Rolando Gorostiza

ACE Adult Learner of the Year

INSIDE

Honor Roll of Donors

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Rolando Gorostiza ’07
Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,

Albert Einstein said, “It is every man’s obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it.”

This issue of Invention is dedicated to people and organizations who have followed Einstein’s advice. Their generous support enables Thomas Edison State College to continue to fulfill its mission to provide flexible, high-quality, collegiate learning opportunities for self-directed adults wherever they live or work.

Each year, alumni, businesses, corporations and employees of Thomas Edison State College make substantial financial contributions that allow the College to increase enrollment, expand our academic enterprise and maintain our dedication to adult learners.

In this edition, you will read about two graduates who embody the spirit of Thomas Edison State College.

One is Rolando Gorostiza ’07, a manager for L’Oreal USA, who was selected as this year’s Adult Learner of the Year by the American Council on Education. This husband and father of three recalls the experience of completing his degree at Thomas Edison State College at the same time his children were pursuing their own college educations.

The other is Lt. Jason Anderson ’06, a member of the U.S. Army National Guard, who finished his degree while serving in Iraq. Lt. Anderson tells us how Thomas Edison State College courses on Islam helped him understand the people and places he encountered during his deployment.

These graduates’ stories illustrate the importance of Thomas Edison State College’s mission and the financial support we receive every year from loyal donors, including the Thomas Edison State College Foundation.

On behalf of the entire College family, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Thomas Edison State College Foundation for its support of our institution and for its work on behalf of the Annual Fund, our special events and other development initiatives. We are grateful to all who have supported the College during the past year!

Sincerely,

Dr. George A. Pruitt
President
To help meet the growing demand for experienced nurses who understand the law, the School of Professional and Continuing Studies at Thomas Edison State College has created a new professional certificate in Nurse Paralegal Studies.

The 45-week online program is modeled after the College’s general Paralegal Studies certificate, launched in 2007, which focuses on the use of technology in the legal profession. The Nurse Paralegal certificate is a noncredit program designed for nurses interested in entering the legal field as a nurse paralegal or becoming a legal nurse consultant.

“Throughout the country, law firms, corporate legal departments, insurance companies and other agencies are looking for experienced nurses,” said William J. Mulkeen, director of the Paralegal Studies program at Thomas Edison State College. “We developed our new nurse paralegal program using the expertise of a stellar advisory board, each of whom is recognized nationally for their expertise in specific course content areas. We believe this program will meet the growing demand that currently exists in the marketplace.”

The certificate includes six online courses led by nationally renowned leaders in legal, paralegal and nurse paralegal education:

**PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE THAT PREPARES NURSES AS NURSE PARALEGALS OR LEGAL NURSE CONSULTANTS**

**INTRODUCTION TO NURSE PARALEGALISM**
**Mentor: Nancy Wilson Soga, RN**
Wilson Soga is a graduate of Cameron University and Long Island University. She has practiced nursing for more than 16 years, is a charter member of the Morristown, N.J., chapter of the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants and is an associate editor of *Legal Nurse Consulting, Principles and Practice, 2nd Edition* (2002).

**TORTS**
**Mentor: Michael C. King**
King is a graduate of George Mason School of Law and is currently chair of the Business Division at Essex County College. He has been involved in legal education for more than 20 years.

**LEGAL RESEARCH AND WRITING**
**Mentor: Raquel Y. Bristol**
Bristol is a graduate of Rutgers Law School and is currently an appellate attorney with the Office of the Public Defender of the State of New Jersey. She has served as an editor at a national legal publishing company.

**LITIGATION**
**Mentor: Charlotte Riser Harris**
Harris is a graduate of Virginia Tech and the Southwestern Paralegal Institute and is currently a partner with Five Star Legal Compliance, Inc. in Los Angeles.

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW**
**Mentor: William Jenson**
Jenson is a graduate of the Suffolk University Law School, the judicial officer of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and vice chair of the American Bar Association’s section on Administrative Law and Regulatory Practice in Agriculture.

**INTRODUCTION TO TECHNOLOGY IN THE LAW**
**Mentor: Thomas Goldman**
Goldman is a graduate of Temple Law School and is the author of the textbook for the course, *Introduction to Technology in the Law*, as well as the leading paralegal textbook, *Paralegal Profession*. He has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAIPE) and is currently chair of the AAIPE Technology Task Force.

To register, or to learn more about professional certificates offered at Thomas Edison State College, visit www.tesc.edu/spcs or call (609) 777-5642.
A GRADUATE COHORT CAN BE MANY THINGS.

It can be a peer group or an academic unit, with members often collaborating on completing course work toward their degree.

It is in its unofficial capacity, however, that a master’s cohort truly shines. For Stephen Theisen, Antonio Doria, Esther Velázquez, William Strain and Eric Percival, who each earned a Master of Science in Management in 2007, their cohort also served as a crucial sounding board, support group and safe haven during one of the most transformative and rigorous passages of their academic careers.

“During the months of hard work, reading, research papers and nonexistent social lives, we provided each other with moral support,” said Velázquez. “No matter what happened during our strenuous studies, we wouldn’t allow each other to give up.”

For students fortunate enough to find themselves surrounded by such support, the rewards are obvious. “As a team of five, we were each others’ academic and emotional support system,” said Velázquez, who works as a technical writer for a financial firm. “We provided encouragement and a ready ear if one of our members was floundering. At one point, I was going through a rough patch and seriously considered dropping my courses. I shared my frustration with fellow cohort member Eric Percival. His words of understanding, encouragement and advice were enough to make me hang in there.”

Graduate-level course work typically consists of reading required chapters, articles and case studies, then subsequently researching, analyzing and interpreting the material. More often than not, students bring their professional experiences to the online discussions and integrate theories with practice.

“During a typical assignment, we would read numerous articles or text and respond to questions posted by our graduate mentor on the Discussion Board,” said Theisen, who is currently pursuing a Graduate Certificate in Online Learning and Teaching. “We would also respond to questions or comments from other students. The assignments honed our leadership skills and encouraged us to collaborate with each other on a professional level.”

Cohort members cited the program’s affordability and quality as the most compelling reasons for pursuing their degrees at Thomas Edison State College. Access to quality mentors was also an important part of their experience at the College.

“I was pleasantly surprised at how eager our mentors were to hear from us and how generous they were with their time,” said Velázquez. “I would encourage all students—graduate and undergraduate—to establish communication with their mentors early and often in their course work.”

Collegiality such as this often endures beyond commencement, with members staying in close contact and often building on their earlier accomplishments.

“We plan to stay in touch with each other,” added Theisen. “My belief is that we have become a ‘family’ over the 18 months we’ve been together and will continue to share significant events with each other. Antonio [Doria] is now planning to pursue his doctorate degree and I know Esther is doing the same. I feel privileged to have met and become friends with these folks. If it had not been for Thomas Edison State College, I would have never gained such excellent friendships.”
For Lt. Jason Anderson ’06, Mixing Mortars with Midterms Was an Everyday Occurrence
WHEN LT. JASON ANDERSON STEPPED OFF THE C-130 TRANSFORM PLANE IN IRAQ, HE IMMEDIATELY REALIZED HOW FAR AWAY HE WAS FROM HIS HOME IN MINNESOTA.

As Anderson stood on the runway at Talil Air Base, wearing 50 pounds of body armor and hauling his gear, the temperature was racing toward 100 degrees in April.

“When the transport door opened, it was just like a blast furnace,” recalled Anderson BA ’06. “Under most conditions, a breeze would provide some relief; but over there, the wind merely served as a vehicle for more heat and dust.”

In addition to beginning his tour of duty in the world’s most dangerous war zone, Anderson was about to begin taking courses to earn a college degree through the Military Degree Completion Program at Thomas Edison State College.

But before he started, Anderson established a routine to stay on track academically without interfering with his military service.

Anderson worked 10- to 14-hour shifts each night. As an intelligence staff officer, he was responsible for operations, intelligence tracking, operational security, section counseling and management and anti-terrorism protection.

“My military work consisted of a series of ongoing projects,” said Anderson. “I was assigned to conduct vulnerability assessments for battalions and convoy escort teams in a number of radio relay points and small combat outposts stretched along hundreds of miles of supply routes. The process undoubtedly saved lives daily.”

For Anderson and his unit members, the fevered pitch rarely subsided.

“Each member of my unit worked extraordinarily hard. There was barely time for anything except our mission for the first three months in theater,” he said. “Once my courses began, I came in early or worked late in order to have the Internet access I needed for online Discussion Groups and submitting assignments.”

Anderson said his course work on Islam helped him reinforce his understanding of the Sunni/Shea conflict in the Mideast. He asserts that his grasp of the cultural makeup of the area was at least as important as his tactical understanding.

“I studied the effect Christianity had in the creation of Islam,” said Anderson. “Other topics covered were the Koran, Islamic law, prayer and understanding extremist behavior. There are also many historic and religious sites in Iraq, some of which I have seen after reading about them. My unit also encountered Muslims participating in Ramadan and the Hajj. The courses I took helped me understand the significance of their religious observances and respect their dates and rituals.”

Anderson always wanted to be a soldier. He is known by friends and family as being analytical and staunchly patriotic, and originally served three years of active duty as a U.S. Army Calvary Scout. He looked forward to the college education he would earn when he felt ready for it.

He was home from duty in Bosnia-Herzegovina when he and his family turned on the television one sunny September morning to watch United Airlines Flight 175 dissolve into the side of the World Trade Center. The event deepened his focus on family and country.

“When I originally joined the Army, I don’t think service to my country was as paramount as it is now,” he said. “Now that I have children, I feel it’s imperative for them to have secure, successful and happy lives.”

Alumni Profile

Lt. Jason Anderson pauses with daughter Marguerite and son Dayne at the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn.
Actions Speak Louder Than Words
When Rolando Gorostiza Took His Own Advice, He Got Something He Never Bargained For...
When Rolando Gorostiza decided to return to college to complete his degree, he thought he would set a good example for his children and achieve a goal he started earlier in life.

Like many adults who return to school, Gorostiza had children who were also pursuing college degrees at the time, and he prepared for long nights of studying in a home full of learners. One thing he never expected to do was earn a national education award along with his college degree.

But he did. The American Council on Education (ACE), which presents the ACE Adult Learner of the Year Award annually to an adult learner who leverages professional training that has been evaluated by ACE’s College Credit Recommendation Service to advance their education or career, saw something special in Gorostiza, a resident of Delran, N.J.

“Rolando’s entry jumped out at us” said Deborah Ross Warin, assistant director of Program Evaluations at ACE. “The nomination, submitted by his son and supported by an acting dean and a mentor from Thomas Edison State College, was a unanimous favorite among our judges.”

Recipients must demonstrate outstanding achievement in their community or workplace while successfully balancing the demands of family, career and education. The ACE review process validated Gorostiza’s certifications and professional training provided by his employer, L’Oreal USA in Clark, N.J., for college credits.

In February, Gorostiza traveled to San Diego, Calif., to be honored at the American Council on Education’s Annual Meeting, where he received the award with family members and Thomas Edison State College President Dr. George Pruitt in attendance.

“A bout two years ago, my children were poised to transfer their community college credits to four-year institutions,” said Gorostiza, an engineer with 25 years of experience in consumer products, manufacturing processes and teaching. “I encouraged them to pursue their studies, and to do so while they were young. Yet I felt my words were hollow because I did not possess the college degree that I was so eager for them to obtain.”

If fatherhood taught him anything, it was that actions speak louder than words.

In 2005, the Computer Assisted Design (CAD) engineer and manager for L’Oreal USA, enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Applied Science and Technology (BSAST) degree program at Thomas Edison State College.

“I was exhausted some of the time, but the academic spirit in the house was intoxicating! I never knew I loved school so much. It also affirmed what I had suspected - that academic fervor is best conveyed by example,” said Gorostiza.

It was an example made all the more indelible as he approached center-stage to collect his degree as well as an Arnold Fletcher Award for exceptional achievement during the College’s 35th Commencement ceremonies in October.
As a Thomas Edison State College Arnold Fletcher Award recipient, Rolando exemplifies achievement in nontraditional learning,” said Thomas Devine, acting dean of the School of Applied Science and Technology. “We are very proud of all of our graduates, and particularly proud of students like Rolando. Students selected for this award have demonstrated excellence in utilizing innovative learning modes.”

Gorostiza completed his degree in 19 months at Thomas Edison State College.

“When I applied to Thomas Edison State College, I had 40 credits transferred from other institutions. I also transferred the credit equivalency of 19 courses via ACE; credits in English, humanities, social sciences and math via CLEP; and 36 credits via the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program at the College, which was an efficient way of earning credits by documenting college-level knowledge.”

His employer, L’Oreal USA, a strong advocate of career and academic advancement for its employees, provided tuition reimbursement.

“W e are very pleased to see that ACE has chosen one of our employees to honor as Adult Learner of the Year for 2007,” noted Patrick Cafaro, vice president of Human Resources for L’Oreal USA. “We have always encouraged employees to attain their degrees via our tuition reimbursement program. This investment in our people is one that benefits all concerned — from the employees, to their families and back to the company. We are proud of Rolando for this accomplishment as well as his drive to persevere on his own time to achieve his bachelor’s degree at Thomas Edison State College.”

Gorostiza has been married for 28 years to his high school sweetheart, Silvia, who has just transferred her own credits into a baccalaureate degree program at Thomas Edison State College. The couple has a daughter, Jillian, who is pursuing her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Rider University; and two sons, Gabriel, who recently earned an associates degree from Burlington County College; and Michael, who is currently pursuing a baccalaureate degree in music theory and composition with a minor in biology at Westminster Choir College of Rider University.

“In this changing world, a degree is proof that a person is disciplined enough to meet deadlines, to reason, learn, think analytically and follow through,” said Gorostiza.

A jubilant Rolando Gorostiza takes center stage during Thomas Edison State College’s Commencement in October.
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Honor Roll of Donors

Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,

It is my privilege to present you with the 2007 edition of the Thomas Edison State College Foundation Honor Roll of Donors.

On behalf of the Foundation, we extend our sincere thanks to everyone who provided financial support this year. Your contributions play a key role in enhancing and expanding the unique programs that Thomas Edison State College offers to adult learners throughout the world.

This year, the Foundation committed nearly $120,000 to create a new Provost’s Fund focused on developing new academic programs and courses. This new resource is used at the discretion of the provost and enables the College to respond quickly to the needs of our students, including those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the corporate sector.

Also this year, several new endowments were created. Endowments secure the future of the institution and provide an essential and reliable source of funding to develop new degree programs and partnerships that benefit adult learners.

Your support established the Dr. George A. Pruitt Presidential Endowed Scholarship Fund – the College’s first scholarship exclusively for graduate students. The following alumni also created new endowments: Michael Brewster ‘93 and Raymond Koski ‘93. To date, 20 endowments have been established by friends and alumni of the College and 15 others were established by Foundation Board members. Endowments create permanent sources of revenue that greatly increase the College’s ability to improve course delivery and build new degree programs. If you are interested in learning more about how you can establish a named endowment to preserve a personal legacy, please contact the Office of Development at (609) 984-1588 for additional information.

As we continue our work, it is important to remember how critical your donation is to the College. As in previous years, public funding for higher education continues to be reduced, especially here in New Jersey. Your support enables Thomas Edison State College to continue its mission to serve adult learners.

Your support, in whichever form you choose, secures the future of this extraordinary institution and makes the success of Thomas Edison State College possible.

Sincerely,

John P. Neary
Chair, Thomas Edison State College Foundation
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Merrill Lynch Community Development Company
Christopher J. Miller
David & Margery Miller
Dexter I. Mims
Missy Brewer Design
Mitch-Stewart, Inc.
John Monsport
The Montel Williams Show
Jennifer M. Montone
MTAACC
M. William Murphy, Inc.
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John P. Neary
Nest Antique & Design Center
New Jersey 101.5 FM
New Jersey Business & Industry Association
New Jersey Devils
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Harold Kaluzna
Bess J. Quattrone

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Mindy Alter  BA ’06

Mindy Alter graduated from Daemen College in Buffalo, N.Y., with an MS degree in special education, early childhood, and a 4.0 GPA in January 2008. Her thesis was titled, Teachers’ Perceptions Towards Academic Achievement and Social Development of Students From Single-Parent Families. Currently, Alter stays home to care for her infant son.

Dr. David M. Brady  BSAST ’88

Dr. David M. Brady, director of the Human Nutrition Institute and associate professor of Clinical Sciences at the University of Bridgeport, recently published a new book. Published by Morgan James Publishing, Dr. Brady’s Healthy Revolution: Just What You Need to Know to Stay Healthy in a Sick World teaches the reader in a concise, no-nonsense, manner what really needs to be done to stay healthy in today’s world and explains how the medical system has failed to address the issues of wellness and health with aging baby boomers and an obese younger generation.

John “Jay” W. Brister Jr.  BSAST ’05

Jay Brister was hired by CH2M HILL as their vice president, Business Development Commercial Nuclear, in September 2007. The CH2M HILL enterprise, dating back to 1946, is built on honesty, ethics and morals; a global presence of more than 23,000 employees in regional offices worldwide; with gross revenues of $5 billion in 2007. Brister noted “Thanks to Thomas Edison for making this possible. Your degree program was the only venue I could have pursued in my career to help me continue to grow and challenge myself in career development (although I may have been one of your longest term students before graduating). I am now part of a fantastic company with fantastic opportunities and I am here because of what we were able to accomplish together. Thanks again.”

Karen Brundage-Johnson  MSM ’00

Karen Brundage-Johnson recently co-authored a new book entitled Beyond the Body! Developing Inner Beauty. Her chapter is titled “15 Strategies for Overcoming Negative Thinking.” This 25-chapter book is dedicated to the emotional, mental and spiritual wellness of women. Authored by 25 consultants, coaches and international professionals, this anthology is for women who desire to create a calm life, build healthy relationships and increase self-esteem on their life’s journey.
Barbara Dan  BA ’86

Barbara Dan, who went on to earn an MA in humanities at California State University in Dominguez Hills after graduating from Thomas Edison State College, has had two historical romance novels published: O’Rourke’s Bride (2006) and MacGregor’s Bride (2007).

Roxanne Genova  BSBA ’07

Roxanne Genova, vice president of Enterprise Talent Management and Strategy at Prudential Financial, Inc., accepted an award from LATINA Style magazine on behalf of the company, which was selected as one of the 50 best companies for Latinas to work for in the United States in 2007.

Stephen A. Guckin  BSBS ’06

Stephen A. Guckin was ordained a permanent deacon for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in June 2007. A retired lieutenant from the Philadelphia Police Department following 27 years of service, Guckin now serves as a campus school minister for Lansdale Catholic High School in Lansdale, Pa. Guckin noted, “Additionally, I became a proud Pop-Pop on July 28, 2007, when my grandson Frank was born.”

Dr. John Hill  BSBS ’91

Dr. John Hill, after graduation from Thomas Edison State College, went on to earn a master’s degree in criminal justice at Jersey City State College, a master’s in psychology from New Jersey City University, a doctorate in criminal justice from Hawthorne University in Utah, and a doctorate in higher education from Nova Southeastern University in Florida. Hill retired as a New Jersey police officer in 2000 to accept a college professorship at Salt Lake Community College in Utah. He has published more than 20 journal articles, books and scholarly papers on criminal justice topics, crime and police issues. Hill was presented with the Best Paper Award in the Social Sciences Division after presenting at the Spring-2003 Annual Conference of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

Tamar Hill-Sweat  BA ’07

Tamar Hill-Sweat received an MBA degree in marketing, graduating with a 4.0 GPA, from American InterContinental University on Dec. 1, 2007. An employee of Verizon Communications, Hill-Sweat was recently promoted to supervisor of customer service. She noted, “Without the inspiration of my mother, also a graduate of Thomas Edison State College (Joyce Wilkerson BSBA ’95), I don’t know that I would have enrolled in the College or would have received my MBA.”

Edward Michael Janzekovich  BSHS ’03

Edward Michael Janzekovich earned his Juris Doctorate degree from Widener University School of Law - Delaware in May 2007. He successfully passed the July 2007 New Jersey Bar exam and has opened his solo law practice, Law Office of Edward M. Janzekovich, in South River, N.J. Janzekovich, who was a husband, father and full-time police officer while pursuing his degree, credits the flexible programs at Thomas Edison State College offers for his success.

Dr. Brinton (Britt) P. Minshall  BA ’81

Dr. Brinton P. Minshall, after graduating from Thomas Edison State College, went on to earn a master’s degree from Emory University in Atlanta and a doctorate degree from Boston University.

Donna Mayer  BA ’06

Donna Mayer was recently added to the outreach team of the Hepatitis B Foundation, a nonprofit research organization headquartered in Doylestown, Pa. Mayer serves as the outreach coordinator organizing the foundation’s outreach efforts, serving as the Webmaster and developing targeted outreach strategies.

Amie (Strang) McCarthy  BSBA ’05

Amie McCarthy was awarded an MBA with a concentration in finance from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, in October 2007. McCarthy, who was formerly vice president of the Residential Mortgage Trading Group at Nomura Securities on Wall Street, accepted a newly created position with Bank of America, based in Charlotte, N.C., in March 2008. She is vice president of Secondary Marketing for Reverse Mortgages with Bank of America, the third largest provider of reverse mortgages in the United States.

Chuck Miller  BA ’05

Chuck Miller has been the theater teacher at Pinelands Regional High School in Little Egg Harbor, N.J., since graduating from Thomas Edison State College in June 2005. In that time, 11 different students from Miller’s program have earned 14 N.J. Governor’s Awards in Art Education, which is the highest honor one can receive in that area of education in New Jersey. Miller has been nominated for the award as a teacher, and his theater program has won the Speech and Theater Association of New Jersey (STANJ) annual state competition in 2006 and in 2008. Miller noted, “Thanks to Thomas Edison State College, I was able to earn my degree in a timely manner and have had great success!”

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Melanie Morgan  BA ’03

Melanie Morgan was recently honored in Times Square where she received a $5,000 scholarship from Hope for the Warriors for her essay on how her life and goals have changed since her husband was critically wounded in Iraq. Morgan is currently working on her Doctor of Education in Teacher Leadership at Walden University.

Michel Perez  BA ’04

Michel Perez graduated from South Texas College of Law in December 2006. Perez was accepted to practice law in Texas in May 2007, and concurrently accepted a position as an associate in the law firm of Boyar & Miller, P.C., in Houston.

Dina J. Roberson  MSHRM ’06

Dina J. Roberson was hired as vice president of Human Resources at Nevada Cancer Institute (NVCI) in November 2007. NVCI is the official cancer institute for the state of Nevada.

Emmanuel Sullivan  AA ’00 BA ’02

Emmanuel Sullivan received his Master of Professional Writing degree from Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pa., on Dec. 31, 2007. While pursuing his graduate degree, Sullivan worked for JetBlue Airways in New York, N.Y., as a publications specialist. He moved back to Houston, Texas, in 2007, and is currently working for Aker Kvaerner Subsea as a lead technical writer.

Lisa Taylor  BA ’04

Lisa Taylor received her Master of Library Science degree from Texas Woman’s University School of Library and Information Studies in December 2007.

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