

**NCCCALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION**  
**FALL 2016**



**Lester Robinson**



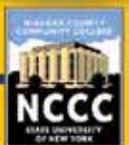
**Laura Schuler**



**Melanie Tisdale**

**A Magazine for Niagara County Community College Alumni**

**INSIDE: Melanie Tisdale '73 | Lester Robinson III '87 | Laura Schuler '04**



## NCCC President

Dr. James P. Klyczek

## NCCC Foundation

Deborah Brewer, Director  
Patricia Klinger  
Allison Kortz

## Alumni Committee

Dr. Martin H. Drake '75, Chair  
Jeff DiMayo '13  
Dan Jackson '99  
Colleen Johnson '96  
Nicholas Klender '13  
Dr. Michael Lafever '70  
Samuel Messina '73  
Christina Cerrone Pecoraro '06  
Lester Robinson III '87  
Julie Short '87  
James Turner '86  
Ron R. Winkley '78  
Ronald Winter, Esq. '74

## Board of Directors

Jerald I. Wolfgang, Chair  
David R. Bonnevie, DDS, '74, Vice Chair  
Donna J Bryk, Secretary  
David I. Karwick, Treasurer  
William A. Bevacqua  
Ann Briody Petock  
Vincent A. "Jimmy" Cancemi '68  
Peter I. Certo '73  
Maria Crea, MD  
David J. DiCamillo  
Dr. Martin H. Drake '75  
Jane N. Haenle  
Michael Hooper  
Chuck Kilroy  
Jack Kopczynski  
Robert MacDonald Jr.  
James A. Mezahir '68  
Marc O'Hearn  
Christina Cerrone Pecoraro '06  
Fred Rickan, '81  
Lester Robinson III, '87  
William L. Ross  
Jayne Schaber  
Kurt T. Schuler '78  
Geraldine Sdao  
Gary Siddall  
Steven Sinclair  
Melanie Tisdale, Esq. '75  
James Turner '86  
Gina I. Virtuoso  
Ron R. Winkley '78

Stay Connected with the  
NCCC Alumni Association



# INFLUENTIAL ALUMNI

## Ellen Latham '77

Growing up on Ontario Street in Niagara Falls, Ellen Latham always had a future connection to NCCC. Her father, Arthur Calandrelli, was once a popular gym teacher in the city. He believed in the importance of education, physical fitness, and giving back to your community which he then passed down to Ellen.

"NCCC offered courses that prepared me for what I wanted to specialize in with my future." After graduating from NCCC in 1977 with an Associate's Degree in Arts and Science, Ellen went on to earn her Bachelor's in Physical Education and her Master's in Exercise Science from SUNY at Buffalo. "NCCC presented me an intimate environment that allowed me to successfully focus and achieve."



And achieve she did. Now 60-years old, Ellen is the creator and owner of Orangetheory Fitness. What makes this fitness program different though is that all of your 60-minute workouts are tracked wearing a wristband that monitors the pace and color of your workout effort for all to see on an overhead board. The classes are designed for every level of fitness with a personal trainer. Ellen pledges to help customers lose between 500 and 1,000 calories during each hour-long session. For 24-36 hours after your workout, Ellen says you'll continue to burn extra calories.

Following in her father's beliefs, Ellen is on the verge of opening her third studio in Buffalo. She is determined to leave her mark on this community. By the end of 2016, she plans to have opened over 1,000 boutique franchises throughout the country. Through all of this though, she remembers to stay humble and think of her father. "He taught me how to focus on what you have, not what you don't have and reach for the stars." NCCC honored her this May as the 2016 Keynote Commencement Speaker where she told the graduates to have "relentless focus" and "believe in yourself" just as she did.

## Ron Winkley '78

Councilman, trustee, public servant, educator, Chief of Police, and NCCC Foundation chair are just some of the titles that '78 Criminal Justice alum Ron Winkley has been given. Adding to that list is 2016 recipient of the Town of Lewiston Citizen of the Year award. This is the second time Ron has received the award.

Ron first began his career in Criminal Justice by working summers at the Niagara County Jail. He then earned his Associates at NCCC followed by his Bachelors at the Rochester Institute of Technology and Masters from Niagara University. He also graduated from the FBI National Academy. In 1981, Ron joined the then-Lewiston Village Police Department where he worked as Chief of Police for 26 years until his retirement in 2007.



Throughout his time on the force, Ron spent 18 years teaching D.A.R.E, was instrumental in the consolidation of the Village and Town of Lewiston police departments, and served as a liaison for the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy. Upon retiring from the police force in 2007, Ron became a full-time professor at Niagara University, served as a Village of Lewiston trustee, was a member of the Town of Lewiston Council in 2010, and Chair of NCCC's Foundation from 2011-2013. He is currently a Foundation Board member at NCCC and has been honored as a Distinguished Alumni. Congratulations Ron!

# 30 UNDER THIRTY



## Denyel (Koury) Beiter '07

Denyel graduated from NCCC with her degree in Communications & Media Art. She then received her Bachelor's in Communication from SUNY Geneseo. For more than four years, Denyel worked as the Alumni Development Specialist at Niagara County Community College's Foundation Office. She is now a Staff Assistant for the University at Buffalo's Center for Excellence in Writing. NCCC Foundation Director Deb Brewer said that she couldn't be more proud of Denyel on her accomplishments. Way to go Denyel!



## Michael Henderson '11

Graduated from Niagara County Community College with his degree in Computer Aided Drafting & Design. He has been the Account Executive at BlueCross and BlueShield of Western New York since 2012. Before that, he was the Sales Director at Martin's Fantasy Island. Congratulations Michael!

## Lana Perlman '06

Received her Liberal Arts degree from Niagara County Community College before working as the Director of Visitor Services at Niagara Tourism & Convention Corp. There she is responsible for enhancing the visitor experience of Niagara. Previously, she worked as the Director of Community Education at NCCC. Keep making Niagara stronger Lana!

## Nikole Wynn '07

After earning her degree from Niagara County Community College in Humanities & Social Science, Wynn became Owner and Attorney of the Law Office of Nikole M. Wynn. She also works as a Staff Attorney for the Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc. Well done Nikole!

## CLASS NOTES:

### Jill Palermo '95

Jill Palermo majored in Liberal Arts at Niagara County Community College before attending Buffalo State College for Criminal Justice. In 2001, she graduated from the University at Buffalo with her Master's Degree in Library Science. For over 25 years, Jill has worked for the Lewiston Public Library and is currently the Director. She is an advocate for libraries as a necessity to the community and supportive of the new Learning Commons at NCCC.

### Cristina Virtuoso '03

A graduate of Niagara County Community College in 2003, Cristina continued on to receive both her Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Nursing from the University at Buffalo. She recently joined the clinical staff at Niagara Falls Memorial's Summit Family Health Center and Lewiston Primary Care Center.

### Laura Cherry '88

Laura Cherry graduated from Niagara County Community College in '88 with her Associate's Degree in Nursing. She then attended Liberty University for her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing and is currently pursuing her Master's in Nursing Education. She was named Director of Quality Management at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center.

### Phil Tripi '92

Criminal Justice graduate Phil Tripi won his second gold at the World Police and Fire Games in wrestling. In the 2011 games, he won a gold medal in the bench press. The 46-year-old is currently a patrolman for the Niagara Falls Police Department and spends his free time coaching his sons on their high school wrestling team.

**DO YOU HAVE PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL UPDATES WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOUR CLASSMATES?**

Simply fill out our easy form online at [http://www.niagaracc.suny.edu/alumni/alumni\\_info.php](http://www.niagaracc.suny.edu/alumni/alumni_info.php) and you may be featured in the Class Notes section of our "Connections" magazine.



# ALL IN THE FAMILY

## Melanie Tisdale '73

“There are no books on the basics to prepare for this trip!” Melanie exclaimed. I laughed, but began to wonder the same thing as to what exactly I would pack if I were sailing from Youngstown to the Bahamas over the next few months like alumna Melanie Tisdale is planning to do with her husband. “We don’t have a plan as to how long we’re going to be gone for. It’s for as long as we like.”

With no timeframe, no exact plan, and no idea of what one will actually need, it’s a good thing that sailing has been a big part of Melanie’s life since her early 20’s. She was the first female Commodore of the Youngstown Yacht Club and over the past 30-years has raced with her husband in places such as San Diego, Chicago, and Lake Erie. She has been fortunate enough to have experience cruising for several weeks at a time, but never for a few months. She told me, “I’m taking this trip because ten years from now I don’t want to look back and regret not doing all of this.”

## “I just hope that I can pass on some of the things that are meaningful in life and help apply them to NCCC.”

Her lifelong excursion began when she was 8-years old moving to the Niagara area from England. She chose to attend NCCC with an idea of what she wanted to do, but not being entirely sure. During that time, NCCC was in the process of being built. “It looked like a really nice campus and I knew that my credits could always transfer.”

In 1973, Melanie received her Associate’s Degree in Legal Secretarial Science from NCCC. “I was always leaning towards law, but this program helped reassure me of what I was looking to do.” Throughout her time here, she was a member of Phi Theta Kappa, wrote for the Spirit Newspaper, and participated in theater. “Sometimes people think that you’re not getting the same level of education if you were at a four-year school. You’re luckier at a two-year school because you actually get to connect with your professors in a way that you don’t at a larger school and we’ve had some really great professors.”

In an effort to find a way to give back to NCCC, Melanie began working there. For over ten years, she was a Technical Assistant in the Learning Skills Center testing incoming students on reading, writing, and math for their basic skills placement. While working there, she put herself through her Bachelor’s Degree graduating from Buffalo State College. Afterwards, she continued on to Law School and graduated in 1988.

Over the next 25-years, she pursued her dream of opening her own practice of Tisdale Coykendall. She was also a member of the Division of the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo, Chair of the NCCC Scholarship Committee, and currently serves on the Foundation Board of Directors at NCCC. In her spare time, amongst her passion for sailing, she enjoys photography and graphic design work.

Recently, she has taken a leave of absence to set sail to the Bahamas, but has never forgotten the impact that NCCC has played in her life. When asked why she thinks it is important to give back, she responded, “I just hope that I can pass on some of the things that are meaningful in life and help apply them to NCCC. When I work on things such as the Foundation Scholarship Committee it feels good because it fulfills a real need of the students and allows me to be personally involved instead of just monetarily. NCCC is a Smart Place to Start and really allows you the opportunity to set a goal and achieve it.”

# 2016 ANNUAL FUND

A gift to the Foundation at NCCC is a long-term investment in Our Community.



**NCCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

**“The Pursuit of Excellence in Education.”**  
*That’s Our Mission*

## NCCC ALUMNI DONATION FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ MAJOR \_\_\_\_\_ GRAD YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to make a tax deductible donation to:**

Annual Fund    Learning Commons Capital Campaign    Alumni Scholarship    Special Allocation: \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to make a tax deductible donation in the amount of:**

\$1,000 Patron    \$500 Blue & Gold Club    \$250 Thunderwolves Club    \$100 Friend    Other \_\_\_\_\_

**METHOD OF PAYMENT**

Enclosed is a check made payable to the NCCC Foundation

Discover    Master Card    Visa

ACCOUNT # \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRATION DATE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

Please detach form and mail to **NCCC Foundation, 3111 Saunders Settlement Rd, Sanborn, NY 14132**. If you would like to make a contribution over the phone or in person, please call (716)614-5910. Please call for more information about memorial contributions, legacy giving, naming opportunities, or creating or contributing to a scholarship.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## Lester Robinson III '87



At some point in our lives, either ourselves or someone we know may need additional care. Nursing home costs are projected to rise to more than \$175,000 per year on average by 2021. Les Robinson, '87 NCCC Business Program graduate, asks the question, what are your financial plans?

Recently, Les has authored a new chapter to his guidebook titled, "The Essentials for Long Term Care Planning." Have you saved the hundreds of thousands it may require for professional care over multiple years; or would a long term care insurance policy make more sense for you? This guidebook challenges us to answer these key questions and more about the odds of needing care and the risks of not having a long term care plan.

Les is a Senior Long Term Care Planner, verified Agent, New York State Partnership Certified and Special Care Planner with over 25 years of experience in the industry. Since 2008, he has been on the NCCC Foundation Board and Alumni Association Committee. The guidebook can be provided to anyone via email through [les.robinson@acsiapartners.net](mailto:les.robinson@acsiapartners.net).

## Laura Schuler '04

"I don't see why anyone wouldn't want to go to NCCC," Laura says as we begin our interview. She is beaming with pride as she explains why giving back to NCCC is so important to her. "I love being able to say that I came back here, that I'm alumni, I volunteer, and that I'm able to teach." Laura Schuler, '04 Economic Crime Investigation alumna, has truly come full circle here.

After attending Newfane High School, Laura was fortunate enough to receive a Distinguished Student Scholarship from NCCC. This scholarship is the most prestigious award given to high school seniors in Niagara County offering two years of tuition-free education at NCCC for students who exemplify superior academics, community service, and commitment to the county. "It was nice that someone recognized my hard work and it made me feel like my time here really meant something." Laura now works as a police officer for the Lockport Police Department after graduating from Hilbert College with her Bachelor's in Economic Crime Investigation. She also earned her Master's in Criminal Justice Administration from Niagara University.

While continuing her work as an officer, Laura has come back to NCCC as an adjunct faculty to help students forge their own paths and embrace all that NCCC has to offer. She considers NCCC a really great place to start for everyone who attends. "Students are provided with a range of options from diverse electives to faculty and staff who have real world experiences to share." She loves when students outside of the program take her course as an elective because she believes it helps them expand their overall learning experience and maybe even consider a different career path.

The feeling of being able to help students is what continues to drive Laura forward. "Being a teacher is one of my favorite aspects of my career," she says. "I love being able to come here and watch the 'ah ha' moment that students get when something clicks with them; that is the best feeling in the world."



***Do you have a success story which you would like featured in your NCCC Alumni magazine? If so, share your updates with us by emailing [alumni@niagaracc.suny.edu](mailto:alumni@niagaracc.suny.edu). We look forward to hearing from you!***



▲ NCCC's first graduating class of 1965 celebrated their 50th reunion in August 2015 at the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute. A large breakfast buffet was served and guests had the chance to tour the facilities, watch chef Kara Weber bake a chocolate ganache cake, and later taste test it. Classmates were happy to reunite and bond over their time at Nabisco Tech.



▲ Thank you to our wonderful Presenting Sponsor for the second year in a row, The Rickan Group at Morgan Stanley, for their continued support on NCCC's annual 2016 Alumni 5k Race/Walk. The photo features Fred, Grant, Brent, and Eric Rickan all currently employed at The Rickan Group.



▲ The 2016 5K participants are taking off right at the start of the scenic Sanborn campus. To the right, Katie and Caroline Wojtaszek along with Jim Pedlow give this year's race a thumbs up!

**Interested in reconnecting with NCCC? Join the NCCC Alumni Association! Find out more information by emailing [alumni@niagaracc.suny.edu](mailto:alumni@niagaracc.suny.edu). You can also like us on Facebook at [fb.com/NCCCAumniAssociation](https://fb.com/NCCCAumniAssociation) or follow us on Twitter @NCCCAumni.**