

Fall 2023

# Landscape

For Alumni and Friends of Landmark College

## Ready for Prime

Ten students, including Gabby Woolgar (pictured), help bring *The College Tour's* LC episode to life. Student Gus McGee writes about his experience on page 2.





Alex Boylan, host and executive producer of *The College Tour*, spent a day in April on campus meeting with students and filming his segments for the LC episode. At right, Boylan poses with LC mascot Finn the Shark.

## Table of Contents

- 1 President's Letter**
- 2 Ready for Prime**
- 6 Alumnus Mark Gessner '03**
- 8 Retiring Faculty**
- 14 On and Around Campus**
- 15 Career Connections**
- 16 Alumna Andrea Tolliver '00**
- 19 Alumni Association Corner**
- 21 Giving**

*Landscape* is published semi-annually in the spring and the fall by the Offices of Marketing & Communications and Institutional Advancement.

**Editor**  
Mark DiPietro

**Designer**  
Valerie Cox

**Contributing Editors**  
Chris Lenois, Carol Nardino, Tom Oxholm, Tricia Stanley

**Contributing Writers**  
Mark DiPietro, Dr. Peter Eden, Mac Gander, Chris Lenois, Mary Jane MacGuire, Gus McGee, Tricia Stanley

**Contributing Photographers**  
Valerie Cox, Mark DiPietro, Sandra Fishler, Wes Hall, Lisa Hennessy, Gus McGee, Todd Miller, Tanner Roberts

*Cover photo of student Gabby Woolgar by Todd Miller*

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Barbara Epifanio, B.A., Chair**  
*Stylist, Pearl by Lela Rose*

**Maryellen Rancourt, Ed.D., Vice Chair**  
*Grants Administrator, Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School District*

**Adrienne Ansay, B.S.**  
*Vice President, JOAD LLC*

**William R. Cotter, J.D.**  
*Retired Owner, Food Manufacturing Business*

**Peter Eden, Ph.D.**  
*President, Landmark College*

**Mark Ellman, LL.M.**  
*President and Founder, Celestial Capital Group*

**Bennett Fradkin, B.Arch.**  
*Principal, Fradkin & McAlpin Architects*

**Bretton Himsworth '90, B.S.**  
*Vice President, CentralEd*

**Alan Hirsh, B.A.**  
*Owner and Executive Vice President, Lamart Corp.*

**Linda Kaboolian, Ph.D.**  
*Instructor, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health*

**John M. Kemmerer, M.A.**  
*Editorial Consultant and Content Developer*

**Stephan Kiratsous, M.B.A.**  
*Chief Financial Officer, Delphi Financial Group*

**Kim Marroni, J.D.**  
*Corporate/Real Estate Attorney*

**Ana Maria Mellado, B.Arch.**  
*Cofounder, Electra IMS*

**Jamell Mitchell, M.B.A.**  
*Neurodiversity CoE Operations Leader, EY*

**Jon Moran, M.D.**  
*Professor of Thoracic Surgery, East Carolina University (Retired)*

**Stephen Moschetta '95, J.D.**  
*Attorney, The Moschetta Law Firm*

**Belle Brooks O'Brien, M.A.**  
*Trustee, The Morgan and Belle O'Brien Foundation*

**Ralph Zarefsky, J.D.**  
*Magistrate Judge, U.S. District Court, Retired*

## TRUSTEES EMERITI

**Robert Munley, J.D.\***

**John Perkins, J.D.\***

**Charles Strauch, B.S.**  
*Owner, GA Services*

*\*Deceased*

## COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION

**Peter Eden, Ph.D.**  
*President*

**Mark DiPietro, B.A.**  
*Vice President for Marketing and Communications*

**Janie Jenkins-Evans, B.S.**  
*Director of Human Resources*

**Karrie Kalich, Ph.D.**  
*Vice President for Academic Affairs*

**Michael Kirkpatrick, Ph.D.**  
*Senior Director of Institutional Effectiveness*

**Tina LaFlam**  
*Director of IT Services*

**Adam Lalor, Ph.D.**  
*Vice President for Neurodiversity Research and Innovation*

**David LaValley, B.S.**  
*Vice President for Administration and Finance; Chief Financial Officer*

**Michael Luciani, M.B.A.**  
*Vice President for Student Affairs*

**Carol Nardino**  
*Senior Director of Institutional Advancement and Special Assistant to the President*

**Michael Stefanowicz, M.Ed.**  
*Vice President for Enrollment Management*



## From the President's Desk

Photo by Wes Hall



President Eden meets with students Spencer Morgan and Sabrina Cohn in his office.

Landmark College was established on the premise that students with learning challenges, if in the right environment, and through determination, perseverance, and inventiveness, would find success. Founding faculty member Dotti Osterholt, who retired this past spring, notes these qualities in a Q&A about LC's early years (see pages 8–9): “Nobody was here who didn’t have these qualities. The students had them, the people working with students had them, the staff had them. You really didn’t sign onto the whole concept unless you were willing to just dig in and do what was necessary to make this a success.”

LC has changed considerably in the 38 years since our founding, yet certain core, foundational qualities—in our students, faculty, and staff—have remained present and strong. Without these qualities and convictions, LC could not have positioned itself where it is today as the superior college for neurodiverse students.

The intentional changes at LC have included a dramatic expansion of academic and student life programming in our residential as well as LC Online offerings; the emergence of a Success Center in the California Bay Area; and fundraising success, which has brought funds to support students in Putney and online, and has also allowed us to add important facilities to our main campus. Indeed, the College’s mission powers our fundraising efforts such as the Imagine Campaign (see page 21) and our April 2023 fundraiser, “One Day, One Vision, Many Lives Changed” (see pages 6–7). Moving



forward, our current Master Planning activity will identify other needed improvements to our beloved Putney campus, including enhanced accessibility, energy efficiency, improved learning and living environments, and more.

Of course, our greatest strength remains our students, who become alumni and demonstrate to the world outcomes borne of their hard work within the enduring LC model. Many of these students have brought their stories to an international audience via LC’s participation in *The College Tour*, as you’ll read in this issue’s cover story. LC’s episode of this streaming

series went “live” over the summer and will soon be available on Amazon Prime, allowing for worldwide exposure for the transformational experiences Landmark College offers its students.

As our Putney residential and LC Online enrollment continues to grow, we will celebrate even more alumni in the future. It is important that we maintain and improve this important campus in Vermont, from which springs not only our worldwide online programming and microcampus Success Centers, but educated young people better equipped to take on the challenges and opportunities in our society.

With regards,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Eden'.

Dr. Peter Eden  
President, Landmark College



Photo by Lisa Hennessy

President Peter Eden is interviewed by Alex Boylan, host of *The College Tour*, during filming on campus in April. Eden appears in the episode and also in a separate streaming segment called *Coffee with the President*. Both the episode and the interview can be viewed at [landmark.edu/CollegeTour](http://landmark.edu/CollegeTour).





## Ready for Prime

### **The College Tour Meets Landmark College: A Student Cast Member Shares His Experience**

by Gus McGee

**I**n April, a cast of 10 Landmark College students got to live the dream of participating in a well-known streaming series, representing LC on Amazon Prime's *The College Tour*.

Host and executive producer Alex Boylan started *The College Tour* out of inspiration from his niece, who wanted to tour colleges around the country. But her family didn't have the funds for so much travel. With Boylan's idea, prospective college students can get an intimate, detailed tour of the institution of their choice, wherever they may be.

In September 2022, a producer from *The College Tour* approached Mark DiPietro, vice president for marketing & communications, and Mike Stefanowicz, vice president for enrollment management. Over the next few months they came to an agreement to film LC's episode the week of April 10, 2023. I was lucky enough to be chosen as one of the 10 students featured, and I can easily say it was one of the most positive experiences of my life.

In February, I noticed a flyer about *The College Tour* when I was leaving the Strauch Family Student Center. Later, I heard other students talking about it, which made me start to consider auditioning. A couple of nights later, my mother called me. I had told her about filming an episode on Landmark, to which she responded, "This is *absolutely* something you should do." I knew she was right. I have been a ballplayer since I was 6 and on the LC baseball team since I transferred here in fall 2021. It can be frustrating at times, as a neurodiverse athlete, to feel as though we are not getting enough attention for our talents. Athletics lets us show the world what we're good at. When I first transferred to LC, it was partly due to reading the story of alumnus and LC baseball coach **Patrick McKenna '14** and how playing baseball here helped lead him to a professional baseball career. I saw this opportunity to not only tell my story, but also as a chance to increase the level of attention LC athletics was getting. If my own mother was quoting my own frustrations to me, I knew that no matter how scary it may seem, this could be the best outlet to make that change.

I have never been the best at deadlines, so when I got off the phone and saw I had four hours until the submission deadline, I immediately locked myself in my car for privacy's sake and improvised a two-minute audition tape. I said my name, my degree, how long I've been at Landmark, what I do on campus, as well as why I felt I would be a good fit for the show. I uploaded it and didn't think much of it again. Two days later, Rachel Orth, a producer from the show, sent an email congratulating me on being chosen to do a segment about athletics and student life! To say that I was excited to be called to fill that role would be a massive understatement, but if anything, I was more struck by the fact

that I had gotten it despite submitting a last-second audition tape.

After a couple of Zoom meetings with the other featured students, producers, and LC's internal production team, I met with Marketing & Communications Vice President Mark DiPietro and Director Chris Lenois to help create my script. Before I knew it, the time had come and it was the night before filming. I was beyond nervous to be working with an actual TV crew; for one thing, we had been asked to memorize our scripts, and I am not a good memorizer. I barely got any sleep as I was scared to botch any of my lines. When the time came, I grabbed my uniform, baseball gear, bookbag, and two changes of clothes, and met the production crew at Charles Drake Field. Despite getting no sleep, I was running on pure adrenaline. We started off by getting all the footage where I am talking, which took a long time because I would either mess up a line or there would be background noise. Once we were able to get it done, we spent the rest of the shoot getting B-roll footage, which included video of me hitting and throwing on the field and in the Click Family Sports Center, spending time in the library, and walking around with friends as well as Coach McKenna. Since the hard parts were out of the way, I was able to be looser on camera and had a lot of fun.

I thought all was said and done. But the day after my segment was filmed, producer Rachel Orth called to tell me that the video card they had used to record my segment was corrupt, which meant most of the footage hadn't been captured! They asked me to reshoot my segment later that week. While I was saddened to hear all that hard work was lost, I knew it wasn't anybody's fault; it was just one of the bumps in the road of show business. I agreed to come back, and I'm glad I did. As tedious as it was to have to start all over again, I felt more relaxed the second time since I had some familiarity with my lines. Plus, I already had a good taste of how they would film my segment, so there was



Photo by Tanner Roberts

Gus McGee, center, poses for his "Boss Shot" with Director of Photography Wes Hall, VP for Marketing & Communications Mark DiPietro, student Matt Janowitz, Baseball Coach **Patrick McKenna '14**, and Director Josh Douglass.

less uncertainty throughout the whole process. We were able to cruise through it with little to no trouble.

At the end of the week, the College hosted a Q&A with Boylan and Lisa Hennessy, another executive producer on the show. Boylan shared the origin of his idea for *The College Tour* and answered questions from LC students about his career and the show itself. I was the only featured cast member who attended the Q&A, which was cool because Alex called on me to speak about my experience. That was followed by an unexpected ovation! Afterwards, I got to stay behind and have a more in-depth conversation with Alex, who was thoughtful and accessible in interacting with LC students, faculty, and staff.

The most enjoyable part of my *College Tour* experience was being able to tell my story from a baseball prospect standpoint, to put myself out there, and to give LC Athletics some exposure—something a lot of Landmark student-athletes have been longing for. Sharing this opportunity to be on the series with friends, as well as my coach and teammates, made it even more meaningful. This was easily one of the coolest moments of my life, and I'll cherish it forever. 🐾



Gus McGee prepares to film his segment for *The College Tour* at Charles Drake Field as production assistant Tanner Roberts affixes a microphone to Gus's baseball jersey. Gus was one of 10 LC students featured in the episode, which you can watch at [landmark.edu/CollegeTour](https://landmark.edu/CollegeTour). Other student cast members are shown below.



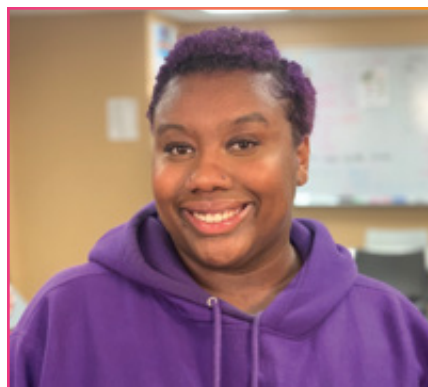
Photo by Mark DiPietro



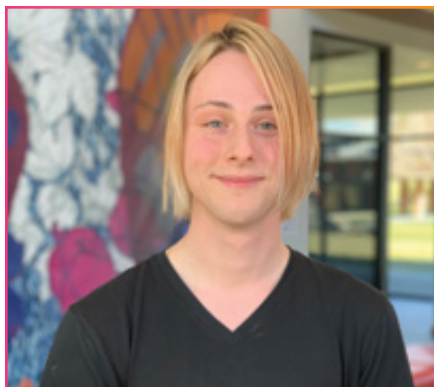
Gabby Woolgar '23



Ivan Casalina



Nailah Quail-Parker



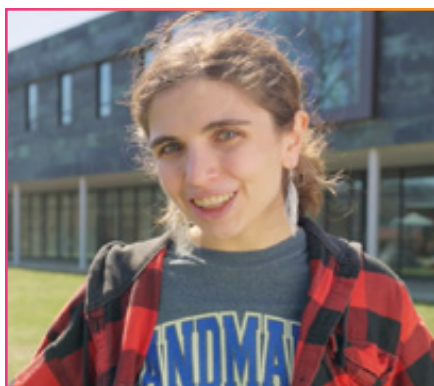
Zoë Feil



Yar Deng '23



Felix Mann



Carolina Mellado '23



Jalen Cyrus '22



Sabrina Cohn



On April 20, 2023, Landmark College held a 24-hour fundraiser that combined LC's Annual Giving Day with an online evening event. More than \$212,000 was raised for LC's Annual Fund; the LD Luminary Award was given to Emmy-nominated actor-producer-writer Amy Brenneman; and alumnus Mark Gessner '03 spoke about his experience as a student at LC. Abridged speeches are included here.

## Mark Gessner '03



*At left, a scene from NCIS: Hawai'i featuring Mark Gessner '03, courtesy of CBS.*

As far as neurodivergent folks go, I am pretty lucky. I always loved school. I just wasn't very good at school. I tended to get in trouble a fair amount as a kid because if it didn't challenge me, I would be bored. And if it did challenge me, I would get frustrated. I went to a small, very good liberal arts college out of high school and immediately ran into a brick wall in terms of my academic career. I didn't have the study skills. I didn't have the tools that were necessary. I left after my third semester and had to get a job working at a resort hotel to pay back my loans.

My mom did some research on folks whose minds work like mine, and she found this little school in my home state. I grew up in Vermont. And I was like, well, I'll think about it. She's like, "No, you're going there."

I'm in no way unique. I am one of many, many people who deal with a lot of the same issues, which in one way was very humbling. And in another way, it was like I finally found a community of people who

could understand what I could barely articulate. The experience I had at Landmark started off quite rough very early on. As soon as I swallowed my pride, I realized that in fact I did belong. To think that I was somehow too good for that place, looking back—that's the dumbest thing I maybe have ever thought in my life. That place [LC] is a godsend. It is a wonderful place and full of some of the most brilliant people I have ever known.

The faculty and administration are angel people. These people are optimistic and brilliant and bursting with empathy, and they meet you where you are and demand accountability from you. I had been used to charming my way through difficult times, and that was fine in high school, but in college it does not work like that anymore. To this day I demand that same accountability from myself that I was taught by those wonderful people. It feels like a success every time I follow through on a task, just because I have learned how I learn. 🐦



# ONE DAY ONE VISION MANY LIVES CHANGED

## LD Luminary Award Recipient: Amy Brenneman

I want to thank everyone at Landmark for honoring me here tonight with the LD Luminary Award, and for my dear friends Nancy Naumer and Muse Watson, and their great soul of a daughter, Sophie, who is a Landmark College student.

How did I get here? Quite literally, I got here through Nan. My daughter Charlotte began at Chime Charter School in Woodland Hills, California, in the middle of first grade. We were battered and bruised, and Charlotte was tantruming a lot, and she had no diagnosis. We were scared, isolated, and a bit hopeless. Then we met Nan, Muse, and Sophie. Nan immediately gave us her number and welcomed us into a thriving friend group.

Chime was the first step in a long journey. To illustrate those steps, which will be very familiar to you all, I'd like to quote from one of my favorite authors from one of my favorite books, Andrew Solomon's *Far from the Tree*. He talks about four stages in this journey, which describe my own: outrage, bewilderment, acceptance, and onward to celebration.

**Outrage:** OK, this was the shock that Charlotte was not developing. We had her assessed. At 3, she got her first IEP; I was wholly unprepared. I look back now and see how narcissistic I was—I mean, of course I was going to have an exceptional, in a good way, child.

**Bewilderment:** I chart this from the ages of 5 to 15. We were still chasing normal. There was still no diagnosis. No one knew why she was neurodivergent. But all along Charlotte kept her good humor and generous heart. And I really don't know how since I was constantly trying to fix her and was judging her constantly. The truth is, I was very rarely, truly present with my daughter. I was worried about her future and judged her present. I was jealous of other special needs moms who seemed to delight in their perky children. I was not there.



**Acceptance:** When Charlotte was 15, finally something was discovered. A new pediatric neurologist did a blood test, micro array genetic testing, and she found something, a spontaneous mutation at the terminal end of Charlotte's 22nd chromosome. She is one of 1,400 people in the world with this mutation.

When I first read Solomon's book, I thought, "I'm never going to get to celebration." Acceptance is the farthest I'll get to if I'm lucky. But here I am celebrating Miss Charlotte Silvering in all her glory. Charlotte is graduating from the Riverview School Grow Program in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in June. She works at Falmouth Hospital four days a week, has a boyfriend, God bless him, and deep friendships lasting seven years. Charlotte is eyeing a job at the Cotuit Center for the Arts in the props department. Cotuit is also where she and I will perform my play, *Overcome*, in March 2024. And we are interested in creating a supportive, interdependent living community. No one has to go it alone anymore. Once again, Charlotte has shown us a better way to live.

She leads the way in dreaming of a beautiful future. We are no longer knocking at the door of normal, hoping to be well-behaved enough to be allowed in.

We need new ways of thinking, behaving, and being in the world. Our kids are now the leaders. 🐘

## 2023 Retirements



Photo by Mark DiPietro

LC celebrated retiring faculty and staff at a ceremony in April. Pictured from left: Professors Dotti Osterholt, Lynne Shea, and Jim Koskoris.

### Dotti Osterholt

38 Years

**P**rofessor Dorothy “Dotti” Osterholt was a founding faculty member at Landmark College after teaching for three years at Landmark School in Massachusetts.

Associate Professor of Education Rebecca Matte says of Osterholt: “Like many others, I have been the richer personally and professionally for every moment spent with Dotti. She embodies the mission of the College. She hung the doors and built the curriculum that has transformed how students learn, then she spent the next 37 years serving students and sharing her findings to transform how educators teach and the public thinks about education.”

Before Osterholt retired this past spring, LC archivist Mary Jane MacGuire interviewed her for the College archives. An abridged and edited version of their discussion is presented here.

**MJM: What did you do before Landmark School?**

**DO:** I worked at public schools in northern Vermont. I was a resource room coordinator between several of the schools on the islands and traveled between schools up there. It was very challenging because a lot of the students were from migrant families, so it made it very difficult to get them signed up for services. We often had to go to their homes and it was very challenging to follow kids through. It was a bit disappointing that we couldn’t make more progress with students because we didn’t have a lot of hands-on time with them.

**MJM: Why did you choose to come to Landmark College? It was a new school and a new concept.**

**DO:** I was excited about the challenge and opportunity to work with a talented group of forward thinkers in developing a college specifically for students diagnosed with dyslexia.

**MJM: What was behind the College’s big success in those early years?**

**DO:** Determination, perseverance. Nobody was here that didn’t have those qualities. The students had them, the people working with students had them, the



staff had them. You really didn't sign on to the whole concept unless you were willing to just dig in and do what was necessary to make the school a success. Everybody, during the first couple of years, from the grounds crew to the president—we dug in. We blindly forged ahead with whatever energy it took to make this a success. Everybody supported everybody else, so we were in it together.

**MJM: Sounds like one of the defining aspects of Landmark College.**

**DO:** Absolutely. If we didn't have that. I don't think we could have been successful or stuck with it, really. Very few of the people we hired had much experience working with this population. We just worked very intensely, getting together, talking about student profiles, talking about our approach, talking about the program, laying out what it was going to look like. We would meet in the evenings on the ground floor of one of the dorms with a whiteboard or chalkboard and begin brainstorming.

**MJM: Can you outline the different positions you've held and those that you enjoyed the most?**

**DO:** Front and foremost is teaching. When I came to the College, I was a supervisor and I also taught study skills. From there, I was a co-department head of the English department and then very quickly I was asked to be department head for the reading and study skills department. I finally said, "I want to go back to teaching." I wanted to work directly with students and I wanted to teach. That's where my heart is.

**MJM: Your research has also really been prolific.**

**DO:** Why I'm interested in teaching in general is to solve the mysteries that prevent students from being successful. That's what keeps me up at night. My scholarship interests came out of that curiosity when I saw a drop in student engagement. A colleague and I got together and started asking that question, "Why

Photo by Wes Hall



Professor Dotti Osterholt works with student David Jenerson during a class last spring.

are students not engaged like they were before?" Over time, our research helped us understand the complexities of learning, which was also when research and education began to link a lot of factors that were not linked before. My own research has revolved around the Four Domains of Learning, which was a first attempt to sort of bring the complexity of learning together in one place and have students begin that process of understanding that learning is hard for anybody, so they should not feel alone in that process.

**MJM: What is your vision of LC for the future?**

**DO:** I hope that Landmark can continue to thrive and be innovative, keep growing ideas, and to impact more and more students, particularly marginalized students who can't take advantage of this kind of education. I also hope that the school will continue to find ways to reach those communities and beef up what they do at the high school level to help students prepare for college.

**MJM: How will you remember your time here?**

**DO:** I feel so lucky to have encountered so many incredible students. Every once in a while, a former student comes back and says, "I remember what you told me back in 1990." My first thought is, "What did I say? I hope it was something good!" I hope I had that kind of small impact and helped students not only build their own self-confidence, but then to feel that they have built enough success so that later when they leave school, they can reach behind them and help the next generation in some small way. 🐘

**Got a news story idea  
you'd like us to feature?**

Send your story ideas to us at  
**alumni@landmark.edu**

by Chris Lenois

**E**ven though Lynne Shea came to LC nine months after it opened its doors, she can count herself among the College's pioneering faculty in at least two important ways.

The first was helping establish a women's center on campus and serving as its first coordinator. That initiative was borne out of discussions about equity on a campus where the number of male students was disproportionately higher than female. One can draw a direct line from that experience to the creation of the Landmark College Centers for Diversity and Inclusion and the hiring of **Marc Thurman '18** as director.

"They say in life there's always key holders to help you get to the next step. Lynne was definitely one of those for me," Marc said.

Marc first got to know Shea through an African American Literature course she was teaching right around the same time the Black Lives Matter movement was galvanizing around national incidents. "Seeing her show the courage to teach that class, the courage to start the women's center, definitely helped me pave the way to do this," Marc said.

The second area where Shea played a foundational role was around LC's mission to train educators to better serve students who learn differently. The College was able to secure two significant grants from the U.S. Department of Education to kickstart the program, with Shea serving as executive director for what eventually became the Landmark College Institute for Research & Training (LCIRT).

Dr. Adam Lalor, who currently oversees LCIRT as vice president for neurodiversity research and innovation, recalled meeting Shea when he was working as a resident dean in the early 2000s. "Lynne has always been committed to not only making sure that our students really got the best education possible from her, but also from all the faculty and staff here at the College and beyond," said Lalor, who collaborated with Shea and Professor Emerita Linda Hecker on the 2019 book, *From Disability to Diversity: College Success*



Lynne Shea

*for Students with Learning Disabilities, ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder* (Stylus Publishing). "From the moment I stepped on campus, I recognized that she was a leader, and at times a boundary pusher in the most positive of ways."

In an email, Shea reflected with appreciation on the opportunity for professional growth LC provided.

She began as a writing instructor and tutor before transitioning to a tutorial supervisor role, and then teaching composition and traditional literature classes. But LC also empowered her to develop courses in areas that dovetailed with personal interests, including women's studies and African American literature, as well as specific courses for the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies.

"The growth of our four-year degrees was such a satisfying development for many of us who had worked at Landmark for so many years, as students now remain at the College longer and can establish and benefit from closer ties to their peers and faculty," Shea wrote in an email.

With LC's growth came the need for more tiers of leadership. Time and again, Shea was willing to step up and serve. She spent time chairing the English department and Faculty Senate. For the last few years, she was dean of the School of Liberal Studies, which she cited as a highlight of her career.

"These roles reinforced for me the truly collaborative nature of our faculty and their willingness to adapt to significant challenges with collegiality and integrity," wrote Shea.

"Suffice it to say that it has given me great satisfaction to see so many talented young people venture out into their lives, developing a stronger sense of self-efficacy because of this small college in Putney, Vermont." 🐾



## Mac Gander

36 Years

*Editor's note: Professor Mac Gander held many roles at Landmark College over nearly four decades, including as a professor of journalism. We asked him to write a first-person reflection about his time at LC.*

**I**n 1987, Ronald Reagan was president and Joe Biden was in his 40s. Personal computers and the internet were brand new, and no one had a cell phone. The *Challenger* had exploded midair a year earlier and the Vietnam War was just 12 years in the past.

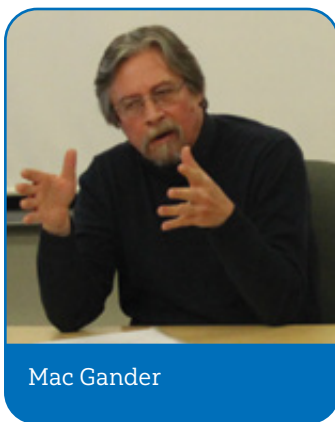
I had just come back from the Philippines after freelancing during the revolution, and I needed a job. I signed up to tutor at this new college in Putney, thinking I would work the summer, or maybe a year.

For the next 36 years Landmark College was central to my life, and I am tempted to talk about the people who made such deep impacts on me or tell some of the best stories I have. But I would not even know where to begin with the stories. Instead, I'll offer a few reflections about what makes LC a uniquely great institution, and end with one illustrative story.

First, LC's capacity to change, grow, adapt, and innovate. Every college has had to change rapidly or die in the past several decades, and a lot of small colleges that prospered in the Baby Boom years no longer exist. LC's capacity to be nimble and purposeful, to be unafraid of the unknown, truly distinguishes it.

Second, the nature of the College's mission and its unswerving focus. LC has always walked its talk in every aspect of its being, from food service to maintenance to its governing board. And it is an extraordinarily difficult mission. Every college promises a transformative experience. Landmark provides one.

Its ability to do so has always been a matter of community and the shared values held by those who work at the College. One of the deep graces of my life is to have worked in a place for so long that genuinely honors a sense of shared commitment to students and collaborates in deep and meaningful ways. A sense of shared purpose has always united Landmark's community, and as new generations of faculty, staff, and students come to Putney, I hope it always will.



Over the years, many outsiders have suspected that we have some “secret sauce”—teaching methodology or support practices—that make us unique, but that's never been true. Instead, we have always taken the best information we have from experience and research and applied it consistently in a systematic, self-reflective, and deeply purposeful way. There is not one element of Landmark that can be pointed to as the source of its success: it is the total system, and our relentless focus on making sure that all the parts work together.

LC's deepest power and strength, the source of its greatness as an institution, lies in how we see our students. We see them as they are, but we also see what they may become. We hold high expectations and a profound focus on accountability, and we also understand that learning comes from making mistakes, not from performing what is already mastered. We believe in our students even when they don't believe in themselves.

Now for that story. One of my mentors was Jeroo Eduljee. She was the academic program director in Landmark's early years. Early in my career as academic vice president, I was meeting with a student who had been recommended for dismissal because of academic nonperformance and some social transgressions. The student's academic record was an awful mess of absences and failure to complete work, all failing grades for a second semester, and no sign of a potential turn-around. Except in one course: he had a B and nearly perfect attendance in a study skills course that Jeroo was teaching. This made me curious, since I knew Jeroo was the hardest, strictest teacher of the four that he had. I asked the student why he was doing so well in Jeroo's class. His answer: “Because she respects me.” 🐼

by Chris Lenois

**Jim Koskoris remembered his orientation sessions at Landmark College, which took place in the spring of 2000, as comprehensive and intense.**

Since he had been hired to provide students with individual tutoring, the two-week session consisted of six-hour days working one-on-one with experienced LC professors, learning techniques and approaches that would help students develop the necessary skills for taking notes, conducting research, and managing time. He also learned strategies to teach students reading comprehension, essay writing, and exam preparation.



Jim Koskoris

Most importantly, he learned that listening would be the key trait he could develop within himself in order to establish the necessary rapport and trust with the students he would be assigned to work with.

“I believe my success as a teacher was based on being curious, and understanding there is always more to discover about the ways neurodiverse individuals learn and can demonstrate their knowledge,” Koskoris wrote in an email earlier this summer.

Landmark College alumna **Alexis Bird '17** shared one experience she had with Koskoris while taking his Introduction to Business course that illustrates this.

“I was struggling with memorizing terms associated with business. I went to his office hours and asked if it would make sense for me to actually create pretend businesses and people to help me recall the information. He said he thought that would be great,” Alexis remembered.

“I created an ice cream business and I still remember that Joe was the name of the owner and he had 200 employees,” continued Alexis. “We sat there and talked about different elements of that business and how those applied to what we were learning, like what an LLC is, or how Joe might need to buy a new ice cream truck for his franchise. That really helped me do well in his class.”

When Landmark College began building its Business Studies program in 2004, Koskoris was among the faculty tasked with developing the curriculum. He says it was important to him and his colleagues that the program would help students learn and apply meaningful business skills that would help them identify and achieve their goals, whether those were professional or personal. Courses in personal finance, marketing, accounting, and

management, among others, were designed and taught with that in mind.

“What helped the most was when I was able to connect course content to areas of student interest such as politics, sports, art, history, social justice issues, music, etc.,” wrote Koskoris.

Recent alumnus **Ziad Almuzaini '23** described a management course taught by Koskoris as fun and interactive.

“Instead of using documents, he would show us pictures and talk about them in a creative way. It made it easier for us to wrap our minds around the concepts,” said Ziad. “He was very enthusiastic, which made it even more exciting.”

While officially retired as a professor, Koskoris intends to continue serving students as a part-time advisor at the Drake Center for Academic Support in the coming school year. His long-term plan is to open a personal finance consulting business that will help college students, graduates, and adults of all ages create the plans and strategies needed to achieve their goals.

“It was rewarding to teach and rewarding to learn,” wrote Koskoris. “To my last day, I continued to learn as I continued to teach.” 🐦



by Gus McGee

**M**any know him as “Guddu’s owner” and the director of Social Pragmatics. But before he worked in human services, Andy Donahue was a restaurant and bar owner in Orono, Maine. When he sold his business share to his partner, Donahue had no clue how many lives he would change.

Donahue first came to Landmark College in 2006 as an intern with the counseling department. When an opening occurred, Donahue became a full-time counselor. Prior to his time at Landmark, Donahue had grown an impressive résumé within human services, from opening his own vocational rehabilitation agency, starting an alternative high school, interning at Marlboro College, and serving an administrative role in a school in Nicaragua for the deaf. It wouldn’t be until Donahue’s third full year at Landmark that he would make a connection to his work in Nicaragua that would change the campus forever.

“I was working with deaf people on language acquisition, for people who hadn’t been exposed to sign language. And a lot of their similarities could be compared to autistic traits,” he explained.

Donahue remembered this while he was working at LC. “People were saying ‘Well, there’s maybe 10 or 11 autistic students on campus,’” Donahue recalled in a recent interview. “Maybe there were 10 or 11 that had obvious characteristics, but if you look at our student body, a significant percentage of our students have an autism diagnosis.” Donahue thought to himself, “What can we do? What type of programs would really make a difference for a lot of these students?”

Shortly thereafter, Donahue formed the Social Pragmatics program, which he started by running small, informal social events for students on campus. He was running it all on his own at first.

“The relationships really became an important part of my job to get things done,” he said. “And I think it



Andy Donahue and Guddu

also made Social Pragmatics more of a college program rather than just one individual. A lot of people became involved.”

Social Pragmatics also served as a destination for students to receive social guidance and coaching, as well as learning and understanding social contexts. Donahue remarked that when working with students on the autism spectrum, he may notice certain behaviors that may be perceivable by others as oppositional

or defiant. But Donahue knew that the opposite was true, and that the way you address the student is everything.

“It may be bad behavior, but frequently it’s not. The language you use when working with someone, how you present things, makes a difference,” he said

LC has also become known for its Therapy Dog Program, in which students can engage with the dogs to reduce their stress levels and form a bond with the dog. In 2017, Andy found a furry assistant of his own, adopting a small Bichon Frisé named Guddu.

“He started coming in here when he was three months old. Landmark was very supportive of training. We really worked on bringing him around, getting him exposed to everything beforehand, lots of people patting him, crowded, noisy rooms ... so he’s not really fazed by much.”

Guddu had not only spent his time on campus as a furry companion for students to befriend, but also played a prominent role in Donahue’s lessons about social cues, which they learned through the way Guddu interacted with them. 🐾

## On and Around Campus (East and West)



Photo by Mark DiPietro

Summer II/Summer Bridge Experience runs for five weeks in July and August. Classes included hiking (left) and ceramics (below).



Photo by Gus McGee



Photo by Gus McGee

The Centers for Diversity and Inclusion hosted a block party for Summer II/Summer Bridge Experience students, which included games on the Quad such as Jenga®.

Students in the Summer Intensive PEERS® Social Pragmatics workshops at the LC Success Center in San Mateo, California, finished with a bowling party in July.



Photo by Sandra Fishler

U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) was a guest speaker at the Governor's Institutes of Vermont's Global Issues and Youth Action program, which was hosted at LC from June 25 through July 4.



Photo by Gus McGee

Photo by Todd Miller



Author and autism advocate Jennifer Cook gave the keynote address during the 2023 Summer Institute for Educators, organized and hosted by LCIRT.



## Career Connections

Landmark College's Office of Career Connections continues to build new partnerships and offer internship experiences for students. This year, Career Connections signed memoranda of understanding with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, London-based Virtual Internships, and California-based Equinix. Below are photos from some of the summer internships LC students participated in through Career Connections.

Nick Payne, a former intern with LC's Office of Marketing & Communications, spent the summer interning at the Belfort Group, a marketing firm in Boston, Massachusetts.



Photo by Shannon Light



Photo by Maggie Magner

Chetra Blumenthal interned at the Fenn School's summer camp in Concord, Massachusetts.

LC Online student James Mangan interned at the St. Frances Cabrini Shrine in New York City, the resting place of the patron saint of immigrants.

James researched the experience of Italian immigrants in the late 19th century for a video that will be shown to the shrine's visitors.

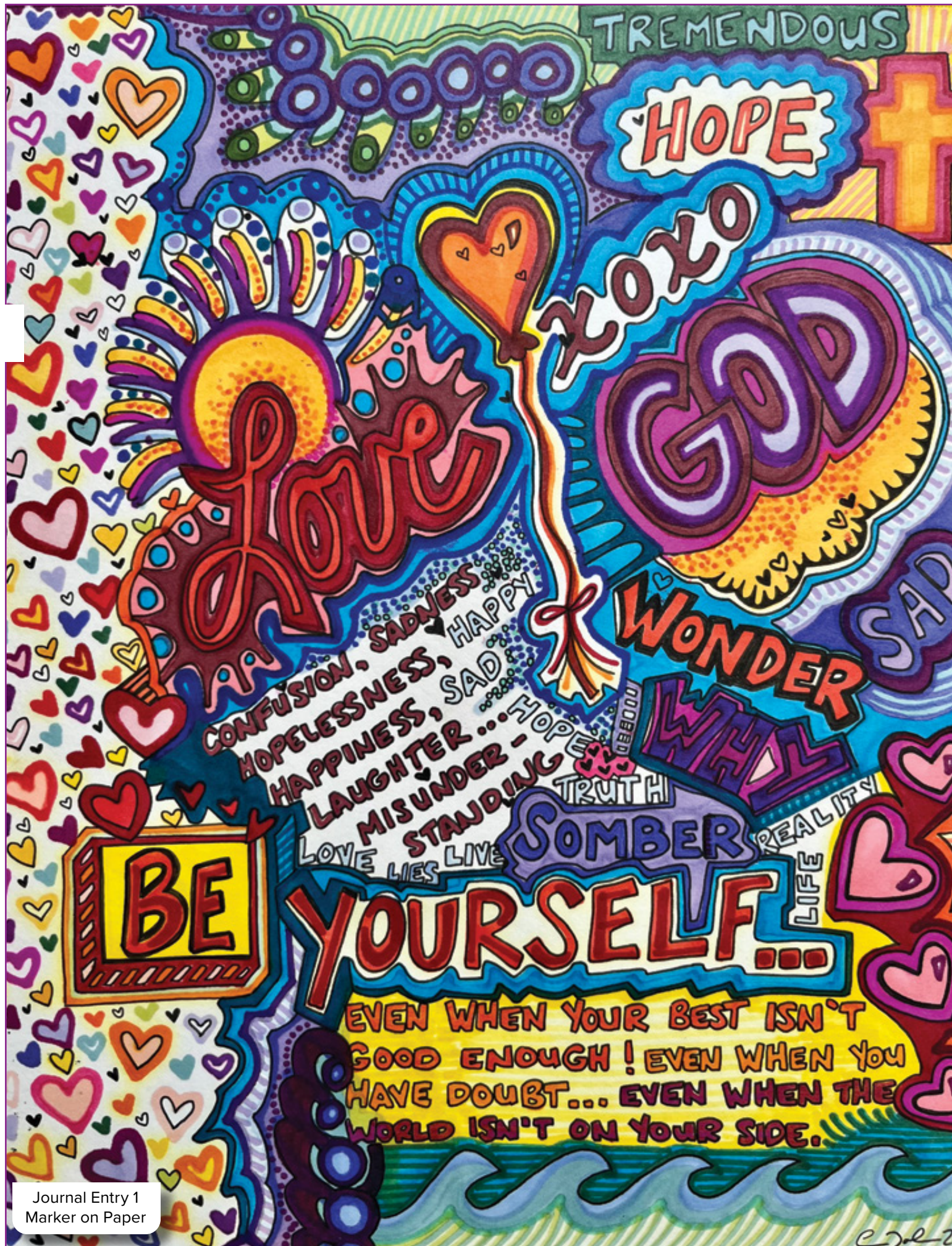


Sabrina Cohn appeared as Mercury in "Orpheus in the Underworld" as part of her internship with the Berlin Opera Academy in Germany.



Photo by Scott Cohn







## Alumni Profile



Concentric Circles  
Mosaic



Andrea Tolliver '00



Fruit Study  
Acrylic on Canvas

### *Andrea Tolliver '00 Finds Art in Everyday Life*

**A**fter being diagnosed with dyslexia in her teens, Andrea Tolliver '00 found Landmark College in the early years of internet searches.

She is now a middle school art teacher at the Windward School in Westchester County, New York, working with students who have language-based learning disabilities, like dyslexia. She talked with *Landscape* editor Mark DiPietro about her time at LC, her love of art, and raising a son with dyslexia.

**MD: What was your educational experience like before you found Landmark College?**

**AT:** I loved school as a little kid and couldn't wait to ride the school bus. Once I got to school, I didn't want to leave. Around third grade, I had an epiphany where I realized school wasn't all about coloring. I was very good at art, so I focused a lot on coloring and drawing. But the dynamics of school changed and became more focused on academics. I had a little meltdown, not having access to my crayons all the time. Things weren't going as smoothly as they once did.

**MD: Where did you grow up?**

**AT:** I'm from Wilmington, Ohio. Fast forward to early middle school when I got put into honors classes. We had moved because my sister had a learning disability

and there was a school in the area. We moved from the country to the city so she could go to that school, which gave me the opportunity to be in a high school that had more advanced classes and more access to art programs. I embraced the art program, loved it. But I was really struggling to keep up in the advanced classes. By the time I was 15, I finally got tested. And sure enough, I was dyslexic. That diagnosis was startling because I loved school! All of a sudden I was labeled and felt like I didn't fit in with those kids. A guidance counselor told me college wasn't an option for me. She discouraged me because my grades weren't good. That fired me up because nobody was going to tell me I couldn't go to college! I loved school. My dad had gotten a family computer and I found Landmark College. I called and spoke to Admissions

and filled out the applications on my own. I finished my senior year in December and came to LC before I even had my diploma!

**MD: How long were you here?**

**AT:** Three years. I had a lot of support and we felt like a family. I met my lifelong friend, **Theo van Roijen '00**. I no longer felt singled out or like a minority. The learning disability seminar (now called Perspectives in Learning) taught by Professor Jim Baucom helped me make sense of everything. He was so amazing because he pushed me to do what I love. I'm an artist and I masked my disability by making my notes and papers look beautiful. He encouraged me to draw pictures of my two-column notes, which I still do to this day.

**MD: Art is a big part of your life now.**

**AT:** It's a huge part of my life. I went to Manhattanville College after Landmark and wanted to pursue psychology and work with children, but I ended up not doing well. The academic counselor met with me and I just started to cry. She said, "Why are you pursuing something that's so hard for you?" I changed

my major that day to education and minored in art. Now I make art every day with kids and create art on my own. I also got my master's in special education from Manhattanville and am pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership.

**MD: If LC had an art degree then, would you have stayed?**

**AT:** I would have. Landmark made me capable of handling a lot in life, including now helping my 15-year-old son who's also severely dyslexic. He's a rising sophomore and, luckily, he was diagnosed early.

**MD: You've stayed active at LC and served on the Alumni Advisory Board.**

**AT:** I hadn't been in touch with Landmark for several years after I graduated, but when my son was little we took a drive to Vermont and I showed him the campus. Theo happened to be there and we reconnected. She said, "You have to meet (director of alumni relations) Tricia Stanley." A few months later, I was on the AAB. It took me a while to appreciate that Landmark College was the foundation for me. 🐦



Flowers in a Vase  
Marker on Paper



Windward School  
Set Design



# Alumni Association Corner

## ONCE A SHARK, ALWAYS A SHARK



Greetings, alumni! In these pages, you read about how **Mark Gessner '03** took a moment out of his busy career to share how his time at Landmark College has helped drive his acting career. You got a sneak peek at how **Andrea Tolliver '00** is using her passion for art to impact future LD learners. And you saw

how recent alumni like **Yar Deng '23** and **Carolina Mellado '23** helped bring LC's story to prospective students via Amazon Prime's *The College Tour*.

These success stories are just a few of many we could share from our amazing alumni network. From professional achievements to personal milestones, Sharks score big wins daily! Hearing about your successes gives me a great deal of pride. The best part of my 17-year career at LC has been seeing our alumni and student achievements.

We aim to encourage and foster lifelong alumni participation, involvement, and commitment. My office, with the help of the Alumni Association and the Student Alumni Association, aims to strengthen the bond between the College and our alumni; to create

programs that match your interests and needs; to maintain and build upon the positive relationships we have with our more seasoned alumni; and to increase engagement with and participation of younger alumni.

Many of you have assumed leadership roles and are making a difference by guiding the next generation of #LCSharks. **Nathaniel Campbell '99** and **Sara Fradkin Dunne '17** were recently appointed to the Alumni Advisory Board, where they are poised to lead with the same dedication that defined their time at LC. These accomplishments and the ways our alumni give back to the College, among countless others, reaffirm the effects of an LC education.

It's a challenge to keep our alumni records updated, and accurate data is vital to our success. Contact us by telephone, mail, messenger, email, carrier pigeon ... send us news, updates, and suggestions on how to strengthen your alumni network. You can reach me at [triciastanley@landmark.edu](mailto:triciastanley@landmark.edu) or at 802-387-6464.

With great admiration and warm regards,

Tricia Stanley,  
Director of Alumni Relations

## Alumni Employees



James Wood '23

James Wood '23 is the latest alumnus to join the Admissions team as Assistant Director of Intersession and Online Programs.



Ian Pulsford '17

Ian Pulsford '17 enjoys shuttling students to various locations as LC's newest shuttle driver.



Christian Laureano '22

Christian Laureano '22 went from his assistantship in Residential Life to a full-time role at LC as Resident Dean and Assistant Director of Transition at College (TaC).

## Trustee Spotlight: Kim Marroni



**Kim Marroni** joined the Landmark College Board of Trustees in May 2023. She is an attorney who previously worked in corporate and real estate law at firms in Boston and New York City. She currently holds her real estate broker license in Massachusetts. After leaving law practice to raise her family, she concentrated her volunteer efforts on the local school system, serving as chair of the Parent Teacher Organization and the school's enrichment council, and as an officer for the Music Association and Senior Activity Board, among others. She earned a B.S. in Biology from the University of Connecticut and a J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law. Kim lives north of Boston with her husband Mark and daughters Anna and **Katie '22**, who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from LC.

## Gobbo Releases New Book

A new book by Ken Gobbo, LC Professor Emeritus of Psychology, examines social and emotional challenges faced by autistic college students and offers practical advice and information for those who work with them.

*Social and Emotional Support for Autistic Students on Campus* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing) focuses on the experience of autistic individuals during late adolescence and early adulthood, covering topics that include cognition of social interaction, identity development, gender, intersectionality, controversies, the challenge of living in a community, and the emergence of neurodiversity culture.



Photo by Valerie Cox

## Alumni Advisory Board [landmark.edu/AAB](https://landmark.edu/AAB)



Andrew Garcia '11  
Chair



Christopher Mathey '04  
Vice Chair



Sarah Holmes '11  
Secretary



Sarah Alley '04



Rachel Brown '16



Nathaniel Campbell '99



Sara Fradkin Dunne '16



Blain Namm '00



Marc Thurman '18



Theodora van Roijen '00



## Imagine Campaign Surpasses Initial \$12M Goal

**L**andmark College's major fundraising effort, the Imagine Campaign, surpassed its initial \$12 million goal to support key priority areas.

The College continues fundraising for the Imagine Campaign's key focus areas, including student scholarships, LC Online programming, career readiness opportunities, the College endowment, and future strategic initiatives.

The Imagine Campaign was launched in 2019 with a publicly stated goal of \$12 million by 2024. A gift of \$750,000 pushed the campaign past this goal while also establishing a new scholarship fund named in honor of longtime LC supporter and esteemed attorney Nancy Lieberman, who died in April. Lieberman's husband, Mark Ellman, a member of the LC Board of Trustees, established the Nancy Lieberman Scholars Program to honor his wife and in gratitude for LC helping their son Eric, a current LC student pursuing his Bachelor of Science in Computer Science.

"The Imagine Campaign has allowed intentional, tactical expansion in many areas, notably in scholarship and financial aid support for students as well as expansion of LC Online and our Bay Area Success Center in California," said Dr. Peter Eden, president of Landmark College. "We aim to keep the momentum going, however, and continue



Eric Ellman '23 with his parents, Nancy Lieberman and Mark Ellman.

fundraising for these specific areas, which support our programming for neurodivergent students at our flagship Vermont campus, as well as anywhere in the world."

President Eden added, "LC has always been part of the problem-solution setup: we provide what families want and need, but now in more—and more accessible—ways." 🐦

## To Make Your Gift to Landmark College

**ONLINE:** [landmark.edu/give](https://landmark.edu/give)

**BY CHECK:** Make your gift payable to Landmark College and mail to:

Landmark College  
Office of Institutional  
Advancement  
19 River Road South  
Putney, VT 05346

**CONTACT:**

[advancement@landmark.edu](mailto:advancement@landmark.edu)  
802-387-6734



Student Gus McGee interviews President Peter Eden for the end of fiscal year 2023 Annual Fund thank you video, which you can watch at [landmark.edu/ThankYou2023](https://landmark.edu/ThankYou2023).



**LANDMARK**  
COLLEGE

Office of Institutional Advancement  
19 River Road South  
Putney, VT 05346-8517

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Wht Riv Jct, VT  
Permit No. 73

**ALUMNI HOMECOMING  
& REUNION WEEKEND**

**Sept. 23 & 24**

[landmark.edu/homecoming2023](https://landmark.edu/homecoming2023)