



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Women's basketball remains perfect in conference play

Stella Johnson remains the nation's leading scorer, averaging 25.2 points per game and helping the team get off to its best start since becoming a Division I program.

Hearing will consider future of WCC litigation



Stephanie Jessiman/The Rider News

By **Stephen Neukam**

A potentially pivotal hearing is set in the lawsuits against Rider for its planned consolidation of Westminster Choir College (WCC) from its Princeton campus to Lawrenceville in September.

The hearing, slated for Feb. 14 in front of the New Jersey Superior Court, will consider the university's motion to dismiss both of the lawsuits against it — one from a group of alumni and faculty and the other from 71 current students of WCC.

Bruce Afran, the attorney for the Westminster Foundation, which is the alumni and faculty group working to stop the sale or movement of the school, said that he expected the court to not dismiss the case based on his experience but conceded that every court and case is different.

If the court decides to grant the university's motion to dismiss, both parties suing the school would appeal, according to Afran.

The hearing comes in the midst of Rider moving forward with construction and renovation projects on its Lawrenceville campus — part of the \$16 million to \$20 million consolidation plan announced after the sale of WCC to a Chinese education company was aborted in July 2019.

As the timeline on the consolidation plan condenses, the university has continued to surge ahead with plans to accommodate WCC students, staff and faculty — all while the uncertainty of the legal situation hovers overhead.

Associate Vice President for University Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown said in a statement to The Rider News that the university would continue its policy of not commenting publicly on the ongoing litigation.

"The university remains highly focused on the upcoming transition of Westminster Choir College to the Lawrenceville campus this coming fall, and are grateful for the many individuals from both campuses working so diligently on the details of this move," said Brown.

The impending hearing and continued court action leave those opposed to the move, including the students signed onto the lawsuit, in a difficult limbo: holding



The Feb. 14 hearing will decide if the lawsuits against Rider will be dismissed or not.

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MIDSEASON UPDATES

Austin Ferguson and Dylan Manfre detail the men's and women's basketball teams' seasons to date.

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Sports editor remembers Kobe Bryant's legacy.

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SECURITY BRIEFS

BY STEPHEN NEUKAM

Swiper no swiping

Lost and not found. On Feb. 1 at 12:10 p.m., a female student reported to Public Safety that she left her bookbag in the Bart Luedeke Center on Jan. 31 around 7 p.m. and when she came back it was missing. The bag is still missing and there are no suspects.

Room and board

Stranger interaction. On Jan. 31 at 7 p.m., a female student reported to Public Safety that a female that she did not know asked her if she could leave her bag in her dorm room while she attended the basketball game on campus. The student said yes and reported to Public Safety officers that she did not know the girl. Public Safety was able to identify the female, who was not a student but was friends with a Rider student. Officers were able to retrieve her bag.

Door troubles

That's not how you knock. On Jan. 30 at 4:10 p.m., a male student called Public Safety to report that when he returned to his room at about 2:30 p.m., his door appeared to be vandalized and wanted the door repaired. He was unaware of how the door became damaged and did not find anything in his room missing.

— Information provided by Public Safety Director James Waldon

University, Princeton Public Schools discuss WCC campus

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out hope for a favorable court decision while also preparing to move to Lawrenceville in a matter of months.

Junior sacred music and voice performance major Victoria Vazquez, who helped organize the 71-student suit, said that she was “looking forward to” the court hearing and “the ability to gain more information on next steps for the Westminster community.”

The dilemma of moving forward full-throttle on consolidation with the possibility of a major legal roadblock is a problem, Afran said, that could be solved with an injunction ordered by the court to temporarily halt the move — a step that might be requested by the parties suing the university and plans for which have been discussed.

On top of undergoing the renovations and construction on its Lawrenceville campus, partnered with the efforts to litigate the two lawsuits, the university has continued its search to find a partner to cash in on the land in Princeton.

In an interview with The Rider News in October 2018, Rider President Gregory Dell’Omo said that the plan was to “pay ourselves back” with the land in Princeton to make up for the resources put into renovations and construction.

The search has included contact with Princeton Public Schools (PPS), which is looking to expand due to increased enrollment projections, about the future of the WCC property.

At a December 2019 PPS Board of Education meeting, Superintendent Steve Cochrane said that the school system and Rider had engaged in “fact-finding” conversations about the legal problems facing the WCC consolidation.

Brown again declined to comment on any discussions the university has had with other parties about the Princeton campus.

Afran was doubtful about the university’s chance of selling the land — at least any time soon.

“Rider has been a little delusional on their ability to sell the Princeton campus,” said Afran. “The only way Rider can sell even one acre of land is if it settles all these lawsuits or it wins them.”

Sexual misconduct on campus raises questions about safety

By Tatyanna Carman

A report of unwanted sexual contact in Wright Hall on the Lawrenceville campus and a report of sexual assault in Seabrook Hall on the Princeton campus of Westminster Choir College were announced to the Rider community on Dec. 17.

The sexual contact report occurred on Dec. 17 and the sexual assault report occurred on Dec. 15. In both cases, the perpetrators were known by the victims and were not students of the university. Both of the victims were women and both of the perpetrators were men, according to Public Safety Capt. James Flatley.

“The anti-harassment and non-discrimination policy, there is nothing in there about sexual contact, but we probably could’ve worded it a little differently it was a case of fondling for the sexual contact, but the sexual assault was a more serious offense,” said Flatley.

He quoted the state law’s definition of sexual contact, which is “an intentional touching by the victim or actor, either directly or through clothing of the victims or actors intimate parts for the purpose of degrading or humiliating the victim or sexually arousing or sexually gratifying the actor, sexual contact of the actor with himself must be in view of the victim when the actor knows to be present.”

According to Flatley, Public Safety issued a persona non grata, which informs the perpetrators that they are no longer welcome back on either campus and they would be subject to arrest for trespassing if they are found on either campus.

Junior journalism major and Wright Hall resident Andriana Rice-Gilmore expressed her thoughts on the incident. She found out while she was with her cheerleading team at a basketball game on the night of Dec. 17.

“It’s definitely safe to say that me and my teammates were all shocked. Not only because it’s here on campus, a lot of us live in Wright. So to hear that another person that lives at Wright, we were all really shocked. We were all really surprised because you never expect it to happen but you know it can happen,” she said.

Rice-Gilmore also shared the effects that the incidents had on the Rider community.

“The sad part is that I could have been in my room. I could have been able to hear it and help someone but unfortunately I was not,” said Rice-Gilmore. “I know that because of this a lot of people have been bringing up other incidents on campus that have happened before. I definitely think people are aware of



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Wright Hall, a residence hall designated only for females, is one of the locations where an incident of sexual misconduct occurred in December.

the situation and there are people that it has happened to. I think some people are afraid to come out and say something. It’s what happens and it’s sad that it’s normal.”

Rice-Gilmore commended Rider for notifying students quickly about the incidents that occurred and for withholding private information. However, she did give some suggestions on how the university can be safer.

“Honestly, one thing that really bothers me is the safety on this campus, for it to be such a private, small campus and for us to be located where we are located,” she expressed. “It’s very busy where we’re located. I feel as though we should have, you know we have those gates there, but they do nothing. Anyone can come on this campus at any time and it’s very dangerous. People walk on this campus at all hours of the night, maybe so much as taking a walk and something can happen. I definitely think Rider should crack down more on their safety and really realize who they’re letting on to this campus without knowing.”

Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning Debbie Stasolla responded to this concern. According to Stasolla, the university decided to no longer restrict traffic on the Lawrenceville campus during evening and overnight hours. She said, “We found that it did not effectively serve as a deterrent or safety measure and detracted from the welcoming community that we are. Most college campuses across the country, including our own Princeton campus, do not restrict traffic on and off their campuses so we are now more aligned with national practices.”

Stasolla also said it is not uncommon for students and others to invite those they know onto campus.

“Given the open nature of our campus, we provide Public Safety coverage 24/7, including an officer stationed evenings and overnight at the back of campus, and have blue light emergency phones and cameras located strategically throughout campus,” she said. “We encourage students to take basic safety precautions such as walking together late at night, programming 911 and Public safety numbers in their phones, paying attention to their surroundings, reporting suspicious activity and persons to Public Safety, not propping open residence hall doors and not letting anyone into the residence hall that you don’t know.”

Rice-Gilmore also said that she hopes that people encourage their friends to put an end to sexual misconduct on campus and suggested that Rider’s programs should have a more “comfortable and natural” environment to talk about the topics surrounding sexual misconduct.

Prevention Education Coordinator Susan Stahley said that she will continue to raise awareness about consent and the power of bystander interventions amongst other topics.

“I can not do this work alone and encourage students to also have conversations with others, how they can prevent harm to others,” Stahley explained. “New students to campus are all required to complete the online educational programs through Everfi (AlcoholEdu & Sexual Assault Prevention for College). Prior to these incidents, plans have already been in the works to offer online refresher programs to all students.”

Stahley also gave students some advice on how to stay safe on campus. Her number one word of advice was to “watch out for one another.” She promoted Rider’s agreement with Womanspace, which allows the organization to come to the Public Safety building and have free confidential conversations with students.

“I also want the community to help reinforce that it is never ever the victim’s fault. No one asks to be assaulted, it doesn’t matter what you wear, if you drank [or] used drugs, who you choose to be with or where to go....No one is ‘asking for it’. I need others to echo this message around our campus community and speak up if they hear someone blame the victim,” Stahley said.

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6

Dashiki Day

All day, Lawrenceville Campus

Join RASA and other students and staff for Dashiki Day. Represent African culture in your favorite dashiki or African clothing and show it off around campus.

Sponsored by RASA

7

"Colorful Connections" in Sports

*5 to 6:30 p.m., Student Recreation Center Courts
7 p.m., Alumni Gym*

Join us as we bring in the spring 2020 semester with a festive night to remember! The evening will begin with a pre-game mixer to connect students of color with like faculty, staff and alumni. Immediately following, during the men's basketball game, the "Colorful Connections" Group will be acknowledged. One lucky student will win an HDTV! Raffle tickets will be distributed at the mixer and the winner will be announced during the game.

Sponsored by Men's Basketball, Rider Athletics, Center for Diversity and Inclusion

10

Waist Bead Class

9:30 to 11 p.m., Mercer Room in Daly Dining Hall

Join RASA in its first annual Waist Bead Class. Come out and learn the history behind waist beads and learn how to make your own personal waist beads.

Sponsored by RASA

13

Black Love in the Media

9:30 to 11 p.m., Mercer Room in Daly Dining Hall

While presenting, students will make Valentine's Day cards for community service and talk about Black Love in Media at the same time.

Sponsored by BSU

18

Conversation Café: Contemporary Issues in Race, Class, and Gender (Brown Bag Event)

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Rue Auditorium (Sweigart 115)

Conversation Café is back with Contemporary Issues of Race, Class and Gender! Join us for a Brown Bag lunch discussion with students, faculty and staff panelists, where we will watch clips of films and engage in dialogue about the role of media in creating social change. We will have a panel discussion on media about the Black experience in America within the last five years. Films such as *Black Panther*, *Green Book* and *Moonlight* and television shows like *The Central Park 5* and *The People vs. O.J. Simpson* have been widely viewed to illustrate the Black experience in America. Although these cinematic and television experiences bring attention and representation to the media landscape, we will discuss their impact on the sociopolitical landscape.

Sponsored by Center for Diversity and Inclusion

23

Soul Food Sunday

*4:30 p.m., Daly Dining Hall (Lawrenceville campus)
Westminster Commons (Princeton campus)*

Enjoy the culinary delights of the cultural contribution of "soul food" from early African American generations that continue to satisfy our palates today! Join us for dinner on the Lawrenceville and Princeton campuses!

Sponsored by Gourmet Dining, supported by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion

23

Gospel Fest

5:45 to 7:30 p.m.,

Cavalla Room in the Bart Luedeke Center

Unite with us for a closing celebration of Black History Month through gospel song, dance and spoken word. Dessert will be served after the show. Enter the Bart Luedeke Center's Cavalla Room and experience enormous joy and excitement as performers from Rider University and surrounding areas end Black History Month on a high note! This event is free and open to the public.

Sponsored by Center for Diversity and Inclusion, BSU, BHA, and other Black organizations

24

Meet the Historians

9:20 to 10:20 p.m., Rue Auditorium (Sweigart 115)

Come out and meet our panelists who will pose as famous black historians. You can ask them questions about their time back then as well as what they stood for.

Sponsored by Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

26

GirlZ Room

9:20 to 10:20 p.m., Lynch Adler Hall 129

Come out and discuss what being a woman is all about! We will talk about how you care for yourself and the women who inspire you to keep going.

Sponsored by Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

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Town says permits expected later than administration predicted

By Stephen Neukam

Preparations for renovations are complete in two buildings across campus while a plan for “complete renovations” to Moore Library has been approved in preparation for the movement of Westminster Choir College (WCC) to Lawrenceville in September.

In Omega House, which up until the end of last semester housed students in the Fine and Performing Arts living learning community, demolition and abatement has been completed for a renovation plan that will turn the building into space for WCC faculty offices.

Days before Thanksgiving break last semester, residents in Omega House were told that they needed to be moved out of their rooms by Dec. 17. Most students ended up in Poyda Hall, while others were spread throughout various dorms.

The same process has also concluded in Gill Chapel, where renovations are expected to create new performing space and rehearsal spaces, 13 practice rooms, worship spaces and an expanded lobby.

To begin renovations in the buildings, the school needs permits from Lawrence Township. The university has said it expects the permits this month. However, according to the township’s Planning Board, the university has applied for three different permits and they are scheduled to be considered by the board



Courtesy of Rider University

Demolition in Gill Chapel has been completed, according to the university.

on March 16.

The work in Omega House and Gill Chapel are not the only changes coming to campus. In addition to the already-revealed plans for the Fine Arts Center, the Science and Technology Building and the Bart Luedeke Center, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs DonnaJean Fredeen announced in an email that plans for an overhaul to Moore Library have been agreed on.

Changes are expected for the top three floors of the library, according to the email. The renovations to the top two floors are intended to house the material from Talbott Library, the library on WCC’s Princeton campus. These renovations, according to Fredeen, are expected to include a top-floor space dedicated to

Talbott’s Special Collection and scores, choral music titles, sound and video recordings and more, along with new offices for Talbott faculty and staff on the third floor that will also include a new circulation area for the Princeton library’s materials.

According to the university, it is not expected that permits will be required for the changes in Moore Library. The work is expected to begin in March 2020.

Freshman sacred music major Jordan Klotz, who is a party to the 71-student lawsuit that was filed against Rider in October 2019, said that he was grateful for those in the process that have worked to make the transition as accommodating as possible but that the changes were insufficient to embody the prestige and history of WCC’s current stature.

“At the end of the day, revoking conservatory status from Westminster, a 20th-century musical icon, creates an atmosphere that does not cultivate the same musical and educational environment that WCC has had since its founding,” said Klotz.

The renovations are part of the \$16 million to \$20 million consolidation plan that the university announced shortly after the sale of WCC to a Chinese education company went under in July 2019.

Rider develops new accounting program to give students “competitive advantage”

By Tatyanna Carman

An accelerated accounting program will be added to the Norm Brodsky College of Business starting in fall 2020 and will include a yearly \$2,000 scholarship and a 30% discount on graduate courses.

The program will act as a four-plus-one, in which students will receive an undergraduate and graduate degree as well as a dual accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International after graduating the program, according to the Rider University website.

Interim Dean of the Norm Brodsky College of Business Eugene Kutcher shared what the program would add to the college.

“I think it will show our students, and potential students, that we are here to provide pathways to achieving their goals and preparing them for career,” Kutcher said. “If we can assist with respect to the financial and time-based elements of the education, it puts the focus on our faculty who want them to succeed, on the community that supports their development and engagement, and on the solid curriculum that we provide.”

According to Chair of the Department of Accounting Margaret O’Reilly-Allen, the program was created “as a response to the accounting profession’s requirement for certified public accountants (CPA) to have 30 additional credit hours in addition to a bachelor’s degree.” She also went in-depth as to how the new program, its scholarship and discount came to be.

“We recognized that many students did not pursue a MAcc [Master’s of Accounting] due to the cost. So, as the business world becomes more complex and more young professionals have master’s degrees, the Accounting Department worked with Rider’s Enrollment Management Department to develop a program in which accounting majors can earn a master’s degree prior to entering the world of work by seamlessly moving into their graduate year,” O’Reilly-Allen said.

O’Reilly-Allen said the accounting department and enrollment management wanted to make the MAcc as affordable as possible so students would have a “competitive advantage,” and benchmarked against other graduate programs and scholarships to Rider students.

“Many MAcc students already do this, so they would have eight or nine classes remaining in the MAcc. For example, if a student takes two MAcc courses while still [being] an undergraduate they only have eight courses left in the graduate program, and at a 30% discount, this is a savings of approximately 50% of full tuition. Students are also still eligible for scholarships from the accounting profession,” she said.

She also explained that with an additional year, students could earn a MAcc and work at a paid

internship or co-op and still take the CPA exam, which she said is useful because new accountants have difficulty finding time to study for the CPA exam.

For the accelerated program, the MAcc has 10 graduate courses and students who both meet the undergraduate course requirements for graduation and a minimum GPA, can take one or two MAcc classes during their last undergraduate semester as part of their undergraduate tuition, according to O’Reilly-Allen.

Master’s of Accountancy graduate student Adriana Tirado pursued her undergraduate and graduate degree as a three-plus-one. She is expected to graduate in spring 2020. She found out about the accelerated MAcc program and felt as though it made the “most sense” to stay at the school.



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

“I had spoken a lot with the chair of the accounting department, Dr. O’Reilly-Allen, about my possibilities and path I should take. She was extremely helpful in making sure that I was able to balance my work load and do valuable internships throughout the time as an undergraduate,” Tirado said. “I loved all the professors I had in undergraduate school and a lot of them teach graduate classes so I knew I was going to get to most out of my education staying at Rider with some of the best professors.”

She also explained that Rider gave her the foundation for what she needed in order to be successful at her internships by knowing key concepts and how to apply them. In the summer of 2019, she interned at an accounting firm, Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG), which is one of the big four accounting firms. As a result, she accepted a full-time position there. She also interned at WilkinGuttenplan and Mercadien. Tirado said the program allowed her to map out her career and get a “jump-start” on her life.

“With the accelerated program I have [the] opportunity to finish all four parts of my CPA before I start working. This is a huge incentive for me since studying for the CPA is comparable to a full-time job and being able to have this exam already done before I start working lifts a weight off my shoulders.”

Another Master’s of Accountancy graduate student Daryna Chumak

explained how the program strengthened her skills outside of Rider.

“Due to the accreditation this program has in the business world and my hard work, I was able to attain a six month financial planning and analysis co-op at Johnson and Johnson as a freshman,” Chumak said.

“In addition, I completed numerous other professional opportunities, a tax internship at Alliance Wealth Management Group, [a] tax and audit internship at WilkinGuttenplan, an advisory Internship at Ernst & Young and I will be starting full time in audit at Deloitte in Fall 2020.”

The courses within the accelerated program are related to MAcc and MBA. Students will take courses in financial and managerial accounting, auditing, tax, data mining, professional research and communication.

O’Reilly-Allen said, “The Accounting Department is grateful to the university for developing this accelerated program to offer our students the opportunity to earn their MAcc in one and at a significantly [lower] cost than in the past and at other universities.”

Former field hockey player charged with first-degree murder

By Lauren Minore

A former Rider University student was arrested and charged with first-degree murder in December in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, following the shooting death of a Missouri woman, according to local authorities.

Former Rider field hockey goalkeeper Grace Huff was held at the Oklahoma County Jail without bail, according to Oklahoma’s News 4. According to Rider athletics records, during her freshman year in 2016, she appeared in six games. Huff was not listed on the field hockey roster in subsequent years.

The victim, 20-year-old Montanah Sullivan, and Huff were riding in a car together with other passengers on Dec. 27, Oklahoma’s News 4 reported that Oklahoma City Police Department Master Sgt. Gary Knight said.

“At some point, while they were driving around in the same area as the hospital, one of the females discharged the firearm inside the vehicle striking the other one killing her,” Knight told the Oklahoma television station.

When asked for comment, the Department of Athletics deferred to Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications Kristine Brown who said Huff is no longer a student at Rider University.

According to the Oklahoma State Courts Network, Huff’s preliminary court hearing was scheduled for Feb. 6.

From Rider to the Rebovich Institute: The Micah Rasmussen story

By Stephen Neukam

SITTING in his second-floor office that overlooks a small road and sorority houses that line the far side of the sidewalk, Micah Rasmussen pointed to the political cartoons that hang from the wall opposite his desk.

“I have carried these — everywhere I have ever worked they have been on my wall,” said Rasmussen.

The illustrations, which all mocked or poked fun at Rasmussen, were from The Rider News in the late 80s and early 90s when he was an undergraduate at Rider University.

Rasmussen, the director of the Rebovich Institute for New Jersey Politics at Rider University, was surrounded in his office by political memorabilia of the past — campaign pins, posters, pictures and letters. The ambiance provided the perfect context of understanding just who he is — a protagonist turned mentor who has accomplished a lot politically and continues to push the envelope with his future plans.

Rasmussen’s political journey, which has found him in a “dream” role at his alma mater, was perhaps foreshadowed by the activism in his family’s past. While he described his family as non-political, a pattern of organizing and involvement is clear. His grandparents helped organize a bus drivers and janitors union in Howell Township, New Jersey, and his mother started a petition drive to change the school board from appointed by the mayor to elected by the people (an endeavor in which she was successful.)

While these early experiences may not have defined a clear political ideology or affiliation, Rasmussen said they led to one of the most critical attributes of his career — the ability to question authority.

“My parents taught me that you do not take something at face value,” said Rasmussen. “Does that become a stubbornness because you don’t just accept? Yeah, there are times when it has been a stubbornness in my life.”

It was this tenacious and unshakable determination that made him one of the most popular and polarizing students while he was at Rider. It was the story behind the cartoons that hang on his office wall. It was the reason why he thinks that upon his graduation, some at Rider “wiped their brow and said, ‘shew, he’s leaving.’”

Part of the Student Government Association (SGA) executive board as a freshman, Rasmussen’s spars with The Rider News and the university’s administration made him notorious.

In one particular dispute with the administration over alcohol policy, Rasmussen challenged the university on students having a say in the social code of conduct.

The student newspaper criticized him when he won homecoming king his sophomore year, with its main sticking point being that the event hosted by SGA should not have any of the organization’s officers participating in it. This is the subject of one of the cartoons in Rasmussen’s office, with him standing on a podium with an SGA pin on, next to a banner that says, “HOMECOMING sponsored by the Student Government Assoc.”

“[The Rider News] thought that I was a populist trying to stir up sentiment on campus,” said Rasmussen.

Despite his starring in campus controversies, Rasmussen found his groove in the political science department.

“I had an absolutely amazing set of teachers,” said Rasmussen.

In particular, he developed a close relationship with former professor David Rebovich, who founded and is the namesake of the institute Rasmussen now leads.

Rebovich helped Rasmussen land his first internship, working on a state Senate campaign in Hamilton Township, New Jersey.

“It was the town where [Rebovich] lived,” said Rasmussen. “I saw that as a vote of confidence. If you’re sending me into the town where you live, you must think I’m halfway decent.”

Rasmussen admired Rebovich for his reputation and prestige in New Jersey politics. In fact, Rasmussen recalls aspiring to be like his former professor.

“I always wanted to be a pundit like he was,” said Rasmussen. “He was someone who was really relied upon for his opinion. He was the only guy talking about New Jersey politics at the time.”

With Rebovich’s nudging, mixed with his own stubbornness and persistence, Rasmussen started a career in helping and running campaigns in the state. In true personal form, he took on campaigns that had little chance of winning — he worked predominantly on Democratic campaigns in more conservative parts of the state. He joked that he only got the job because no one else wanted to manage the races.

“You know you’re going to be outspent, you know you’re outnumbered in terms of registration, you know the odds are against you,” said Rasmussen. “So you work harder and you work smarter than the other guy. That is how I made a reputation for myself — by winning races that we had no business winning.”

The reason for the success was simple to Rasmussen, and it culminates his college experience and professional career thus far:

“We didn’t take no for an answer.”

Rasmussen’s public career saw him move up the ranks of state government, working in the state legislature, holding the job of communications director for the state Department of Transportation and ultimately serving as the press secretary for New Jersey Governor James McGreevey amid the governor’s resignation in 2004.

Following a stint in private industry, where he primarily served in communications, Rasmussen’s professional career found him back on the Lawrenceville, New Jersey, campus where he spent his undergraduate years. In 2018, he was named the new director of the Rebovich Institute.

“I walked into the department during my interviews, and to see half of [my professors] still here was amazing to me after 25 years,” said Rasmussen. “I never expected that to happen.”

Nearly three semesters into his new position, Rasmussen has taken his place in what he described as a “more mature” university. Since taking control of the institute, Rasmussen has managed to bring the likes of New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, United States Congressman Jeff Van Drew and other prominent public officials and commentators to Rider.

While Rasmussen is instrumental in these visits and usually partakes in discussion with the guests, he said the most satisfying part of his job is working with students. He also teaches courses as an adjunct professor and helps coordinate internships for

interested students.

“The most rewarding part of my job is the chance to help students who are politically minded to really get a foothold in the world of politics in New Jersey and beyond,” said Rasmussen.

Rasmussen’s commitment to fostering student success in his brief time at Rider has had an impact on a number of the university’s students. Senior political science major Charles Palmer said that Rasmussen has gone above and beyond to assist students outside of the classroom.

“He’s personally taken the time to help me with my resume and offered career advice” said Palmer.

However, with his never-take-no mantra and work-harder-and-smarter attitude, Rasmussen has his eyes set to the future. He wants to grow the institute so that it is relevant to every student at the university — not just in the political science department.

With those goals in mind, he managed to reflect on his position — one, he said, he never wants to leave.

“It is a dream come true,” said Rasmussen. “I will continue to do this for as long as they will let me.”

Courtesy of Rider University



Micah Rasmussen, the director of the Rebovich Institute at Rider University, was an undergraduate at the university.

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GREEN FILM SERIES Spring 2020

Monday February 10th & Wednesday February 12th
A Concerned Citizen & STRAWS

****One Night – Two Short Films****

Monday March 9th & Wednesday, March 11th
Bigger Than Water

****Shared Read Event****

Monday April 6th & Wednesday April 8th
The Biggest Little Farm

All films will be shown in Sweigart Rue Auditorium
(Room 115) at 7p.m. Brief discussion to follow.

For more information, please contact:
Melissa Greenberg, Sustainability Manager
megreenberg@rider.edu

or the Eco-Rep team at broncsgogreen@rider.edu



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A “Starry” evening with actress Stephanie J. Block

By Jason Mount

THE Bart Luedeke Center Theater was abuzz on Jan. 27 with students and staff alike, chatting about the Tony award-winning actress who was about to grace the stage.

In front of the red curtain, a piano and microphone stand decorated the right side of the stage, while a pair of chairs were placed opposite. Members of the audience were sure that Stephanie J. Block had something dazzling in store for them.

When Block stepped on stage, she was met with loud cheering and thunderous applause.

“So you didn’t want to watch ‘The Bachelor’ huh? Yeah, I know your lives,” she responded, making light of the moment.

To start the night off, Block and her accompanist sang a variety of songs as a treat for the audience, including “I’m Breaking Down” from “Faretos” and a slower, soulful version of “Believe” by Cher.

Throughout Block’s performances, the audience was reactive: laughing during “I’m Breaking Down” and silently fixated during “Believe,” even bowing to Block when she was finished.

After her performances, Block moved to the chairs for a conversation with senior musical theater major and Student Entertainment Council member Anna Sanzone.

The first topic of the night was Block’s win of the Tony award for Best Actress in a Musical for her work as “Star” in “The Cher Show.” Block said that in the moments leading up to her win, she was mentally preparing for where she would stand during her acceptance speech.

“We were doing a performance for ‘The Cher Show’ just moments before, so beforehand I was going over doing it on stage right or stage left in my



Stephanie J. Block (right) sang a variety of songs and spoke about her experience as an actress.

head,” Block said. “Then it happened and it was center stage, and I was not prepared for center stage.”

On the topic of her work, Block talked about wanting to find her voice and trying to speak out to help the creative process of shows.

“My instincts were screaming at me to ‘stay in my lane’ as the kids call it,” Block stated, evoking a few giggles from the audience. “It didn’t work out for me. I didn’t say anything when audiences weren’t getting it. It was a rough go.”

Block also touched upon the value of her voice, commenting “the phrase ‘diva’ has a different understanding compared to the male voices.”

Ultimately, the award-winning actress explained that she resolved to speak against what she felt did not work for her shows, but accepted the things that made them human. She used her time in the 2009 musical “9 to 5” as an example, saying that she wanted to make her character Judy more outspoken, but could not deny the faults that make her human.

“We have to embrace what’s on the page. Embrace all of the flaws, all of the messy, because that’s what makes it human for the audience,” Block said.

After Block and Sanzone’s conversation, the audience was able to ask the Broadway star questions. One question evoked such an emotional response from Block that it almost brought her to tears.

Senior theater major Anna Meyer asked how Block balances being a parent and a working actress, a question that almost brought Block to tears.

“I could cry right now. It’s really hard...” Block started, her voice noticeably choking up. “But it makes it more meaningful. Every line, every lyric is deeper... It’s hard, but if it’s easy, we’re not living the way we’re meant to.”

Meyer explained that her question was motivated by her own personal dreams, and the response she was given inspired her.

“Being a mom is something that I have always wanted to be,” Meyer elaborated. “Having the chance to ask Stephanie J. Block what it is like to raise a kid and be on Broadway was a moment I will never forget. I didn’t expect her to tear up but that moment was so special and sweet. Her true emotions came out and it reminded me that actors, even famous ones, are people with normal lives.”

Perhaps the advice the audience resonated with most, however, was how Block handles being rejected in an audition: “I go into an audition, and I only want to win the audition. It’s easy to think that the audition could lead to a callback, which could lead to a casting, which could lead to this and that, but that puts a lot of pressure on us.”

Block continued, saying “It’s also empowering knowing you get to say ‘no’ sometimes too. That’s a beautiful thing.”

Cranberry and White Affair dances the night away

By Christian McCarville

THE Cranberry and White Affair is an event that has quickly become tremendously popular among Rider students. The event gives students a chance to show off their formal apparel as well as their most impressive dance moves.

“This event is open to the entire Rider student body. Students have the chance to show off their best formal fit on a night that includes dancing, good music and food,” said senior business management major and Executive Board President of the Student Entertainment Council (SEC) Goanio Chavarria.

Tickets for the Cranberry and White Affair were distributed on Jan. 30 and 31. Students were evidently excited for a chance to attend the event, as a line for tickets formed outside of the Student Leadership Suite. Rider students were also allowed to bring up to two registered guests. Space was limited, however, and guest tickets were given on a first-come-first-serve basis.

Sponsored by the Rider University Greek Council (RUGC) and the Office of Campus Life, the Cranberry and White Affair was held in the Cavalla Room in the Bart Luedeke Center (BLC) on Feb. 1.

“My favorite part was the atmosphere of the night. Being a part of Greek Life, you can go to something that everyone can attend,” said sophomore accounting major Cory Mayo. “It’s a nice way to give all students the experience of a formal.”

The Student Government Association (SGA), SEC and Residence Hall Association (RHA) also provided co-sponsorships in support of the event.

“With themes changing from year to year, the fun is kept in the event and gives students the opportunity to get creative and flashy,” said Chavarria.



Students attending the Cranberry and White Affair were able to have their photo taken by a professional photographer. Members of the Student Entertainment Center (SEC) used this opportunity to take a group photo. The SEC was co-sponsors of the event.



The Cranberry and White Affair took place in the Cavalla Room in the Bart Luedeke Center. Students began to populate the room after the event began at 7 p.m. The DJ kept the event going until it concluded at 11 p.m.

This year’s theme: the roaring 20’s.

Beginning promptly at 7 p.m., students began to file into the Cavalla Room in their elegant attire. The DJ played plenty of crowd favorites that could be heard from outside of the BLC. All who attended were also given the opportunity to have professional photographs taken by the entrance of the Cavalla Room. Many took advantage of this opportunity, as they did not want to forget this memorable night.

Refreshments and desserts were available to all attending students who had worked up an appetite on the dance floor. A unique beverage titled “Cranberry Bliss” was also served, paying homage to the university’s signature color.

As the event continued, more and more students arrived and joined in on the fun. The event hit its peak around 9 p.m., as the Cavalla Room was filled with dancing students, loud music and bright lights.

The Cranberry and White affair gradually came to an end as students grabbed their coats and returned to their respective dorms.

“I would go to Cranberry and White again, it’s something we get to experience for free that gives us something fun to do on a weekend, which is very important for a smaller school,” said Mayo. The event was certainly a success and will surely be making a return next year.

“This year was only the second year of Cranberry and White Affair. With both years being a success, it seems that this newly founded tradition is here to stay,” said Chavarria.

Gabriella LaVerdi/The Rider News



Don’t “drag” your feet: Come and see Rider’s Drag Race

By Cassandra Stathis

SASS, shade and style come back with Rider’s Drag Race, happening Feb. 8 in the Yvonne Theater at 8 p.m.

The fourth installment of the annual event will have not only Rider students, but appearances by drag performers from Philadelphia and New Hope, Pennsylvania.

“For this year’s Drag Race we reinvented the program and are really excited for this new take on the event,” said Associate Dean of Campus Life Nicholas Barbati.

Barbati is excited for the new addition to the event because it will, “showcase to our students the larger community that surrounds them.”

Rider’s Drag Race was originally an “on-again-off-again” event for years, said Barbati, but recently gained popularity due to the television show “RuPaul’s Drag Race.” The Student Entertainment Council (SEC) decided to permanently keep the event and give students a platform to do what they love.

The show is one of the major fundraising events the SEC holds throughout the school year, with audience members voting for their favorite performance by donating money, Barbati said.

In past years, the SEC has donated the earnings to Rider’s Relay for Life as well as New Hope Celebrates, an LGBTQ+ organization based in New Hope, Pennsylvania.

Freshman geoscience major Mitose McHugh said, “It’s pretty cool, not a lot of colleges do it so it sets us apart from them. It’s nice to be on a campus that is very welcoming to everyone.”

To be given this opportunity, Barbati said, “It is always an amazing feeling... the event is always joyful, celebratory and carries with it a feeling of triumph. It is an honor to be part of this program each year.”

To further emphasize the appeal of the recurring event, Barbati also stated, “The show has grown in scale immensely and the production value has increased with the rising interest on campus. This year will certainly be a show to remember.”



Rider’s Drag Race will be taking place on Feb. 8 at 8 p.m. in the Yvonne Theater of the Arts. It was decided by the Student Entertainment Council that the Drag Race will become a campus tradition.

A battle of rhyme and wit: Rider Rhymes set to return

By Giavanna Troilo

THE “highly anticipated” and promising fierce competition, Rider Rhymes, Rider’s own student-run hip-hop and rap competition, will make a comeback to the Cavalla Room on February 12.

The electrifying event debuted in 2018, following alumnus Chris Patrick’s 2016 victory in Rider’s vocal competition, R-Factor. Patrick wowed the crowd with his performance of Kanye West’s “All of the Lights,” which he rapped along with added original verses.

Patrick was just one of many student rappers who have taken the Rider stage to share their passion for hip-hop, whether through R-Factor or its predecessor, Rider’s Got Talent. It was clear that a hip-hop based competition would be the next best addition to the campus community.

Rider Rhymes turned out to be a massive hit among the student body, cementing itself as an asset to Rider’s annual Student Entertainment Council (SEC) events calendar.

Brittany Cook, junior health science major and SEC member, will lead this year’s Rider Rhymes, and is confident in the event as a means to put a wider variety of student abilities on display.

“It showcases a talent that we normally don’t get to see,” Cook said. “We have R-Factor, which is always a great event, but it doesn’t let people who like to rap showcase their talents.” Cook will be behind the scenes ensuring that each aspect of the show runs as planned.

The competition will consist of three rounds: the first round, featuring the contestants’ own original songs, the second “cypher” round, in which all contestants perform over the same beat, and the third and final round, challenging performers to free-style over a random hip-hop track from pop culture.

The winner will be determined by audience votes.

“This year we have amazing talent coming, old and new,” said Cook. “We are going to have people who have participated in previous years and new talent that we expect a lot from.”

Cymere Nobles, junior musical theatre major and winner of last year’s Rider Rhymes, will be one of the performers featured in the event this year.

“Being a part of it last year and actually winning was an amazing experience,” said Nobles of his 2019 victory. “Going back into it, I just want to have fun, and have a competition with myself from last year instead of focusing on the other ‘competitors.’”

Nobles, along with Cook, believes in shining a light on the dynamic artistry that Rider students have to offer. He appreciates being able to express himself through rap, especially while sharing his talents with his fellow students.

“I think it should be held every year because it showcases the wit, wit, wit, bar-heavy rhymes, and competitive nature of hip-hop,” says Nobles.

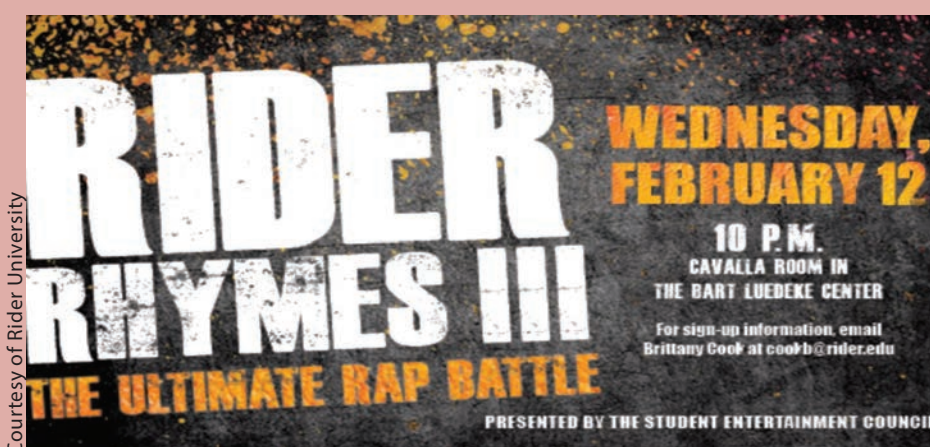
Above all, Rider Rhymes asks us to recognize the growing influence and storytelling power of hip-hop as a genre.

“Hip-hop is such an essential and influential piece of our everyday lives,” says Nobles. “It has grown to be the largest genre in music today and its culture has reached an enormous number of people worldwide.”

Rider Rhymes will be held in the Cavalla Room of the Bart Luedeke Center on February 12 at 10 p.m.



Last year’s memorable Rider Rhymes concluded with sophomore theater major Cymere Nobles winning it all. Nobles, now a junior, plans to perform again this year.



The third installment of the Rider Rhymes competition will take place on Feb. 12 at 10 p.m. in Bart Luedeke Center (BLC). Students will go head-to-head, showcasing their best rhymes in an attempt to take the crown.

Remembering Black Mamba

It is just the nature of a journalist to have something on their minds they may want to formulate into a story.

With this story, however, I am at a loss for words.

I sat on my bed aimlessly typing on my computer in an attempt to comprehend the legacy and horrific passing of NBA legend Kobe Bryant and his 13-year-old daughter Gianna “Gigi” Bryant, who were among seven others to perish in a helicopter crash on Jan. 26 in California.

I was on a FaceTime call with a friend when I got an alert from Twitter saying that TMZ Sports had reported a helicopter crash in Los Angeles involving Kobe Bryant. I immediately said to my friend, “No way. It’s fake.”

I wished this was some sick joke and hoped someone would be punished for putting out a massively fake headline.

It’s probably safe to say most of the world wishes that were the case too.

I called my dad. He has a way with words and putting things into perspective, so I thought he would be the right person to call. I went on a walk around campus that evening just to tell him “I love you” and to try to put into words how I felt.

He told me the empty feeling was similar to when he was a freshman at Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1980 and he learned that John Lennon was shot and killed. The death of someone of Kobe Bryant’s and Lennon’s stature carries a magnitude beyond reasonable comprehension because of the type of impact they had on the world.

They were bigger than their occupation. Kobe Bryant was bigger than basketball.

As I type this story, I cannot help but hold back tears and think to myself, “I’m using the past tense.”

Kobe Bryant’s impact transcended the NBA. It transcends gender. He was a vocal advocate for women’s sports. He supported his daughters in all their endeavors, supported up-and-coming women’s sports, and supported the WNBA.

He worked with numerous college players like Oregon’s Sabrina Ionescu and former UConn Husky Breanna Stewart, to name a couple.

Rider women’s basketball Head Coach Lynn Milligan even believed he would one day be the owner of a WNBA team. The world believed Gigi Bryant would be in the league one day. When they perished, it was almost as if the world stopped rotating on its axis. Time stood still.

“He’s been one of the faces of women’s basketball as far as the support of our sport,” Milligan said. “I envisioned him to be a WNBA owner, to be really honest with you. He was an iconic figure for this generation.”

In all honesty, coach Milligan, I could see that happening too. Heck, he could have started his own team and Gigi would have played for it.

He was — as ESPN SportsCenter anchor Elle Duncan said on Jan. 28 — “a girl dad.” Hashtag #Girldad began trending on Twitter because Kobe Bryant loved his four girls and

was a champion for equality.

Prior to the women’s basketball team’s game against Marist on Jan. 28, there was a 24.8 second moment of silence.

Amari Johnson spoke on some of the lessons she took away from one of her basketball idols.

“Work hard and work ethic. You have to work hard to do anything you want to in life and he obviously worked hard all the way to be a legend,” Johnson said. “Everybody knows his name and what he does.”

The Rider men’s basketball team wore shirts with the No. 24 on the front with No. 8 on the back. The shirts read “Mamba for Life!”

“A guy like Kobe Bryant — a guy that I looked up to — in terms of his work ethic as a person, in terms of what he got done on the basketball court, this is the least we could do to celebrate his life,” Head Coach Kevin Baggett said. “I think it’s important for our guys to know tomorrow’s not promised for any of us. Sometimes it takes something like this unfortunately for us to understand what’s important in life ... I had these guys listen to ‘Dear Basketball’ what Kobe [Bryant] wrote ... I respect anybody who can dedicate themselves to anything, whether it be basketball or anything else in life.”

Even if you did not follow sports, you knew who Kobe Bryant was and that he was synonymous with the highest level of basketball. To some, he was just a player that people knew. To others, he was their role model. One of the biggest lessons I took away from this tragedy is that life is too short. It is too damn short.

It would take years to come up with the appropriate words to summarize Kobe Bryant’s impact on the world, not just in the United States but everywhere. He was a pioneer for the game internationally. It helped that he spoke three languages fluently.

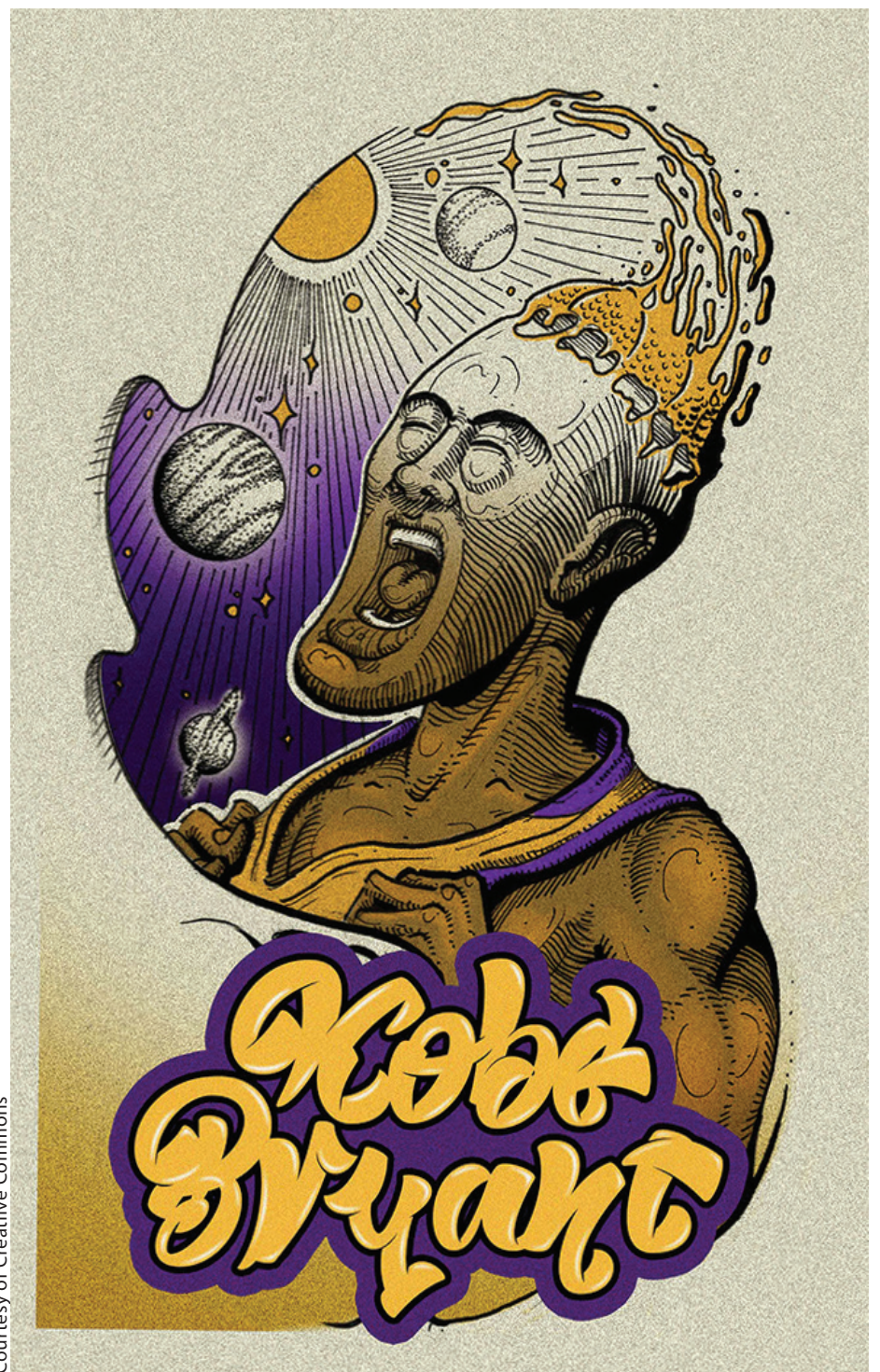
Kobe Bryant and Gigi Bryant will have a memorial service eventually, but it seems like the outpouring of love from the Los Angeles community has already memorialized him, his daughter and the seven other passengers since the tragic news was confirmed.

The NBA is regarded as a family. There may be rivals on the court, but this tragedy brought people together. On social media, there were multiple images of a new NBA logo donning purple and gold with a silhouette of Kobe Bryant instead of the current logo depicting Laker legend, and personal friend of Kobe Bryant’s, Jerry West.

Spencer Dinwittie of the Brooklyn Nets was one of many players to change his jersey number. He will now wear No. 26 instead of No. 8, which was Kobe Bryant’s number when he entered the league.

Lakers guard Quinn Cook now wears No. 28 instead of No. 2, which was Gigi Bryant’s number on her Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) team at Mamba Sports Academy.

The Lakers held a moving tribute to Kobe Bryant prior to their game against the Portland Trailblazers.



THE Rider News

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It was the first game since the tragedy. Usher began by singing “Amazing Grace,” followed by a cellist providing music to an emotional video tribute.

Charlie Puth and Wiz Khalifa performed “See you Again” which they released after Paul Walker died in 2013. I got chills. I even got chills writing that sentence simply because of the tone and message of the song. There will never be another Kobe Bryant.

When LeBron James addressed the crowd man did that hit me. It was the first time a player had publicly spoken in person. He adlibbed his speech after tossing a prepared speech to the floor.

He ended the pregame remembrance saying the following — and I think he speaks for everyone:

“In the words of Kobe Bryant, ‘Mamba Out.’ But in the words of us, ‘not forgotten.’”

This editorial expresses the unanimous opinion of The Rider News Editorial Board. This week's editorial was written by Sports Editor Dylan Manfre.




Courtesy of Creative Commons

JUNIOR JOURNIES

Tourist guilt: Spring break epiphany

As spring approaches all I can think about are my plans for spring break 2020. This year's destination: Puerto Rico.

The white sand, palm trees and crystal blue waters make Puerto Rico the dream destination for tourists but what about for the people living there?

Tourism is an important source of income for the island and its citizens. In 2016, it contributed about \$8 billion USD in total to the island's GDP according to the World Travel and Tourism Council.

But what happens when there is trouble in paradise? When natural disasters occur (which seems to be frequent) Puerto Rico seems to be neglected.

Today, Puerto Rico has been experiencing massive earthquakes including 11 that were of magnitude 5 or greater. The largest and most damaging of this storm of earthquakes occurred on Jan. 7 that had a magnitude of 6.4 and a maximum felt intensity of VII (very strong) on the Modified Mercalli intensity scale. At least one person was killed and several others were injured.

All the while, Puerto Rico has yet to recover from Hurricane Maria, a Category 5 hurricane, killing hundreds and knocking out the island's power.

Due to the earthquakes, 300,000 out of Puerto Rico's 1.1 million population were left without water service and approximately 7,500 citizens have left their homes for other kinds of shelter (some cases tents and cars) according to the U.S Geological Survey.

Puerto Rico's status as a territory means they must abide by federal law but unfortunately do not get all the benefits.

“After 120 years of a relationship, we still don't call ourselves ‘Americanos,’” says Aníbal Acevedo-Vilá, a former governor of Puerto Rico to U.S News.

There seems to be a disconnect on both sides. Only 54 percent of Americans knew that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens.

“It's the economic issue, and the cultural identity issue. We are U.S. citizens, but we don't feel we are Americans. That's important to both sides — for Puerto Rico and for Americans,” he told U.S. News. “It's one thing for you to be for multiculturalism, even bilingualism. It's another thing to accept people that call themselves a nation within the federation. That's a completely different story,

I feel some sort of tourist guilt going to Puerto Rico in March to enjoy their rich culture and beautiful attractions without thinking about how there are locations on the island still without power, families homeless with fear that their homes will collapse on top of them. Although, my dollars will contribute to the revenue increase for the island I know there is more to be done. Members of the western world tend to exploit outside countries for their tourism but neglect the bodies that inhabit these million-dollar places living in utter poverty. That knowledge does not sit right with me. I do not just want to leach off of the cultural nutrients of the island but actually provide genuine change. Puerto Rico is a strong and independent unit but still an entity apart of the United States and the citizens need to be treated as Americans.

*Qur'an Hansford
junior journalism major*

GREEN CORNER

The air we breathe: Rider takes initiative to reduce carbon footprint

TAKE a walk around campus, through a city or even any moderately populated town and observe what you see. At first, it may not be much — everything appears to be clear. But as you look up at the sky and see no stars and a layer of smog, you realize that this is not a result of natural processes, but a result of air pollution from surrounding factories, vehicles and other anthropogenic activities. With this increase in harmful gases being released in our atmosphere, there are already numerous indicators of climate change, such as the melting of the arctic ice caps, an increase in sea level, a decrease in overall air quality and so much more.

According to National Geographic, “The average temperature of the Earth is rising at nearly twice the rate it was 50 years ago.”

National Geographic also mentions just how high these levels of greenhouse gases (GHGs) are, stating that the current level of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide is higher than any point over the past 800,000 years, causing an increasing amount of heat to be trapped in our atmosphere. This is rapidly changing the entire world's climate.

The largest contributors to massive releases of GHGs include transportation, electricity production and industrial processes, accounting for a total of 79% of greenhouse gas production, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Increasing concentrations of GHGs are what is accounting for dangerous weather conditions and rising sea levels, as warmer temperatures fuel storm systems to become more powerful. A result of this increase in temperature was Superstorm Sandy, which impacted over 200,000 homes. One individual that was nearly flooded out of his home was freshman psychology major Brody Hilliard.

“The water [from the flooding] was inches away from my doorstep, and also left us without power for over a week. My family is lucky that we made it out of the storm with minimal damage, as houses just down the block got completely flooded out.”

Climate change has also caused certain areas to become significantly drier than usual, creating fires that devastate large areas. Some of these areas that have been impacted so heavily include California and Australia, resulting in a severe increase in GHGs in the surrounding atmosphere and decreasing the biodiversity of the region as some species are left nearly extinct.

Thankfully, Rider has implemented a variety of initiatives to reduce the impact that students and faculty alike, have on the environment. One of these initiatives is the creation of a 3.2 acre, 0.74-megawatt solar field located just at the back of Rider's campus. The 2,640 solar panels are projected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 35,580,526 pounds over a 25 year period. This replaces the burning of coal from power plants to power Rider and provides energy for 100 other Public Service Electric and Gas (PSE&G) users. Rider is also about to install more electric car charging stations on campus, giving students, faculty and staff the opportunity to easily charge their electric vehicles.

It comes down to you to make a difference in the world we live in. Each and every person that makes a change, whether it be a large or small change, improves the world we live in and with worldwide support, we can all make enough change to save the planet we love so much.

*Dean Riddle
Lawrenceville Eco-Rep*

WRESTLING

Rider to face Rutgers at home



Courtesy of Rider Athletics

Redshirt senior **Peter Lipari** transferred from Rutgers to Rider in November 2019. Lipari qualified for the NCAA tournament in 2019 at the 141 lb weight class.

By **Michael Ricchione**

THE most-anticipated duel of the wrestling team's season is coming on Feb. 9 against in-state foe Rutgers. This match pits two of the better wrestling programs in the state against each other, which caused Rider to alter the ticket pricing as well as exclude the match from the season ticket holder package.

The pricing for Rutgers vs. Rider is the same as a men's or women's basketball game but also adds a section called, matside reserved, which can be bought for \$25 a ticket.

This matchup got an in-season boost when one of Rutgers' returning NCAA qualifiers, Pete Lipari, transferred to Rider in November 2019.

Lipari, a redshirt senior, transferred after losing his starting job with the Scarlet Knights at 141 pounds.

True freshman Jojo Aragona beat out Lipari for his job. However, at this point in the season, Lipari is the higher-ranked wrestler, coming in at No. 24 by FloWrestling. Aragona is 10-7 on the season.

Lipari earned that ranking when he beat returning All-American Sa'Derian Perry of Old Dominion via a 5-4 decision.

Both teams attended the Southern Scuffle tournament on Jan. 1, so for some, it will not be the first time wrestling their opponents.

Potential rematches from the Southern Scuffle include graduate student Gino Fluri against Gerard Angelo at 149 pounds and redshirt senior Jesse Dellavecchia vs. Mike VanBrill at 157 pounds.

Junior Ethan Laird also wrestled Matt Correnti at the Southern Scuffle, but Rutgers has since been competing with Jordan Pagano at 197 pounds.

Rider swept that series of matches. Fluri won in overtime, 3-1, Laird won, 5-2 and Dellavecchia got the major, winning 14-5.

Rutgers has maintained a positive record overall at 8-5, but is 3-4 in the Big Ten with a loss against No. 25 Michigan, 21-16, at Madison Square Garden.

The Scarlet Knights are coming off a season where Nick Suriano and Anthony Ashnault became the program's first national champions. Neither will be wrestling against Rider, however, as Suriano is on an Olympic redshirt and Ashnault has graduated.

The Broncos returned all four of their NCAA qualifiers — Dellavecchia, Laird, redshirt seniors Anthony Cefolo and Dean Sherry — and also added another via the Lipari transfer from Rutgers.

The Broncos come into the week with a six-match win streak and entered the week well-rested. Head Coach John Hangey thought that the break was well deserved after the George Mason duel.

"They've been grinding pretty good since probably Christmas, just after Christmas. So it's been a long stretch," Hangey said.

One interesting storyline to look out for will be the return of redshirt sophomore Joe Casey at 165 pounds.

Casey was on a four-match winning streak before losing to Old Dominion's Shane Jones by major decision, 16-3 on Jan. 19. He missed the George Mason on Jan. 25 match as he was recovering from a skin infection.

"His confidence is there, he's wrestling more relaxed and he's got talent just as much as anybody else in the team," Hangey said

Rider and Rutgers have one more match each before they face each other. Rider will travel to Lock Haven on Feb. 7 as Rutgers hosts Illinois.

The Rider vs Lock Haven match begins at 7 p.m.

"Lock Haven and Rutgers is going to be a really big weekend for us so we're looking forward to that," Laird said.

During Rider's six-match winning streak, Laird clinched the team victory for the last three matches.

"He's good," Dellavecchia said about Laird after the match. "He's Top-8 in the country and he's doing well."

The Rutgers match can be streamed on ESPN+ with wrestling scheduled to begin at 7 p.m.

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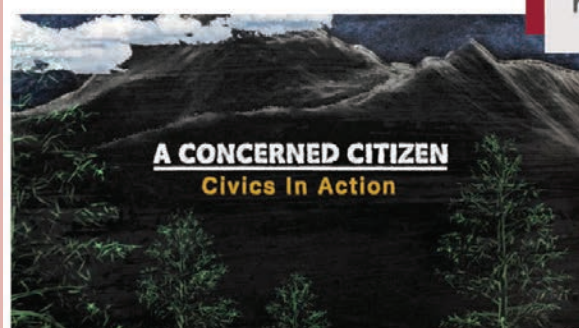


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COLUMN

Broncs' rollercoaster season: What's next?

By Austin Ferguson

WITH just nine games to go in the 2019-2020 season, the men's basketball team's campaign can only be described as a rollercoaster.

Rider found a way to win seven of its first nine games, mostly against non-conference opponents, but a rough patch in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) portion of the schedule had all but erased the Broncs' early-season success.

Rider's play in the non-conference schedule showed signs of being a top contender for its first MAAC championship, highlighted by a victory over the University of Vermont on Nov. 24 that included a 17-0 run in the second half.

After a close call in a 74-64 win over Marist in the MAAC opener on Dec. 16, Rider was 7-2 and sat atop the conference standings at that point. Like all rollercoasters, the drop-off was ahead.

The Broncs went back on the road after their win over Marist to take on Temple and Wisconsin to wrap up the 2019 calendar year and lost both matchups, scoring a season-low 37 points against Wisconsin on New Year's Eve.

Rider started the 2020 portion of the season with a close but strong win against Siena on Jan. 5. After that, the Broncs lost four of their next five matchups, with their only win in that span coming against Marist on Jan. 12.

Though Rider did lose four conference matchups in the month of January, all but one of those losses were by single-digit margins. The first of the Broncs' four January losses came on the road against Quinnipiac on Jan. 7, 80-61.

Rider's Jan. 10 loss to Iona was its only home loss of the season so far, falling 69-66, though the closest of the Broncs' January losses came on Jan. 17 against Niagara, 70-68, off the back of a game-winning three from Niagara guard Marcus Hammond.

The new-year skid brought the Broncs' MAAC record to 3-4. However, Rider still had the upper echelon of the standings in its sights with three games left in the first month of 2020, two of which were at home.

The Broncs struggled in its matchup against a surprise MAAC contender in Saint Peter's on Jan. 24, but strong defensive stands in the second half were able to help Rider get back into the win column with a 70-66 victory. The Broncs went on the road two days later and clinched a strong 67-53 win over Manhattan, which enjoyed a first-place standing in the MAAC earlier in the month, without trailing a single time in the contest.

Rider finished off the trifecta with a 68-52 home victory over Fairfield on Jan. 31 to bring its MAAC record to 6-4. Half a game behind first-place Monmouth, the Broncs headed to West Long Branch, New Jersey, for a Feb. 2 matchup with the Hawks.

The game between Monmouth and Rider was, much like the Super Bowl later that same day, a close one. It was the Hawks, however, that surged ahead in the final minutes to take the game, 90-84, bringing the Broncs to their current state.

The Broncs entered this season after losing two players to graduation (guard Anthony Durham and forward Karamoko Cisse) and five more players to transfers (guards Jordan Allen, Noah Buono and Ryan O'Leary and forwards Ahmad Gilbert and Devine Eke), with two of those seven losses (Durham and Allen) having started numerous games last season. Eke started one game in 2019.

Three freshmen and one graduate transfer are included in the list of additions to the Rider lineup for the 2019-2020 season. The three freshmen that joined the team all come in the form of Philadelphia natives in guards Christian Ings, Allen Powell and Khalil Turner.

Turner and Powell have seen action exclusively off the bench, with Powell getting regular minutes throughout the season. Powell's shot does not seem to be fully developed quite yet, but his basketball mind certainly is, contributing smart play in the time he sees on the court.

Turner hasn't found his spot in the rotation to date, though time will be the eventual sign to reveal his true potential. His 6-foot-7 frame is an advantage to him on the court, especially when he sees minutes at the



The men's basketball team hoisting the Air Force Reserve Tip-Off Tournament Springfield Bracket trophy after its victory over Vermont on Nov. 24.

guard position.

Ings, like his fellow freshman teammates, started the season off of the bench. A leg injury to redshirt senior guard Kimar Williams presented a chance for Ings to shine.

In Rider's Nov. 17 blowout loss to Arizona State, Ings' first career start was a bit of a silver lining. The Neumann-Goretti High School graduate contributed 10 points, three rebounds, three assists and two steals in the loss, though he looked rough around the edges with four turnovers during the matchup.

From there, Ings has started all but one game, averaging just under six points per game and just above two rebounds and assists per game this season.

Ings' explosiveness at the rim and overall energetic play on both ends of the floor was evident from the get-go, but it was the progressive development of his three-point shot that brought him to the level he currently plays at. Ings is shooting 36% from beyond the arc, highlighted by four games where he made multiple threes.

The Broncs' recent graduate transfer, Willy Nuñez, Jr., has been significant to Rider's on-court cohesion all season. Nuñez's versatility was shown in the Broncs' preseason game against Slippery Rock, where he played minutes at every position with an exception to center.

Outside of his ability to play and guard multiple positions, Nuñez's three-point shooting has also proven to be a valuable asset to the team. Though he may not show off the range that Jordan Allen had with Rider, Nuñez has the consistency to boast, showing off two games with four made threes and three games with three made shots from beyond the arc.

On top of the Broncs' additions, Rider has seen the debut of redshirt freshman forward Tyrel Bladen and the return of redshirt sophomore guard Tyrei Randall, who sat out last season and was suspended for the first 10 games of this season for violating team rules.

Bladen has seen limited minutes but shows the promise of being a body that can bring physicality and athleticism on both sides of the floor. He has slowly found himself to be a part of the rotation as time has progressed, averaging about five minutes per game.

From his debut at Wisconsin, Randall had struggled to find his stroke and re-work himself into the rotation. He turned that narrative around with a 12-point performance against Saint Peter's followed by a 16-point output at Manhattan, asserting on the court that Randall is very much still an important piece to the Broncs.

Rider's new players have given it the support it needed in the rotation after the departures it took on at the end of last season. It is the Broncs' starters,

however, that take a large piece of the pie in keeping Rider competitive.

With Ings' development aside, the core of senior guard Stevie Jordan, senior center Tyere Marshall and redshirt junior forwards Dimencio Vaughn and Frederick Scott has been the backbone for the Broncs this season.

The contributions of Rider's 'core four' can be summed up by their career scoring marks. After Jordan scored his 1000th career point last season, Marshall, Vaughn and Scott all joined him during the year to bring the number of active 1000th point Rider scorers to four.

Jordan and Marshall's senior campaigns have been business as usual, showing out in their final seasons. Jordan is averaging 11.7 points and 4.2 assists per game while Marshall is averaging 12.8 points and 7.8 rebounds per game.

For Vaughn, the 2020 season is a defining one for his college career. After he set the MAAC ablaze in 2018 and earned all-MAAC first-team honors, Vaughn had an off-year in 2019, visibly having lost some of his step.

In the current season, Vaughn has silenced the doubters, proving that he has his bounce back. Vaughn leads the Broncs in scoring with 14.3 points per game and couples it with 6.5 rebounds per game.

The 2020 season is Scott's first season as the full-time starter, which is well deserved. Scott won MAAC Sixth Player of the Year in 2018 and found some starts in the 2019 season, averaging 12.1 points and 5.7 rebounds per game that year.

Scott has transitioned seamlessly into the full-time starting role, averaging 12.8 points and six rebounds per game this season.

With the squad that Head Coach Kevin Baggett has in front of him, the end of this season is pivotal to defining his tenure with Rider. The Broncs have failed to win multiple MAAC tournament games in the same season during Baggett's tenure. As time has gone on, the window is slowly closing for this current crop of players to win the tournament. The Broncs' best chance to find a berth in the NCAA tournament is now.

It seems that Rider has found its footing after a midseason skid. If the Broncs get back onto the track they were on to start the season, the MAAC is theirs to win.

Rider's next game will be against Canisius on Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. in the Alumni Gym. The Broncs allowed 96 points to the Golden Griffins in their Jan. 19 matchup but were able to score 86 points of their own behind a 31-point performance from Marshall.

Sports

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RIDER MIDSEASON UPDATE

Austin Ferguson recaps the first half of the men's basketball team's season and details players' development

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Broncs poised to stay undefeated in MAAC



Carolo Pascale/The Rider News

Senior guard **Stella Johnson**, Rider's all-time leading scorer and NCAA Division I's leading women's scorer this season, sits 100 points from breaking the 2000-point mark for her career.

By Dylan Manfre

THERE is no doubt that having the nation's leading scorer, an emerging star point guard, one of the most consistent shooters in the conference and a 14-game win streak puts the women's basketball team in a great position going forward.

Rider sits on top of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) with a 16-2 record and is a perfect 10-0 in conference games. Although Quinnipiac no longer has its intimidation factor of 52-straight victories in regular-season MAAC games, the Broncs might be conjuring up some intimidation of their own.

Head Coach Lynn Milligan does not want opposing teams to fear Rider when it appears on the schedule — she wants them to respect her team.

"I just want to be respected by everybody," Milligan said. "For everybody to respect what we do and how hard our kids work. We respect all of our opponents. The league may not look the way it normally looks but it's certainly the grind and the competitiveness and the talent level hasn't changed — it really hasn't. There's been a look about the MAAC like I said that may be different."

That "look" is probably referencing Quinnipiac's historic streak which Iona ended in the conference opener on Jan. 2.

People around the conference knew 2019-2020 was going to be tough for the Bobcats since they graduated a handful of players who paved the way to three-straight appearances to the NCAA Tournament.

All eyes were on the Broncs when they hosted Quinnipiac on national television on date and low-and-behold, Milligan checked a box off on her coaching bucket list: beat Quinnipiac, which happened to be the first time Rider ever defeated them too.

Along the way, there were teams who gave the Broncs a tough time, yet they prevailed. Multiple teams caused Rider to get into foul trouble and it became problematic even if the team will not admit it. There were times when the offense did not click so well.

In the four games prior to the Marist contest, senior guard Stella Johnson was 3-for-20 from long range. Magically she managed to still put up ridiculous scoring numbers, but the nation's leading scorer said

the confidence in her shot wavered.

"I don't think I was shooting it with much confidence," Johnson said after the Canisius game. "I try to [get shots up] before every game we play away just to get a feel of the court and hoop so it's just an every game routine for me."

Johnson has since found the hot hand and shot 46% over the last six games. But if Johnson is not having the best game offensively, MAAC play showed the Broncs defense is unlike anything we have seen in previous years from this group. It has also shown us a glimpse of what the future might be like. Here's a glimpse of Johnson's best counterparts who have excelled in MAAC play.

Amari Johnson

For starters, senior guard Amari Johnson is a double-double machine and leads the conference with 13. Having a player of her ability to run straight in the paint and crash the boards is invaluable when other players are focused on boxing out.

"Just the pride she's taken in her rebounding ...," Milligan said. "She's rebounding like a beast. I mean serious rebounds, not like — oh this fell in my hands — no she's going to get the ball, which is a big change for her. She's got a better idea of where the ball is going."

Amari Johnson has said on multiple occasions that rebounding is her favorite part of the game and it shows. She is the only player in the MAAC to average a double-double and is 10th in the nation in rebounds.

Amanda Mobley

Stepping into the starting point guard role at the beginning of the season was no easy task but Milligan had no other option. Mobley has proven to be one of the MAAC's best emerging guards and will be a big threat for her remaining time at Rider.

Mobley's confidence and her basketball IQ has consistently improved during MAAC play. Against Marist, she hit three big 3-pointers, two when the shot clock dwindled down and one from 75-feet as time expired in the first half. They were well-defended, but intelligent shots, meaning she took the time to square up to the hoop and not just chuck the ball in the air.

She finished that game with her first career double-double of 11 points, 10 assists and was 4-of-9 from the field. Mobley also sets up her teammates well and ranks second in the MAAC in assists behind Marist's Grace Vander Weide.

Lea Farve

Farve is one of the most consistent players in the MAAC. Rider caught a big break after she only missed the season opener at Princeton with her ankle injury, which, looking back on it, Rider probably would not have won anyway and the game does not even matter too much anymore.

Milligan was not in any rush to get Farve back in the starting lineup but once she did, the Broncs have not lost.

In the most recent four-game stretch Farve has shot just over 66% from the field. She went an astounding 8-for-10 from the field against Niagara and in all but one of the conference games she has finished with double digits.

The Schedule Ahead

The Broncs are halfway to 20-0 and look to be a lock for the No. 1 seed in March's MAAC tournament and with many things going their way, it would take a lot to derail this group.

Facing Quinnipiac on its home floor Feb. 20 will be tougher than hosting them at Alumni Gym but Milligan said the team actually likes playing on the road.

"Anytime you're in conference play, you have to win some at home and steal some on the road," Milligan said. "We've done a really good job protecting our home floor, we've obviously stole some on the road and we have to continue that mentality. We're a pretty good road team. There's a schedule when you're on the road that's different when you're on campus. There's less distractions, we actually like it."

The Broncs pulled away from Canisius late in the game in their first meeting but face them again on Feb. 29. Two days earlier, Rider travels to Fairfield who they only defeated by eight on Jan. 28.

If Rider continues to play like they have been, an NCAA tournament berth may be on the horizon.