

WINTER 2008

# Invention

THE MAGAZINE OF THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

FROM A BROOKLYN TENEMENT TO  
HILTON WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Ernest Wooden, Jr. '07

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WINTER 2008



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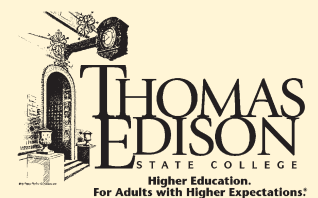
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## Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,

Arthur Ashe said, “Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome.”

This edition of *Invention* focuses on people who embody that idea.

In this issue, you will meet Ernest Wooden Jr., MSM '07, and learn how Thomas Edison State College helped this successful executive continue his education and his ongoing quest for self-improvement. After earning his master's degree at Thomas Edison State College, Wooden has now started a doctoral program at the International School of Business in Paris, France.

You will also meet Michael Cestero, BA '03, and read about how Thomas Edison State College helped him find a more rewarding career – and fulfill a promise he made to his mother.

The College has served many other students with programs designed around the unique needs of busy adults. Each year, we celebrate the extraordinary accomplishments of our students at our annual Commencement ceremony.

This year, approximately 350 graduates attended our 35th Commencement. Coverage of the ceremony is featured in this edition.

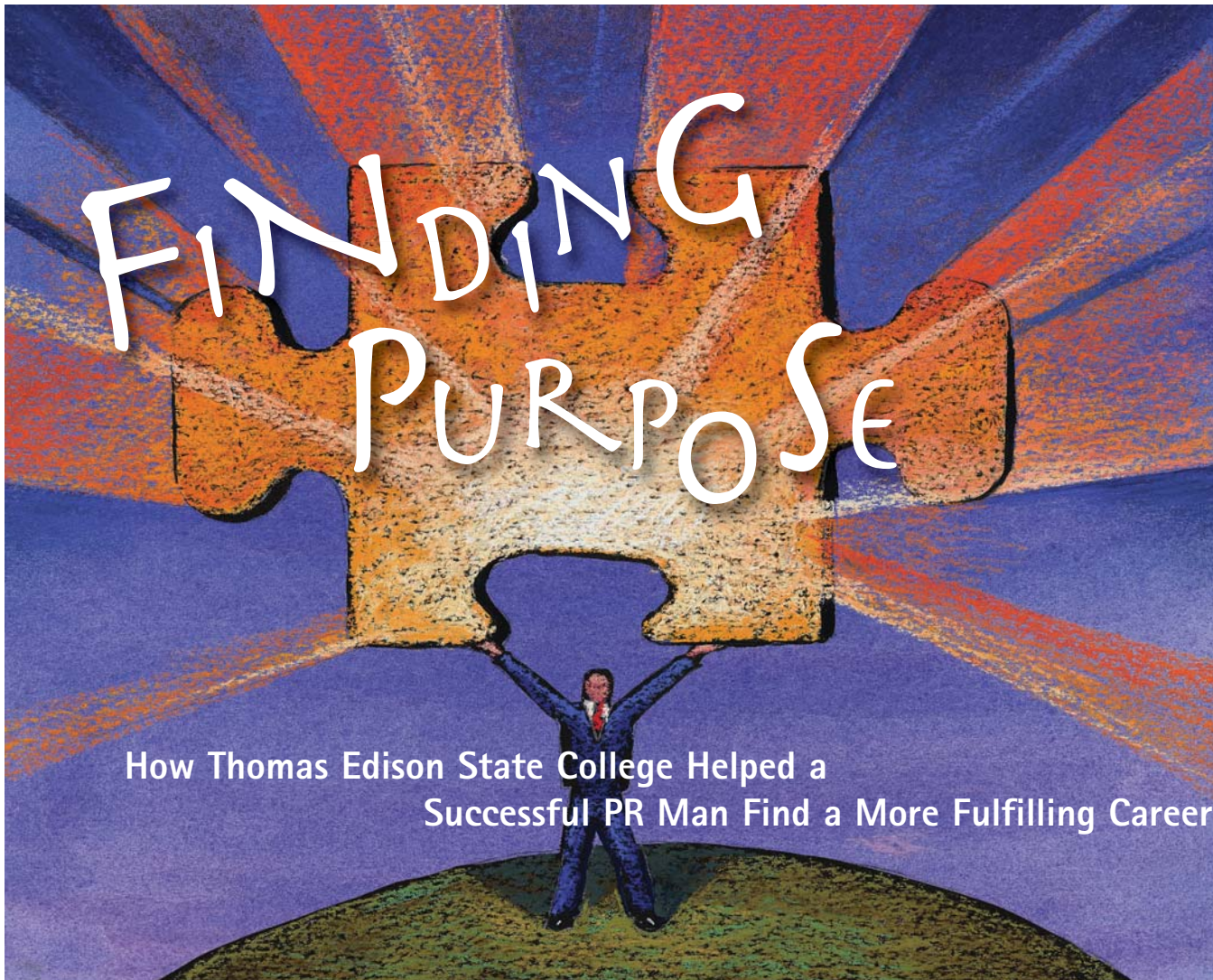
Lastly, the accomplishments of Thomas Edison State College would not be possible without the support of the Thomas Edison State College Foundation and those who support our annual Grande Ball. At this year's event, nearly 300 guests honored our 2007 Spirit of Edison Award recipients Ida Hammond, AA '77, BA '79, a member of the College's Board of Trustees, and former New Jersey Senator Peter Inverso, president and CEO of Roma Bank.

We are honored to serve and work with individuals like you, who are dedicated to accomplishing their academic goals. I hope you enjoy this edition of *Invention*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George A. Pruitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light-colored background.

Dr. George A. Pruitt  
President



## How Thomas Edison State College Helped a Successful PR Man Find a More Fulfilling Career

# Michael Cestero

Michael Cestero was faced with a challenge: he was a successful public relations professional whose career left him unfulfilled.

He was also haunted by the fact that he never finished his college education – something his mother always had wanted him to do.

“Both of my parents were college graduates, and I knew that it was a hole in my mother’s heart that her baby boy never graduated from college,” lamented Cestero. “That ate at me.”

Cestero initially entered college in 1982, after graduating from Manalapan High School in New Jersey, but he was not ready for the dedication required to earn a college degree.

“I took up time and space,” he recalled. “Like many young people, I enjoyed the social scene but I was immature and ended up dropping out after just a few years.”

Despite his educational setback, Cestero found success

in public relations. He worked for two national organizations that focused on, ironically, continuing education.

Cestero worked for Computer Learning Center in Chicago and Philadelphia, where he initiated publicity and spoke with high school students throughout the country about opportunities in the field of computers. Before that, he was a public relations representative for Lincoln Technical Institute in New Jersey and Chicago.

Although he developed a successful career, Cestero always regretted his decision to drop out of college. It was his mother who inspired him to go back to school.

“She had graduated from college in the 1940s, when most women were homemakers,” said Cestero. “She was a trend setter, and an inspiration for me to go back.”

After a 16-year hiatus, Cestero started to research accredited colleges.

“While surveying the field of prospects, it became clear that Thomas Edison State College would be my choice

# Alumni Profile



*Brian Harper has been at Walgreen's in Brick Township (N.J.) for nearly two years, working as a sales floor and stock person. He has won the New Jersey State Outstanding High School Student Award and recently graduated from Point Pleasant Boro High School.*



*Frank Cornely recently started his job at the Mount Laurel Shop Rite, working in the scanning department. He inputs data into the computer's software in order to create and change signs advertising sale items throughout the store and attends Camden Catholic High School in Cherry Hill, N.J.*

because of its stellar reputation and the flexibility it provided for career adults like me," he said.

Cestero said he was nervous about returning to college and how he would manage both his course work and his career at the same time.

"Although I knew I now had the maturity and discipline to achieve this goal, I did have my doubts," he said. "But, the staff, educators and academic advisors at the college were extremely supportive and available to assist me in every capacity."

In 2003, his hard work paid off. Cestero completed his Bachelor of Arts degree and earned an Arnold Fletcher Award for exemplary academic achievement. He remembers gazing into the audience in the Patriots Theater at The War Memorial in Trenton, N.J., and seeing tears in his mother's eyes.

"If I live to be a hundred, I will always remember how proud she was at that moment," Cestero reminisced. "That achievement came not a moment too soon, as my beloved mother tragically and unexpectedly died shortly thereafter. I am glad that the timing was such that my mother was in the audience to be able to realize our dream together."

Earning his college degree was not the only change in his life. Cestero was also thinking about how to find a more rewarding vocation.

"In my career, my wallet was full but my heart had become empty," he said. "I needed that to change as I approached my 40th birthday."

He researched human services agencies and found the perfect match in Allies, Inc., a Mercer County-based nonprofit organization that supports individuals with disabilities throughout New Jersey.

Cestero joined Allies, Inc., in 2003 and today works as a transition counselor working with high school kids who have developmental disorders, such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, Williams syndrome, and autism spectrum disorders, such as Asperger's syndrome.

As a transition counselor, Cestero helps kids develop employment and life skills and prepare for the world outside of high school.

"In other careers, I've made more money, but after working for Allies, Inc., I've never been compensated more in my life," said Cestero. "Just to see my kids getting jobs, working hard and being part of the community is priceless. Their self esteem skyrockets knowing that they are really just like everybody else in this world. It is truly a beautiful thing."

Clearly, his passion shows in his work. Cestero was named the 2007 Transition Educator of the Year by the New Jersey APSE (Association for Persons in Supported Employment), a supportive employment network for people with disabilities throughout New Jersey.

"I owe a lot of my success over the past several years to Thomas Edison State College," he said. "I would not have been offered the position with Allies, Inc. if I did not have that degree."

Cestero lives with his wife of 12 years, Toni, in Bucks County, Pa.

# The 35<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL Commencement

Amy Florence knows all about persistence.

In an age of expecting virtually everything to happen quickly, Florence, of Princeton, N.J., is living proof that you are never too old to pursue your dreams and that you never stop learning.

"It has taken me almost 46 years to understand what I am to be, but now I feel that I am at the polishing stage," said Florence, who is currently pursuing a dual master's degree in divinity and social work at Princeton Theological Seminary.

She notes that she is completely comfortable with the idea that her objectives were reached in small increments.

"There was never an 'Aha!' moment in my decision to attend seminary," she said. "The realization was revealed to me piece-by-piece. I was born in a generation whose mothers mostly stayed home to care for their children. I married on my 19th birthday and, in the years immediately following, had three daughters."

Later, after serving as a homeroom mom, Girl Scout leader, and fronting a family business in which she designed horse racing silks for jockeys, Florence eventually worked full time as an administrative assistant. This year, she completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Thomas Edison State College.

She said she expects to benefit from the knowledge she obtained from earning her degree and the

determination she has developed along the way.

"I have life experience that is impossible to learn from a book," said Florence. "I am using the dedication and determination that I acquired while pursuing my BA and it has made all the difference in the world!"

Florence received her diploma on Oct. 6 during the College's 35th Annual Commencement at The War Memorial in Trenton. She was joined by approximately 350 fellow graduates who attended the ceremony, including some who came from as far away as Italy, Hawaii, California, Texas and Canada.

Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College, told the graduates that the spirit of the College and its namesake will stay with them long after Commencement has ended.

"Wherever you go, the College will go with you. Wherever you work, the College will work with you," he said. "We are extremely proud of



*Amy Florence '07, just prior to the 35th Commencement ceremony.*



*"Wherever you go, the College will go with you.  
Wherever you work, the College will work with you."*

*Dr. George A. Pruitt*



your accomplishments and welcome you as alumni of Thomas Edison State College."

Two individuals addressed graduates at the event.

Ernest Wooden Jr., MSM '07, gave the response for the graduates. Wooden, who is executive vice president of Global Brands for Hilton Hotels Corporation, said he is proud to be part of a community of learners committed to self-excellence and managing their personal and professional responsibilities.

"Meeting many of you online was

incredibly encouraging," he said. "A grandmother from Texas, a Marine in Iraq, fighting during the day and doing his homework at night – all incredibly powerful stories of focus and will."

Dr. Pamela Tate, president and CEO of the Council for Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL), received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. She told the graduates she has long admired Thomas Edison State College and reminded them that their education enables them to make a difference in the world.

"The world needs people like you, who have stretched and struggled," she said. "You have reached an important milestone, but you cannot stop here. Please remain an active and committed learner. Your willingness to keep learning will give you the power to change the world. The future is not predicted."

The College has awarded more than 29,000 degrees since its began providing flexible, high-quality, learning opportunities for self-directed adults in 1972.



# FROM A BROOKLYN TENEMENT TO HILTON WORLD HEADQUARTERS

ERNEST WOODEN JR. PROVES IT'S NOT  
THE CARDS YOU'RE DEALT THAT MATTER,  
BUT HOW YOU PLAY THE HAND

His moment of clarity came during a family vacation in Martha's Vineyard and was inspired by a rock lying in a dusty corner of a gift shop.

Even though Ernest Wooden Jr. had already achieved professional success as a top executive at one of the world's most renowned hotel companies, finding that rock helped him answer a question he had been struggling with for years.

It was inscribed with the following words: "It's not the cards you're dealt that matter, it's how you play the hand."





For Wooden, life's purpose finally found a foothold.

"The vagaries surrounding my own drive and motivation suddenly became clear as I held the rock," said Wooden, during his Response to Graduates address at the College's Commencement in October. "It was a treasure in plain sight. Ironically, we've all witnessed people who have been dealt a 'royal flush.' People who have caring parents, financial wherewithal, good looks, health, privilege – all the ingredients for success – yet tragically squander their potential."

If you never met Wooden, executive vice president of Global Brands for Hilton Hotels Corporation, you might think it peculiar that such a transformative event occurred after a steady rise through the corporate ranks of some of the most distinguished

hotels, including Sheraton, DoubleTree, Omni and Hilton.

But those who know him understand that he is passionate about education and lifelong learning.

A man with an unwavering eye toward self-improvement, Wooden was originally dealt an astonishingly poor hand of cards. The son of a single mother, he grew up in Brooklyn's hardscrabble Bedford-Stuyvesant tenements, where he recalled snow actually falling *inside* the hallways where he and his four siblings roamed.

"We had to boil the water we used to wash up for school in the morning," he said. "I grew up in an extremely disadvantaged neighborhood where just getting to school was perilous."

Today, Wooden sees little indication of winter's blight in his office at

Hilton's Beverly Hills headquarters – though the daily pressures on him are equally daunting.

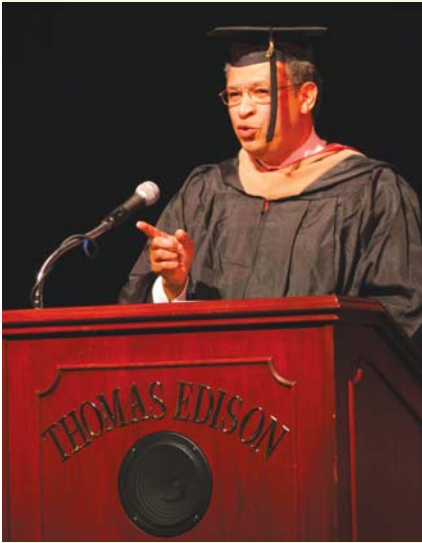
Wooden is charged with global advancement of Hilton's full complement of brands – Hilton®; Conrad®; DoubleTree®; Embassy Suites®; Hampton Inn®, Hampton Inn & Suites®, Hilton Garden Inn®, Hilton Grand Vacations™; Homewood Suites®, and the Waldorf=Astoria Collection®.

In this capacity, he is responsible for the branding vitality of nearly 3,000 properties in 80 countries, revenues in excess of \$8.2 billion, and oversees 30 senior vice presidents and vice presidents, along with the venerable Hilton Honors Program®.

Why would someone with such a successful and challenging career want to continue their education?



“It’s about self-excellence and the character-defining power of education”



“It’s about self-excellence and the character-defining power of education,” explained Wooden. “I’m always suspicious about what I don’t know, and try to set an example of enthusiasm for learning for my children and my colleagues.”

Wooden added that it is about developing an appreciation for and an understanding of life.

“Unfortunately, many people open the newspaper to read that inflation is on the rise, but they lack the capacity to fully understand why,” he said. “A better understanding of the ‘mechanism’ affords people a valuable grasp of the world in which they operate.”

The mechanism that Wooden selected to continue his education was the variety of course methods available at Thomas Edison State College.

“It was the most flexible learning environment I had ever come in contact with,” said Wooden, who earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree in hotel management in 2006 and a Master of Science in Management degree in 2007. He is now pursuing a doctorate degree from the

International School of Business in Paris, France.

Despite being a frequent corporate traveler, Wooden remains an eager explorer. His wife, Annice, helped him develop an appreciation for art and museums, which has enabled Wooden to find something fascinating in every place he visits.

Dr. John Mellon, one of Wooden’s mentors at Thomas Edison State College, said Wooden’s point of view is refreshing, especially in a corporate setting.

“It’s impossible to overstate the wisdom and intelligence of Ernest Wooden in the industry,” he said. “This is a man who briefed former owner of the Beverly Hilton, Merv Griffin, during lunch, but is completely modest about what he’s achieved.”

The softening in Wooden’s voice, however, reveals the people who he is truly in awe of – his family. He describes his primary job as husband, father and grandfather.

Wooden’s eldest daughter, Marlowe, is completing her nursing degree at the City University of New York; his second daughter, Lauren, holds an undergraduate degree in elementary

*(left) Ernest Wooden delivers the Response for Graduates at the 2007 Thomas Edison State College Commencement ceremony*

*(center) The Wooden Family (clockwise from left) Lauren, Ernest Jr., Ernest III, Annice and Gabrielle (Not pictured: Marlowe)*

*(right) Ernest and Annice Wooden at the Beverly Hilton*

education, and will soon complete her master’s degree in sign language; his son, Ernest, is a graduate of the American Music and Dramatic Academy in New York; and his youngest daughter, Gabrielle, will embark on her baccalaureate degree in September. In addition, Annice earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Thomas Edison State College and is now completing a master’s degree in fine arts.

Wooden said he is honored to be part of a school whose graduates refuse to be “victims” of difficult and inconvenient circumstances.

“Thomas Edison State College has defined the educational setting more broadly than tradition has allowed,” he said. “The College has provided a framework which encourages motivated adults of all stripes to grow in their understanding of the world.”

## The Grande Ball 2007

### Thomas Edison State College Foundation Celebrates College's 35th Anniversary

The Thomas Edison State College Foundation hosted The Grande Ball – 2007 at the Hyatt Regency in Princeton, N.J., on Saturday, Oct. 27, which attracted more than 270 guests and raised approximately \$113,000.

The black-tie gala event began with a silent auction and cocktails followed by an evening of dinner, dancing and entertainment. Highlighting the evening was the presentation of the 14th Annual Spirit of Edison Awards. Ida Hammond, AA '77, BA '79, past chair of the College's Board of Trustees, received the Spirit of Edison Distinguished Alumna Award, and former New Jersey Senator Peter Inverso, president and CEO of Roma Bank, received the Spirit of Edison Community Leader Award.

The Spirit of Edison awards recognize community leaders and alumni whose creativity, commitment and entrepreneurial spirit reflect the pioneering genius of Thomas Alva Edison.

Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College, said this year's recipients embody the commitment

to innovation, concern for public good and the spirit of excellence associated with the mission of Thomas Edison State College and the inventor it is named after.

"Ida's excellent record of service to our College and to the community makes her an outstanding candidate for the Spirit of Edison Award," said Dr. Pruitt. "Under her leadership as chair of our Board of Trustees, Thomas Edison State College experienced extraordinary enrollment growth."

Dr. Pruitt said Inverso's track record as a state legislator and corporate leader has always benefited higher education in New Jersey. "Peter's unwavering commitment to community service and leadership makes him an ideal recipient of the Spirit of Edison Award," he said.

In honor of the College's 35th anniversary, Hammond introduced the establishment of the Dr. George A. Pruitt Presidential Scholarship, an endowed fund that provides scholarship opportunities to graduate students at Thomas Edison State College.



*(left) New Jersey Manufacturers President & CEO Anthony Dickson and his wife, MaryEllen. Dickson served as honorary chair of The Grande Ball 2007.*

*(center) Dr. George A. Pruitt with Spirit of Edison Award recipient Peter Inverso, and Trenton Mayor Douglas Palmer.*

*(right) Thomas Edison State College Foundation Board Member Don Conover and his wife, Patti. Conover was also a member of The Grande Ball 2007 planning committee.*

*Peter A. Inverso*     *Ida Hammond '77 & '79*

Peter A. Inverso served in the New Jersey Senate representing the 14th Legislative District, covering parts of Mercer and Middlesex counties from 1991 - 2008, and serves as president and CEO of Roma Federal Savings Bank, based in Robbinsville, N.J.

Inverso was first elected to the New Jersey State Senate in 1991. During his senatorial career, he was the primary sponsor of several pieces of major legislation that are now state law, including: "Megan's Law"; the Megan's Law Internet Notification Amendment; "The Fair Credit Reporting Act", which entitles consumers to receive one free credit report per year; and the "Victim's Impact Statement", which gives family members of a murder victim the right to enter a statement during the sentencing phase of murder trials. Prior to his election to the state Senate, Inverso served two terms as a Mercer County Freeholder, where he served on various boards and commissions.

Under Inverso's leadership, Roma Bank has expanded its operations and currently serves customers in Mercer, Burlington and Ocean counties and remains dedicated to its mission of providing superior financial services in a personal and professional manner to its customers and communities.

Inverso is a certified public accountant and graduate of Rider University. He holds an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from The College of New Jersey.

Inverso is vice chairman of the Robert Wood Johnson Health Care Corporation at Hamilton and has served as chairman of the Board of Trustees of Robert Wood Johnson Hospital Hamilton. He is a trustee of Project Freedom, which provides housing and assistance for people with disabilities, and a board member of Angel's Wings. He is a member of the New Jersey State Museum Board of Trustees and the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission.

Inverso resides in Hamilton Township with his wife, Geri. They have five children and two grandchildren

Ida Hammond can tell you all about lifelong learning.

As a parent, an education professional and a literacy advocate, she has worked for more than 40 years to enhance education for children and adults and has witnessed the benefits of higher learning first-hand.

She applied to the College in the early 1970s, when it was located in a storefront on North Olden Avenue in Ewing Township, N.J. Hammond, who was working and raising two children at the time, always understood that education provides opportunities for promotion and professional growth.

While she pursued her degree at Thomas Edison State College, Hammond served as a student representative on the College's Academic Council. During this time, Hammond's daughter was also attending college and her son was in elementary school.

In 1977, Hammond earned her Associate of Arts degree and two years later, received her Bachelor of Arts degree. Soon after that, she began to rise through the ranks at the New Jersey Department of Education before retiring in 1992.

Hammond also became an active alumna, serving two terms as president of the Alumni Association. She also served as an alumni representative on the College Foundation Board of Directors.

She is the 1994 recipient of the College's Thomas C. Streckewald Service Award. Since 1972, Hammond has served as a tutor with the Volunteers of America Adult Literacy Program and has been a volunteer with Bookmates, a program that promotes reading to elementary school students. Today, she remains an active member of the Friends of the Library programs in Westhampton and Willingboro and People to People International.

Hammond was appointed to the College's Board of Trustees in 1995. In 2005, she was named chair of that board and served in that capacity for two years. During her tenure as chair, the College expanded its academic program and its enrollment.



*(from left) Peter Inverso, president and CEO of Roma Savings, accepts the 2007 Spirit of Edison Community Leader Award with Dr. George A. Pruitt and College Trustee Ida Hammond, '77, '79, recipient of the 2007 Spirit of Edison Distinguished Alumna Award.*

## Tsvi (Howard) Bisk BS '85

Tsvi Bisk, director for Center for Strategic-Futurist Thinking, recently authored *The Optimistic: a Positive Vision for the Jewish People in the 21st Century*. The Center is an influential organization that consults and educates on critical trends such as the Jewish Energy Project, which was highlighted in his new book. Speaking on July 29, 2007, at the St. Paul Jewish Community Center, Bisk outlined the project's goal to eliminate the power of petroleum as a dominating international commodity by deploying alternative energy resources and conservation methods that already exist.

## Georgette M. Dempster BSBA '05

Georgette M. Dempster received her master's degree in library science from the School of Library Science and Information, North Carolina Central University, on Dec. 14, 2007, in Durham, N.C. Dempster is currently working as a circulation manager for the Harnett County Library in North Carolina.

## Justin Farnsworth BSAST '07

After Justin Farnsworth received his degree from Thomas Edison State College, he found his dream job with Citigroup's Automated Trading Desk as a facilities electrical engineer. ATD is currently responsible for approximately 7 percent of all daily trades on the NASDAQ and NYSE, which is achieved by utilizing state-of-the-art computer and data systems. Farnsworth, who operates, maintains and designs the critical electrical infrastructure, is charged with ensuring these systems are fully functional 24/7, 365 days a year. He noted, "I find my work exciting, and for the first time in my life, coming to work is not work at all. Thank you Thomas Edison State College for giving me [the tools] I needed to jumpstart my career!"

## Devlin W. Fitzpatrick BA '04

Devlin W. Fitzpatrick recently earned his MBA in human resource management from Walden University. He also recently took a position as human resources manager with Fortunoff, a high-end and specialty retailer in New York.

## Patricia (Mantuano) Foltiny BSN '94

Patricia Foltiny, a full-time float nurse for the Hamilton Township School Board, is currently enrolled in Rowan University where she is working to obtain her School Nurse Certification. Foltiny, who has been married for 16 years, has three children.

## John R. Goodell BSAST '94

John R. Goodell was promoted to division manager of Quality and Performance Improvement at Omaha Public Power District's Fort Calhoun (Nebraska) Nuclear Station effective Dec. 16, 2007. In his new position, Goodell is responsible for all quality and performance

activities needed to support the safe, reliable, event-free, cost-effective operation and maintenance of Fort Calhoun Station. Those activities include quality assurance, quality control, nuclear safety oversight, site performance improvement, human performance and the Fort Calhoun corrective action program. Goodell first joined OPPD in September 1985. He has held several assignments since that time, most recently serving as manager of Nuclear Training. In addition to his BSAST degree in nuclear engineering technology from the College, Goodell also has held a Senior Reactor Operator License and has completed several training programs accredited by the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO).



## Matthew J. Harper ASAST '03

Matthew J. Harper started his own electrical contracting and supply house firm (established in 2003), which is doing very well riding in on the boom of development on the Bay Islands, Honduras (specifically Roatan). In October 2007 he was appointed as Honorary British Consul for the Bay Islands, the functions of which he performs around running his business. Harper noted that graduating from Thomas Edison State College "was one of the most satisfying achievements of my life."

## Melissa "Lisa" Hinson BA '04

Melissa Hinson, inspired by her educational experience at Thomas Edison State College, continued her studies and received an MS from the University of Maryland (Baltimore County) in information systems. Hinton now operates a small import/distribution business, Little Works, USA, in Santa Fe, N.M., which imports handmade greeting cards made by women from South Africa. Most of the proceeds go to a nonprofit she manages called Deep Roots/Girls' Scholarship Program, which is specifically for girls — grades 10-12 — in Namibia who would not be able to attend school otherwise due to financial hardship. Hinson writes, "Thank you Thomas Edison State College for the inspiration to achieve my life's mission!"



## John M. Holman BA '06 MSHRM '07

John Holman is pursuing a PhD in Clinical Psychology at the Pacific Graduate School of Psychology. His experiences as a combat veteran of the 82nd Airborne have led him to his current position as a researcher of the National Center on the Psychology of Terrorism.

## Justin Hopkins BA '04

Justin Hopkins is in his second year of law school at St. Thomas Law in Miami, with an expected graduation of December 2008. "I never could have become a lawyer without Thomas Edison State College," Hopkins noted.

# APPLAUSE APPLAUSE

## John Kobylack BSAST '01

John Kobylack, having received his BSAST from Thomas Edison State College in 2001 after taking advantage of the credits earned from his A&P Aircraft and Power Plant Licenses from Teterboro School of Aeronautics, graduated from Central Connecticut State University with a Master in Science in Geography, with a concentration in tourism in 2005. Kobylack noted that he intends to finish his 35-year career at United Technologies – Pratt & Whitney as a jet engine test operator and start his next adventure in life in tourism planning.

## David T. Krausman BSAST '82

David T. Krausman recently won fourth place in the History Channel's 2007 *Modern Marvels* Invent Now Challenge for a medical device called The DeSat Counter. Krausman's invention is a medical instrument that is used to test patients for sleep apnea, the occurrence of frequent interruptions in breathing during sleep. This innovative medical device is worn on the wrist overnight in the comfort of the patient's home instead of the patient spending a night in a sleep lab.

## Michael Lacassin BSAST '03

Michael Lacassin was promoted to senior chief petty officer in the United States Coast Guard on Nov. 1, 2007. He will be assigned to Air Station New Orleans as the leading chief petty officer, beginning in March 2008.

## Robert L. McGowan MSM '00

Robert McGowan has been appointed as chairperson for Pemberton Township's High School Career Advisory Board for the 2007 – 2009 school years. McGowan was also appointed as compliance officer for Buttonwood Hospital in 2007. He is responsible for ensuring business activities are in compliance with all federal, state, county and local laws and regulations.

## Christopher Nyerges BA '05

Christopher Nyerges received the annual award in 2007 for the Live Free International Organization for "outstanding contributions to civilian emergency preparedness and self-reliance education." Nyerges was selected because of his ongoing education outreach efforts. He is currently the editor of *Wilderness Way* magazine, published in Texas, where he brings together many of the best writers and practitioners of the survival and self-reliance arts. Nyerges has also written seven books, the most recent of which is *How to Survive Anywhere: A Guide to Urban, Rural, and Wilderness Environments*.

## Katherine A. R. Sainz BA '03

Katherine A.R. Sainz, who earned her Thomas Edison State College degree in psychology and continued her education by completing a master's in the field, is now pursuing doctoral studies in clinical psychology/neurophysiology. She noted, "Thomas Edison State College

sparked a fire in me that just won't go out." Sainz works with IHCenter/Big Sky Education and Research (autism education and research), which allows her to offer potential education and research opportunities to other students wishing to serve in the autistic community. She recently published a peer review work in the area of neurobiological bases of panic disorder and expects more publications shortly in the area of animal to human healing relationships in the therapeutic setting (i.e., equine facilitated therapy).

## Johnnie Mae Scott AA '07

Johnnie Mae Scott, who credits Thomas Edison State College with helping her achieve her lifelong goal of attaining her first college degree, is currently a candidate for a bachelor's degree. Scott received her AA degree at the Thomas Edison State College Commencement in October 2007, after 30 years of overcoming the many trials that besieged her efforts. She noted, "In life, troubles are guaranteed – no one lives problem free. However, by faith in God and perseverance, you can accomplish anything." The degree resulted in Scott's promotion in the teaching field and the ability to work part time at an increased salary, enabling her to invest more time doing what she most enjoys: caring for her new grandson and establishing a ministry. Scott's "Time Out" ministry focuses on the important things in life through monthly fellowship as well as offering general counseling outreach; nursing home visitation outreach; prison fellowship outreach; a feeding program; and a developing education services component.

## Gail Searels MSM '05

Gail Searels, who has more than 20 years of service in the purchasing and supply chain management field, has earned a professional certificate in purchasing. Through the prescribed requirements of education, personal development and professional responsibility, Searels achieved a Certified Purchasing Manager Certificate with lifetime status from the Institute for Supply Management, Inc.

## Jesse L. Seymour BSAST '05

Jesse L. Seymour has received an MBA from Touro University International, after completing two years of study with a concentration in finance. Seymour is a chief electronics technician in the Navy Nuclear Propulsion Program, and is currently an instructor at Nuclear Power Training Unit (NPTU) Charleston.

## Mary Lukes Stamoulis BSAST '97

Mary Lukes Stamoulis, an author and poet, has published three novels: *Liberated in the Valley of the Kings*, *Shadow War in Crete* and, most recently, *The Last Emperor of Constantinople*.

*continued on back cover*

# APPLAUSE APPLAUSE

## Paul H. Sniffen AA '73 BA '76

Paul H. Sniffen is a NARTE engineer with the U.S. Army at Fort Monmouth, N.J. He is currently working on the development of the Joint Tactical Radio System (JTRS). Prior to working on the JTRS program, he worked on the Joint Tactical Information Distribution System for the Patriot missile system. Before Sniffen worked for the U.S. Army he worked for AT&T Bell Labs in Holmdel, N.J., where he designed and tested Navy sonar, satellite echo cancellers and audio/video codec used for commercial TV and teleconferencing.

## James R. Voorhies BSAST '03

James R. Voorhies was recently awarded an MS degree in Occupational Safety & Health and Environmental Management from Columbia Southern University. Other accomplishments include assisting with the final closure of Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site (former nuclear weapons facility) as a senior transportation specialist. He is currently health and safety manager for SM Stoller for environmental remediation projects in Colorado. Voorhies plans to continue his education and obtain his certification as a Certified Safety Professional (CSP).

## Richard R. Zientek AA '73

Richard R. Zientek, who earned his BA in public administration from St. Thomas University in Florida in 1984 and retired from the U.S. Coast Guard as a chief warrant officer in 1990, recently moved to Colorado and noted, "I love the mountains."

- ▶ New Job
- ▶ Promotion
- ▶ Award
- ▶ Marriage
- ▶ Baby
- ▶ Career Switch

## Please tell us about your...

### If it's news to you, it's news to us!

We invite you as a member of our family of Thomas Edison State College Alumni to tell us about the exciting things happening in your life. Let us know what's new with you since you graduated from Thomas Edison State College or how your experience at the College changed your life, and we may include your updates in a future issue of *Invention*.

**To contact us, please fill out the form below and mail it to:** Thomas Edison State College, *Invention* Editor, 101 W. State St., Trenton, NJ 08608-1176; fax it to (609) 777-1894; or e-mail your good news to [invention@tesc.edu](mailto:invention@tesc.edu). You may include photos to accompany your news. Items will be published as space permits.

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