT/NTID students and learn, in their words, why RIT is the right fit for them.



MARK BENJAMIN

Sadie Kulhanek

Hometown: Lincoln, Nebraska

Major: Psychology

A lot of people ask me why I decided to travel more than 1,000 miles to RIT for college. RIT has more to offer in terms of accessibility and social opportunity than any other university I looked at during my college search. The fact that nearly 10 percent of RIT’s student population is deaf, compared to just a handful of students in my hometown, means there’s a greater understanding of deafness and Deaf culture. Rochester also has a large number of

deaf people compared to other metro areas in the United States. Many people in Rochester have been exposed to a deaf person at one point or another, and it’s awfully nice not to have to explain what ‘those things’ are in my ears or how best to communicate with me. I need to be able to interact with both hearing and deaf alike, and RIT provides that interaction in addition to a wonderful supportive community both on and off campus.

Leah Murray

Hometown: Levittown, Pennsylvania

Major: Arts & Imaging Studies

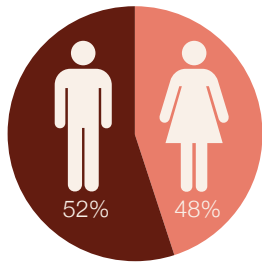
I was born deaf into a hearing family. I attended a mainstream middle school and then attended the New Jersey School for the Deaf, so all of my high school friends were deaf. When I was searching for a college, I wanted to choose a college that had a good arts program, and where I would fit in. I wasn’t sure RIT would be the right fit for me, but when I visited the

campus I felt comfortable and right away knew it was the best place for me. I like the mix of deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing students on campus, and today I have a mix of deaf and hard-of-hearing friends. They are like my second family. The support I get from them and the faculty and staff here is amazing.

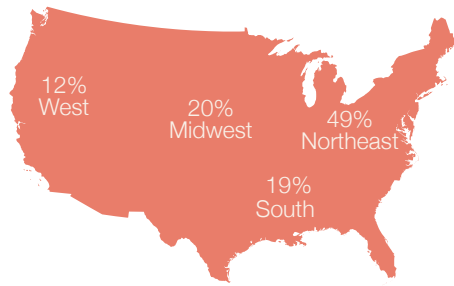


MARK BENJAMIN

OUR STUDENTS



WHERE OUR STUDENTS ARE FROM



TYPE OF HIGH SCHOOL OUR STUDENTS ATTENDED



Duncan Lindberg

Hometown: Felton, California

Major: Environmental Science

In high school I was in classes with mostly hearing students, so when I was in the college search process I looked at colleges that offered me the opportunity to be with both hearing and deaf people like me. It also was important that I find a college that offered support services, including speech and audiology services and interpreting. When I visited RIT, I felt comfortable right

away. Now, I can't imagine myself at any other college because I don't think I would have been so successful anywhere else. I really appreciate the access services I receive for my academics, enjoy the social life I have with other deaf and hard-of-hearing students, and like the relationships I have with faculty here. I'm able to communicate easily with students and faculty, and that's important to me.

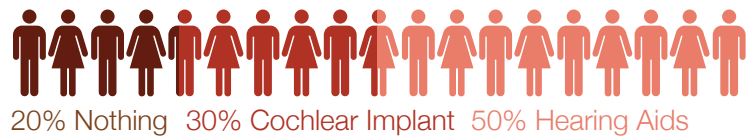


MARK BENJAMIN

DEGREES DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING STUDENTS ARE PURSUING



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS USE



Graham Forsey

Hometown: St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

Major: Management Information Systems

I view myself as a culturally Deaf person, exclusively using American Sign Language, general gestures and written English to communicate with everyone. For high school, I attended a school for the deaf, and with an interpreter, I went to another mainstream school to take more specialized classes for part of the day. I knew RIT would be a cultural fit, and as I suspected, I fit in perfectly. I have full access to everything on campus, and people at

RIT are very accepting of diversity of all kinds. Faculty, staff and students understand and are familiar with deafness, so I'm very comfortable here. Most of my friends are deaf or strong ASL users, but some of my friends are hearing as well. Many of my hearing friends are learning ASL. My friends and I are so active on campus, it's sometimes hard to find time to eat meals together! The atmosphere at RIT is perfect for me.



A. SUE WEISER



MARK BENJAMIN

Lauren Vergara **Hometown:** Queens, New York **Major:** Media Arts and Technology

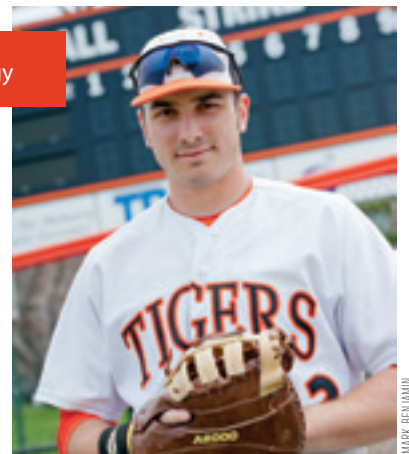
I was the only person who was deaf or hard of hearing at my high school. I was a good student, a little shy, with my own group of friends. My entire family and all of my friends at home are hearing, so when I was looking at colleges, I wanted a diverse campus and the opportunity to meet and be around deaf people—something I hadn't had before. I wanted to find a college where I would be accepted in general...I've always struggled with finding where I fit in, and sometimes I don't feel like I belong in either

the deaf or hearing world. I also wanted a college that offered a lot of majors, since I was undecided which career path to choose. When I discovered RIT, I knew it was pretty much the only college I wanted to attend. And when I first visited the campus, I had this amazing feeling that confirmed this was the place I was supposed to be, so I applied early decision. I've made awesome friends here—both deaf and hearing—and I found a career path in Media Arts and Technology that I love.

Sean "Skip" Flanagan **Hometown:** Framingham, Massachusetts **Major:** Psychology

I felt I could fit in at any college, but RIT really stood out to me in my college search because it has outstanding communication access and a friendly learning environment loaded with deaf students like me. I felt that the opportunity to interact with a large deaf community on campus was a once-in-a-lifetime chance. RIT has been a perfect match for me. Seeing how other deaf people go about things has taught

me a lot, and I learn from them. That's definitely helping me succeed because I'm learning from people who share the same identity as I do. RIT is above and beyond all of my expectations. I've gotten so much exposure to wonderful people, and I wouldn't be the same person if I didn't go here. I'm pretty grateful that I'm calling RIT home!



MARK BENJAMIN



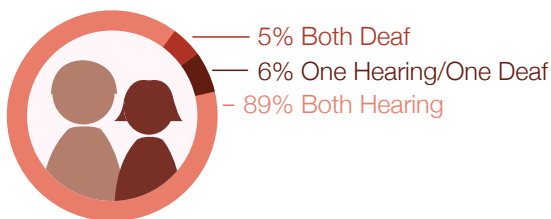
MARK BENJAMIN

Arielle Hirsch **Hometown:** Oceanside, New York **Major:** Imaging Photographic Technology

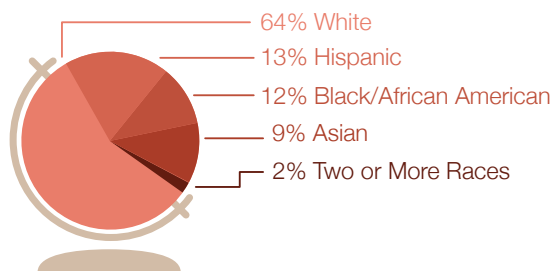
When I was searching for a college, I wanted to find a place that accepted me for me because people in my high school didn't understand my hearing loss, and I was treated differently. I never felt like I belonged. I'm smart; I just can't hear, but kids in my high school couldn't understand that. When I visited RIT, I met another hard-of-hearing student like me, and

we connected right away. I knew if I could make a connection that fast that I had found my home at RIT. I'm so happy here. The entire campus community is open and accepting of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. I fit in perfectly.

PARENTS' HEARING STATUS



STUDENT ETHNICITY



Story and video extra: Read about other students who found their fit at RIT and watch their videos. Visit rit.edu/ntid/fit.

A Conversation on Giving

by Susan L. Murad

What motivates individuals to give? We put that question to two members of the NTID Foundation Board of Directors, alumni Anthony Napoli and Gordon Hewitt. While they are from different generations and have different perspectives, they have a common philosophy when it comes to giving back to their alma mater.

Napoli, of Arlington, Virginia, earned a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice in 2001 from RIT's College of Liberal Arts. He is a diversity and inclusion coordinator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Hewitt, of Annapolis, Maryland, graduated in 1973 with a bachelor's degree in Accounting, and in 1975 with an MBA from RIT's Saunders College of Business. He is a CPA and a retired procurement manager for the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection.

WHY IS GIVING SO IMPORTANT TO YOU?

GH: There is a critical need for educated, talented young people to help keep this country going. Our next leaders and professionals are stepping up to the plate now as my generation of Baby Boomers retires. The cost of higher education has gone up so much since we Boomers were in school, and we can no longer rely as heavily on state and federal government to cover those costs. Every dime counts, which is why I feel it's so important for people of my age group to get involved. Our expenses have levelled off with our children grown and out of the house. We can devote more time and energy to those things we are passionate about.

AN: I have a strong belief in paying it forward. Giving back is a way of thanking RIT/NTID for their support and belief in me. They provided me with numerous opportunities and prepared me for the world of work. In addition to the quality of education, the faculty and staff interacted with us and made time for us. That level of quality and commitment simply is not found elsewhere.

WHY ARE YOU SO PASSIONATE ABOUT RIT/NTID?

GH: I'm a by-product of this institution, and as a member of the NTID Foundation Board, I know the need to build our endowment. We saw what funding cuts can do to RIT/NTID, and we need to make sure that we can sustain ourselves. This will demonstrate to the government that we are good stewards of their money—that they can put their faith in NTID and know that we are worth the investment. We have a great story to tell the government and people who are considering giving to NTID.

AN: RIT/NTID taught me that I can change the world. I want to provide the same opportunity for other students. The federal government's matching gift program doubles my gift and makes our contributions go further. I certainly see the value of providing for the future, but I like to live in the present and want to know that my gift is helping students right away. It's a great joy for me to be in a position to help educate and change the lives of other students.

WHAT WAS IT ABOUT YOUR TIME AT RIT/NTID THAT STANDS OUT FOR YOU?

GH: Co-op experiences were so important. I worked at a manufacturing company doing cost accounting. It was the kind of hands-on experience that most college students don't get. I also completed co-ops at a CPA firm and at IBM.

AN: I was able to customize an independent co-op that met my interests and goals. I did research on ADA compliance at hotels, banks and the like. I compiled the statistics, and the investigation was allowed as my co-op. I also worked with NTID's Student Congress and the Student Life Team. I now work for



Gordon Hewitt

Anthony Napoli

the Environmental Protection Agency to coordinate and strengthen diversity and inclusion programs.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF FUNDRAISING AT RIT/NTID?

GH: We need to put our efforts into looking for people and organizations that have some sort of association with RIT/NTID. Now that we have so many alumni in all areas of business and industry, those are good places to start. We must diversify the types of private sector funding we seek, and raise funds from alumni as well as corporations and foundations. We need to be sure that there is funding for scholarships as well as the endowment, which will keep us producing talented leaders for years to come.

AN: I think it's important to prepare students now to become the givers of the future. Preparing students before they graduate and making them aware that their lives were positively impacted by other people's generosity will help them understand they now have a chance to do the same for others. They can start small and then grow. I also think it's important for those of us who are in a position to give to share our stories with others so they can see how giving can—and should—fit into their lives.

Keith Banks

by Ilene J. Avallone



MARK BENJAMIN

Before coming to RIT, this 21-year-old was crowned Mr. Deaf Teen America, signed the National Anthem at the Pro Bowl, and created a fictional character called “Mrs. Kathy ‘Mama’ Banks,” who is so popular with his peers, he wrote a full-length play about her.

Meet Keith Banks, a third-year student in the Associate+Bachelor’s Degree program in Hospitality and Service Management. Growing up in Orlando, Florida, Banks says he always knew he wanted to pursue a career in the tourism industry.

“It fits my personality,” he says. “I like interacting with all kinds of people, and I love to travel.”

This outgoing young man says a vibrant student life on campus, the opportunity to interact with both deaf and hearing students and outstanding access services were important factors in his decision to choose RIT.

He serves as an NTID Senator on the RIT Student Government, has participated in two RIT/NTID plays and was president

of NTID’s Masquers Drama Club, which sponsors NTID’s performance group Dangerous Signs, a group he performs with annually. He also was presented the 2014 Dawan L. Albritton Humanitarian Award from the RIT/NTID community.

“I think the best things about RIT/NTID are the sense of community here and the friendships you develop and the connections you make with faculty and staff,” says Banks. “Everyone is so welcoming.”

Last year, Banks participated in the Disney College Program, a five-month internship where he got valuable on-the-job experience in his field. He worked at Pizzafari Restaurant in Disney’s Animal Kingdom Theme Park where he held various roles.

“I loved going to work every day and meeting all the new people from around the world and making everybody’s day special,” he says.

His goal is to someday manage a department at Walt Disney World and return to RIT to recruit students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing for co-ops and employment.

David Gustafson

by Kathy A. Johncox



A. SUE WEISER

“**I** love to contribute my time and energy to the NTID community,” says David Gustafson, 21, a third-year Management Information Systems major from Kimberling City, Missouri.

Gustafson’s first experiences with the RIT/NTID community began in St. Louis when he attended FutureQuest, a weekend seminar conducted by RIT/NTID for deaf or hard-of-hearing high school students and their parents to learn about college options. He then attended Explore Your Future, RIT/NTID’s career exploration summer camp, and learned about the university’s strong technical programs and access services. After that, Gustafson says choosing RIT/NTID for college was easy.

Initially not sure of his major, Gustafson soon found his niche and was able to combine his love of technology with the social and people skills he was developing in leadership experiences in NTID student government.

“I’d like to work for technology companies at the management level or

maybe even establish my own business to develop technical solutions to solve issues we face in the world today,” he says.

Gustafson is the speaker for the NTID Student Assembly, a member of the Department of Access Services Student Advisory Board, and serves on the NTID Classroom Communication Committee. This year he received certificates of achievement from the NTID Student Congress, recognizing his involvement on campus. He served on the NTID Imagine RIT Festival Committee, and he is a brother in the Pi Kappa Phi fraternity, from which he received an award in spring 2013, recognizing his work at NTID. He also received a special award from the NTID Student Congress for his efforts on behalf of the NTID community.

“At RIT, you learn the academic lessons that you came here for, and you should,” he says. “But you learn life lessons as well. People are here to help you, listen to you, teach you, show you what the real world is like and help you prepare for it.”

Alyssa Miller

by Kathy A. Johncox

Take a love for writing and graphic design and an obsession with typography, add a growing respect for how software engineering can complement that, and you have Alyssa Miller, a fourth-year Graphic Design major with a passion for art and technology.

Miller, 22, from New City, New York, contemplated going to art school after graduation, but soon realized she wanted a college with more diversity, in both majors and in fellow students.

"I loved the idea of meeting other deaf and hard-of-hearing students, and I realized that at RIT/NTID I could do that, and I could pursue my creative writing and any other liberal arts subjects that I was interested in," Miller says. "I also was impressed by the offerings in RIT's College of Imaging Arts and Sciences."

Miller has taken advantage of some of those offerings and says, "I love the CIAS academic support staff who are mentors, tutors and advisors. They have been here for me every step of the way."

One of Miller's favorite accomplishments is being in the Honors Program, in part because she enjoys the opportunities it has created—a leadership trip to New Orleans and travel to Washington, D.C., and locations in New York State. And, she recently received the Outstanding Undergraduate Scholar Award.

During an internship last summer at RLA Creative in Englewood, New Jersey, doing print design and creating marketing materials, Miller gained important experience and learned about the world of work.

"My goal is to become a user-experience designer at a tech company," she says. "I have a passion for being in a mixed creative environment, and I can thank RIT for my constant curiosity about the engineering sides of projects."

Miller's creative pursuits continue in her spare time with writing short stories, creative non-fiction and poetry; baking and cooking; painting; and photography.

"RIT/NTID is challenging" says Miller. "It's a lot of work and can be stressful at times, but it's worth it."



Kathryn Womack

by Susan L. Murad

Kathryn "Kat" Womack's interest in sign language began at home in Louisville, Kentucky.

"My younger brother is hard of hearing, so I was exposed to sign language as a young child," she says. "My high school also had a number of deaf students, so I learned ASL from them and from other deaf community events."

Womack, who earned her bachelor's degree in ASL-English Interpretation in May, completed two practicums through ASLIE—a requirement spent interpreting, observing and professionally discussing the work.

"My first practicum was volunteer interpreting," she says. "My second practicum was at Strong Hospital working with the fantastic interpreters there."

Outside of her class requirements, Womack also has been a research assistant with RIT's Human-Centered Computing Group, a multidisciplinary team of professors and graduate and undergraduate students.

"We are looking at the decision-making processes of physicians and the differences

between novice physicians and experienced physicians," she says. "My work specifically has been in linguistics, looking at ways of predicting if a physician is correct or incorrect, or confident or unsure in their diagnosis; patterns of reasoning when a physician is trying to decide a diagnosis; and differences in the way novice vs. experienced physicians speak. I've also done some other projects, like organizing a workshop last summer, and I ran a pilot study to look at diverse students in STEM majors."

"I've had papers published and traveled to South Korea and France (and Sweden this summer) to present my work. I can't emphasize enough how fantastic those opportunities have been."

Learning to balance her busy schedule has taught Womack how to make time for socializing, meeting people and having fun, and she suggests that others do whatever makes them happy.

"Don't be afraid to go off the beaten path," she says. "Look at everything as a learning experience and keep an open mind."





MARK BENJAMIN

A Fond Farewell NTID President Gerry Buckley honored recent retirees at an event in the Dyer Arts Center on campus. From left: Buckley, Peter Lalley, Kate Rizzolo, Larry LoMaglio, Gail Rothman-Marshall, Mike Servé, Vince Danielle and John Albertini.

Passing the Torch

by Susan L. Murad

NTID's 2013 Annual Report notes that, as of fall 2013, 34 percent of the college's workforce was eligible for retirement, with faculty and staff averaging 49 years of age and 15 years of service. As a result, NTID has been focused on succession planning in order to nurture faculty and staff who have an affinity for leadership positions.

"People who have been here for more than 20 years have seen the university change both physically and intellectually," says Dr. Stephen Aldersley, NTID associate vice president for Academic Affairs. "And those individuals can be mentors for the new crop of faculty and staff who are emerging as leaders."

"I believe that passion and the desire to make a difference in our students' worldview defines the future of leadership within NTID," says Amy Stornello, NTID's Summer Vestibule Program/

First-Year Experience program manager. "We need to make the time to work closely with current leaders who can mentor future leaders, so we can feel prepared to take on any challenges that come our way."

"The key for me as a departmental leader in these times is to expect that a healthy dose of change is in the offing for the foreseeable future," says Dr. Matthew Lynn, chairperson of NTID's Science and Mathematics Department. "To be accepting of the change that does occur, leaders must use the talent and resources that are available, expect a reasonable amount of flexibility from colleagues as we move through this change and be proactive in maintaining and rebuilding the department with an eye toward enhancing the quality of an RIT/NTID education."

Another key change is RIT's move

toward faculty being viewed as "teacher/scholars." RIT Provost Jeremy Haefner has defined this new model as reflective of the complex challenges facing the world today.

"Our teachers understand that in order to solve the most pressing issues facing our society, our brightest minds must use a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach," Aldersley says. "Our teacher/scholar model promotes experiential learning, setting the foundation for a lifetime of discovery, creation and innovation for both our students and our faculty."

"This transitional period in NTID's history harbors great opportunities for faculty members who want to take a leadership role," says Dr. Nancy Forand, senior research administrator for proposal development in RIT's Sponsored Research Services. "The new class of leaders will offer a clear vision, ingenuity,

connections, and the ability to manage complex projects. A compelling vision of what NTID can become drives the successful leader. The vision can apply not only to innovative research and products, but also to new models and directions for educational programming or services for the deaf community.”

To help identify individuals who can fill the need for new leaders, NTID President Gerry Buckley established an emerging leaders group two years ago. There were 12 faculty and staff involved in leadership training. The program emulated a similar RIT program and focused on topics surrounding diversity, student behavior, and scholarship and research.

“Strong leaders today need to be forward-thinking, calculated risk-takers and good listeners,” says Dr. Denise Kavin, instructional/support faculty in NTID’s Liberal Studies Department. “They trust that there can be multiple approaches to addressing issues, and that everybody has something to contribute. While you may not notice the little steps along the way, eventually you will look back and realize that they have added up to real progress.”

“Leaders in higher education must be on the front lines—they cannot lead from behind,” Aldersley says. “I define

leadership success as dependent on the success of our students—that means graduation rates and obtaining jobs in their field of study. Leadership takes place not only in the academic areas, but on the staff side as well. It will take willingness, enthusiasm and high energy to lead NTID into the next era of greatness.”

While not all faculty want to be administrators, Aldersley notes there are other ways to lead besides taking on an administrative role, such as leading projects, spearheading the adaptation of new technology, and the like.

“NTID has multiple constituencies: students, faculty and administration, employers, Congress and the American public, hearing and deaf nationwide,” says Dr. Raja Kushalnagar, NTID instructional/support faculty in RIT’s Golisano College of Information and

Computing Studies. “Every constituency is changing rapidly in the post-Americans-with-Disabilities-Act era. It is vital to pay attention to the change of expectations from the constituencies, including deaf students’ educational aspirations. NTID has extremely talented faculty and student leaders who can serve these multiple constituencies, and take advantage of new resources and avenues. NTID leaders have been extremely successful in leading and

adapting very well to evolving expectations in this era.”

Aldersley lists among the key qualities of an emerging leader an understanding of the audience, the ability to put that understanding into practice, flexibility, and understanding that there’s more than one side to every situation.

“A true leader is someone who sets goals that their employees will continue to strive towards to excel in their work and to become better than the leaders themselves in the future,” says Dr. Kim Kurz, chairperson of NTID’s American Sign Language and Interpreting Education (ASLIE) Department. “Just as flowers need constant support from all three sources—water, earth and sun—part of a leader’s responsibility is to provide those vital resources to their employees and to nurture the working environment, and at the same time support the university’s policies and mission.”

“To be a leader will require the excellence of vision for creativity, innovation and intellectual growth for students and colleagues,” says Dr. Deidre Schlehofer, instructional/support faculty in NTID’s ASLIE Department. “Steel determination, patience and fearlessness are necessary components of a leader who values teamwork.”

“At the same time, a leader needs to enjoy the daily challenge—you never know what any given day will bring,” Aldersley says. “To be able to take all that in and enjoy solving problems while focusing on student success is what makes a true leader.”

“Steel determination, patience and fearlessness are necessary components of a leader who values teamwork.”

—Dr. Deidre Schlehofer



Pioneers NTID faculty and staff, 1969.

Andrew Jacobson

by Susan L. Murad



A. SUE WEISER

NTID's 2014 Distinguished Alumnus, Andrew R. Jacobson '90, '96 (Hotel Management, Service Management), took the skills he learned at RIT/NTID and applied them to his professional life.

"The intensity of RIT's academic system, combined with involvement with my fraternity, gave me a broader perspective on life," the New York City native says.

Jacobson's career led him to Portland, Oregon, and Wilmington, Delaware, before he returned to New York City to focus on his tax preparation business.

"The tax business truly is a people-focused business," he says. "You meet all kinds of individuals, and building those business relationships has great rewards."

Jacobson has given back to RIT/NTID in a variety of ways, including serving on the boards of NTID's Foundation and the NTID Alumni Association. He has been a supporter of Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall, NTID's newest facility for research and innovation. And at April's Distinguished

Alumni Award Dinner, Jacobson was able to reflect on what the college really means to him.

"The dinner was beautiful," he says. "It was wonderful to see all of the other honorees who also are involved at RIT. I was truly honored and humbled."

"This award was not about me; it's about the evolution of our school. The growth of RIT and NTID has been tremendous."

Jacobson cited new facilities, a thriving campus life that provides more opportunities for leadership and personal growth, and the university's growing national and international reputation as factors that have made RIT and NTID a destination for attracting the finest students and faculty.

"I'm grateful to Dr. Gerry Buckley and the leadership of NTID for allowing me to share my insights on the NTID Foundation and Alumni boards; to my fellow board members for their motivation and dedicated service; and to the NTID faculty, staff and students for asking me to share my life experiences. I'm truly proud to be an alumnus."

Gabrielle Nocciolino

by Susan L. Murad

Sometimes, leaving one thing behind opens the door to amazing possibilities, as RIT/NTID alumna Gabrielle Nocciolino discovered.

"I was in 8th grade when I quit violin, and my mother insisted that I replace it with something else," the Binghamton, New York, native says. "I was fascinated with language and culture, even at a young age, and wanted to learn sign language, so my mother found a local interpreter who taught me for a year."

After that, Nocciolino and her mother signed up for a class together, and she began taking classes during high school. By her senior year, she knew the direction she wanted to go.

"If I was going to study every day for four years it had to be something I love," she says. "American Sign Language was the only thing that didn't feel like work."

Unlike her twin sister, who applied to nine colleges, Nocciolino applied only to RIT.

"I knew what I wanted to do, and I knew the best place to do it was RIT/NTID," she says.

Nocciolino earned a bachelor's degree in American Sign Language-English Interpretation in 2009, and a master's degree in Secondary Education of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in 2011. She received the Outstanding Graduate Award for both degrees. She also earned a certificate from the NTID Performing Arts Program.

"My mother and father both work in the arts, and it always has been a part of my life," she says.

Today she's a middle school teacher at the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin, teaching English/Language Arts and Theater Arts, and directing several high school productions. This fall, she will be a Theater Arts teacher and director full time.

When asked what advice she would give students looking for a college, Nocciolino says, "Get involved outside of the classroom and create your home there. And remember, it's easy to be bad at something you don't enjoy. It's a lot harder to be bad at something when you love what you do."



CHRISTY LASALLE

Embracing Diversity

by Ilene J. Avallone

As RIT continues to become a more diverse and inclusive campus, NTID is making a major contribution to the effort.

“The college’s commitment to affirmative action and diversity has become an integral component of NTID’s strategic plan,” says Alvin Boyd, NTID’s special assistant to the NTID President for Diversity and Inclusion.

“As NTID seeks to recruit African-American, Latino, Asian and Native American (AALANA) students, the college also has undertaken recruitment and persistence strategies to attract and retain qualified AALANA employees,” he says.

To assist in these efforts, a group of NTID faculty and staff members formed the NTID Diversity Group (NDG) in 2011. The mission of NDG is to “promote the best possible learning, living and working experience for AALANA members of the RIT/NTID community.”

The group’s primary goals are to engage RIT/NTID AALANA faculty, staff and students in partnerships and collaboration; function as a resource for the RIT/NTID community; enhance the campus climate for AALANA faculty, staff and students; and provide opportunities for professional development.

“We provide a forum for AALANA members at RIT/NTID to share their concerns and be supported, and we are proud to be role models for our AALANA deaf and hard-of-hearing students,” says Alex Jones, chair of NDG and a residence coordinator at RIT.

NDG has established several areas of focus to achieve their goals.

One area of focus is participating in NTID Outreach and Student Life Team programs to engage current and prospective AALANA students. Members of NDG facilitate sessions at NTID’s annual Steps to Success career exploration program for 7-9th grade deaf and hard-of-hearing AALANA middle school students as well as conduct workshops at NTID’s Step-Up Program for current first-year RIT/NTID AALANA students who are undecided on a major. NDG also volunteers with the NTID Student



Paving the Way From left to right: Marcus Holmes, Thomastine Sarchet, Alex Jones, Sarah Sarchet and Jonathan Hopkins.

Life Team on activities such as the annual Ethnic Fest and Apple Fest and participates in other NTID cultural student club events.

“These activities foster meaningful interactions between AALANA faculty, staff and students, and provide support, guidance and resources for the students,” says Sarah Sarchet, secretary of NDG’s executive board and instructional support faculty in NTID’s Science and Mathematics Department.

Another area of focus is to engage AALANA faculty and staff by providing a welcoming and accepting environment where concerns about personal or professional growth can be expressed. NDG holds meetings during the year to encourage this communication, and shares information with NTID’s and RIT’s administration to raise awareness and ensure that issues are addressed.

“We have a strong focus on recruiting AALANA faculty and staff, so the information we get from NDG is key to helping us recruit and retain AALANA professionals,” says Dr. Stephen Aldersley, associate vice president for Academic Affairs at NTID.

NDG also promotes and encourages networking efforts among faculty and staff, offers professional development opportunities, and provides mentoring to

younger AALANA faculty and staff—a goal of NTID’s Strategic Decisions 2020 Professional Development Committee.

Another area of focus is on data collection and dissemination of information within NTID and the greater RIT community. Members of NDG collect and analyze data on the NTID AALANA community and compare it to RIT, peer institutions and national data. Their findings show that the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing AALANA students at RIT/NTID has increased over the past 10 years. Therefore, NDG is helping to develop new AALANA faculty and staff recruitment strategies through establishing strategic partnerships with NTID’s Administration, RIT’s Human Resources Department and RIT’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

“The NDG is committed to ensuring that RIT/NTID will continue to see increased diversity,” says Jones. “The addition of more diverse students, faculty and staff as well as an expansion of multicultural learning will provide many opportunities for AALANA members of the RIT/NTID community.”

RIT’s Multicultural Center for Academic Success awarded NDG a “Star Award” at its annual end of the year event in May to celebrate and recognize the contributions of the group.

Thomastine Sarchet

by Kathy A. Johncox



A. SUE WEISER

Paying it forward is important to Pittsburgh native, Thomastine Sarchet, associate director of NTID's Pre-College Education Network (P-CEN).

"I knew that I wanted to work at RIT/NTID because I wanted to contribute to the community that helped me grow up," says Sarchet, a two-time RIT alumna.

After completing a bachelor's degree in Biology at RIT, she got a job—coordinating Vocational Rehabilitation services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students at RIT's Campus Connections Bookstore.

"My career here has had a strange trajectory," she says. "I had learned to sign as a student, and at the bookstore, I could maintain my connection to the deaf community. I then worked as a C-Print captionist, but missed interacting with deaf students in the way I had been able to do at the bookstore. That's when I realized I wanted to combine my love of science and teaching with my deaf community involvement, so I applied for the Master of Science Program in Secondary Education of

Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. While completing my master's, I worked in the Center for Education Research Partnerships at NTID, then moved to my current role at P-CEN. I also have worked as an adjunct instructor for two NTID academic departments.

"I love working here because I love the energy of our students, and I appreciate the support of the community," says Sarchet. "Each unit I have worked in has been like a family. My proudest achievements here are seeing students I have worked with graduate, and working with deaf education programs in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Region."

"RIT/NTID is a unique place that gives me the ability to use my varied skill set," says Sarchet, who is working on her doctorate in Teaching and Curriculum at the University of Rochester.

"My mother told my siblings and me, if we were going to do something, do it all the way. RIT/NTID has given me a lot, so I want to give back all the way."

Michael Stein

by Susan L. Murad



MARK BENJAMIN

Michael Stein is a thinker and a doer. And he challenges his students to become thinkers and doers as well.

Born deaf to a hearing family, the Maplewood, New Jersey, native attended Princeton University, majoring in Public Policy, and then Harvard Law School. He specializes in disability law and the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act.

Stein teaches courses in NTID's Liberal Studies Department, is working on developing a course on Disability Rights, and tutors courses in Criminal Justice, Politics, Public Policy, Law, Philosophy and Economics.

"I enjoy challenging students to think," he says. "I encourage students to identify counter arguments and rebut them. It's that moment when they understand how to engage in reasoned argument that I enjoy the most."

Stein has students break into groups and simulate plea bargaining as a class exercise, and provides opportunities to bring to the real world what they learned in the classroom.

"Fellow faculty member and attorney

Jennifer Gravitz and I taught a Criminal Justice Research seminar last year, and our students wrote a comment in response to the FCC's request for information on phone access in the correctional system," he says. "The FCC cited the students' work several times in a follow-up report."

In addition to bringing the real world to the classroom, Stein brings his classes to the real world. He recently led a group of students to Chile to learn about the deaf community in that South American country.

"Prior to coming to NTID, I had lived in Chile for close to a year working on advocacy issues with deaf leaders," he says. "Bringing my students to Chile was a great way to expose them to what disability rights advocacy looks like on the ground, especially in a world with limited captioning and almost no relay services."

With his approach to teaching and learning—both in and out of the traditional classroom, Stein demonstrates for his students how thinking and doing can create a better world.

Congratulations to the Class of 2014!



MARK BENJAMIN

MARK BENJAMIN

Proud Graduates Matthew Annis (left) and Derek Landis were selected as 2014 commencement delegates.

Matthew Annis, from Pittsford, New York, graduated with a master's degree in Secondary Education of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. As a graduate assistant, he helped with the planning and teaching of remedial English development courses as well as the research and development of an online vocabulary program for use in middle and secondary school classrooms. Matthew taught students from kindergarten through middle school at the West Irondequoit (N.Y.) Central School District, and currently teaches high school students at the Indiana School for the Deaf in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Derek Landis, from Frederick, Maryland, graduated with an associate degree in Applied Liberal Arts. He served as a Big Brother Mentor at the Learning Center for the Deaf in Framingham, Massachusetts, and as the American Red Cross Coordinator for the Maryland School for the Deaf. He will enter the Criminal Justice program in RIT's College of Liberal Arts.

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MARK BENJAMIN

A Theatrical Homerun The NTID Performing Arts production of the musical comedy *Damn Yankees* entertained baseball and theater fans alike with the story of an average guy who sells his soul to the devil for a shot at a major league baseball career and a big win for his beloved team. Will he be seduced by fame and fortune, or remember what he truly values and who he loves? In a musical comedy, there usually is a happy ending, and the Performing Arts players brought it home for their delighted audiences.