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Kaleidoscope: 175th Anniversary Issue

Division of Advancement

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As you likely know, The College at Brockport, State University of New York, is celebrating its 175th anniversary during the 2010-11 academic year. Throughout this edition of Kaleidoscope you can read about the history of the College and how it is intertwined with that of the Village of Brockport. Many thanks to Mary Jo Gigliotti, Bruce Leslie, and Kenneth P. O’Brien, exemplars of Brockport faculty in their dedication to the College through research, service, and, of course, teaching. These three stars are responsible for researching and documenting much of the College’s history, an example of which is the book referenced at the start of this letter.

While this milestone is obviously a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the numerous stories and memories that have taken place over these many years, I believe this is also an appropriate time to let you know more about the Brockport of today and tomorrow.

When I joined the College in 2005 as your sixth president there were undoubtedly more if we consider the distinguished “principals” and leaders of the old Normal School; together we created a strategic plan – what I called our Matrix – of how we would build on the strong work done by my predecessors, most recently Drs. Paul Yu, John Van De Wetering, and Al Brown. Ideas included in my integrated approach to planning and accountability covered such areas as strengthening our presence and visibility in Rochester to building upon our academic excellence, including not only our rising reputation as a top SUNY institution, but also to encompass recognition of our faculty for their scholarly endeavors, research and graduate programs. Now it’s time to determine the next stages in the development of our College and my vision for getting there.

SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher was in town on April 16 to roll out the SUNY Strategic Plan: What is being called The Power of SUNY. This ambitious “road map” to remake SUNY into an economic driver for New York State fits perfectly with Brockport’s own strategic plan.

The Chancellor has been very clear that although she looks for each of SUNY’s 64 campuses to become better aligned with the system as a whole, she fully expects each institution to retain its individual identity. So what’s this mean for The College at Brockport after my five years as president and the College’s 175 in total as we’re in the process of identifying our distinctive qualities?

Back in 1996, nationally renowned authors Jim Collins and Jerry Porras coined the acronym BHAG, which — if you pardon the expression — stands for “Big Hairy Audacious Goal.” While the acronym may be awkward, our BHAG is for The College at Brockport to become a nationally recognized comprehensive college focusing on student success. Our Cabinet has identified four overlapping “quadrants” that will help us achieve our goal. These are:

- Learning Environment and Quality of Place
- Academic Quality and Engagement
- Co-Curricular Programming and Supportive Services
- A Culture of Philanthropy and Alumni Connectedness

Within each of these areas, key administrators at the College have been tasked with identifying goals that can be tracked and assessed. As part of our vision, we would also like to be considered a “Best Practices” institution. One concrete example of this is the success of our student retention program.

So as you read the following articles and stories reflecting on our 175 years, please be assured that I and everyone currently at The College at Brockport as well as our emeriti, alumni, and donors are fully committed to making the next chapter of our School’s history the best ever. I can’t wait until 2035 to see how we did!”

John R. Halstead, PhD
President
National Societies Trace Roots to Brockport

Before there was a Brockport Student Government (BSG) to bring speakers, concerts, and other events to campus, or to host picnics, dances and social activities, the task fell to sororities and fraternities. One such Greek organization, the Alpha Delta sorority, traces its roots back to The College at Brockport.

The February 24, 1930, issue of The Stylus reported that Alpha Delta was founded around 1886. Its constitution states that the sorority was established, “To secure greater permanency and efficiency of effort in literature and debate, to promote intellectual, moral, and social improvement, to bind closer in their work the students of Normal School.” Also important to Alpha Delta was that, “friendship, high scholarship, and social adaptability have an opportunity to develop.” “Good times” for the group were in the form of picnics, house parties, progressive dinners, teas and social evenings. The first dance of the year, the traditional Halloween Dance, was sponsored by the Alpha Deltas.

One of the first fraternities at Brockport was a literary society, Gamma Sigma, which was founded according to fraternity records on October 11, 1869. The original literary societies focused on orations, debates, and music and essays, which were usually featured at meetings and in public programs. The June 1870 program included a musical opening, Happy Are We Tonight, Boys, and continued with the reading of essays, a debate, and the reading of the poem, Buried Cities, ending with the reading of, The Flying Machine, and Prophecy, and the song, I’ll Paddle My Own Canoe.

This article contains information obtained from Cherishing This Heritage by W. Wayne Dedman.
Brockport Resident Dance Company

The Brockport Resident Dance Company was one of the few dance companies in residence on a college campus in the early 1970s anywhere in the country. The five members of the company, pictured right, were also faculty members at the College. The professional company was funded through grants for the New York State Council on the Arts and other organizations. They performed throughout the northeastern United States and in Canada.


The Brockport Legacy

Garth Fagan

The College at Brockport has a long and impressive history of developing internationally acclaimed dancers and choreographers. Rose Strasser founded the Department of Dance, which grew out of the College's original Department of Physical Education, in 1968. Accomplished faculty were recruited to build the program, and many remained at Brockport over several decades, sometimes beginning and bringing to a close their careers in academia at the College. Strasser, Jacqueline (Jacqui) Davis, Suzanna Peyton Newman, Sondra Fraleigh, Santo Giglio, Garth Fagan and others, all brought their own unique perspective and talent, and shared them freely with one another and their students.

The internationally acclaimed Garth Fagan Dance traces its roots back to Brockport, where Fagan established his Bottom of the Bucket... or Bucket... Dance Troupe, now Garth Fagan Dance. Garth Fagan overcame many challenges in his career as he establish and nurtured his dream of leading a professional dance troupe. Meeting and rising above the challenges, Fagan went on to receive a Tony Award for his choreography in the Broadway musical, Walt Disney's The Lion King.

"In the beginning, the major challenge was to train a majority of people who had no previous dance training to dance. Priscilla Scott '72 had previous training and Bonnie Atkins '71 was an All-State gymnast. All the men came from soccer fields, basketball courts and Steve Humphrey was a wrestler. This was my choice since I wanted to train dancers my way as opposed to the constrictive formalized dance of the day. I wanted a company of people dancing rather than dancers portraying people, a subtle but clear distinction to me," says Fagan.

Huge congratulations to The College at Brockport on 175 years of excellent work in education. I am particularly proud of and thankful for my 33-year contribution, producing world-acclaimed art and giving Brockport exposure in six continents and 38 countries. Many thanks to the intelligent, talented students and colleagues who enriched my life.

— Garth Fagan, Distinguished University Professor Emeritus
Intercollegiate athletic competition at Brockport has been a significant part of the culture of the College throughout its 175 years. There are records of competition with teams back in the 1800s, but the general consensus puts the start of true athletic competition with other schools — Normal and Training Schools at the time — in the 1910s and 1920s.

In its earliest years, Brockport was dominant in men’s basketball. Through the 1950s, the men’s soccer team became one of the best in the country at any level — and shared the 1955 National Championship with Penn State.

Women’s sports became a permanent part of the culture in the 1960s, and field hockey gained prominence in the 1970s and ’80s under Linda Arena ’69, Mauro Panaggio ’52 (basketball) and Don Murray ’69 (wrestling) provided the coaching leadership that moved those programs to the top of the heap. In the 1980s and 1990s, women’s volleyball and softball provided yearly conference titles and NCAA appearances, while football, gymnastics, both soccer and basketball teams, and baseball made the 2000s the most successful decade in the program’s history.

As they say, records are meant to be broken — but memories last a lifetime. Following are some reflections by successful Golden Eagle alumni and friends on some of those special eras of Brockport sports.

Basketball Makes Its Mark

When Brockport basketball won State titles in the 1920s and 1930s, few were more dominant than Robert J. Iveson, Sr. ’30. Iveson led the Brockport Normal School to its second straight New York State title with a 40-9 win over Fredonia in March 1930. Iveson had 22 points in the win and led the team in overall scoring for the season.

My dad was very modest and never boasted — nor even talked about — his abilities on the basketball court. Only when friends came over and reminisced about past experiences did I get the impression that Dad was a “pretty good” basketball player.

He taught on Long Island after finishing his college career and played semi-pro basketball there, which is where he met my mother.

My only regret in growing up in a large and loving family is that my dad never “pushed” or encouraged my brother and me to play the game. A few trips to the Edgerton Sports Arena to watch the Rochester Royals play were the only exposures we had to the game. Dad did put a hoop up on the side of the barn, but it took all the effort my brother and I had to get the ball up high enough to score.

I regret the lack of early intervention because I, too, have the “basketball gene.” It manifested itself too late — after high school — but I did play in a fraternity league at Cornell and loved it. And my lifelong love of the game has resulted in my involvement in the Brockport High School basketball program for the past 40 years, but only as a spectator and chronicler of the team’s achievements.

My other regret is never seeing my dad play. No videos, no tapes, no CDs of the game as played 70 years ago. The emphasis was on passing, assists, and not scoring, hence very low-scoring games.

Bob Iveson, Jr. is the son of Robert Iveson, Sr. ’30, a member of the Golden Eagle Hall of Fame Class of 1991.
The College's green and gold spirit colors hearken back to some of the earliest days of the Normal School. By the time Color Day was established in 1902, the colors of green and gold were firmly established among the School's traditions, along with the Golden Eagles sports teams and Ellsworth the College's spirit mascot.

Color Day was developed by a committee of students and faculty led by Principal Charles MacFarlane (1901-1910), and always took place in May when the colors of spring — green grass and golden dandelions — made their appearance following the black and white of a long, snowy Upstate winter.

Over the years, Color Day became very popular at the School and within the local community. However, Principal Ernest Hartwell (1936-1944) ended the tradition in 1937 because it had become “too rowdy.” He also abolished the Greek organizations that had become integral to Color Day because they, too, went against his sense of academic decorum.

Color Day activities included regular morning classes, “followed by ‘Class Stunts’ performed in the Normal auditorium for the amusement and entertainment of friends and classmates.” The day continued with a luncheon, games and sports, and concessions run by various student organizations. The main event, however, was a pageant presented by Normal School students, which featured a Color Day queen and her court.
Teams in the 1950s looked to Brockport and Coach A. Huntley Parker, Jr., as the center of the collegiate soccer universe. Harvey Dorfman '57 was a goalie on these teams and remembers them well.

I’ve been asked to write — briefly — about Brockport soccer in the 1950s. That’s a helpful restriction, since I could go on and on about my years playing soccer at Brockport. About coaches Van Leuven and Parker, who knew their game, and, if my experience counts for anything, knew how to understand and mentor their players.

I could be expansive about some of the stimulating and compelling games played during my years at the school. About the 1955 championship team — my teammates — about playing at West Point.

But in the limited space allowed for these words, I must simply say that these years — that experience — provided penetrating insights into self and into the intellectual and psychological aspects of competition at a high level. As a sport psychologist, I can trace much of my understanding of athletes and their issues to my activities as a goalie; from 1953 through 1956, on freshman, junior varsity and varsity teams, including the championship team of 1955.

My preparation, intensity, determination — I call it "an insistent will" — can be traced to the daily involvement in a program that I heard referred to back then as “the Notre Dame of soccer.” Golden Eagle soccer then exemplified “the winning way.”

Experience isn’t what happens to you — it’s what you do with what happens to you. My Brockport soccer experience continues to have application to my life and my work.

Community Supports the Golden Eagles

In the 1960s and '70s men's basketball became a national power, and Brockport reached the NCAA Final Four on two occasions. Guy Vickers ’74 starred on one of those teams.

As I reflect on my basketball career at Brockport, it becomes more apparent that I was very fortunate and blessed to have played on great teams that made history relative to winning, a tradition for other teams to follow. What I remember most was the outstanding and fantastic support from the student body fans, administrators and Brockport Boosters. Often times the fan support gave us the “will to win” in dire situations... and for that, I shall never forget them.

It’s important to pay tribute to Coach Mauro Panaggio, his wife, Rita, and their family. From 1971 to 1974, our teams were able to achieve “greatness” because we had a special coach who not only taught us Xs and Os, but helped young men to become men with values and a purpose in life.

Highlights that will always be remembered are playing with the best point guard in the country, Ron Gilliam; winning the J P Morgan Chase Tournaments; representing Brockport and finishing 4th in the NCAA Tournament in Evansville, IN, (I still have nightmares from losing to Western Kentucky by one point); and finally having the honor of being inducted into the Brockport Hall of Fame. I am also very proud of the fact that I graduated from Brockport with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention my wonderful teammates! We believed and trusted each other. Mike Panaggio ’75 coined a phase that is very relevant: “We are teammates for life.” Without their hard work, dedication and commitment to excellence, there would be no discussion about being the “best team in school history.”

Guy Vickers ’74 — then and now — also was inducted into the J P Morgan Chase Basketball Hall of Fame. He is president of the Tommy Hilfiger Corporate Foundation.
Wrestling is Number One

To those both inside and outside Brockport, the signature sport of the College is wrestling. Of the school’s seven national championships, five have come in wrestling (the other two have been in men’s soccer). *Steve Cella ’77* was on the first of four NCAA Division III title teams between 1977 and 1983.

The Brockport wrestling team is the centerpiece of our proud athletic program. Over the past 48 years, the wrestling program has produced 134 All-Americans, 26 Conference Championships, five NCAA Division III national titles, two Division I All-Americans, and an Olympian. Brockport has an amazing 48 straight winning seasons. Our prolific program started in 1962 with Coach *Tom McIntyre* followed by Roscoe Hastings, Bill DeSario and Jerry Freischlag.

In 1970, a youthful Air Force wrestler named Don Murray, pictured right, took over and remains at the helm. For the past 40 years Coach Murray’s tenure has always been about the big picture and the most competitive schedule possible. Don was instrumental in bringing the 1976 and 1980 Olympic training camps to Brockport. Regional Olympic Qualifying Tournaments continue to be held here. On a yearly basis Brockport competes against the likes of Oklahoma, Michigan State, Ohio State and Army. The graduation rate for team members is a phenomenal 90 percent. Coach Murray is the nucleus providing the tools, high level opportunities and the resonating expectation of success from each team member. We simply provided results.

Yet, the greatest lesson taught within this program is benevolence. Graduates become coaches, teachers, business executives and fathers, extending the reach of excellence started some 48 years ago at this wonderful college. Every member of this successful program looks back at their years at Brockport with pride and responsibility. Every alumnus looks forward to providing the same opportunities to others that were generously offered to each of us. Go Brockport!

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**Steve Cella ’77** was an All-American in 1977 and was the spokesperson for the wrestling team when it was inducted into the Golden Eagle Athletic Hall of Fame in 2009. His daughter, Michele, was an all-State and All-SUNYAC soccer player for the Golden Eagles.

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**Perennial powers**

In the 1980s and ’90s, the women’s softball and volleyball teams became dominant forces in the SUNYAC, region and nation. Both won numerous conference titles and NCAA games and matches. Volleyball success under Frank Short included annual trips to the national tournament. Liz Pitts ’95 was a standout on teams in the mid 1990s.

I was very fortunate to play volleyball at Brockport. I was only there for two years, but it wasn’t until I transferred to Brockport that I really learned to love and appreciate the game. Coach Frank Short made the game come alive for all of us. He is the reason that the volleyball program and Brockport have been so successful for such a long period of time.

I always knew I wanted to coach volleyball, but after playing for Dr. Short I could not wait to expand and share my knowledge. He made me the player and the coach I am today. Dr. Short not only taught the basic fundamentals but he took the game to a whole new level. He was the type of coach that helped us to master the sport. At the same time, I believe that he learned from each and every one of his players.

Off the court, Dr. Short made me realize that there was more to life than just volleyball and this made me that much better in volleyball. He taught me discipline, leadership and fellowship. One of the biggest things that I learned from Dr. Short is that sometimes in life you may not get along with everyone. But, if you showed each other respect, you can play volleyball with anyone. Our goal: Six minds, working together for a common goal, to defeat the opponents on the other side of the net.

Liz Pitts ’95 starred for Brockport in volleyball and track and field. Inducted into the Golden Eagle Athletic Hall of Fame in 2000, she teaches and coaches at Lockport High School.
A New Model

Brockport’s women’s sports teams were competing in the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), the precursor to the NCAA, when Linda Arena ’69 took over the field hockey team at her Alma Mater in the 1970s.

I was 25 years old when I was hired and given a specific mandate: develop a different way to coach as an alternative to the prevailing autocratic, varsity model. I could not have been better trained. I had been influenced by the best of professors. Ruth Garis, Marguerite Fellows, and Coach Shirley Carmichael gave me the vision and inspiration to teach students to reach personal best athletic performance. They taught me to surprise and outsmart opponents.

Years later, our “secret (strategy) system” was used by a men’s Olympic gold medal team.

Our field hockey team was indeed different. We were democratic. A player council was formed with a captain from each class. Together we made decisions on training rules, travel squads, equipment purchases. On random Tuesdays we skipped practice and players went to local high schools to conduct clinics. We never cut an athlete, using up to six teams for 80 players. The varsity played the likes of Ithaca, Colgate, Cornell; the second team, State colleges; and the third team, community colleges. Practice often went in shifts from 3 to 7:30 pm to give everyone instruction and playing time. We made three trips to Bermuda over spring break to test our international ability—and have fun. Countless players passed this caring philosophy on as coaches—my fondest pride.

Our players went on to share their ability off the field and represented teammates in the Brockport Hall of Fame—Cheryl Clifton ’77, Sue Ferraro ’82, Anne Fowler ’84 and as Gerald D’Agostino ’50 speakers—Kathleen Tiemey ’79 and Mara Manson ’81. Yet it was our bench, our subs, our entire cast of teammates who completed the heart of our team. Together we became the force to become the first women’s team at Brockport to play in the Final Four.

A Decade of Greatness

Brockport’s football program made one post-season appearance in its first 53 seasons. In 2000, the Golden Eagles put together the start of a magical decade that included an undefeated season, four consecutive trips to the NCAA s and five total playoff appearances. Jay Johnson ’02 was a catalyst to that success.

In 2000, Brockport football had its first and still only perfect regular season, which was made possible because of a group of special guys. I believe we dominated opponents because of how hard we worked in the off-season and the close-knit community we developed. Teams that I have been on from youth football to the NFL break down to “family;” however, that expression took on a whole different meaning when we did it at “The Port.” It is a great feeling to be a part of that winning era of Brockport football. Yet a better feeling is the life-long friendships and memories that I bring with me every day.

Being undefeated in 2000 was the start of what we knew we could do for each other and what we felt Brockport should be. The 2000 season was the first year of a four-year stretch in which Brockport football made it to the playoffs. I believe much of the credit should go to those coaches who dedicated themselves to endless hours on the road and phone recruiting.

When I am asked about what made those teams different from others I always say how close we were. The players lived together, worked out together, went to classes together, and enjoyed life together, too. The unity and love that we had for one another drove us to extraordinary heights!
“The Wedding of the Waters” — DeWitt Clinton carried a barrel of Lake Erie water as he passed through Brockport and other canal towns. Pouring it into New York Harbor brought to a climax ten days of celebrations opening the completed Erie Canal.”
THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM:
A Canal, A Village, and A College

By Mary Jo Gigliotti, W. Bruce Leslie and Kenneth P. O'Brien

Conceived as the audacious vision of Erie Canal entrepreneurs, today's flourishing College at Brockport reflects the breathtaking optimism and local pride of communities across 19th-century America that quixotically founded colleges. Many perished, leaving only picturesque buildings. But against the odds, the seed planted in Brockport survived, matured, and now thrives.

Without the Erie Canal there would be no College at Brockport. When "Clinton's Ditch" intersected a wagon trail connecting Leroy to Lake Ontario in 1823, it transformed a small crossroads into the commercial center for the abundant agriculture of the Ontario Plain. Incorporated in 1829 and named after the largest landowner and leading boat builder, Hiel Brockway, early Brockport reverberated with the commercial rivalries, free-flowing alcohol, religious revivals, and voluntary associations of boomtown life. Middle-class respectability rubbed shoulders with the rough edges of a frontier community.

As the flourishing canal port spawned a substantial village, affluent residents craved the civic institutions of middle-class American life. Good roads, churches, and schools were first steps, but a college promised respectability and prominence. Fortunately, the Village leaders' aspirations intersected with those of Western New York's Baptists who desired a presence in the heart of the "Burned Over District," the birthplace of the Second Great Awakening. Several villages wooed them; Brockport was the successful suitor, thanks to Hiel Brockway's dowry of six acres and cash. Soon an impressive Georgian building stood in the southwest corner of the Village and the fledgling "college" welcomed its first students in September 1835. As in the birth of many American colleges, local boosterism combined with the fervor of Protestant denominationalism to produce a college.
But life was precarious on the frontier and the institution in Brockport passed through several near-death experiences. After only two years, the Depression of 1837 bankrupted the Baptist Convention and the College, leaving an abandoned building. As prosperity returned, villagers revived their dreams and raised nearly $4,000 to purchase and restore the derelict building and resume operations as the Brockport Collegiate Institute. In December 1841 classes resumed with, the Catalogue bragged, “the most flattering prospects” and 130 students.

A wide variety of courses ranging from those for children to academic and professional training for older students. Note the wide range of courses advertised in the 1832 prospectus below, including Latin and Greek, surveying, piano, painting, French and German. Room, board, and clothes washing cost resident students about $4 per week.

The Collegiate Institute prospered until Sunday morning, April 2, 1854, when churchgoers emerged to find it engulfed in flames. By afternoon the building was a smoldering ruin. According to campus folklore, an errant student burned down the building while making candy rather than attending Sabbath services. The religious meaning was as unclear as the temporal disaster was unmistakable.

Undaunted, the Board of Trustees assembled the morning after the conflagration and pledged to rebuild. Within months an impressive Medina sandstone building began to rise like a phoenix from the ashes. On December 23, 1856, an elaborate ceremony dedicated a new and improved building measuring 200 feet across with 182 rooms constructed at a cost of $30,000.

Like a Phoenix – Brockport Collegiate Institute’s new home rose from the ashes.

The announcement that a class to train teachers would “receive particular attention” was the first harbinger of what became the institution’s hallmark. Although the Institute was no longer church-affiliated, religious observance was still required. Its first catalogue stipulated that “All students are required to attend church twice upon the Sabbath, unless specially excused.”

The Brockport Collegiate Institute typified the mid-19th-century “academy” with financial support from the local government, private contributions, student fees, and New York State for teacher training. The curriculum was also a hybrid, offering

The 1852 prospectus for the Brockport Collegiate Institute.
The Battle of Brockport

Although Brockport's residents had rebuilt their institution, a successful educational enterprise demanded resources beyond those of a canal village in "the age of the railroad." Two large reaper factories produced machines that harvested Western New York's crops, briefly making Brockport a manufacturing center. And other enterprises lined the canal's banks. But the New York Central's mainline bypassed Brockport, stunting industrial development while preserving its village atmosphere. Instead, an educational institution would become the Village's hallmark and later its growth engine. But first its survival would be tested one more time.

The debt incurred for reconstruction left the Institute vulnerable to the vagaries of history. When the Civil War diverted male students and local philanthropy, the Brockport Collegiate Institute nearly drowned in red ink. When New York State threw a lifeline, the trustees reached for it. The New York State Legislature passed a resolution in 1866 to establish four Normal Schools to augment those in Albany and Oswego, and Principal Malcolm MacVicar grasped the opportunity. Genesee and Brockport competed to be the one in the Rochester area. Brockport trumped its perennial rival by offering to deed the Institute's building to the State and to raise another $60,000 to build two new wings. New York accepted Brockport's offer as well as those of Cortland, Fredonia, and Potsdam. On March 21, 1867 the Board of Trustees wrapped up its business and dissolved the Brockport Collegiate Institute, preparing for a new relationship with the State.

In April 1867, New York's Superintendent of Instruction authorized local officials "to open and put in operation immediately a Normal and Training School at said Village." Duly certified, Brockport Normal School began classes in the former Brockport Collegiate Institute building on April 17, 1867.

Malcolm MacVicar saved the Institution by transforming the bankrupt Brockport Collegiate Institute into a Normal School. He remained as principal, overseeing the Academic (aka high school) and Primary Departments that continued as they had in the former Collegiate Institute, but added to them was an expanded teacher training program. Advertisements attracted 140 students to the first year of the teacher training program, underwritten by a very welcome $4,034 from New York State.

However, selection to be one of New York's "Normal Schools" came at a high price and produced bitter conflict. Bankrupt and in debt, the Institute's trustees deeded its property to the Village, whose Board very generously offered to pay off the Collegiate Institute's debts, to give the buildings and grounds to New York State, and to enlarge the building. A bitter taxpayer revolt by those who resented subsidizing an "elite" institution almost scuppered the deal. Only dubious tactics by the "pro-Normal School" advocates finally overcame opposition and passed the tax levies. By hook and by crook, the Village's greatest long-term asset had been given new life.
The Normal School supporters’ victory was fortunate as the Village’s industrial base soon peaked. In 1880, the bird’s eye view below, factories line the Erie Canal; churches, stores, and hotels dominate Main Street; the Normal School sits magisterially on the southwest edge of the Village; and the Niagara Falls branch of the New York Central Railroad line passes along its southern side. But, with the main line bypassing Brockport to the south, industrial decline set in.

Mimicking Winslow Homer’s famous “Crack the Whip” painting, pupils engage in a spirited tug-of-war in front of the Training School.

The State Normal School displayed Victorian splendor at the end of the century.

The Training School had its own library, devoted to children’s literature.

Basket boarders strike a jaunty pose under their house mother’s gaze.
by the late 1800s. The population consequently stagnated. Without the College, Brockport would have come to resemble numerous small Western New York villages lacking a distinguishing institution and an engine for future growth.

Once guaranteed significant support by New York State, the future was more secure, even though control, like the waters of the Erie Canal, flowed slowly toward Albany. The Normal School gladly accepted the funds from the State, while struggling to keep Albany at arm's length. For several decades little changed; Brockport continued virtually as an academy, providing schooling for the local community with an enhanced teacher training program.

Toward the end of the century the State began to intervene more directly, pressing its institutions to focus more narrowly on teacher training — to become “more normal.” The term “normal,” unimpressive to Anglophonic ears, translated poorly from its French source, Napoleon's elite Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. While the additions of a “Training School” and a new chapel at the north end of the building were most welcome, the curricular restrictions were not.

The Training School enrolled 300 young pupils on whom the future teachers rehearsed their chosen trade. Such “laboratory schools” became the cutting edge of teacher training after John Dewey’s famous experiments at the University of Chicago. Generations of Normal School graduates learned their craft on the campus before venturing into surrounding schools.

At the State’s insistence, the curriculum tilted strongly away from academic subjects toward pedagogical courses. The Academic Department was turned into a separate high school, though it was housed in the Normal School until 1934, and the old academy tradition of a rounded education withered. From 1907 until the early 1920s, the Normal School offered only one- and two-year professional courses for high school graduates preparing to teach.

After a fatal 1900 fire at Fredonia Normal School led the Regents to ban on-campus living in New York's Normal Schools, all students roomed in local homes. This created a half-century tradition of “basket-boarding” for students who lived in private homes during the week and went home on weekends. When they returned on Sunday evenings, they arrived with baskets of food for the week.

The world occasionally intruded into Normal School life. After WWI, for example, stained glass windows were installed in honor of the 101 Brockport students who served and the five who sacrificed their lives. Their service was also honored by planting 101 poplar trees along Utica Street, which edged the east side of the campus into the 1970s.

Even without residential students, campus traditions were created including the much loved Color Day, which began in 1902.

Student musical and theatrical performances were followed by outdoor festivities such as a Maypole and folk dancing, a parade, and finally a dance attended by alumni of the Normal School and of the Training School. The increasingly raucous festivities offended the stern Principal Ernest Hartwell, who abolished Color Day in 1937.

The "Normals" fielded baseball and basketball teams to compete with other Normal Schools and regional high schools. After the high school students left the campus in 1934, men's teams became more collegiate, dropping high schools from their schedules. Basketball had the strongest tradition and a game with alumni inspired the first reunions, the forerunner of today's Homecoming. Nationally, intercollegiate competition for women fell out of favor, but
intramural programs, especially basketball, thrived at Brockport.

In the 1920s, New York’s State Education Department stripped most remaining powers from its Normal Schools’ local Boards of Visitors and ordered them to eliminate the high school classes from their campus schools. The 1934 dedication of a large red brick high school on a hill south of the Normal School officially severed a historic town-gown link. But its proximity to the Normal School laid the basis for today’s adjacent facilities that flow seamlessly together into, in effect, one sprawling shared campus. The restoration of a third year and of more academic content moved the curriculum toward a more collegiate basis.

But without the high school, and with the most decrepit Normal School building in New York State, the institution once more faced an uncertain future. As the Depression squeezed State budgets and Brockport’s Board of Visitors squabbled over the appointment of a new principal, the State Education Department considered closure. Then, reversing direction, it imposed a vigorous new principal, Ernest Hartwell, the former superintendent of schools in Buffalo. He skillfully mobilized local, regional, and eventually State support, securing funds for a new building in the Legislature’s 1938 budget. Then he moved to procure collegiate status.

WWII was a watershed. While war rumbled ominously across the Atlantic, Brockport was in transition. After three years of construction, dignitaries dedicated today’s “Hartwell Hall” on June 4, 1941. The words “State Teachers College” etched across the portico reflected Hartwell’s determined optimism that New York’s “Normal Schools” would soon become “State Teachers Colleges.”

When Governor Herbert Lehman inscribed into law what was already set in concrete over the front entrance, Brockport only six males. But within months of V-J Day, the campus began to grow dramatically.

After Allied armies had turned the tide against fascism in Europe and the Pacific, planners in Washington and Albany turned their thoughts to the post-war world. New York’s “Plan for Post-war Education” changed Brockport’s destiny. Each newly designated State Teachers College assumed a specialty; Brockport would prepare New York’s future health and physical education teachers in addition to training elementary school teachers.

When the first WWII veterans arrived, Hartwell Hall was the entire “campus,” housing a gymnasium, bowling alleys, swimming pool, “Ma Green’s” cafeteria, a library, and a dark walnut auditorium cum theatre. But it was almost immediately overwhelmed as enrollment soared past 600 in 1946, to 1,000 in 1948, and 1,200 in 1950.

Soon overcrowding was endemic. A college without dormitories meant the village of 4,000 suddenly had to house an unprecedented number of students. The arrival of war-surplus barracks and the construction of flimsy West Hall accommodated some students. As veterans’ needs differed from those of
Brockport's traditional students, several barracks were designated for married student housing, and children soon toddled around the campus. Despite psychological adjustments and physical inconveniences, most veterans settled into college life and many recall a special camaraderie.

Rapid growth was also a mixed blessing for faculty. New faculty were recruited for the Health and Physical Education Program as well as existing departments, doubling the ranks in five years. But facilities bulged at the seams. Military surplus "Quonset huts" arrived as emergency classrooms. To the dismay of their occupants, these "temporary" facilities remained in use until the late 1960s.

The post-WWII generation left an indelible mark on Brockport student life. It arrived at an institution still growing into its new collegiate status. Although most of their parents had not experienced higher education, post-war students brought definite images of collegiate culture and thirsted for the full panoply of activities they associated with "college life." Most prominent were the anthems and totems accompanying football. Newly arrived Coach Robert Boozer fielded the first team in fall 1947 with equipment donated by a nearby army base. The soccer team, destined for national glory in the 1950s, was revived and cross country, swimming, track, and golf teams soon followed. The Women's Athletic Association provided an extensive intramural program and "play days" with other Teachers Colleges.

New college "traditions" sprang to life. Students selected the Golden Eagle as a mascot and dubbed him "Ellsworth," Coach Boozer's middle name. Homecoming began in 1947, providing an annual autumn renewal of alumni connections. Christmas pageants, the Winter Carnival, and formal dances each enhanced campus social life. The Stylus, founded in 1914 as a monthly student newspaper, became a weekly. The Sage yearbook was in its heyday. The late 1940s were also fertile years for associational foundings, as religious, musical, dramatic, and academic organizations flourished. The social patterns and collegiate traditions shaped by post-war students endured as a model for student life for two decades.

Post-WWII prosperity and the College's growth returned the Village of Brockport population to Victorian levels. The departure of factories and warehouses left a picturesque Main Street and a village offering a comfortable home to many faculty, staff, and students — an ideal setting for a college community. Although a student union and women's dormitories opened in 1951, most students lived in the Village and depended on it for recreation and shopping. In turn, many villagers attended cultural and athletic events on campus.

As veterans graduated, the College's enrollments stabilized and its mission remained constant. Under President Donald Tower, Brockport epitomized the "State Teachers College" etched over the entrance to Hartwell Hall.

Then, in the late 1950s, the approaching "Baby Boomers" sent bulldozers into action again as the campus crept west and the shock of "Sputnik" threatened the curricular status quo. By the time President Tower retired in 1964, enrollment had multiplied eight times in his 20-year presidency and the transformed campus included a library, science building, gymnasium, dormitories, and a student union. But, even bigger changes were coming.
On April 4, 1948, a mild breeze blew across the fertile Lake Ontario plain; 12 miles south of the shoreline the students, faculty, and staff of the State Teachers College enjoyed unusually mild temperatures in the 70s. Residents of the Erie Canal town and its College savored the vernal tease by a spring that so slowly bestows its annual blessings on Western New York.

About 250 miles east of Brockport, Governor Thomas E. Dewey, who had interrupted his Wisconsin presidential primary campaign, flew into Albany to sign legislation destined to transform public higher education in New York. With a stroke of his pen, Dewey created the State University of New York (SUNY), which initially encompassed 32 State-supported institutions of higher education outside New York City and envisaged future medical schools and community colleges. Few could have imagined that the fledgling University, with fewer than 30,000 students and 2,500 faculty, was destined to become one of the world’s largest.

Today its 64 campuses dot the State from eastern Long Island into Manhattan, north up the Hudson Valley into the Adirondack Mountains to the Canadian border, and west to Niagara Falls and Lake Erie, almost to the Pennsylvania border. As America’s largest comprehensive university, SUNY incorporates community colleges, colleges of technology, university colleges, research universities, medical schools, health science centers, and specialized campuses in fields as diverse as optometry, ceramics, horticulture, fashion, forestry, and maritime training. During its 60 years, SUNY has awarded nearly three million degrees and currently enrolls nearly 165,000 students who are served by 87,000 faculty and staff, and supported by a budget of more than $10 billion.

Initially little changed at Brockport and the other 10 Teachers Colleges. Opponents had laced the legislation with poison pills barring the colleges from teaching liberal arts or raising private funds. SUNY seemed destined to remain a modest collection of very different institutions. But then, a decade later, the stars aligned and SUNY was soon transformed. The launch of Sputnik, the election of Nelson Rockefeller as New York State Governor, the approaching waves of “Baby Boomers,” and the lapse of the 10-year ban on teaching liberal arts combined to liberate SUNY from Dewey’s promise that it would “only supplement the private colleges.”

Rockefeller moved quickly, appointing a committee to study the State’s future higher education needs. Its report argued that the post-war demand for higher education would accelerate and that much of the projected increase would occur in the public sector, in fact, in SUNY. Consequently, the committee recommended a dramatic expansion of the State University to provide for the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who would be seeking admission to public higher education over the next two decades. The post-war Baby Boom was about to hit college campuses. Among the report’s recommendations was a call to transform SUNY’s Teachers’ Colleges into liberal arts institutions, a recommendation echoed in the University’s revised Master Plan of 1960.

And Rockefeller soon found the man to carry out his expansive plans—Chancellor Samuel Gould, who had come east from the world’s greatest public university system, the University of California. Together, Rockefeller and Gould transformed SUNY, literally putting it onto the national higher education map.

Gould was later asked to identify his favorite campus president, and the first name he gave was Brockport’s Albert W. Brown.
Although the blueprints for expansion and change had been first drawn in the early 1960s, the direction and scope was largely the result of Albert W. Brown, who became the College's third president in October 1965 and who quickly put his personal stamp on both campus organization and plans for expansion. The "Ten-Year Academic Plan" that he inherited had estimated the campus would serve 3,500 undergraduates by 1970, an increase of only 1,000.

Brown, who better understood the unmet demand for public higher education in the region, immediately revised the projections to 5,000 undergraduates by 1970 and 7,500 by 1975. Just three years later, the campus raised its projected enrollment again, to 10,500 undergraduates by the mid 70s, which proved to be an underestimate.

The curriculum was also revised, with new liberal arts majors becoming the favored programs. Almost alone among the SUNY colleges making this transition, Brockport prophetically required all students who sought teaching certification to complete both an appropriate academic major and a certification program. Master's level graduate programs were created for many of the new majors, and some departments even submitted ambitious plans for new doctoral programs in the immediate future.

By 1975, in just one decade, the College had been transformed from a small State Teachers' College to a large multi-purpose campus of well over 11,000 students that was constantly changing. Ambitious building projects were underway, distinguished new faculty had been hired, and academic programs undertaken in fields as distant as a major in the Peace Corps and a new interdisciplinary, time-shorted curriculum called the Alternate College. National conferences in philosophy, economics, and history, and the growing renown of the dance program spread Brockport's name across the country.

Brockport achieved national stature as a college that was making a uniquely successful transition from its Teachers' College past to a new, as yet uncharted, future. This was the heyday of the new Brockport.

Student life was also rapidly changing in "The Sixties." As the College lost, or perhaps willingly...
A new tradition.

Continuing a tradition.

surrendered, much of its authority to act in loco parentis, students increasingly shaped campus life.

Issues of race, the Vietnam War, and competing lifestyles energized and divided the campus.

While the student body had been politicized by the early 1970s, the majority student experience was still non-political, often revolving around shifting sexual mores and increased drug use, with alcohol remaining the drug of first choice. In 1969, the College had turned the basement of the recently opened Student Union into a bar called the Rathskeller, where students, enjoying New York State’s 18-year-old legal drinking age, could drink before walking — or stumbling — back to their residence halls. By the early 1970s the rites of spring had been transformed, as “Spring-In” replaced the 1950s genteel, formally attired Spring Day. Beer trucks pulled up onto campus, classes were cancelled, and electric guitars were heard wailing far into the night.

Some traditional activities continued to attract students. The men's soccer team won the first NCAA Division III title in 1974. And women's intercollegiate teams began to compete,

beginning with basketball and volleyball in 1966. The Stylus student newspaper and other publications thrived in a new era of student editorial control.

For all the changes, Brockport's traditional collegiate mission continued, a place of learning where an often raucous student culture met the higher culture of the arts, the sciences, the humanities, and the professions. Art exhibitions, dance recitals, intercollegiate athletics, movies, speeches by distinguished guests, and faculty panels focusing on significant issues of the day were commonplace in the weekly campus calendar. At Brockport in the 1960s and 1970s, ideas still mattered.

But, the decade ended with as much uncertainty as it had begun. Enrollment had peaked in fall 1975 at 11,696, only to begin a rapid decline. Five years later Brockport had almost 25 percent fewer students attending, and as President Brown announced his retirement in 1981, there was great concern about the direction in which the College was heading. These concerns within the larger community were dramatically illustrated by the cover photo that accompanied the story, “The Trouble at Brockport,” in the UpState Magazine of the October 26, 1980 Rochester Democrat and Chronicle.

Not all news of the period was this dire. In fact, the 1970s ended with one of the most extraordinary events in the history of the College — the 1979 International Special Olympics. Despite its problems, the

College community organized itself through hundreds of volunteers to host the event that attracted many thousands, including a stellar national and international audience, to the campus. The Games were a great success and changed the campus’s built environment, leaving behind the nation’s largest Division III stadium and two massive sculptures that were a gift from a Republic of Georgian artist and the Soviet people.

Muhammad Ali and Rafer Johnson, Olympic decathlon champion, and a Special Athlete help light the torch for the Special Olympics.
Three Presidents. After an extensive national search, Dr. Paul Yu, a philosopher by training who had been Provost of Butler University, became the College's fifth president in July 1997. Here he is pictured with his two immediate predecessors, Presidents Brown and Van de Watering, at his inauguration in spring 1998.

John E. Van de Watering became the College's fourth president in 1981, beginning a 16-year stewardship. Despite a very rough start, a retrenchment of 10 percent of the faculty and staff that had been demanded by the SUNY Administration in Albany, and ongoing State budget woes, he and his administration guided the College toward greater stability, a process that was continued with different emphases by each of his successors, President Paul Yu (1997-2004), Interim President John B. Clark (2004-2005), and President John R. Halstead (2005-present).

The first and overriding issue, after staff reductions, was the need to stem the declining enrollments. By the early 1990s, the admissions picture brightened as enrollments rose modestly, as did the academic credentials of freshmen and transfers. But, much of the College's increase came in part-time enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, which doubled during this decade to more than 3,000, making the College even less of a traditional residential campus, as the College lost almost 1,000 resident students between 1985 and 1995. The College renewed what by now had become a 20-year presence in downtown Rochester, using several different sites before the acquisition of the MetroCenter on St. Paul Boulevard, which was designed to serve selected undergraduate majors and graduate programs.

Budget problems were not solved, however, by the increasing enrollments, since this was also the period of New York State's disinvestment in public higher education. Direct State support decreased from 90 percent of SUNY's operating budget in the mid-1980s to less than 40 percent a decade later, and it would continue to decline in the years ahead. Transferring the real cost of public higher education from State funds in general to particular students and their families was one consequence of this trend, and on-going budget cuts, with annual and semi-annual cost-cutting, another.

Yet, the on-going problems of financing public higher education in New York State failed to deflect the College from achieving a large degree of stability during these years, as it maintained its essential character as a comprehensive college, but with a somewhat larger and more diverse student body. Diversity, in this case, was defined more by age than ethnicity, but there is little question that the reliance on older, part-time, and transfer students lent a distinctive
character to many classes. With little new construction, the campus had an opportunity to mature as trees and plantings grew and the central mall was completed.

These decades also witnessed the renovation of older buildings, beginning with Hartwell Hall in the mid-1980s and extending through the renovations of the lower quad residence halls in the first decade of the new century. The faculty that had been so actively recruited in the late 1960s and early 1970s largely stayed and provided the intellectual and political leadership needed as they moved into senior ranks. And, the degree program mix stabilized around the comprehensive college’s blend of the liberal arts and sciences with professional and pre-professional programs, with physical education and business administration remaining the most popular majors throughout these decades.

The student body, however, did change, especially after the arrival of Dr. Paul Yu in 1997. The new administration reorganized admissions with the creation of a new vice presidency for the combined Divisions of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, sought highly qualified high school and transfer students (including a new stream of students from Eastern Europe) through an extensive scholarship program, recommitted resources to the College Honors Program and Delta College, and severely limited the number of incoming students in special admissions categories. The results were clear; the College attracted a higher and higher qualified freshman class with each successive year.

Academic ceremonies, both traditional and new, such as the Opening Convocation, became regular events on the College’s annual events calendar. These ceremonies today serve as reminders of a more fundamental change, one that worked its way across almost all of higher education, marking the shift from a faculty and staff-centered institution to one that is student-centered. This was true in both the classrooms, where the emphasis shifted from the quality of instructors to measures of student learning (although there is a relationship between the two) and in each office, that now measured itself by the extent to which it handled student needs.

During this decade, the College began looking once again to its future. The campus culture was enlivened by a much improved newspaper, The Stylus, by a common freshman summer reading assignment that was followed by a fall presentation by the author, by a renewed commitment to community service and service learning, by an entire cadre of new faculty and professional staff, and by a series of student leaders who brought new energy and ideas to student government. And, new construction returned to the campus, first with the Raye H. Conrad Welcome Center, then apartment-style residences that offered students an enhanced on-campus living environment, and then with the ground-breaking in 2010 of a long-awaited Special Events and Recreation Center.

By 2010, the College had achieved a welcome, even comfortable, maturity. The College at Brockport, as we are now called, looks to its future with as much optimism as our students, knowing what we are and all that we are capable of providing.

Professors Leslie and O’Brien are members of the Department of History. Ms. Gigliotti is the College archivist.
Happy 175th Birthday

Happy 175th Birthday to The College at Brockport! The years do not show considering the long winters found in Rochester. Maybe it's the warm breeze that arrives by spring because you really you don't show your age. Congratulations on being a source of sunshine that shines through the sleet, freezing rain and snow of Western New York!

— Glenn Johnson ’85, 13 WHAM Chief Meteorologist

"Like a fine wine you get better with age!" I spent four years of my life there and tried to pack 175 years of fun AND learning into that time span! There were at least 175 great experiences I had, 175 lifetime friends made, 175 nights to remember, 175 athletic events attended, BUT, I met and married ONLY 1 wife, and she's still with me. Happy Birthday Brockport!

— Bob Casullo ’73, Assistant head football coach, Syracuse University

I had an arduous childhood: poor, depressed, with my mother dying. My teachers said simply, "He is not college material." I arrived at Brockport and my world changed. I was the one who lived homeless, while BSG Vice President, and leading tumultuous Vietnam protests. Today, I can hardly believe how much I have soared, with thanks eternally to Brockport.

— Lawrence O. Gostin ’71, Linda D. and Timothy J. O’Neill Professor of Global Health Law Faculty Director, O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law Director, WHO Collaborating Center on Public Health Law and Human Rights Professor, The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Georgetown University School of Law

As a 1970 graduate, I remember Brockport growing and changing. I was so proud to be an RA in the new high-rise residence hall. May the College joyously celebrate 175 years while always looking to its future.

Happy birthday,

— Nancy Carriuolo ’70, President, Rhode Island College
Bill Andrews: Preserving Town-Gown History

By Nicholas Mascari

If there was an award for the model town-gown citizen, William Andrews, PhD, professor of political science emeritus, would win it. He has been an influential member and active citizen of both College and Village communities since 1967. In fact, he easily could be the poster boy for town-gown relations at their best, having made major contributions to both campus and community for more than 40 years.

Andrews arrived in Brockport during the Albert W. Brown administration, as the College was making the transition from a State Teachers College to a comprehensive liberal arts college. He had earned his PhD from Cornell University in 1959 and had served on the faculty of Dartmouth College and Tufts University, before leaving his tenured position at Tufts to accept the challenge of establishing the Department of Political Science at The College at Brockport, where he served until his retirement in 1996.

“It was an exciting time at the College because we were being transformed from a teacher’s college to a comprehensive college and to have the opportunity to build an excellent political science department was special,” Andrews said. He proved to be a good architect as well as faculty member, founding and chairing what became one of SUNY’s outstanding academic departments, at one time home to three Distinguished Professors and eight Chancellor’s Award recipients.

In 1968, Andrews was involved in the early meetings that gave rise to The College at Brockport’s Washington Program. During the winter of ’67-’68, he and fellow Political Science Professor Michael Weaver, PhD braved a blustery snow storm to meet in Cortland to discuss the format of what would eventually become an innovative semester-long internship program to place students in the top branches of government and other...
DC-based organizations. What began as a consortium of five SUNY schools soon evolved into the Brockport Program that was further developed and led by Weaver until his retirement in 1995. (See Kaleidoscope/c.22, #4, Spring 2009, pp. 10-17 for more about the Brockport Washington Program.)

Then, in 1987, several students approached the department, requesting it sponsor a Model UN simulation. Andrews saw a better opportunity. “I didn’t want to do just another Model UN, because there were hundreds of them around the country. So I suggested that they do a Model European Union simulation, because it is a much more complex institution with diplomats, ministers, heads of government and civil servants. Students have a tough time with it at first, but they learn a lot.”

The first SUNY Model European Community (SUNY MEC), with 35 students from five SUNY schools taking the myriad roles, met in 1987. The program, now called EuroSim, has since blossomed into an annual event, alternating between the US and Europe, bringing together more than 200 students from 14 New York State colleges and eight European universities.

In 1993, Andrews was appointed to the Brockport Historical Preservation Board where he continues to be involved in protecting buildings and neighborhoods with special architectural, historical and cultural character. He then became Village historian (1993-99) and continues today as historian emeritus. He is the author of three books on the history of Brockport, Around Brockport (2002), Early Brockport (2005) and Around Brockport: A Postcard History (2008), The Village and College marched in tandem for most of their history; the Village celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2005.

And, at 80 years old, Andrews continues his service to the community on multiple fronts, serving as chair of the Village of Brockport Preservation Board, vice president of the Greater Brockport Development Corporation, and president of the Brockport Community Museum.

Although a political scientist by training, Andrews explains his interest in history succinctly, “I always approached political science from a historical perspective,” he says.

And Andrews notes that the Village and the College (in its several iterations) shared a close relationship for most of their history.

“There would be no College without leadership in the Village,” Andrews states. “Hiel Brockway took the initiative in 1830 to invite members of the Baptist Conference of Western New York to start a college, donating $3,000 and six acres of land to create a college. When that didn’t work out, the Village again took the initiative to start the Brockport Collegiate Institute in that same building. When that burned, the Village again took the initiative to rebuild,” Andrews said. He also noted that Village leaders recognized the importance of a college to the community’s social and fiscal health and were instrumental in its transition to a Normal School and State Teacher’s College, with the Normal School providing elementary and secondary education for Village children. “In fact,” Andrews notes, "the north wing of Hartwell Hall was at one time home to the Village high school."

It was Brockport resident Vincent Dailey, political secretary to then New York Governor Herbert Lehman (1933-42), who arranged for the construction of Hartwell Hall. He succeeded in getting it approved and funded, with the stipulation that it be built using the same architectural plans that had previously been used to build Potsdam College’s Satterlee Hall.

Andrews also points out that the Village’s newspapers always included news about the College. “They always gave a lot of attention to College affairs, reporting at length on College activities, suggesting the College was important to the residents,” he said. “And there always was involvement of Village leadership in the leadership of the College."

“There’s always been a very close symbiotic relationship between Village and College. Each continues to be important to the other,” he says.
Q. When did you come to Brockport?

A. **John**: I came here in 1966. It was a time of great change. Under the leadership of President Al Brown the College was making a “great leap forward” — undergoing a transformation from a teacher's college to a university. President Brown had a vision for Brockport that included an emphasis on both teaching and scholarship. Brockport offered the balance I was looking for.

**Kathy**: I came in 1970. That year, the College added 13 faculty members to the Department of History alone. I thought I would stay only a short time, but obviously it didn't work out that way.

Q. Why did you decide to stay?

A. **Kathy**: The Brockport campus community is like a family. In the Department of History, we were each other's best friends and we relied on each other. We supported each other's research and this continues today. Passion for the discipline, immersion in the field, and ongoing scholarly work allows you to bring your material alive for your students. We made that possible for each other.

And, of course, John and I got married and raised our family here.

**John**: There were days when I'd drive over to campus with our boys and wait in front of the building where Kathy was teaching. As soon as she finished her lecture, she'd come running out and hop in the car, and I would go in and teach my class.

Q. Tell me about Brockport students.

A. **Kathy**: They are an incredible joy. Many of them are the first generation in their families to go to college and they lack confidence when they start out. Brockport gives students an opportunity to blossom. We get to watch them develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments. There is real joy in seeing students find themselves.

Many of our students go out into the world and lead quiet lives as judged by the way our society defines “success.” But I know that whatever our alumni are doing, they are touching — and changing — countless lives.

Q. Do you have a particular story about a student that you’d like to share?

A. **John**: In 1966, when I first came to Brockport, I had a young woman in my class that sat in the front row and never said a word. She didn’t ask questions or participate in discussion. She was so shy that she hardly raised her head. But after the class turned in their first assignments, it was clear that she was the best writer in the class. I decided at the end of the semester that I would award the best student in the class with a book. She, of course, was that student. Not only did she invite us to her wedding, she still sends us a Christmas card every year. You can never tell how you’ll impact a student.
Q. What motivated you both to pursue careers in education?

A. **Kathy**: My stepmother, Sophia Smith, was very influential. She was of Russian descent and taught in the Elba, New York school district for 47 years. She had very high standards and was always raising the bar — whether I liked it or not.

**John**: My mother, Sabina Kutolowski, was my driving force. Coming from Poland in the early 1900s, she worked in sweatshops to support the family. Though having little formal education, she understood the importance of it. She insisted that all six of us graduate from high school, which was not common then. I was able to go to the University of Massachusetts, recruited to play football, thanks to my coach.

Q. You have named a scholarship for your mother, correct?

A. **John**: Yes, the Sabina Kutolowski Scholarship. The description of the scholarship reads:

“A native of Poland, she became a naturalized American citizen. Always a caring, concerned, and committed mother, she possessed an extraordinary desire to learn and to promote the education of her children — something that she scarcely received.”

Our education was truly her priority. The scholarship is a way to honor her and support current students with financial need.

Q. You’ve also established the John and Kathleen Kutolowski Department of History Faculty Development Fund. Why was this important to you?

A. **Kathy**: Brockport is a public college and we compete for talented faculty with private institutions, who, by the way, generally offer much more financial support for faculty research. The College simply can’t afford to do that. Yet, the constant generation of new knowledge is critical to enrich the classroom experience. Faculty serve as role models for our students. When we test and exchange ideas with colleagues, our students are encouraged to do the same.

Brockport has been very good to us throughout our careers. It gave us an environment to thrive as teachers and scholars — and a wonderful community to raise a family. This fund will help ensure that current and future history faculty can pursue their passions and provide students with the dynamic and engaging classroom experience they deserve. This is our way of giving back.
Our Mystic Chords of Memory: Four Decades at Brockport
Professors W. Bruce Leslie and Kenneth P. O’Brien

“The Model for Brockport is Brockport” President Albert W. Brown once proclaimed — an accurate reflection of the campus that we, along with 150 other new faculty, discovered upon our arrival in August 1970. Brockport was charting a distinctive path within SUNY. Enrollment was soaring; the arts scene was vibrant; plans for doctoral programs had been submitted to Albany; and international programs, including the distinctive major in the Peace Corps, were proliferating. Construction crews were transforming a campus that was messy but very much alive in the midst of dramatic changes to its physical plant, its curricula, and its personnel. Beyond the campus boundaries, President Albert W. Brown, former director of Michigan’s Office of Economic Opportunity, oversaw an “urban thrust” designed to take the College into Rochester. At the time, it seemed as if the academic sky was the limit.

Five years later, the limit had been reached. New York State’s budget had crashed, a victim of New York City’s fiscal crisis; the “Sixties” student unrest had alienated many legislators; and Rockefeller, SUNY’s public benefactor, assumed the vice presidency, leaving his successor to lament that the “days of wine and roses” had passed. Private colleges, faced with declining numbers of Baby Boom college-bound students, began to poach those transfer students who had been so critical to Brockport’s growth. As a consequence of tumbling enrollments, an institutional crisis that lasted for almost two decades struck the campus.

One casualty of the crisis was the unity among the faculty and staff who, shocked by two retrenchments in five years that led to the dismissal of 54 teaching faculty, 39 of whom were tenured, engaged in an unseemly competition for scarce resources. Another casualty was the traditional, first-time college freshman. To meet enrollment targets, the College began lowering admission criteria for traditional freshmen, a tactic that quickly backfired by leading to rising attrition rates. Consequently, the College increasingly depended on transfer, “mature” commuting, and graduate students.

To a large extent, our history mirrored national trends, as many State Teachers Colleges like Brockport had been transformed into engines of mass higher education needed by the extraordinary post-war surge in college enrollment. While research universities, liberal arts colleges, and community colleges each had clear senses of themselves and their missions, such was not the case for the “Brockports.” It took until the mid-1980s to name such places. “Comprehensive colleges” they were called, institutions that combined the traditional liberal arts disciplines with a range of professional and pre-professional academic programs.

Actually, these institutions were extending their older identities as they forged new futures. Today’s College at Brockport genuinely reflects its Normal School and State Teachers College history in the large numbers of students who continue to seek preparation for teaching and other helping professions. But the 21st-century Brockport contains new, or renewed, elements as well. The current residential students, for example, now make up a growing share of enrollments. Over time, the various curricular strands have been better integrated, ending the open warfare among schools. In addition, we continue to be a major destination for transfer students and our graduate program is one of the largest among SUNY’s comprehensive colleges.

Why is connecting these mystique chords of memory so important? We believe that doing so adds meaning to the journey so many of us have taken and provides texture to our current College community. Over our four decades, our colleagues and students have given Brockport its distinctive character, blending old and new. We arrived at a Brockport with an uncertain identity, despite roots dating back to 1835. The journey since the 1970s has been exciting, but it also exacted a price, a result of having reached a bit too far in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

However, looking back, we can also see that that drama was part of a larger picture as American higher education, especially public higher education, matured. We at Brockport were on the front line of an American experiment in higher education that is now sweeping the world. We have been fortunate to take that journey with so many wonderful people; too many now sadly gone. Mindful of their contributions, we believe that taking stock of our past acknowledges our debts and better informs us as we complete almost two centuries of service to the citizens of New York.

Professors W. Bruce Leslie and Kenneth P. O’Brien have been colleagues and friends in the Department of History for 40 years.