

ALUMNI ANCHOR

PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

10TH EDITION
FALL 2024



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI:

Honoring Today's PSC Alumni Leaders



PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

JUNE 22, 2024



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS 2024

Seven trailblazers — Judge Gary and Carissa Bergosh, Dr. Richard Fountain, Rep. Michelle Salzman, Commissioner Michael Kohler, James “Jim” Reeves, Esq., and Senator Doug Broxson — were recently recognized as 2024 Pensacola State College Distinguished Alumni.

Marty Stanovich, president and CEO of First Tee Gulf Coast, served as the master of ceremonies for the awards gala held June 22 in the Jean and Paul Amos Performance Studio on the College’s Pensacola campus.

Also on hand for the celebration were 2022 Distinguished Alumni honorees — Gerry Goldstein,

Spirit of PSC; and Mary Hoxeng, Road Less Traveled award recipients.

Four of the honorees are also set to establish new \$25,000 endowed alumni scholarships. Judge Gary and Carissa Bergosh and their family are establishing the Bergosh Family Endowed Scholarship with the goal of supporting the “underdogs,” who may not have otherwise have an opportunity to attend college. Dr. Richard Fountain and his family are establishing the Cleveland Kennedy Fountain Memorial Endowed Scholarship in honor of Dr. Fountain’s son. Mr. Jim Reeves has established the Cara Morris, Madison

Bales and Stefanie Shaddock Endowed Scholarship in celebration of three of his long-time, exemplary employees. All honorees received contributions to the Alumni Association scholarship fund from friends in recognition of their selection as Distinguished Alumni.

The Pensacola State College Alumni Association has agreed to match each donor’s \$12,500 gifts to establish future endowed scholarships. Through the alumni matching scholarship program there are now 21 fully endowed scholarships.



MEET THE HONOREES

Circuit Court Judge Gary L. Bergosh serves the First Judicial Circuit of Florida. Over his 18-year career, Bergosh has presided over 50 civil jury trials, including complex civil cases such as *Accardo v. Brown*, 139 So.3d 848 (Fla. 2014), and more than 100 criminal jury trials, including death penalty cases and one concerning serial killer Craig Price.

Bergosh oversees civil, criminal and family law cases and presides over the Escambia County Veterans Court.

Adopted at age 12 by a U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class, Bergosh lived around the world as a child. His father inspired him to serve his country. After working as a teamster with United Parcel Service to pay for college, Bergosh earned a commission in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1989.

He served on active and reserve duty for 25 years, retiring as a lieutenant colonel. Bergosh's Marine Corps unit, the 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, was deployed with the First Marine



Mrs. Carissa Bergosh

Mrs. Carissa Bergosh was born and raised in Pensacola, Florida. The first person in her family to attend college, Carissa was awarded an academic scholarship in 1986 to Pensacola Junior College, where she earned an Associate of Arts degree. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education, cum laude, in 1989 from the University of West Florida.

Carissa began a lifelong career in education by teaching in the inner city schools of Memphis, Tennessee. After one year of teaching, she was

Division on Jan. 27, 2003, to fight the war against terrorism.

The New York Times selected Bergosh as the "Quote of the Day" for Feb. 1, 2003: "If I was not willing to do this, how could I expect my son or anybody else's son to answer our country's call?" he stated about being called to serve in Iraq.

He served as the Battalion's Executive Officer in Kuwait and Iraq during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Bergosh was nominated for the Bronze Star and awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his service.

During his legal career, Bergosh served as a Florida Assistant State Attorney, a senior attorney with the Department of Defense Office of the General Counsel, and a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney. He has overseen complex civil cases involving the Federal Tort Claims Act, Medical Care Recovery Act, Federal Claims Collection Act, and federal labor and employment litigation.

After Hurricane Ivan demolished NAS Pensacola in 2004, Bergosh was assigned legal review over \$1 billion in contracting and construction on the base and to advise the government on the largest mitigation project in the



selected to enter graduate school and earned a master's degree in Guidance Counseling and Personnel Services in 1991 from the University of Memphis.

From 1990 until 1996, Carissa continued her career in education by teaching in the Schools of Memphis, Manassas, Virginia, and the U.S. Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) (Okinawa, Japan) as both a classroom teacher and a guidance counselor.

In 1996, Carissa continued her career as a teacher/Guidance Counselor with the Escambia



Judge Gary Bergosh

history of the National Historic Preservation Act.

He also advised the Navy on environmental mitigation to allow for the U.S.S. *Ex-Oriskany*, a World War II-era aircraft carrier, to be sunk 24 miles off Pensacola, making it the largest artificial reef in the world.

In 2004, the Pensacola Business Journal selected Judge Bergosh as one of 40 up-and-coming individuals under 40 (40 under 40). In November 2021, he received the Florida Patriot Award from the Florida Bar Association.

Then, Second Lieutenant and Carissa Bergosh were married on June 16, 1990. They are the parents of sons, Alexander, 23, and Benjamin, 18.

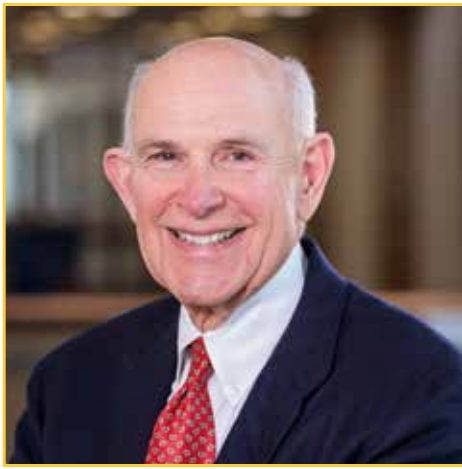
County School District at Bratt Elementary School, Bellview Elementary School and Blue Angels Elementary School.

In January 2003, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush appointed Carissa to serve on the Escambia County School Board in a Florida Constitutional political position for one year, due to an emergency vacancy.

Following her time on the Escambia County School Board, Carissa continued to

teach and volunteer in the school district. In 2009, she was selected as the first School Liaison Officer between Northwest Florida education agencies and Naval Air Station Pensacola.

As the School Liaison Officer, Carissa empowers military and Department of Defense civilian employees to advocate for their children and navigate through the area school systems' complex rules and regulations to assist in family readiness for the local military commands.



Dr. Richard Fountain

Dr. Richard Fountain is the Dean of the College of Business at the University of West Florida and a Clinical Professor in the Department of Accounting and Finance.

Named dean in January 2020, Dr. Fountain has led the university through the establishment of two new degree programs — Human Resource Management and Executive Master of Business Administrations: Leadership Practice and Purpose. UWF also established the Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz Center for Leadership, and the College of Business Hall of Fame during his tenure.

As dean, Dr. Fountain’s priority is to foster an increasingly strong relationship between students and the local community. He shares, “I love what I do at UWF — educating people and creating opportunities for them to thrive.”

Before becoming dean, Dr. Fountain was Chair of the Department of Accounting and Finance. During his two years as chair, he focused on recruiting for the Master of Accountancy program, more than doubling the number of new students joining the program since 2017.

Dr. Fountain has strengthened and built new relationships with local accounting firms and other businesses to increase student internships and permanent job opportunities. He established the Accounting and Finance Advisory Council, comprised of 25 community business leaders who serve as guest lecturers and mentors and aid in recruiting efforts. He’s cultivated relationships with colleges and high schools to recruit more undergraduates, resulting in the completion of an articulation agreement with Pensacola State College.

He has also served on the UWF Development Foundation’s Board of Directors and the UWF College of Business Advisory Council. He has been the faculty advisor for the Delta Sigma Pi business fraternity and on the national board for the Cenikor Foundation, serving as chairman from 2010-2012.

Before joining UWF, Dr. Fountain had a

successful 30-year law career in Mississippi. He helmed the Law Offices of Richard M. Fountain, P.A., which he founded in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1987. He earned a Master of Laws in Taxation from the University of Florida, a juris doctor from the University of Mississippi, a bachelor’s in accounting from UWF, and an associate degree from Pensacola Junior College.

He is a member of the Hinds County Bar Association and the Mississippi Bar Association. He also supports Pensacola High School Athletics, serving as voluntary historian and publisher of “Florida’s Oldest High School Football Team” and “A History of Pensacola High School Softball.”



Representative Michelle Salzman

Florida House of Representatives Michelle Salzman was first elected in November 2020 and is now in her second term as the District 1 Member of the Florida House of Representatives.

She currently serves as the Chair of the Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee. Her other committee assignments include the Appropriations

Committee, Health and Human Services Committee, the Rules Committee and the Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee.

Rep. Salzman is a business owner, philanthropist, wife, mother and a wounded warrior. She is a committed community volunteer and has served on numerous boards, such as Autism Pensacola, Escambia County Public Schools Foundation, and the Pensacola MESS Hall Foundation.

She also serves on the executive board for the Republican Party of Florida as the chair of the appointee caucus. Rep. Salzman served in the U.S. Army for five years and has a Computer Analytics and Business Administration degree.

Rep. Salzman’s leadership and local philanthropic efforts with community partners yield millions of dollars in fundraising annually and utilize hundreds of thousands of community service hours.

Rep. Salzman has followed her heart and passion to help those who cannot help themselves. This passion leads her to focus on children, families in poverty, and her fellow wounded veterans.

We want to hear from you! Share your story by emailing us at alumni@pensacolastate.edu or visit our website to stay connected. Alumni.PensacolaState.edu



Commissioner Michael Kohler

Escambia County District 4 Commissioner Michael Kohler ran for office for the first time in 2022 following a 33-year career in the U.S. Navy. His career began in 1988 in Pensacola as a hospital corpsman at Naval Hospital Pensacola.

Kohler's career concluded as the Executive Officer of Navy Medicine Operational Training Command — a tenet command onboard NAS Pensacola.

Kohler graduated from Pensacola Junior College in 1991 with an associate degree in

nursing. In 2004, he earned a Master of Education degree from the University of West Florida.

Active and engaged in his community, Kohler coordinated a Health Excellence Symposium for the greater Pensacola area from 1999-2001 and was vice chair of the Escambia County Republican Party from 2011-2014. He was the Rock N Fly Half Marathon and 5K race director from 2014-2020, raising over \$230,000 for the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.

Since 2012, Kohler has served on the Escambia County Health Facilities Authority, which has donated \$1.5 million to local nonprofits and managed \$1.4 billion in bonds for Escambia County. He resigned after being elected to the county commission.

Kohler and his wife, Shannon, are proud to call Pensacola home and are committed to improving the health and well-being of children. The couple has coordinated or supported numerous races and triathlons over the last 20 years. The committed athletes have together completed marathons in all 50 states.

Kohler is a member of AMVETS Post #12, American Legion Post 240, Escambia County Republican Executive Committee, Everman's COOP, Gulf Coast Navy Nurse Corps Association, National Rifle Association, Northeast SERTOMA, Pensacola Navy League, Pensacola

Military Officers Association of America, a Pensacola State College alumni, Tri Gulf Coast, USA Triathlon, University of West Florida alumni, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #706, Warrington Elks Lodge #2108, and West Florida Wheelman.

A persistent optimist, Kohler aims to have an ethical and trustworthy government. As a registered nurse (the most trusted profession across America for the last 21 years), he believes he has the skill set to make a positive change.

The Kohlers have three adult children and a pug named Jackson.



Mr. James R. Reeves, Esq.

Mr. James J. Reeves, Esquire, is a Pensacola real estate developer, served in the Florida House of Representatives, a former City of Pensacola Councilman, a founding member of the Irish Politicians Club (IPC), and a generous philanthropist.

He is the father of Pensacola's current mayor, D.C. Reeves, but his broad community involvement has been instrumental in the success of generations of Pensacola leaders. He has been a principal developer in high-profile real estate ventures, including Aragon and Pensacola Beach RV Resort.

Reeves grew up around East Hill with his parents

and brother, John. His life as a businessman started at age 11 when he was a Pensacola News Journal paper boy. After graduating from Pensacola High School, he enlisted in the U.S. Marines and attended Pensacola Junior College (now Pensacola State College).

Reeves earned his undergraduate degree from Florida State University and his law degree from Stetson University College of Law.

He serves on many boards, including the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, Pensacola Cultural Center, Tourism Development Council, Gulf Breeze Rotary, and the Downtown Improvement Board.

In 2022, Reeves was named a Pensacola State College Foundation Fellow for his significant contributions to the College. In 2015, Reeves and the Martin family were responsible for establishing the Molly McGuire Culinary Arts Endowed Scholarship. He encourages IPC members to donate funds to grow the scholarship each year. Since its establishment, Reeves and the Martins have grown the endowment to be one of the PSC Foundation's Top 10 scholarships.

Reeves' latest vision is a newly created \$250,000 endowed scholarship to train the incarcerated. The funds would allow inmates to earn workforce certificates in carpentry, plumbing, electrical, HVAC and welding. He believes these skills will help prevent recidivism and provide opportunities for constructing tiny home options for low-income families.

Over his lifetime, Reeves has received numerous awards, including the Mayor's Award for Revitalizing Downtown Pensacola from 1972-1977, Gulf Sides National Bank Chairman of Boards Certificate of Recognition for Charter Board Member and Legal Council in 1986, Gulf Breeze Rotary Citizen of the Year for 2010-2011, and the Florida Bar Association 50-year member distinction in 2012, to name a few. His favorite is the 1999 Gulf Breeze Rotary Rotarian of the Century award.

Reeves loves traveling with his wife, Susan. He has five children: James J., Michelle, Rachel, J.J., and D.C.





Senator Doug Broxson

Part of a Florida family that settled in the Santa Rosa County area in the early 1800s, Senator Doug Broxson, the youngest of Bart and Annie Gordon Broxson's 11 children, was born in Pensacola in 1949 at the old Sacred Heart Hospital. Doug grew up at Broxson Station on the Gulf Breeze peninsula.

In 1956, Broxson's father Bart was elected the Sheriff of Santa Rosa County and moved Doug and his family to Milton. Doug grew up in Milton, played football at Milton High School, and

graduated in 1967. Broxson attended Evangel University in Springfield, Missouri, and graduated in 1971.

During his college years, Broxson met and married Mary Bernhardt, and after graduating from college, Broxson moved his family back to Santa Rosa County, where he built a career in real estate, property insurance sales, and investments.

The Broxsons have four children — Julie, Jason, Judd, and Jill, and 12 grandchildren. He is an active member of Brownsville Assembly of God Church, and he spends much of his spare time with his family, fishing or boating, or taking part in community functions.

Broxson was elected to serve in the Florida House of Representatives in November 2010 and was subsequently re-elected in 2012 and 2014. While serving in the Florida House, Broxson championed cutting taxes and government regulations and worked to make Florida the most veteran-friendly state in the nation. In November 2016, Broxson was

elected to the Florida Senate, and re-elected in 2018, and 2020; continuing to proudly serve District 1 which includes Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa counties. Since serving in the Senate he has been a champion and advocate for introducing legislation to improve banking and insurance, as well as education.





THE CELEBRATION







MICHAEL THOMAS STEPS INTO ROLE AS INCOMING ALUMNI BOARD PRESIDENT OF PSC



A LIFELONG BOND FORMED AT PSC

Michael Thomas, the newly appointed Alumni Board President at Pensacola State College (PSC), reflects fondly on his student days during the early 1970s. "I joined Delta Kappa Alpha Fraternity mostly because my buddies were pledging, so I followed suit," Thomas recalls. "I didn't put much thought into it, and like a lot of things in life, you don't realize the impact until later." Little did he know that this decision would lead to lifelong friendships and a robust network of brothers spanning generations and continents. "A good

portion of my current circle, some fifty years later, are DKA Brothers," he says, emphasizing the fraternity's enduring connections.

A REWARDING ROLE ON THE ALUMNI BOARD

Thomas finds immense satisfaction in his role on the Alumni Board, particularly in contributing to the success of PSC students through scholarships. "The scholarships are helping students succeed, which is most rewarding," he states. His involvement has also given him valuable insights into the college's operations and its significant role in the Gulf Coast community. "Pensacola State College is a vital part of the Gulf Coast community," Thomas notes, highlighting the broader impact of PSC beyond its campus.

THE FUTURE OF THE MATCHING SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

One of the standout initiatives of the Alumni Association has been the highly successful matching scholarship program. When asked about its future, he expresses strong support: "Yes, I think the matching scholarship program is important and hope the Board Members do as well." This initiative has played a crucial role in providing financial assistance to students, ensuring they have the resources needed to achieve their educational goals.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS AND LOOKING FORWARD

Reflecting on his tenure with the Alumni Board, Thomas fondly mentions the annual PSC/DKA fishing trip in Louisiana. "The fishing trip has turned into a memorable weekend, and I have enjoyed getting to know those who have participated," he shares. This relaxed event provides an excellent opportunity for networking, building friendships, and, of course, catching a few fish.

As he steps into his new role as Alumni Board President, Thomas is most excited about meeting scholarship recipients. "Nothing is more important than helping someone reach their potential," he asserts, underscoring his commitment to supporting students.

A TRIBUTE TO LANE HARPER

Thomas also takes a moment to acknowledge the contributions of his predecessor, Lane Harper. "I'd like to hat-tip to the outgoing Alumni President Lane Harper. Lane has been active since the founding of the association and has been tireless in supporting many fundraising efforts. Thank you, Lane!" he says, expressing gratitude for Harper's dedication and hard work.

With a deep connection to PSC and a clear vision for the future, Michael Thomas is poised to lead the Alumni Board with passion and purpose, continuing to enhance the lives of students and the broader community.

LANE HARPER: REFLECTING ON A LEGACY OF SERVICE AND COMMUNITY AT PSC



A LEADER AND A FRIEND TO ALL

Lane Harper's name resonates with warmth and respect at Pensacola State College (PSC). Serving as the PSC Alumni Board of Directors President and a member of the PSC Foundation Board of Governors since 2016, Lane's leadership has been instrumental in fostering growth and unity within the PSC community. His tenure has been marked by memorable events like the Annual Quail Hunt and Pheasant Shoot, the Annual Fishing Excursion, alumni socials, and the biannual Distinguished Alumni Awards. Each event has strengthened the bonds among alumni and supported the college's mission.

Lane's vision and dedication have also been pivotal in expanding the alumni matching program, allowing donors to create endowed scholarships of \$25,000. Today, over twenty scholarships have been established, thanks to his efforts, providing vital support to students and helping them achieve their educational dreams.

When asked about his proudest achievements, Lane couldn't pinpoint just one. "I would say all of the events we've hosted, both fundraising and social, as well as the matching scholarships and opportunities for our alumni members to engage with us and network," he said. Lane deeply values the collaborative spirit and talent of his fellow board members, who have played a crucial role in the association's success.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

Lane credits his success in life to his start at Pensacola State College, formerly known as PJC. "PJC is where I got my foundation for business," he shared. Over 25 years, Lane built a successful office products company with seven locations across three states, ultimately selling the company to Staples in 2017. "We truly accomplished our American dream," he reflected, proud of the journey from his educational roots to entrepreneurial success.

For Lane, being part of the Foundation and Alumni Association is not just a role but a heartfelt commitment. "I have met so many wonderful

people and can say they are friends for life," he said, highlighting the deep, lasting relationships formed through his involvement with PSC.

CONTINUING A LEGACY OF SERVICE

Lane Harper's impact on the PSC Alumni Association is profound, and his contributions are deeply appreciated. Fortunately, Lane will continue to serve as an active member of the alumni board of directors, ensuring that his wisdom and passion for service continue to benefit the community. "I enjoy giving back to the community that has been so good to me," he said, capturing his enduring dedication to PSC.

As Lane looks to the future, he expresses confidence in the new president, Mike Thomas. "Mike has been a very loyal and dedicated member of our executive board since 2018. He has a true passion for PSC, and he will be a great leader going forward. Mike never wanted credit for all he has done for the college, but Mike is a major reason the Alumni Association has been so successful," Lane said.

Lane Harper's journey as PSC Alumni Board President is a story of dedication, growth, and community. His legacy is one of connection and service, leaving an enduring impact on Pensacola State College and its alumni. As he steps down from his role, the community looks forward to his continued contributions and the bright future ahead under Mike Thomas's leadership.

PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE ALUMNI AND ATHLETICS INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR THE

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SAVE THE DATE FEBRUARY 15 HOMECOMING CELEBRATION



Don't miss the Alumni social to start the festivities, followed by basketball and the crowning of PSC's Homecoming King & Queen.



ALUMNI ANCHOR

PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE

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Message from the President



Greetings from the Office of the President,

Pensacola State starts the Fall Semester with great excitement, with the groundbreaking of a women's soccer field, the start-up of an aviation airframe and power plant program at the Pensacola International Airport,

and the development of a diesel mechanics program in Santa Rosa County at the Truck Driver Training Center.

Two years ago, PSC began a dual College enrollment Charter High School Academy at the Warrington Campus, and the Florida Department of Education awarded the Academy a grade of "A" this year. Beginning this Fall, the Charter Academy will extend to include the 9th and 10th grades at the Warrington Campus and a new Career and Technical dual enrollment Chapter Academy at the Pensacola Campus for 11th and 12th grades. Students attending the Charter Academy work toward receiving an Associate

of Arts degree or Associate of Science degree upon completing their high school diploma.

The 10th Edition of the Anchor also highlights seven Distinguished Alumni recognized for their contributions to PSC and the community. Events to look forward to this coming year include the Pars 4 Pirates Golf

Tournament on November 15th, Homecoming on February 15th, and numerous exhibits at the Charles Lamar Studio Visual Arts Department and performances at the Ashmore Performing Arts Theatre. Fall intercollegiate sports competitions include women's cross-country, women's volleyball, and women's soccer; winter intercollegiate sports

begin our men's and women's basketball season, and in the spring baseball and softball. All sports' schedules can be found on the PSC Athletic web page. Athletics.pensacolastate.edu



GET CONNECTED &
STAY CONNECTED

Join the Pensacola State College
Alumni Association.

