

MCLA

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

JAN/17



PAYING IT

FORWARD





Jane Flint, David Flint '78, Charlotte Miczek '70, MCLA President James F. Birge, and Sarah Flint Wood '07 at the Annual MCLA Boston Alumni Holiday Social.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Greetings from MCLA. As I write, winter has descended upon the Berkshires, offering a snowy landscape that will be with us for the next few months.

I have read with great interest the article "Paying It Forward" (page 4). One of the salient themes among the alumni comments is a focus on "the other." Cheryl Starr Boilat '79 and the alumni quoted in the article speak about building connections, engaging with MCLA, having a positive influence on students, and improving experiences. This value, and this sense of personal agency, is something I see reflected not only among our alumni but within the campus community.

This value is a defining characteristic of MCLA that is in action every day. In my time at MCLA, I have seen dozens of upper-class students help new students move into the residence halls; I have seen faculty mentor students in the Student Innovation Lab in the Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation; I have seen students help a local food bank prepare for increased needs for food security around the holidays; I have seen students and faculty host a memorial service for a student who passed away at home last summer. These kinds of actions

don't emerge from one's sense of job responsibility or because there is "something in it for them." These actions emerge from a sense of culture, an ethic of service, a commitment to community that underpins and compels a liberal arts education.

As alumni, even though you have graduated and moved forward in your lives, you remain part of this culture. I am grateful for your support of MCLA and for the actions you take to support others. Through you, we extend the value and reputation of the liberal arts education MCLA offers.

MCLA is fortunate to have such supportive alumni. Please join us any time for performing arts events, lectures, athletic events, or just a visit to campus. It is always good to have you here!

Warmly,

James F. Birge, Ph.D.
President

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Alumni Association Board of Directors

The MCLA Alumni Association Board of Directors is an important link between MCLA and its alumni, providing opportunities for alumni to serve and promote the College in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Advancement. There are no dues to be a member of the association. Five alumni candidates are elected annually.

If you are interested in running for an elected seat on the Alumni Association Board of Directors, please call or email Christine Naughton, director of alumni relations and development, at 413.662.5074 or C.Naughton@mcla.edu. Nominations must be received by May 1, 2017.

MCLA

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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Kristin Lamontagne Nichols '01

David Ortendahl '05

Jade Prickett '10

Paula Randazza '88

Dorothy Giusti Ransford '64

Monique Symes '11

Todd Vroman '90

Sarah Flint Wood '07

Dennis Zicko '65



ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

AT 18,000 STRONG, MCLA's Alumni Association plays a vital role in the institution's past, present, and future, spanning a generational arc representing each chapter in MCLA's rich history. Today, the MCLA Alumni Association Board of Directors includes more than 20 members who have been nominated and elected by MCLA alumni.



2016-2017 Alumni Association Board of Directors: **Top row**, from left to right: Dan Summers II '07, Osakpolo Igiede '15, David Ortendahl '05, and Benjamin Lamb '07. **Middle row**, from left to right: Dennis Zicko '65, Monique Symes '11, Dave Flint '78, Cecelia Hamrock Kennedy '78, Laura-Jean Griffin Hickey '99, and Todd Vroman '90. **Bottom row**, from left to right: Cheryl Starr Boillat '79, M.Ed. '97, Lisa Hall Blackmer '99, Kristin Lamontagne Nichols '01, Erin Fielding Baffuto '05, and Sarah Flint Wood '07. **Not pictured:** Amey Blackburn Bissonnette '09, Lynn Brennan '04, Rachel Dayton Churchill, Esq. '06, Joanne Ricker Maynard '82, Jade Prickett '10, Paula Randazza '88, and Dorothy Giusti Ransford '64.



CHERYL STARR BOILLAT '79 M.ED. '97,

program coordinator of special education for the North Adams Public School District, credits MCLA with providing the foundation for her rewarding career in education. She became active with the Alumni Association eight years ago. "I wanted to be more engaged with the students and get a better understanding of what new teachers needed," she reflects. "I saw a need to connect with MCLA's students and help them to better navigate the process of going from school to career."

Today, Boillat serves as president of the Alumni Association Board of Directors. "I attend and support any activity or event where I can meet students and alumni and let them know that we are active and there to help them build connections," she explains. Boillat has found the opportunity to serve as a role model and mentor immensely rewarding. "This is a great way to make a difference and pay it forward," she says.

"I love being part of the MCLA community; even after Commencement, I still find myself connecting with former peers and current students. Getting involved with the Alumni Association isn't just limited to giving money, it's about showing students how your experiences have shaped you into the person you are today, and getting them excited about creating their own experiences."

– OSAKPOLO IGIEDE '15



WAYNE SOARES '89

A talented actor, author, comedian, and motivational speaker, Wayne Soares improves lives by helping people tap into their own strength and confidence to overcome obstacles. Soares spreads his important message about the power of words and actions across the nation, including at MCLA. "A large portion of my career is about making an impact with adults and youth. It's important for me to come back and make myself available," he explains.

Soares delivered the keynote address at MCLA's 2016 Leadership Conference and also coordinated a campus screening of a film in which he co-starred. "I'm really amazed at how far the College has come since I graduated," he remarks. "I take a lot of pride in the (MCLA) community."



DAVID ORTENDAHL '05 couldn't agree more with Cheryl. After graduating from MCLA with degrees in business administration and fine and performing arts, he earned his M.B.A. from Suffolk University and went on to become director of corporate relations at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Through it all, he has maintained a close relationship with MCLA, now serving on the Alumni Board as chairperson of the outreach subcommittee.

"One of my personal mantras is to leave a place better than how I found it, and this is an opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of students," says Ortendahl. He adds that there are many ways alumni can help accomplish this, citing improved "access to information, opportunities for scholarships, more internship experiences, and better relationships between alumni and current students."

Ortendahl urges fellow alums to get involved. "My hope is that if they had a good experience here, if there was something that really helped them, they will pay it forward to current and future students. If, on the other hand, there was something missing from their experience, this is an opportunity to make something positive out of that – to be part of helping to provide that 'something.' The Alumni Board is always open to hearing about those things."

Indeed, the Alumni Association and its Board of Directors play an invaluable role at MCLA, striving to bridge the gap between past and future. This is a special point of pride for

DOT RANSFORD '64, a longtime foundation incorporator at MCLA. Some 40 years ago, Ransford gathered with a small group of fellow alumni to brainstorm ideas for getting more alums back to campus for events. Little did they know, Ransford says, that they were actually forming the “very beginning of the fledgling Alumni Association.”

Years later, when the Alumni Association was formalized, Ransford served in a variety of capacities, including vice president. She is currently serving on the Alumni Association Board once again and is grateful for the opportunity to play a part in MCLA's evolution. Asked what has inspired her to maintain such an active level of alumni engagement, Ransford says, “What I've done, and try to continue to do, is the only thing I know: help those I come in contact with to reconnect with their classmates and help alumni, in general, learn about the networking opportunities and shared resources available through MCLA.”



“WHAT I'VE DONE ... IS THE ONLY THING I KNOW: HELP THOSE I COME IN CONTACT WITH TO RECONNECT WITH THEIR CLASSMATES.”



RICK MAYBURY '80

Organizational psychologist Dr. Rick Maybury, president/founder of Peak Performance Group, Inc. and Pericles Publishing Company, of Gloucester, Mass., credits MCLA and its dedicated professors for nurturing his passion for psychology and helping him to discover a love for science and research.

Today, Maybury gives back by creating internship opportunities, serving on committees, mentoring students, delivering speeches, appearing as a guest lecturer, and assisting with MCLA's fundraising efforts. “I'm always willing to help whenever asked. My MCLA (North Adams State College) experience was one of the most profound and seminal events of my life. I would not be where I am today if not for the unselfish commitment of professors and staff of the College,” he says.

As further proof of Maybury's allegiance, his son, Kyle, is now a student at MCLA, making Maybury a very proud alumnus and father!



“I’VE ONLY SEEN POSITIVE THINGS COME OUT OF MY INVOLVEMENT WITH THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, AND AT THE END OF THE DAY, THAT’S WHAT MATTERS.”

Other Alumni Association Board members strive to do the same, including

KRISTIN LAMONTAGNE NICHOLS ’01,

who graduated from MCLA with a degree in English and is now director of enrollment marketing for the University of Massachusetts Lowell. She and her husband, Chris, also an MCLA alumnus, are proud of their alma mater. “I’ve worked with students from a number of high-profile colleges,” she says. “And MCLA provided me with the same first-rate education in a small liberal arts environment.”

Back in 2008, a fellow alum reached out to Nichols over lunch and encouraged her to become more actively engaged in alumni relations. This reintroduction to MCLA was a turning point. “Learning more about where the institution was going really made me want to be more active,” she recounts.

Now a member of the Alumni Association Board, Nichols takes her role seriously. “We are responsible for keeping abreast of everything that happens at MCLA, both negative and positive,” she says. “We listen to students’ stories and strive to make their experiences even better. Higher education is the gateway to success, and we want to make sure more students are able to obtain a solid education from MCLA.”

Nichols extends an invitation for other alumni to become more involved. “It is easier than you think,” she says. “This is not a pressure environment, it’s not one-size-fits-all ... it’s just about what you can do. Come and join us on your own terms. I’ve only seen positive things come out of my involvement with the Alumni Association, and at the end of the day, that’s what matters.”

Countless opportunities exist for MCLA alumni to get involved. While some serve as volunteers on the Alumni Association Board of Directors, others demonstrate their allegiance by attending functions, speaking at events, making monetary gifts, offering internships, or providing support and networking opportunities for current students. All alumni are valued members of the MCLA community; it’s never too late to reconnect.

“Being involved allows me to pursue both my personal and professional interests with passion and purpose ... I am so blessed to have so many wonderful things in my life as a result of my time at MCLA, and I want to share that with others.”

– ERIN FIELDING BAFFUTO ’05



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

2017 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts has distinguished itself in various ways, particularly through its many alumni who have made outstanding contributions within their professional fields, respective communities, and family lives. During Reunion Weekend, we honor these truly remarkable graduates as Distinguished Alumni for their many achievements.

Please take a few moments to consider former classmates for one of the following distinguished alumni awards. The awards include:

Distinguished Alumni Award: The individual must have demonstrated a history of achievement in one or more of the following: community, state, regional, or national service, and a significant leadership contribution to a state/regional/national organization that does not come under the purview of their profession.

Humanitarian Award: The nominee must have demonstrated a record of service to their community and to the world at large.

Outstanding Educator Award: This award is given to recognize and honor an individual who has shown continued and dedicated service to their students and their profession and a commitment to developing the potential of all students. This award recognizes K-16 educators from all areas of education who have made significant contributions to support and enhance the education of students through innovative classroom practices, programming, extracurricular activities, committee, or community work.

Outstanding Educator Emeritus Award: This award is given to recognize and honor an individual who spent a lifetime dedicated to education and exemplifies all elements of teaching impacting their students, the school, and community at large.

Outstanding Service to the College Award: The nominee must have demonstrated a record of service to the Alumni Association and/or the College.

Young Alumni Award: Within 10 years of their MCLA commencement, the individual will have shown significant growth in their chosen profession and/or career path, received recognition as an emerging leader through professional and/or community achievements, and served as an outstanding role model for current and future MCLA students.

Nominations must be received by May 1, 2017. Please provide as much detailed information with regard to your nomination that will allow the Awards Committee to review your nomination. Send to the director of alumni relations and development, MCLA, 375 Church Street, North Adams, MA 01247, or contact Christine Naughton at c.naughton@mcla.edu or (413) 662-5074.

To view past recipients: <http://alumni.mcla.edu/past-alumni-award-recipients>.

MCLA Alumni Give Back to their Alma Mater



Gina Puc '07 knows firsthand how difficult it can be to choose the right college. She initially attended a large school, only to discover that it wasn't a good match. After a brief hiatus, she transferred to MCLA, a decision that opened up a new world of possibilities. Today, Puc is not only a proud alumna, she is also the College's director of admission.

As a senior at MCLA, Puc served as an ambassador in the Office of Admission, an opportunity that piqued her interest in higher education as a potential career. A year after graduation, she was back at MCLA in an official capacity. "I wanted to return to higher education and help college-bound students make a better choice than I initially did," she reflects. "There was an opening at MCLA in the Office of Admission, and the rest is history!"

In 2013, Puc became director of admission, a position she enjoys tremendously. "I feel strongly about the value of public higher education and the

doors it can open for students by offering access to a top-notch education without burdensome loan debt. My daily work allows me to share the possibility of this experience with prospective students and share my passion for MCLA," she says. "It's wonderful to be able to give back to an institution that means so much to me and watch the campus continue to evolve."

Puc shares this sentiment with several staff members. Among them are assistant directors **Dayne Wahl '09** and **Meghan McMahon '11**. "The most rewarding aspect about working for my alma mater is spreading the word of this hidden gem and being able to give back to a place that helped me grow so much," says Wahl.

The notion of giving back also appeals to McMahon, who says it is rewarding to see other students embracing their MCLA experience. "I love many aspects of my job, but the one I enjoy the most is helping students through the admissions process

"Students have a puzzled look on their face, like, 'how do you know so many specifics about dance company?' and then I'll say, 'I was the president!'"

— Kayla Hollins '12



and then seeing them getting involved and loving their time at MCLA," she says.

Admissions Counselor **Katie Johnson '14** hopes to mirror the positive impact that MCLA's faculty and staff had on her as a student. "The MCLA community is so focused on student success and engagement," she explains. "I enjoyed and benefited from having numerous opportunities to try new things and have new experiences; now I can be a part of creating that atmosphere and environment for incoming students."

The fact that so many alumni have chosen to return to MCLA and work within the Office of Admission no doubt has an inspirational impact on prospective students and their families. Not only does it speak volumes about their dedication to the institution, it also provides special insight into the life of MCLA students.

"I find joy talking with prospective students about clubs and organizations I was involved in,"

reports **Kayla Hollins '12**, assistant director for multicultural recruitment. "Students have a puzzled look on their face, like, 'how do you know so many specifics about dance company?' and then I'll say, 'I was the president!' I also like being there for the current students as a mentor or resource. I'm constantly amazed by what current students are doing to make MCLA a better institution. That, in and of itself, makes this job worthwhile!"

The Office of Admission team at MCLA



REUNION WEEKEND

Fellow alumni came back to campus during Reunion Weekend, Friday, October 14 through Sunday, October 16. For more Reunion Weekend photos visit alumni.mcla.edu



Class of 1986 reunited at Public Eat + Drink.



ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

Congratulations to this year's Athletics Hall of Fame inductees. From left, Eddie Pires '01 (men's soccer), Jess Tietgens Langenback '11 (women's soccer), Murales Louis '01 (men's basketball), MCLA's President James F. Birge, Amy Strand '99 (women's basketball), and Bill Fitzpatrick (baseball).



GOLDEN GRADUATES

We were delighted to celebrate our newest members of the Golden Graduates. **Standing** from left to right: John Allen '65, Dennis Zicko '65, Donald Wilkinson '66, Ronald Pollone '66, Donald Pecor '66, Ruth Lambert Zicko '64, Ruth Starratt Innes '64, Gregory DeBlois '66, Kenna Andrews Hoellerich '66, Michele Barile Sweet '66, Robert Taylor '64, Harriet Peck Hunt '54, Katherine Cariddi Mogavero '52, Peter Abuisi '66, Diane Gallese Parsons '61, and Daniel Foster '61. **Sitting** from left to right: Gina Bellini Zauli '61, Joey Shepard Beaudreau '66, and Jane Brooks Allen '61.



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

Congratulations to this year's Alumni Association Award recipients: from left, Peter Abuisi '66, Outstanding Educator Emeritus Award; Benjamin Lamb '07, Young Alumnus Award; Buffy Durringer Lord '98, Outstanding Service to the College Award; Michelle Kirby '90, Outstanding Educator Award; and Katherine Foster Warren '82 Distinguished Alumnus Award. Not pictured: Michelle Dubois '66, Humanitarian Award.



MCLA 2016 ATHLETICS GOLF CLASSIC

The MCLA Athletics Golf Classic benefits the student-athletes and athletics program at the college. The tournament was sponsored for the third consecutive year by President's Club Title Sponsor Petri Contracting of Clarksburg. From left, MCLA President James F. Birge, Jay Petri, and Director of Athletics Laura Mooney.



BOSTON ALUMNI HOLIDAY SOCIAL

Fellow MCLA alumni Quincy Goodwin '13, Monique Symes '11, Lynn McEnaney '14, and Alyson Carey '13 reunited during the Annual MCLA Boston Alumni Holiday Social on December 7, 2016 at the InterContinental Boston.



DECEMBER ACADEMIC RECEPTION

We welcomed the August and December 2016 graduates as the newest members of the Alumni Association by celebrating them at the MCLA December Academic Reception on Tuesday, December 13, 2016, at the Church Street Center.

FOR MORE EVENTS VISIT ALUMNI.MCLA.EDU

Save the Date

INAUGURATION OF THE
12TH PRESIDENT OF MCLA

JAMES F. BIRGE, PH.D.

FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 2017

AT 1:30 P.M.

MCLA.EDU/INAUGURATION

**MASSACHUSETTS
COLLEGE OF
LIBERAL ARTS**

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MCLA
Alumni Association

Together you helped us raise
\$33,000 in one semester!



Help us do it again. Spring phonathon returns in February.