

# connections

CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2012 VOL. XXXVI NO. 1



(L-R) Chief Joseph Gaudett, Dr. Jennifer Dysart and Chief John DeCarlo

## Charter Oak State College Hosts Annual Shea Lecture and Fundraising Reception

Despite falling on the evening of the first snowstorm of the year, many came out for an evening of thought-provoking conversation when Charter Oak State College hosted our annual Shea Lecture and Fundraising Reception on October 27 at The Hartford Tower Auditorium in Hartford. This year's lecture, which was free and open to the public, was titled "Eyewitness Testimony: Fact or Fiction?"

The reception, hosted by The Charter Oak State College Foundation, was held

after the lecture, and proceeds will be used to fund scholarships, including the Sgt. George R. Dingwall Scholarship, established in memory of a Charter Oak graduate who lost his life in the line of duty as a law enforcement officer in Middletown, CT. Retired Hartford Chief of Police and Charter Oak alum Daryl K. Roberts received the Charter Oak State College Foundation Innovation Award at the reception.

The fascinating lecture on the reliability of eyewitness testimony



(L-R) Bernardine Morris-Thielert and Alesia Mondello at the Shea Lecture



(L-R) Alumni Citation recipient Ruth Garby Torres, Innovation Award winner Chief Daryl K. Roberts, and Charter Oak President Ed Klonoski

featured Dr. Jennifer Dysart, Associate Professor of Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, who is a leading authority on eyewitness research. She shared the latest news about the science of eyewitness memory and suggested several ways to improve the police lineup process.

A panel discussion after the lecture included Chief Roberts and Bridgeport Chief of Police Joseph Gaudett.

Retired Branford Chief of Police and Charter Oak alum John DeCarlo, Ph.D., moderated. The panelists discussed Dr.

*continued on pg. 4*

## in this issue

- 1 Shea Lecture**  
Charter Oak hosts annual lecture and fundraising reception
- 2 The President's Take**  
Connecticut establishes a new Board of Regents
- 4 Alumni Profile**  
Meet environmental specialist, Harry Chichester
- 9 Make a Difference**  
Participate in Charter Oak's Annual Appeal
- 10 Alumni Citation Awarded**  
Ruth Garby Torres recognized

# THE PRESIDENT'S TAKE



Connecticut has been hit this fall by two weather-related disasters. The first occurred just as the semester was beginning – Hurricane Irene passed right across the state and left us saturated and wind-damaged, with over 730,000 homes without power. Many parts of the state had severe flooding and others lost

power for as much as a week. I spent the week learning the intricacies of manning a generator while trying to keep my house from floating away.

Then this week we had an unprecedented October snowstorm that left as much as 20 inches of snow on the ground and, more destructively, in the branches of our trees. The result

was another huge set of power outages caused by falling trees, this time affecting over 900,000 homes. As I am writing this, reports are that residents will be without power for a week, and this time the College is directly affected. Our building in New Britain, CT is without power, so our staff has been home for three days. However, our data center is operating normally on generator power. So in a very strange way we are both open AND closed. Blackboard is up, but many of our instructors and students have no power at home. Welcome to the world of online classes.

The planned topic of this message (before the snow started falling and the lights started flickering) was Connecticut's new Board of Regents for Higher Education, which came fully into power on January 1. The Board of Regents is a new system, which includes the four state universities (Central, Eastern, Southern and Western) as well as the community college system and Charter Oak State College.

We hosted a successful visit in October with Dr. Robert A. Kennedy, The Board of Regents' Interim President, and Lew Robinson, the Board's new Chair. They met our senior staff, as well as several students and faculty members. As they heard our story, you could see both of these men begin to light up with the possibilities represented by our

*"...you could see both of these men begin to light up with the possibilities represented by our non-traditional approach to adult education. I feel very positive about our fit into the new Regents, and I expect to be reporting to you on a variety of new initiatives that make fuller use of our natural advantages."*

non-traditional approach to adult education. I feel very positive about our fit into the new Regents, and I expect to be reporting to you on a variety of new initiatives that make fuller use of our natural advantages.

But we still have some challenging moments ahead. The Board for State Academic Awards had its final meeting on November 17. We made the seven Board members who are not Charter Oak alums honorary alums as a way of thanking them (and symbolically all their many predecessors) for 38 years of dedicated and successful service. This is a particularly noteworthy moment for me, as I have been working with this Board for the past 14 years, and they are the group that entrusted me with your College. It will feel very different for me to be working for another Board.

But there we switch back to good news. The new Board of Regents will have 15 voting members when it is fully staffed, and two of those members should be very familiar to most of you. First, Dr. Merle Harris, who was Charter Oak's President for 18 years, is now a member of the Board of Regents, appointed by Governor

Malloy. And she is joined by Matt Fleury, President and CEO of the Connecticut Science Center and proud alum of the College. In fact, last year he won the Citation Award from the Alumni Association (an organization that I hope you have all joined) and he served as Treasurer of the Charter Oak Foundation. Both of these Board members know and value Charter Oak, so I am confident that we will be in good hands going forward.

Please drop me an email and let me know how your career is progressing. I enjoy hearing from you, and I always share your stories with the rest of the staff.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ed Klonoski". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Ed Klonoski**  
President

## Greetings From Your Alumni Association...

It's a pleasure to meet Charter Oak alumni either in person when we are out in the community or via phone or email. While you have different stories of what brought you to complete your degree at Charter Oak, one thing connects you – each and every one of you have accomplished impressive things!

In the Summer 2011 issue of *Connections* you read about our honorary degree recipient, David Matthews, who serves in the Department of Defense Civilian Expeditionary Workforce. David has served in Kabul, Afghanistan and was awarded the NATO Medal for his service. In this issue you'll meet Ruth Garby Torres, the recipient of our Alumni Citation Award for her 21-year service to the Connecticut State Police and her advocacy work to the Schaghticoke Indians in addition to her dedication to the College.

David and Ruth certainly have impressive accomplishments and both credit Charter Oak for helping them achieve their goals. If you are thinking, "I haven't done anything as impressive as that," you're wrong. All of your stories are noteworthy and we encourage you to share them.

Whether you obtained a graduate degree after attending Charter Oak, or received a promotion in your job, started your own company or made a difference in your community, we

want to hear about it. More importantly, your stories and your accomplishments help inspire others to come to Charter Oak to complete their degrees.

Some of the most frequently asked questions by prospective students are: "What do your graduates do after completing their degrees?" "Will my Charter Oak degree be accepted by graduate schools?" "Do graduates find their Charter Oak degree helps them in their career?" All of these are questions which can be best answered by you, our graduates. You have first-hand experience in how your degree has helped you in your career or personal life.

Our Admissions counselors are able to tell prospective students that approximately 50 percent of our graduates go on to graduate school – a fact that has proved meaningful and encouraging to others to complete their degree. And when Ruth Garby Torres tells her personal story of attending the prestigious Harvard Kennedy School after Charter Oak, it's a very powerful testimonial.



(L-R) Guiding the Charter Oak State College Alumni Association are its president, Carlo Esidore, and Nancy Taylor, the College's Assistant Director of Alumni Relations and Corporate Recruitment.

So, please, share your story. Tell us what you've been doing and your latest accomplishments. Show others what a Charter Oak degree can do for them. As you know, our alumni are our best salespeople for the College. Please send your news to Amanda Savio Guay at [aguay@charteroak.edu](mailto:aguay@charteroak.edu).

*Cordially,*

**Carlo Esidore**

*President, Charter Oak State College Alumni Association*

**Nancy Taylor**

*Assistant Director of Alumni Relations and Corporate Recruitment* 🌱

## A New Face at *Connections*

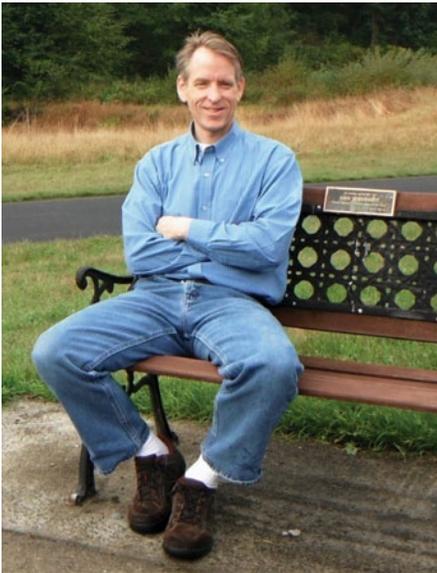
Hi there! I am excited to introduce myself as your new *Connections* editor. My name is Amanda Savio Guay, and I am the new Senior Associate, Marketing & Communications at Charter Oak State College. I'm thrilled to be here!

Prior to beginning here at Charter Oak in September, I was the

Communications Manager at The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts in Hartford, CT, doing marketing and public relations for a wide range of programming for 11 years. Before that, I was a newspaper reporter at the *Record-Journal* in Meriden, CT.

So it's easy to see I have a love of stories. And I would be thrilled to hear

yours. I really want to hear from you – updates on what is happening in your career and your life as a Charter Oak alum. Please email me at [aguay@charteroak.edu](mailto:aguay@charteroak.edu) with your news, or even just to introduce yourself. I look forward to hearing from you! 🌱



Harry Chichester

Charter Oak alum Harry Chichester's love of the environment is unmatched. And his degree from Charter Oak has enabled him to enjoy a career as an environmental specialist for the Washington Department of Ecology after a 26-year career in the Coast Guard.

While serving all over the continental United States, Alaska, and the Virgin Islands kept him extremely busy, he also made getting his degree a top priority.

"As a Chief in the Coast Guard, higher education was something I always encouraged the young people that worked for me to pursue," Harry

said. "I knew (a college degree) was something I needed to finish before I retired. I knew that the world outside of the military would respect and appreciate my military service, but they would never understand it. Talk of ranks, rates, awards, and military achievement were foreign to them. What the 'outside world' understood was a college degree. It was – and is – a benchmark of achievement."

Harry chose Charter Oak State College for its personal touch. "The two primary reasons I chose Charter Oak over other colleges were because of the courses offered and the responsiveness of the staff. Charter Oak was a perfectly sized institution; not so small that course offerings were limited, and not so big that you couldn't talk to a real human being when you called... it is 'right sized,' allowing professors, counselors, and staff to know their students and help them through challenging circumstances. It's the niche Charter Oak holds over other institutions."

Harry received his Bachelor of Science degree with an Individualized Studies concentration focusing on Maritime Port Safety and Management in 2007. And today, he has a career he loves, working for the Washington Department of Ecology as an Environmental Specialist. He leads his state's efforts in developing Geographic Response Plans (GRPs), which are oil spill response plans that

minimize damage to natural, cultural, and certain economic resources at risk in the area.

"Like everyone, I'm a user of the environment and depend on the resources it provides for my survival," said Harry, who enjoys kayaking, traveling, hiking and whitewater rafting with his wife Brenda in his free time. "I'm also passionate about environmental protection. I love my work because it allows me to help the response community prepare for the day something bad happens, so injury to sensitive environmental resources from oil can be minimized."

"Harry was the ideal Charter Oak student who understood the value of education and was dedicated to earning his degree for his career advancement," said Bob Frederick, Assistant Director of Admissions at Charter Oak. "His success and enthusiasm about the College has now made him a great advocate for others, particularly in the military, to pursue their educational goals."

*We would love to hear from you! If you are interested in sharing your success story with your fellow alumni, please contact Charter Oak's Assistant Director of Alumni Relations, Nancy Taylor, and let her know! She can be reached at [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu) or 860-515-3863. 🌱*

"Shea Lecture" continued from pg. 1

Dysart's ideas and the requirements of the new law.

Also in attendance for the lecture and panel discussion was retired Connecticut Supreme Court Justice, David Borden, Chairman of the Connecticut Legislature's Eyewitness Task Force.

"This year's Shea Lecture was extremely timely," said Chief DeCarlo. "Earlier this month, the Connecticut State Legislature put a new law into effect requiring the study of new methods with which to make eyewitness evidence less prone to error."

The Shea Lecture is supported by an endowment established in 1987 upon the retirement of Bernard D. Shea, Charter Oak's first President. The endowment enables the College to sponsor programs which further the College's mission to engage students and the community in lifelong learning. 🌱

## We've Changed Our Numbers!

As you know, technology is an integral part of what makes Charter Oak State College a leader in online adult degree completion. We recently upgraded our phone system to Cisco Unified Communications, a leading-edge voiceover IP system designed to provide unprecedented customer-focused phone, chat, and email service to our students.

What does this mean for our alums? Well, our phone numbers are changing. To reach Nancy Taylor, our Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and

Alumni Relations, you will now call 860-515-3863. Our main number is now 860-515-3800.

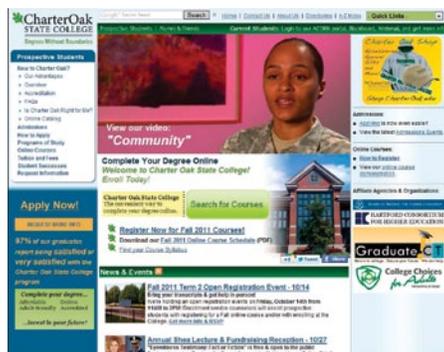
"Today's online learners don't always pick up the phone. The Cisco UC system will provide students, faculty and staff multi-modal support through voice, chat, and interactive video conference. Higher education is in a time of tremendous change and there are some traditional models that just aren't sustainable anymore," said George Claffey, Charter Oak's Chief Information Officer. "Our goal was

to develop a solution and identify a partner who could meet our needs today and help us respond to the industry and customer shifts of tomorrow."

Ed Klonoski, President of Charter Oak said, "Charter Oak prides itself on providing world-class customer service to its students and we are excited to have a technology that will allow our College to respond to today's student requirements while providing a framework to meet the student needs of tomorrow." 🌱

## Charter Oak Alums Featured in New Television Ad Campaign

We love when our students and alums act as ambassadors for Charter Oak. If you want to see some of them in action, all it takes is a visit to [facebook.com/CharterOak](https://www.facebook.com/CharterOak) to check out three videos we debuted on our website this fall to show prospective students how great an experience completing your degree at Charter Oak can be! The videos are also part of our new television ad campaign.



There are currently three videos available to view on our Facebook page – "Advancement," "Community" and "Motivation." The videos feature commentary by students, alums and Charter Oak staff and faculty.

"Advancement" promotes the way a degree from Charter Oak can help advance your career, with commentary by alums including retired Hartford Chief of Police Daryl K. Roberts and Lieutenant Peter Bergenholtz, who share their appreciation of the

opportunity to take challenging courses, with the flexibility to do so while working an unusual schedule. Getting a degree from Charter Oak allows these men to lead by example, encouraging their peers in the public safety sector to complete their degrees as well.

Student and military mom Diana Jones is featured in the "Community" video, which spotlights the tight virtual community that Charter Oak cultivates through its online classrooms. Diana talks about the bond she has with her fellow students, which has fostered friendships beyond the classroom. She also appreciates the loyalty of her admissions counselor, and the quick, positive feedback she receives when she has questions – whether she is taking courses stateside or while stationed overseas.

"Charter Oak makes you feel welcome," says Chief Roberts in the "Community" video, "makes you feel that the choice will work for you."

"Motivation" is always a factor when our students choose to enroll at Charter Oak, and in this video, several alums note that their goal-driven personalities played a major role in motivating them to complete their degrees.

Assistant professor and Charter Oak alum Milaim Tahriri was extremely motivated to complete his degree and

graduation was a pivotal moment in his life: "I was determined that I was going to have my degree," he says. "The day I got my diploma was one of the best days in my life. I was more happy when I finished my Bachelor's (at Charter Oak) than I was when I finished my Master's."

We encourage you to stop by [facebook.com/CharterOak](https://www.facebook.com/CharterOak) and take a look! 🌱

## connections

JANUARY 2012 • VOLUME XXXVI, NUMBER 1

Issued semi-annually for alumni and friends of Charter Oak State College.

 **CharterOak**<sup>SM</sup>  
**STATE COLLEGE**  
Degrees Without Boundaries

Amanda Savio Guay, Editor

State of Connecticut  
Dannel P. Malloy, Governor

Board of Regents  
Dr. Robert A. Kennedy, President

Charter Oak State College  
Ed Klonoski, President

# Hartford Chief of Police and Charter Oak Alum Daryl K. Roberts Receives the Charter Oak State College Foundation Innovation Award

Charter Oak alum and retired Hartford Chief of Police Daryl K. Roberts received the Charter Oak State College Foundation Innovation Award at a fundraising reception hosted by the Foundation on October 27. The award is given to an individual, organization, or business that offers new and creative techniques for serving the public.

Chief Roberts retired from the Hartford Police Department at the end of 2011 after a distinguished 30-year career, where he served in the capacity of Chief of Police since July 2006. During his time as Chief, Part 1 crime – the most serious of crimes – decreased by nearly 30%.

Among his many accomplishments achieved over the course of his tenure, Chief Roberts implemented a Truancy Reduction Program in collaboration with the Hartford Public School system, aimed to reduce truancy and increase school attendance for at risk youth; made the Sex Offender Registry Unit number one in the state for compliance; implemented a domestic violence unit and was one of the architects of Hartford's Neighborhood Policing Plan. He received numerous community awards, including



(L-R) Chief Daryl K. Roberts and Charter Oak President Ed Klonoski

ones from the Lions Club, the Urban League of Greater Hartford, Leadership Greater Hartford, and the Collin Bennett/Marcus Garvey Award. He has been recognized locally by *Hartford Magazine*, the CT NAACP, and of course Charter Oak State College!

"Chief Roberts has been great for me to work with, and has always been a true professional," said Charter Oak enrollment counselor, Shawn Holliday.

"I know he's been an inspiration for many others to follow and earn their degree."

"Chief Daryl Roberts has served the citizens of Hartford for 30 years, accepting increasing responsibilities until he was appointed Chief of the department. Along the way, he completed his Bachelor's degree at Charter Oak State College, kept performing on the job, and raised his family," said Charter Oak President Ed Klonoski.

"He is being honored for his innovations in policing, but for me he is an outstanding example of the professional accomplishment produced by Charter Oak's adult students," Klonoski continued. "In every case, our students finish their degree while continuing to work in their career and raise their families. These working adults find a way to balance learning, work and family – no easy task. And Chief Roberts did all that while also providing leadership and creative solutions to the Hartford Public Safety community."

Congratulations to Chief Roberts for this well-deserved recognition! 🌿

## Save The Date!

### *We are busy planning the Alumni Association's Spring Social event!*

Based on the positive feedback and overwhelming success of last year's Spring Social, we are going back to the Goodspeed Opera House on the banks of the beautiful Connecticut River in East Haddam on Friday, May 11, 2012 to see a production of the classic musical comedy, *Mame*. This year will once again

include dinner at the Gelston House restaurant. Please contact Nancy Taylor at [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu) for cost information and to make reservations. Don't delay – this is sure to sell out!

*Mame* features music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, book by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee and is based on the novel *Auntie Mame* by Patrick Dennis and the play by Jerome

Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. *Mame* will be directed by Ray Roderick (Goodspeed's *Hello! My Baby, My One And Only, Singin' in the Rain*, and *42nd Street*) and choreographed by Vince Pesce (Associate Choreographer of Broadway's *Anything Goes, The Pajama Game, Wonderful Town*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*). 🌿

## Charter Oak State College Named As a Top 100 Test Center by CLEP

Your alma mater was proud to be named one of the top 100 test centers by the College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP), and recognized for our commitment to promoting access to higher education for all students! Charter Oak was recognized for being among the 100 test centers in the country that administered the most CLEP exams in 2010-2011.

CLEP helps students receive college credit for what they already know,

for a fraction of the cost of a college course. Developed by the College Board, CLEP is the most widely accepted credit-by-examination program, available at more than 2,900 colleges and universities, including Charter Oak.

In addition to the CLEP exams, Charter Oak accepts for credit DSST program tests, Excelsior College exams, Thomas Edison State College exams, and the NYU language proficiency exams,

among others. CLEP continues to be the most popular of these testing programs among Charter Oak students. One of the most popular CLEP tests with our students is the college composition exam. Exams like CLEP and others offer our students a fast, convenient and inexpensive option to earn credits towards their college degree. 🌱

## Leave a Legacy to Charter Oak State College

A degree from Charter Oak State College is life changing. Our alums rave about the enormously positive impact their Charter Oak educations have had on their careers and lives. And we have an opportunity for you to give back, to help the College maintain its important role as a leader in adult higher education.

By making a charitable bequest, you will assure that your generosity continues to assist students and to advance the mission of the College. No matter what the size, your gift will help provide the resources to preserve Charter Oak's future, and to effect real change in future generations of Charter Oak students.

Charter Oak alum Marcia Anderson-Esson has planned for a charitable bequest in her will. Since graduating in 1993, she has served on the Alumni board, and currently holds the position of Treasurer.

"Charter Oak State College is near and dear to my heart, and throughout the years, I have done all that I could do to assist in recruitment, fundraising, being a spokesperson, advertising and other aspects aimed at building the College," she said. "I am pleased with

the direction both Dr. Merle Harris and now President Ed Klonoski is taking the College, and want to do my part in keeping the College going into the next century."

Marcia updated her will last year, and she included Charter Oak and other charities as beneficiaries. In addition, she recently started a charitable business called "Painted with Love," and proceeds from the sale of her paintings go to various charities. She donated the painting "From a Distance," which depicts a man standing on a mountaintop looking out at the horizon, to Charter Oak. "This to me is the main goal of Charter Oak," she said. "Providing distance learning and 'helping to fulfill dreams through education.' Many of us would not be who we are or be where we are, if not



(L-R) Marcia Anderson-Esson and President Ed Klonoski with her painting, "From a Distance"

for the degrees offered by Charter Oak State College."

If are you considering making a bequest, please contact the Charter Oak State College Foundation through the office of Charter Oak President, Ed Klonoski, at 860-515-3888 and contact your estate planning attorney or other professional advisor.

For more information about the Charter Oak State College Foundation, please visit [www.coscf.org](http://www.coscf.org). 🌱

# alumni spotlight

## 1983

*Dr. Bradford Howard, Jr.*, who received his Master's degree in Theology and his doctorate in Ministry from North Carolina College of Theology, was honored for Distinguished Community Service during Black History Month by the City of Hartford in February, 2011. He was nominated for a gospel award for his CD at the Holla Back Gospel Awards in October – which was the second year in a row he had a nominated CD.

## 1999

*Cheryl A. Cuozzo* earned her second Master of Science degree in Nursing last May from Quinnipiac University, becoming a certified Adult Nurse Practitioner. She plans to take the required classes for an additional Family Nurse Practitioner certification at UMass this year. Cheryl credits earning her BA at Charter Oak as the stepping stone for all of her subsequent academic successes. Additionally, Cheryl bought a new home in North Haven last fall, and is getting married this winter to current Charter Oak student Michael Carner.

## 2003

*Dana Lambert* earned her BS in Business Administration from Charter Oak, and went on to earn her MBA from the University of Bridgeport in May 2011, graduating in the top 10% of her class. She is currently employed as Director of Operations at Advanced Specialty Care in Danbury, CT.

After *Steve Markowski* returned from a year-long military deployment (including nine months in Kosovo), he started a new job as speechwriter for

the Directorate of the Army National Guard in Arlington, VA, in May 2011. Steve works as both a civilian employee of the Department of the Army as well as a member of the Army National Guard. As a member of the Strategic Communications Division, he works on special projects including brochures, pamphlets, informational videos, and conference planning. He handles Congressional inquiries and writes Congressional testimony for the Director of the Army National Guard. Prior to starting his new job, Steve was the Public Liaison Officer for the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (part of the National Institutes of Health) working with approximately 200 nonprofit organizations that specialize in funding neurological research and/or stroke-prevention.

*Katrina Rychling* decided to follow her heart and pursue a career in writing. She currently publishes on the Yahoo! Contributor Network and has had reader letters published in *Writer's Digest* and *Health* magazines. Although the majority of her current published work consists of short pieces, she is also working on both a fiction and non-fiction book.

## 2006

*Keith S. Roberts*, MBA, is a resident of Coral Springs, FL, and an accomplished professional with many years of government, community and private sector related experience including procurement specific to disadvantaged, small, large, minority, and women-owned businesses and contract and compliance management. He has received special awards and recognition

for outstanding leadership in business development and is an advocate for businesses with the expertise to interface with diverse socio-economic groups. Keith currently holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the American Intercontinental University located in Weston, FL and received his Bachelor of Science degree from Charter Oak State College. He serves as a Supplier and Diversity Outreach Specialist for Broward County, Florida Public Schools, CEO of KDR Enterprises, Inc., and founder of Skillz Entertainment, Inc. a Florida non-profit organization for Youth Empowerment.

## 2007

Charter Oak alum and Middlebury Chief of Police *Richard Guisti, Sr.* was honored by The Police Commissioners Association of Connecticut during the organization's Distinguished Chiefs Award Dinner at Zandri's Stillwood Inn in Wallingford, CT, in May 2011. Chief Guisti is a founding member of the Middlebury/Southbury Juvenile Review Board, a certified instructor through POST, and a graduate of the 216th session of the National FBI Academy. The 23-year police veteran is currently in the process of leading his department toward national accreditation status.

## 2009

Deputy Chief *Richard Riggs* was promoted in July 2011 and has assumed the second-in-command position for the South Windsor Police Department, holding the newly-created rank of Deputy Chief. He is presently serving as the commander in charge of Patrol Operations. He has been a member of the South Windsor Police Department since 1979. Through the years he has served as a patrol officer, patrol supervisor and patrol watch commander. He has been assigned as a criminal investigator, manager of the public information and technology section, and coordinator of the department's field training officer program. Deputy Chief Riggs also served as aide to the

Chief of Police where he was charged with the research and writing of department policies. He also served as the department's public information officer. Deputy Chief Riggs holds an Associate's degree in Law Enforcement and a Bachelor's degree from Charter Oak State College. He is a graduate of the Institute of Law Enforcement and Administration in Plano, Texas, and the Supervisory Leadership Program at the Connecticut Criminal Justice Command Institute. ✎

## Stay In Touch!

We occasionally share alumni news and information through email – and we'd love for you to join our ever-expanding list of alums who receive these communications! In consideration of our alumni who prefer not to receive email from us, we will no longer send electronic information without your 'opt-in' permission.

To opt-in to receive future email communication, please visit [CharterOak.edu/update](http://CharterOak.edu/update) and complete the Alumni Information Update form

**being sure to leave the opt-in box checked.** It's quick and easy! If you choose not to complete the form, you will no longer receive Charter Oak emails alerting you to special alumni offers, alumni publications and other pertinent information.

Please complete the Alumni Information Update form at [CharterOak.edu/update](http://CharterOak.edu/update) to remain informed about alumni-related activity at the College.

**We want to stay in touch with you!** ✎

## Make A Difference – Participate In Charter Oak's Annual Appeal

As a Charter Oak alum, you know that a college degree has never been more important than it is today. The stark economic reality is that a college degree significantly alters your chances for finding and keeping a job. The unemployment rate for college graduates is only 4.4 percent nationally, compared with a national rate of over 9 percent. More than 95 percent of college graduates have jobs.

However, today's economic realities also cause a large number of our students to choose between providing the necessities for their families or paying college related expenses. Your donation of as little as one dollar a week

provides critical dollars for students who are challenged to meet the cost of a college education. Our collective support of these essential needs makes a significant and immediate impact on the lives of our students.

Charter Oak State College is dedicated to advancing the workforce of our nation and supports that mission by working with adult learners to provide them with flexible and relevant degree programs. The Charter Oak State College Foundation is dedicated to supporting the mission of the College for those students who cannot afford the full cost of their education.

Participation in this Annual Appeal is more critical than ever, and every gift, regardless of size, will have a significant impact. If you give every year, please consider increasing the size of your gift by 10 percent. If this is your first donation, remember that \$50 from just 14 alumni can offset the cost of a course.

Together we can make a real difference and significantly change the course of someone's life. Please take a moment to go online at [www.coscf.org](http://www.coscf.org) to make your tax-deductible gift.

Thank you for supporting the Charter Oak State College Foundation. ✎

## STAY CONNECTED THROUGH **connections**

We'd like to hear from you about promotions, graduate degrees, awards, marriages, births, and other significant successes in your life. We'll publish your news in the next edition of *Connections*. Please use the form below, or drop us a note. Send to: Alumni News, Charter Oak State College, 55 Paul J. Manafort Drive, New Britain, CT 06053-2150 – or email [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu).

Your name and address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_

My news \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Ruth Garby Torres Awarded the Charter Oak State College Alumni Citation

Ruth Garby Torres was recently awarded the Charter Oak State College Alumni Citation, given annually to a graduate on the basis of accomplishment in a field of endeavor and loyalty to the College.

"Accomplishment" should be Ruth's middle name. The 2008 Charter Oak graduate earned her Master's degree in Public Administration from the prestigious Harvard Kennedy School last spring. The program, which is an intensive course of study designed for students who already have significant public service experience, was a perfect fit for Ruth, who served for 21 years with the Connecticut State Police. She was drawn to the Harvard Kennedy School, she said, because of its Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development.

Ruth has been involved in tribal politics and activism since she was a high school student. "I was the youngest person from my tribe ever to serve as a tribal councilor," she said. "In fact, the 21 years I served as a law enforcement officer pale in comparison to the community service I've been doing as a Schaghticoke Indian since those high school days. I plan to use my MPA in continued service to and advocacy for Indian country, hopefully right here in the Northeast."

While earning her Master's, she also completed a program called "From Harvard Square to the Oval Office," designed for women who plan to run for public office. Ruth said she is always encouraging women in the law enforcement community to run for elected office after they retire.

"It's a natural progression for a public servant who wants to give more to her community," she said. "And very much like the law enforcement profession, women are under-represented in state legislatures, Congress and executive government offices."



(L-R) Charter Oak's Assistant Director of Alumni Relations and Corporate Recruitment, Nancy Taylor, and Ruth Garby Torres

Ruth is now busier than ever. She is collaborating on a research project concerning Connecticut's Indian policy and spends one day a week in the Connecticut State Archives. She is also finishing a chapter about the Schaghticoke experience for an edited volume titled *Sovereignty Struggles and Native Rights in the United States: State and Federal Recognition*, which will be released next year.

In addition, she was recently tapped to join the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame Consulting Scholars Committee, and continues to serve on the advisory board for the Native American Cultural Center at Yale University.

If she had to choose one word to describe her experience as a Charter Oak student, it would be "wonderful," and she promotes the College whenever she can. "Based on several conversations with friends and coworkers who went to either a four-year college immediately following high school or graduated after part-time studies at a traditional institution, I believe I received an education at COSC that was not just comparable

(which I would have been very happy with) but was exceptional to their traditional academic experiences.

"Having the option to choose from any accredited college or university gave me the opportunity to sample from quite a few," said Ruth, who earned a BS in General Studies with a Political Science concentration from Charter Oak, and was given a Doris G. Cassidy Award at graduation. She was also a Sgt. George R. Dingwall Scholarship recipient for two years. "This created a sense of adventure and exploration during my studies and was an important contribution to a fulfilling and robust academic experience."

Ruth is such a cheerleader of Charter Oak that she says she should carry around green and white pom-poms, and is always inspired to talk about her experience to friends and coworkers who are looking to return to school. "And if anyone has any doubt about the value of a COSC degree in furtherance of educational goals, they should know that my COSC degree got me into a graduate program at an Ivy League institution!" 🌿

## ARC Cohort Celebrates Graduation

On Sunday, September 18, the fourth cohort to complete the Alternate Route to Certification in Early Childhood Education program at Charter Oak State College celebrated its graduation with family and friends. Graduates included Mimi Bryant (Hamden, CT); Katherine DeNaples (New Haven, CT); Karla Garro-Cruz (Norwalk, CT; Charter Oak graduate 2010); Lynn Hadad (Guilford, CT);

Nicole Krause (Sandy Hook, CT); Bethany Lebel (Willimantic, CT); Cheryl Reme (East Hartland, CT; Charter Oak graduate 2010); Michelle Rodrigue (Stratford, CT); Jacqueline Romero (Bridgeport, CT); Karen Selepec (Cheshire, CT) and Lisa Baglini (Milford, CT).

Honorary “baby graduate” of the program, Samantha Maria Garro-Cruz, was born on August 22 to parents Karla

and Rudy and big brother Daniel. We were all happy Samantha waited *just* long enough for mommy to finish her portfolio!

At graduation, two valedictorians were asked to speak on behalf of their cohort. Each shared moving stories and inspiring perspectives. 🌱

## valedictorians

**Lynn Hadad spoke of her personal growth during the program and encouraged the graduates to make a difference (excerpted):**

*“All of the stories, experiences, strengths, and knowledge that each of us shared with each other during those long nights of postings and weekend classes that never seemed as though they would end helped me want to learn all I could about the field of Early Childhood Education, Birth to Kindergarten. I feel fortunate to have spent the last eight months learning from each of you... let’s go out and create more stories and experiences so that we can continue to share them with our colleagues, families, children and friends.”*

**Her speech ended with a quote from Glinda from *The Wizard of Oz*:**

*“You’ve always had the power.’ Yes we have the power – and the credentials – to help us make a difference. I want to challenge you to make a difference today. Do not wait until tomorrow. I know we will all make a difference in the lives of children and families across Connecticut and wherever our paths will go.”*

**Mimi Bryant shared her mother’s story of determination against poverty and prejudice while growing up in North Carolina (excerpted):**

*“She had an opportunity to attend school, but a segregated school that was designated for black children only. So each day Ruth would leave her home and hike past the neighborhood school that was designated for white children only. She would trek for miles over the railroad tracks, past hobos and through the woods to get to her one-room schoolhouse. She continued to persevere because her parents taught her the value of an education. She also persevered because she knew there was a compassionate person waiting for her to arrive. Her dedicated teacher knew the hardship it took for Ruth to make the journey to school. She would have a cup of warm milk in her hand waiting for her.”*

*“Ruth was my mother. She knew the value of an education and her determination earned her a high school diploma... she also attended Hunter’s College and earned a child care certificate. My mother was the fourth generation out of slavery. My story is an extension of Ruth’s dreams. I learned respect for all people and to understand that differences are okay. This is exactly what our instructors here at Charter Oak have been teaching us through their curriculum. So fellow colleagues, go out and make a difference – touch the lives of young children as we were taught to do so here at Charter Oak State College.”*

The Alternate Route to Certification in Early Childhood Education program is currently the only post-baccalaureate program at Charter Oak and it qualifies graduates to obtain a Connecticut teaching certificate in Birth to Kindergarten Integrated Early Childhood/Early Childhood Special Education. The program has graduated 41 students since 2008. Graduates from the program currently hold positions in kindergarten, public special education preschools, magnet preschool programs and early intervention Birth to Three. 🌱

## WIT Program Receives Donation From The Leipold Foundation

Charter Oak State College was honored to receive a generous donation of \$9,000 to our Women in Transition (WIT) program from the Leipold Foundation last summer. Rachel Leipold, an alum and former WIT student at Charter Oak, serves on the Board of Directors of the Foundation, which is a non-profit organization established by her late grandfather.

The Leipold Foundation has, in total, given \$22,000 to Charter Oak over the past three years. Rachel earned her Bachelor's degree from Charter Oak in 2008 and went on to earn her Master's degree from Post University. A single mother of four, she has a passion for helping people, and in particular, young women.



"I am so excited to be able to support these women (in the WIT program) in their choice to complete their education," Leipold said in a letter to the College. "My hope is that our relationship can continue through the years, as the program's continued success is extremely important and very close my heart!"

The WIT program was established in 1999 by former President of the College, Dr. Merle Harris. The program helps working single mothers earn their degree with the assistance of financial aid. This program is funded by donations and grants. For information about donating to this valuable program, please visit the Charter Oak State College Foundation website at [coscf.org](http://coscf.org). 