

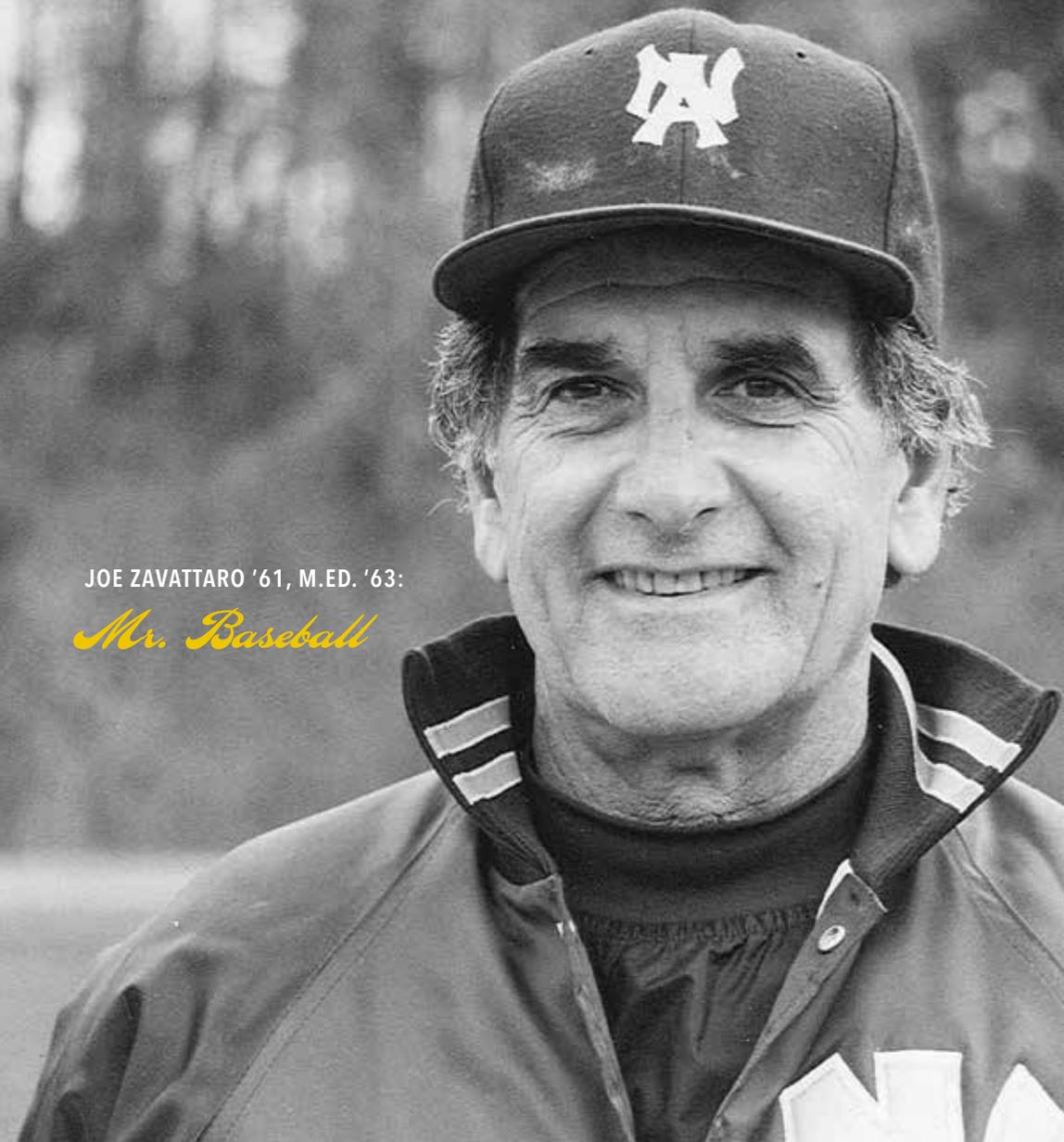
# MCLA

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

JUNE/15

JOE ZAVATTARO '61, M.ED. '63:

*Mr. Baseball*



## GREETINGS,

This issue of *The MCLA Alumni Magazine* truly represents the arc of success this special institution has enjoyed, as seen through the stories of our alums, including Coach Joe Zavatarro '61, M.Ed. '63 who has dedicated himself both personally and professionally to transform student lives.

I am sure he was bursting with pride and joins me in congratulating our women's softball team who won the MASCAC conference title this spring. Many of you who know "Coach" know that he exemplifies commitment and passion which is demonstrated on this campus every single day by our faculty and staff until the moment the students walk across the stage at Commencement.

Commencement is a time of celebration, not just for the graduates and their families, but for each and every one of the faculty and staff who have assisted them along the way. This year was made even more special with Derrick Z. Jackson, parent of Tano Holmes '13, as our Commencement speaker. Over the years, Derrick, an award-winning columnist for the *Boston*

*Globe* and accomplished photographer, along with Tano's mother, Michelle Holmes, have stayed engaged and connected to MCLA, because they have seen firsthand the excellent, quality education that a public college like MCLA offers.

We were also deeply pleased to honor our very own alum Jani Maselli Wood '85, Esq., who has done important humanitarian work with death row inmates in her home state of Texas, and who continues to advocate regarding the constitutionality of court fees. Jani truly is a role model to emulate in service to others and represents the heart of what our students embrace during their MCLA experience.

As we close the chapter on another inspiring year at MCLA, and I reflect upon the accomplishments of



On Saturday, May 16, MCLA conferred 417 diplomas on the Class of 2015 at the 116th Commencement ceremony. Award-winning *Boston Globe* columnist, and parent of Tano Holmes '13, Derrick Jackson was presented with an honorary doctor of journalism degree and delivered the 2015 Commencement address. Also receiving honorary degrees this year were Jack and Susy Wadsworth, dedicated supporters of educational and cultural activities in the Berkshires and throughout the world. Jack Wadsworth received an honorary doctor of business, and Susy Wadsworth received an honorary doctor of public service. In addition, Jani Maselli Wood '85, assistant public defender for the Harris County Public Defender's Office in Houston, TX, received an honorary doctor of laws.

# MCLA

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our students, I feel privileged to follow in the footsteps of President Emerita Mary K. Grant '83 to lead this institution during this important transition, and will continue to do so in the academic year ahead.

Chair of the Board of Trustees Tyler Fairbank has let the community know that there will be a new search launched to select the College's twelfth president. The search committee will be appointed this summer and advertising of the position will also happen then, with the goal of bringing finalists to campus during the fall. We look forward to welcoming the new president in 2016.

Bowman Hall is in the final stages of renovation with classes scheduled to be held there in September and a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the reopening of this wonderful building. The departments of computer science and mathematics, programs in art and arts management, and the academic affairs office will all soon be moving into their new offices and facilities there. This important project complements the building of the Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation by updating and improving numerous classrooms and will be another important milestone in the transformation of the campus.

Athletics is excited about the installation of lights on the Shewcraft Field which will provide more opportunities for student use such as intramural activities and events, student gatherings and functions, extended practice and playing times for all sport and intramural offerings, as well as potential recruiting opportunities for all programs.

I hope your future travel includes a trip back to the beautiful Berkshires and this campus that you once called home. When you see the Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation and the renovated Bowman Hall, you will want to be a student again! Stay in touch, and I look forward to the opportunity to welcome you back. Have a wonderful summer.



Sincerely,

Cynthia Farr Brown  
Interim President



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**MCLA SCORED A BIG WIN BACK IN 1957,** the year that **Joseph Zavattaro '61, M.Ed. '63** made what he refers to as one of the best decisions of his life. Having just begun college, the young ballplayer transferred to State Teachers College of North Adams, now MCLA. Little did he know that nearly sixty years later, his legacy would continue to be celebrated.

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Even before his move to North Adams, Zavattaro made his community proud. As a star student and athlete at Pittsfield High School, he received numerous accolades. From there, he was drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates, quickly advancing to the Triple-A level.

At North Adams, Zavattaro continued to excel. He was a pioneer in the newly created athletics program, playing both baseball and basketball. Following graduation, he coached baseball at Pittsfield High School while pursuing his master's in education administration at North Adams State College. It wasn't long before MCLA President Eugene Freel offered him a position as director of the newly established physical education department.

Returning to his alma mater, Zavattaro not only served as director, but also as athletic trainer and coach. The department consisted of three staff members: Zavattaro, Patricia Mowbray, and Sue Getchell '63. There was no formal women's athletic program, but the three colleagues worked to create one. Several years later, as both men's and women's teams gained steam, Zavattaro was able to hire coaches.

Among those hired during Zavattaro's tenure was Ron Shewcraft, who served as head coach of the men's soccer team for twenty-nine years and continues to serve as an active member of the MCLA faculty.

"I thought I'd be here for two or three years, but here I am in my thirty-eighth," reflects Shewcraft. "MCLA turned out to be a good match for me both

personally and professionally, and I am appreciative to have had this opportunity. I was young, but Joe was willing to take a chance on me.”

Although never coached by Zavattaro, Shewcraft describes himself as “a member of Joe’s team.” He commends the manner in which Zavattaro supported his coaching staff, saying, “He understood what we were trying to accomplish. He was always willing to try and provide the resources needed to create the kind of environment that would allow our teams and programs to be competitive on the conference, regional, and national levels in the NCAA Division III. I couldn’t have asked for a better boss.”

As if his role at MCLA wasn’t enough, Zavattaro spent many summers traveling to coach baseball in countries such as Canada, Japan, Africa, and Italy.

Zavattaro retired from MCLA twenty years ago, but he continues to follow the activities of his alma mater. He is impressed by the many enhancements made in recent years, including those related to the athletic complex named in his honor.



Joe and his wife, Sharron '85, at their home in Florida.

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**“BASEBALL HAS BEEN MY LIFE,”** he says.  
“It took me to places I never would have seen otherwise.”

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Joe with Al Belanger, current MCLA baseball coach and Assistant Athletic Director Jeff Puleri MBA '12, and Ron Shewcraft at the 2014 Athletics Golf Classic.

Looking back at his career, Zavattaro says there were two main highlights. One was watching the young men he coached grow into adulthood; he keeps in touch with many former players and enjoys hearing about their successes and their families. The other, equally as precious and important, was meeting his wife of twenty-eight years, Sharron, also a graduate of the College, who served as director of career services at MCLA. Today, the couple lives in Florida, but they are always rooting for their old home team.

*If you would like to make a gift in honor of Joe to the baseball program, go online to [give2mcla.edu](http://give2mcla.edu).*



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**MCLA**  
**2**

## *THE COMPETITIVE EDGE*

Finding the right balance between athletics and academics can be challenging, but MCLA student athletes go the distance. Time and time again, these dedicated and determined individuals have risen to the occasion, demonstrating the skills to succeed, not only on the playing field, but also in the classroom and in life.

According to Assistant Athletic Director and Senior Women's administrator Dot Houston, MCLA's student athletes have consistently higher retention rates than other students.



Dot Houston

She attributes this to several factors.

"When a student has a significant interest in something like athletics, they are driven to do well academically so that they can continue enjoying that activity over the course of their four years here," she explains.

Houston also notes that many of the skills associated with success are exhibited by athletes, including a "natural tendency to lead and the ability to easily accept and adapt to change for the betterment of the whole." She says that "involvement in athletics is an opportunity to further develop and utilize such skills, which then become transferable to the workforce."



Christina Kidd '11, Amanda Lane '11, Amanda Borsotti '11, Tasha Berroa '11



Xhirley Gonzalez '11

**Amanda Borsotti '11**, of Lee, MA, was drawn to MCLA because it was one of the few colleges close to home that allowed her to play multiple sports. Her participation included two years of basketball and four years of volleyball and softball, both of which she captained during her junior and senior years. With an outstanding record of academic and athletic achievement, Borsotti was named to the Massachusetts State College Athletic Conference (MASCAC) All-Academic Team three years in a row and served as athletic chair of MCLA's Student Government Association her senior year. She graduated with a B.A. in sociology.

Now a social worker for the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, Borsotti is putting her skills as a leader and team player to good use. She works collaboratively with families and community partners to protect children from abuse and neglect. "The ability to work as a team is an important part of this position and was one of the characteristics they were specifically looking for in candidates," she says.

Borsotti's position is based in Pittsfield, MA. She is thrilled for the opportunity to remain in the Berkshires and give back to the community that is near and dear to her heart.

**Raul Escobar '09**, originally from Venezuela, has also reaped the benefits of being both a team player and leader. He played four years of soccer, serving two as captain, and was named to the 2008 MASCAC Men's Soccer First-Team All-Conference Squad. He graduated with a B.S. in business administration,

received his master's from the Massachusetts School of Law, and now works in immigration in Miami, FL.

"Being a college athlete gives you a strong foundation. It forces you to be disciplined and teaches you to work hard, take directions and follow them through, and put the needs of the team ahead of your own interests," Escobar reflects.

Yet another MCLA alum, **Xhirley Gonzalez '11**, has a unique dual perspective on the benefits of participating in college sports. As an athletic trainer at Rice University in Texas and a former member of the MCLA cross-country team, she says that teammates provide an outstanding support system, and that communication skills gained by working together offer a significant advantage in the workforce. Furthermore, she feels that being a student athlete is an excellent precursor to life after college. "It mimics having a job," she explains, "you have to show up on time, be dedicated and dependable, have a good work ethic, and learn to balance the various aspects of your work and life."

Gonzalez graduated from MCLA with a B.S. in biology and a concentration in athletic training. She completed her master's in athletic training at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

Reports indicate that an increasing number of employers are recognizing the many marketable skills that athletes bring to the table, not the least of which is the ability to respect, value, and embrace the contributions of others. In today's job market, it appears as though athletes may have a competitive edge.

# AN ATHLETE'S JOURNEY

After completing a two-year degree at Mitchell College in New London, CT, **Andre Washington '92** found himself at a crossroads. At home in Brooklyn, NY, he couldn't decide what direction to take next, but his inner compass told him three things: he needed to get out of the city, he needed to play basketball, and he wanted to be the first person in his family to earn his bachelor's degree. His former basketball coach had a friend at North Adams State College, now MCLA, and that connection led him north to North Adams during the winter recess of '89.

"I had no idea what to expect," recalls Washington. During that visit, he enjoyed practicing with the team. "I was really out of shape," he laughs, "but I was impressed by how closely knit everyone was, and I liked the atmosphere."

The following fall, Washington became a computer science student at NASC, as well as a standout contributor in one of the most successful basketball seasons the college has ever known. Under Coach Al Sokaitis, the team went 23-5, tying the school record for wins in a season, and advancing to the Elite Eight in the NCAA tournament. The entire Berkshire community celebrated this magical season, which earned the team a

Andre on the court in an early '90s game against Fitchburg State.



spot in MCLA's Hall of Fame. It was the second such induction for Washington, who was also honored at Mitchell College.

Washington played basketball at NASC for two years and learned a great deal from Coach Sokaitis.

**“HE TAUGHT US THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A SUPERSTAR, BUT IF YOU COME TOGETHER AS A TEAM AND BELIEVE IN EACH OTHER, YOU CAN SUCCEED.”**

Although the pressure to perform well both athletically and academically can be taxing, Washington benefited from the structure. “I need structure to really thrive and be successful,” he explains.

While at NASC, Washington became part of an even larger team, the Army National Guard. He conducted basic training in Fort Benning, GA, and, after graduating from NASC, transferred to the New York National Guard. He later transferred to the Connecticut National Guard.

Serving in the National Guard, Washington found the same sense of structure he benefited from as an athlete. When his six-year commitment ended, he stayed on, serving a total of twenty years. In that time, he was deployed to Iraq as a battalion maintenance officer and activated as a company commander in lower Manhattan during 9/11. He underwent trainings throughout the United States and the world, and has served in various ranks and positions.

Today, Washington is a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserves. In addition to his bachelor of science

from NASC, he achieved his master of science in information management technology from Grantham University and is pursuing his doctorate of business administration in information systems and enterprise resource management at California Intercontinental University. He hopes to one day teach at a university.

Washington and his family live in Georgia, where he is a senior software developer at Mansfield Oil Company and continues to enjoy his love of basketball by officiating at the recreational and middle school levels. With a timeshare in the Berkshires, he enjoys visiting his alma mater periodically and is ever so grateful for that first trip north and the journey that ensued.



Lieutenant Colonel  
Andre Washington '92,  
Army Reserves

# New Initiative Seeks to Increase Field Time and Opportunity at MCLA

## SHEWCRAFT FIELD LIGHTS INITIATIVE

### Goal:

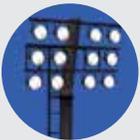
**\$200,000**

with 1:1 match from College by December 2015

### Cash and Pledges Raised:

as of June 1, 2015:

**\$78,500**



For more information or to make a gift, please contact Jeff Puleri, assistant athletic director, at (413) 662-5403 or at [J.Puleri@mcla.edu](mailto:J.Puleri@mcla.edu).

When it comes to athletic facilities, MCLA has its game on. In the past decade, the College's Joseph Zavattaro Athletic Complex has undergone major renovations, most notably the 2007 installation of state-of-the-art synthetic turf on the Ron Shewcraft Field. This effort, and others, is part of MCLA's ongoing mission to help student athletes achieve their highest level of personal, academic, and athletic performance.

The synthetic turf upgrade maximizes the use of the soccer field, making it playable in all weather. While the field is primarily used for men's and women's soccer, it is also now home to women's lacrosse and is available to other teams for practice.

In an effort to further increase utilization of the Shewcraft Field, MCLA has embarked on an initiative to raise funds for the installation of lights. Former men's head soccer coach Ron Shewcraft, for whom the field is named, has been instrumental in this effort. Shewcraft coached the team from 1978 until 2007 and continues to serve as an active member of the faculty, as well as physical education chair.

"Adding lights will give us greater flexibility with scheduling, particularly in the fall months when it gets dark earlier," Shewcraft comments. Currently, weekday home games need to be started in mid-afternoon, often forcing players to miss classes. Shewcraft explains that "lights will alleviate this problem and will create additional practice time for soccer and other sports, particularly baseball and softball." The lights will also allow for recreational and intramural use by students.



Dianne Shewcraft '80 and Ron Shewcraft

MCLA baseball coach and Assistant Athletic Director Jeff Puleri is spearheading the lights initiative. He says that in addition to benefiting student athletes, the installation of lights will “expand opportunities for community outreach by attracting more people to MCLA and the athletic complex.” The College will be eligible, for example, to host events such as state high school tournaments.

The cost of adding field lights is \$400,000. MCLA has agreed to support the initiative with a 1:1 dollar match. In order to qualify, the campaign seeks to raise \$200,000 through the generosity of alumni, community members, and other friends of the College.

Among alumni who support this effort is **Jason Mlodzianowski '07**, a former member of the men’s soccer team. He was a four-year letter winner and served as team captain his senior year. Although he only played a short while on the synthetic turf, he refers to it as “a game changer.”



Jason Mlodzianowski '07

Mlodzianowski graduated from MCLA with a B.A. in history and achieved his M.S. in athletic administration from Springfield College. He is currently the event manager and coordinator of athletic facilities at Carnegie Mellon University. He attributes much of his success to his athletic involvement at MCLA and considers the Shewcraft Field Lights Initiative a means for alumni, like himself, to help further enhance the experience for future MCLA athletes.

**“I am where I am today because of athletics,”** he says.

“I firmly believe that being involved in college sports is one of the best leadership opportunities that exists for students. It teaches so many valuable life skills. Anything we can do to build upon that is important.”

The Shewcraft Field Lights Initiative will extend through December 2015. If all goes well, the lights will be installed during the summer of 2016.

## LACROSSE

Our women's lacrosse team launched their historic first season in fine fashion as they defeated Mitchell College on March 17 for the first win in program history. Maria Bartini was named head lacrosse coach in April 2014.



She currently serves as a full-time professor within the psychology department. Bartini has a wealth of coaching experience and is working toward her Level 3 certification in US Lacrosse. She

played collegiately at the College of William and Mary at the Division I level. Congrats to Maria and these student-athletes on a great start to their inaugural season.

1) Katelyn Brown '15 2) Natalie Caney '17



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## Welcome New Athletics Director



Following the retirement of Scott Nichols earlier this year, Laura Mooney has been appointed the new athletics director and began working at the College on April 6. Laura

comes to us from the State University of New York Maritime College, where she served as their associate athletic director for administration.

Interim President Cynthia Brown said, "We are very pleased to welcome Laura Mooney to MCLA. I am certain that her knowledge, skills, and experience will provide strong and collaborative leadership to our athletics program and for our student-athletes."

Previously at Maritime, Mooney served as the business manager of its athletics department. She began her career there in 2006 as an assistant coach for the women's soccer and lacrosse programs, and was promoted to head coach of the women's soccer team for the 2007 season.

She is a member of the National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators (NACWAA) and the National Association of Division III Athletic Administrators (NADIIIAA).

Mooney was a dual-sport Division III athlete, lettering in both women's soccer and lacrosse at SUNY-Potsdam, and graduated with a bachelor of arts degree. She later went on to earn her master of science degree in sports administration and management from SUNY-Cortland.



## MASCAC CHAMPIONSHIP

The MCLA softball team captured their first ever Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC) tournament championship and first National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournament appearance since 1995 when the Trailblazers defeated Salem State 6-0 on May 3. MCLA's Rachel Quackenbush '16 was named the tournament's most valuable player as she won all three games off the mound. Quackenbush also earned MASCAC Player and Pitcher of the Week honors following the tournament. MCLA was sent to the Williams College regional in the NCAA tournament, where they were eventually eliminated by Western New England University.

## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE



Bentley Munsell '15, Diane Sammer '81, and Virginia Graves '16 at the 2015 URC.

At the 2015 Undergraduate Research Conference (URC), Virginia Graves '16 was presented with the second annual Pamela P. Dennis '82 Scholarship by last year's recipient Bentley Munsell '15. The scholarship is supported by the Pamela P. Dennis '82 Achievement and Triumph Fund named in memory of a former psychology graduate and partner of Diane Sammer '81, who was in attendance for the presentation. The scholarship is awarded to students who demonstrate high potential, have overcome adversity in their lives, and participate in the URC.

## SENIOR ALUMNI WELCOME

On May 13, we celebrated the Class of 2015 at Gallery 51 by officially welcoming our graduating students as members of the MCLA Alumni Association. In addition, graduating students that participated in the student philanthropy program were recognized at this event when Alumni Association Board of Directors President Cheryl Starr Boilat '79, M.Ed. '97 and Vice President Ben Lamb '07 presented them with their student philanthropy spirit cords.



## CONNECTIONS HAPPEN HERE

Join your peers in participating in The Alumni Online Community! Reconnect and make new connections using the alumni directory where you can view and edit your personal alumni profile, search for friends or other alumni by major, city, or class year, enter and view class notes, and post or view opportunities on our online job board. Our members have begun making meaningful connections with the College and each other. Join them today by visiting [alumni.mcla.edu](http://alumni.mcla.edu).

*Please note: Alumni community members will have access to each other's name, address, e-mail, and place of employment and position through our alumni directory. If you would like any of this information made private, please log in and update your privacy settings in your profile, or contact Annual Giving Program Manager Nikki Lotter '06 at (413) 662-5193 or [N.Lotter@mcla.edu](mailto:N.Lotter@mcla.edu).*



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## TACONIC SOCIETY DONOR RECOGNITION BRUNCH

MCLA honored members of the Taconic Society at an annual brunch, held in April this year at The Williams Inn. Members contribute \$1,000 or more each year to support MCLA. Support from Taconic Society members significantly enhances the College's ability to provide students with a quality education.

**1)** Former trustee Gene Leibowitz with student trustee Alyson Stolz '15 and brunch keynote speaker Ama Bemba Adwetewa-Badu '15. **2)** John DeRosa, trustee of the Ruth Proud Charitable Trust, which funds the annual fall Michael S. and Kitty Dukakis Public Policy Lecture and the annual spring Public Policy Lecture at MCLA.



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## SAVE THE DATES

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2015**  
MCLA Athletics Golf Classic

**OCTOBER 16-18, 2015**  
Reunion & Fall Family Weekend



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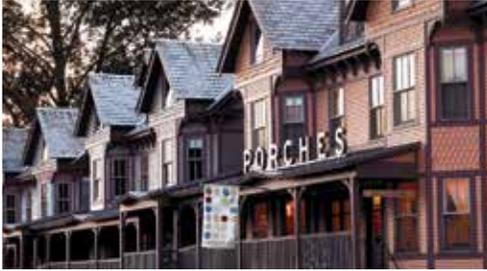
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