

# Connections

The Newsletter of Charter Oak State College

VOL. XXX NO. 2

JULY 2006

## Charter Oak Graduates Largest-ever Class



**Chandler J. Howard, Chairman of the Board for State Academic Awards, congratulates Connecticut Superior Court Judge, Carmen L. Lopez, who received the honorary degree, Dr. of Humane Letters, at June 4 commencement ceremonies.**

**T**he growth of Charter Oak State College, since its inception more than three decades ago, is reflected in the size of the Class of 2006. Six hundred ninety-seven individuals – the largest class in the College’s history – received their diplomas on June 4 during ceremonies held in Welte Auditorium on the campus of Central Connecticut State University.

The graduates come from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and Japan. Some class members, who serve with the U.S. military, earned their degrees while fulfilling commitments to their units overseas. One graduate, Riri Moioika, a 35-year-old resident of Niigata, Japan, traveled all the way to Connecticut to receive the diploma she earned while studying from her home.

“That’s the beauty of distance learning,” comments Charter Oak’s president, Dr. Merle Harris. “Online learning,” she says, “allows our adult students who have job and family commitments that don’t allow time for campus-based study to earn their degrees from a distance while accommodating their busy personal schedules.”

Historically, more than fifty percent of the College’s graduates have gone on to master’s and doctorate programs, both online and on-campus, at more than 250 colleges and universities across the nation.

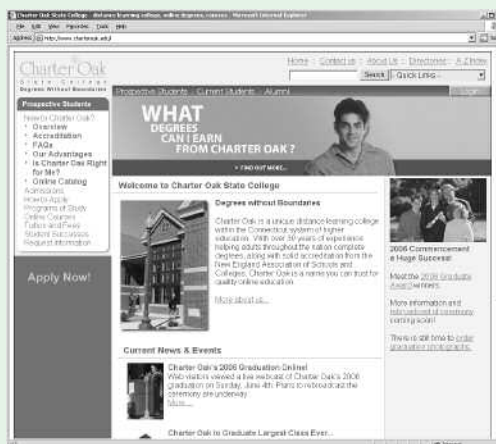
Honored during this year’s commencement ceremony was Judge Carmen L. Lopez who received the

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## Charter Oak Unveils Enhanced Web Site

**T**he first phase of a newly-designed and content-enhanced Charter Oak State College Web site made its cyberspace debut in March. The College has upgraded its site in an effort to make [www.charteroak.edu](http://www.charteroak.edu) more informative and user friendly for prospective students interested in learning about the College’s programs and services. The new site further provides opportunity for individuals with some college credit, but no degree, to make better-informed decisions about completing their degrees at Charter Oak or enrolling in

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## From the President

**Y**ou are invited to participate in Charter Oak State College's decennial accreditation review by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). This review will take place between October 22 and October 25. You don't have to make the trip to New Britain, Connecticut to participate. All you need to do is reserve time for a phone conversation or conference call.

Accreditation is the stamp of approval given to a college following an in-depth review by an accrediting organization. The process provides public assurance regarding the quality and integrity of college programs. Through the accreditation self-study process, Charter Oak will identify strengths and weaknesses. The NEASC visiting team will determine if it is in agreement with our conclusions and will suggest areas for improvement. The team will then make a recommendation to NEASC's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education regarding continuing accreditation.

Our self-study was developed in consultation with staff, Board members, faculty, students and alumni. We are making the final revisions in the document which will be posted on our Web site ([www.charteroak.edu](http://www.charteroak.edu)) by September 1. Some of you may have already reviewed the draft and provided comments. In preparation for their visit, NEASC team members will have read our self-study and formulated a list of questions regarding what we said and the documentation we have provided relative to how we have met NEASC standards.

We hope you will accept this invitation to participate. To respond, just send an e-mail to [mharris@charteroak.edu](mailto:mharris@charteroak.edu) or call me at (860) 832-3875. We will then provide you with the schedule and hope that you will be available to participate during the designated time period. Your involvement is important to the College.

Accreditation is a learning process that helps an institution increase its effectiveness. We hope that, as part of the Charter Oak community, you will interact with the visiting NEASC team to share your Charter Oak experiences and views on what the College has done well and how it can improve its performance.



Merle W. Harris,  
President




Merle W. Harris, Ph.D.

## Eight Graduates Share Cassiday Award

**T**he Doris G. Cassiday Award, established in the name of a founding member of Charter Oak State College and in recognition of her longstanding commitment to higher education, was presented to eight members of this year's graduation class.

The award recipients were Connecticut residents Allen D. Black, Groton; Brenda D. Jenkins, Chester; Samantha Lendl, Goshen; and Vlasta J. Noubel, Seymour. Also receiving the Cassiday Award, which recognizes individuals who achieve excellence in innovative learning and who exemplify the essence of the Charter Oak mission, were William A. Easterling of Colorado Springs, CO; Keith H. Ford, Fort Mojave, Arizona; Javier Velez-Ramos, Odenton, MD; and Danielle C. York of Greenfield, WI.


In making the award presentation during June 4 commencement ceremonies, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Shirley Adams, noted that the Cassiday Award recognizes individuals who fully avail themselves of a broad range of learning options and who earn credits both inside and outside the traditional classroom setting." 



Three Cassiday Award recipients flank Doris Cassiday (in white) a founding member of the College. The graduates (l-r) are Vlasta Noubel, Allen Black and Danielle York.

## Largest-ever Class

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honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters. Judge Lopez presides over civil matters in New Haven's Superior Court and had previously overseen a special domestic violence docket in the Waterbury District Juvenile Court. She was chosen to receive the honorary degree 'because of her professional accomplishments and because her actions are a living example that every voice counts.' 

## Stay Connected through Connections

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

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

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## Charter Oak Unveils Enhanced Web Site

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any of the more than 130 distance learning courses offered by the College.

The reconfigured site, which simplifies visitor search efforts, now accommodates access to more detailed information with greater speed than in the past. It employs an easy-to-use, A-to-Z indexing system that expedites access to specific site areas and pages. If you haven't already viewed the functionally improved and informative site, please do. The College welcomes your post-visit feedback to [mtraub@charteroak.edu](mailto:mtraub@charteroak.edu).

## Early Childcare Professionals Receive CDC Credential

Fourteen Connecticut residents who have exhibited competencies that qualify them for leadership roles in the field of early child care and education received the Connecticut Director's Credential (CDC) in ceremonies recently held at the State Capitol. Sixty-five individuals have earned the Credential since the program's inception in 2003.

The CDC, which recognizes knowledge and experience acquired by professionals in the early care/education community, is a collaboration of Charter Oak State College, the Connecticut Department of Social Services, the Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative and Connecticut Charts-A-Course, an organization that supports dedicated professionals who work with Connecticut children.

Those interested in earning the Credential may employ one or any combination of pathways to meet core areas of knowledge requirements. Options include approved, credit-based course work offered onsite or online by colleges and universities; portfolio review by Charter Oak; and up to 90 hours of non-credit-based training approved by Connecticut Charts-A-Course.

Information about applying for the CDC may be obtained from Dr. Maryanne LeGrow at the College – 860-832-3846 or [mlegrow@charteroak.edu](mailto:mlegrow@charteroak.edu) – or by visiting [www.charteroak.edu/cdc](http://www.charteroak.edu/cdc).



## From the Alumni Association President

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate the members of the class of 2006 on their graduation and welcome you all into the Alumni Association. I encourage each of you, along with the current alumni membership, to become involved in the various events the Association sponsors during the course of the year. We are looking, as well, for individuals interested in becoming active members of the Alumni Board.

The Association is currently in the process of organizing its annual Road Race. Last year's inaugural event, which was a great success, brought much needed attention to the College and its mission. We were fortunate to have Al Terzi, a Charter Oak alum and news anchor at Hartford's WFSB-TV, as a race participant. Dollars raised through race sponsorships and donations were allocated for scholarship assistance for current Charter Oak students.

If you are interested in becoming a board member or volunteer for future alumni events, please feel free to contact me ([danCOSC@aol.com](mailto:danCOSC@aol.com)) or Lori Pendleton, the College's Admissions Director and Alumni Association advisor ([lpendleton@charteroak.edu](mailto:lpendleton@charteroak.edu)). I hope to meet many of you, personally, at future alumni-sponsored events. Enjoy your summer!

Cordially,

Dan Cahill

President, Charter Oak State College Alumni Association


## Alumni Citation to '93 Grad

The Alumni Association Citation Award, given annually to a Charter Oak graduate for exceptional accomplishment in his or her field of endeavor and in recognition of service to the College, was presented, this year, to Marian Sciacchitano.

The 1993 Charter Oak graduate and Suffield, CT resident, has long been a loyal friend to the College. She has served on Charter Oak's 25th Anniversary and D'Amato Award selection committees and as president of the Alumni Association. While serving as a training and development specialist at Hartford's St. Francis Hospital, she provided networking and marketing opportunities that assisted the College in its student recruitment efforts. Her contributions to the College's outreach programs have been invaluable.

Marian continues to pursue her interest in higher education and assisting others through her professional life. She recently moved to a position

at Central Connecticut State University as an advisor in the School of Business.

The Citation reflects Charter Oak's appreciation for Marian's tireless efforts on behalf of her alma mater. 



**Alumni Citation Award recipient, Marian Sciacchitano (c) at alumni brunch with Alumni Association President, Dan Cahill, and President Harris.**



**A. Barry Rahmy, this year's student graduate speaker, addresses Charter Oak's largest-ever (697) graduating class.**



**B. Dorothy Arcovitch (l), who was honored by the Connecticut Legislature for her scholarly achievements, graduated with a 3.942 GPA. She is shown with President Harris.**

# Graduation Day, 2006



**G. Members of the Class of '06 appear captivated by the message delivered by graduation speaker and honorary degree recipient, Judge Carmen L. Lopez.**



**C. A family affair – Florida residents, Jill Glinert and her son Alden, were members of the Class of '06. Each earned a Bachelor of Science degree. A third family member, Emmaleen, has been accepted to Charter Oak.**

**F. Shown (l-r) are BSAA Board members Vincent Socci and John Titley; President Harris; honorary degree recipient, Judge Carmen L. Lopez; Chairman of the Board, Chandler J. Howard, Board member, John Padilla; Dr. Shirley Adams, Charter Oak Vice President for Academic Affairs.**



**D. Joshua Cooperman, who received his Associate degree in June, was the first to complete Charter Oak's new Computer Security Certificate program. President Harris shared his delight.**

**E. Riri Morioka traveled to Connecticut from her home in Niigata, Japan, to receive, in person, the degree she earned as an online learner from half a world away.**



# THANK YOU DONORS

The Charter Oak State College Foundation and the College thank our donors. Your generosity is making a difference for individual students and the College. The list of donors, below, includes those who made a contribution to the Annual Fund or Endowment between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006. An asterisk following a donor's name indicates that the donor has given \$100 or more for three consecutive years. To learn more about the Foundation and giving opportunities, please visit [www.charteroak.edu/Foundation/makingagift.cfm](http://www.charteroak.edu/Foundation/makingagift.cfm) – or – contact Harry White at (860) 832-3863 or [hwhite@charteroak.edu](mailto:hwhite@charteroak.edu).

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## 1982

**Richard Ewing** reports that he recently passed the California Professional Engineers Exam in Electrical Engineering.

## 1983

**David Lomax**, who has been in the field of Information Technology for more than 20 years, has earned Microsoft Certification as a Desktop Support Technician.

## 1987

**Anthony Maulucci** tells us he has published his fourth work of fiction. He is a college English instructor and conducts writing workshops throughout the state of Connecticut.

## 1989

**Anita (Bailey) Schmidt** presented a paper, "Examining the Rhetorical Situation Through America's Great Speeches," at the Georgia Communications Association Conference in February. She teaches public speaking at Macon State College.

## 1998

**Colleen Kruger**, director of Continuing and Professional Education with Connecticut's Career Development Center, was invited to become a member of the Youth Futures Policy Team, a state legislative advisory committee.

## 1999

**Eva Colon**, who received an MS in Community Economic Development from Southern New Hampshire University, serves as Director of Programs at The Center for Women and Families in Bridgeport, CT and is an Adjunct at the University of Bridgeport. **Chad Morgan** received his MBA from the Lake Forest Graduate School of Management and currently serves as an Environmental Health and Safety Specialist for the Sea Ray Boat Group. **Steve Skelton**, a research historian, has published his first book based on the manuscript collection of Civil War army officer.

## 2000

**Darrell Julian** received his law degree from Seattle University and has been admitted to the practice of law in

# Alumni spotlight

Washington State. **Steven Weems** retired from the U.S. Coast Guard last month. Says Steven: "My Charter Oak degree aided my promotion to full Lieutenant... from the enlisted ranks, a major milestone in my Coast Guard career."

## 2001

**Steve Atwood** reports that he has spent the past four years traveling and lives, seasonally, in Florida and Connecticut. He recently earned his Florida mortgage broker's license. **Art Belanger** has earned his master's in Health Science from Quinnipiac University. **Frank Omonte** became a proud dad last year and currently teaches ninth grade math at Immokalee (FL) High School.

## 2002

**Amanda Bryant** informs us that she completed her MBA in 2005 and now serves as a traveling nuclear medicine technologist. **Candace Craven** is teaching fifth grade in Lancaster, CA. **Larry Kirk** has been Chief of Police in New Athens, Illinois since 2004. **Pearl Lauder** recently earned her MA in Christian Education from the Princeton Theological Seminary. **Ronnie Maebry**, who has been a Yale University employee for 28 years, recently returned from a 14-month tour of duty in Iraq and has been promoted to Custodial Services Supervisor at Yale. **Kenneth Nessing** has received a Master of Science degree in Labor Relations from the University of New Haven. **CarolAnne Rowe** has earned her MBA from Salve Regina University and her JD from the Southern New England School of Law and has enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Walden University. **Clare Settle** earned her Master of Science in Management from Colorado Technical University Online. She works in the Project Management Office of the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, CT. **Robin Smith** is a clinical instructor for the radiology program at St. Vincent's College, Bridgeport, CT and supervises the mammography department at Derby, Connecticut's

Griffin Hospital. She is pursuing her master's in health studies at the University of Medicine and Dentistry Online. **M. Barron Stofik** has published the book *Saving South Beach*, the story of a desperate struggle for control of two square miles of prime real estate in Miami, FL.

## 2003

**Loretta Beukema** has earned a Master of Arts in Humanities from Central Michigan University. **Sheri DuBois** is living in La Junta, CO where she runs her own bodywork therapy business. **Mark Fazioli** reports that he received his MS in Instructional Technology from Southern Connecticut State University and now works as an instructional designer for the College of Public Health in Tampa, FL. He is enrolled in Capella University's Ph.D. program. **Paul Klug** was awarded an MBA in Information Technology Management by Touro University International and is pursuing his doctorate in Management in Organizational Leadership with the University of Phoenix. **Stacey Lambert-Bottone** has earned a master's degree in Business Administration from Salve Regina University and is a doctoral candidate at Walden University. She has been promoted to the position of Practice Manager at Day Kimball Hospital, Putnam, CT. **Jeannie Leitao** recently completed her Registered Dietitian studies at the University of New Haven and expects to do her internship at UConn. **Carol Lewin-Dayes** is a recent graduate of Roberts Wesleyan College where she earned an MS in Management. She is currently a member of the financial aid staff at Monroe Community College in Rochester, NY. **Randell Omer** earned an MS in IT Management from Touro University International and is enrolled in Northcentral University's Ph.D. program. **Maria Peplau** is employed as a project manager at DST Output in South Windsor, CT. Following her Charter Oak graduation, she earned a master's degree in Management from Albertus Magnus College. **Alyssa Siordian** proudly announces that she has entered the world of motherhood and is totally enjoying her new daughter, Madison Noel.

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## 2004

**Rochelle Chambers** writes: "Within one month of graduation, I received a promotion with a \$10,000 raise." She plans to start her own consulting company some time this year. **Denise Fleming** will complete her master's in Special Education this summer at Southern Connecticut State University. She has been teaching Pre-Kindergarten youngsters in Waterford, CT. **Christine (Caramonte) Ford** is Marketing Manager for all U.S. LEGO-brand retail stores. **Stephanie Galindo** is Director of Administration and Student Dean for a small online graduate program and employs her creative talents as a freelance publications designer. **Edwin Hill** recently earned his MS in Management of Technology at Fairfield University. **Sheila Jarrell** has received her Master of Education degree, with distinction, from Northern Arizona University and is employed as Assistant Registrar at Yavapai College in Prescott, AZ. **Julie (Howard) Kieras** earned her master's in Education at Sacred Heart University and has taught Language Arts in the Windsor Locks, CT school system. **Margarita Leahy-Giffone** received her MA in Counseling Services from Rider University. **Diane Lemire**, a contract writer at Amgen, Inc., a major biotechnology company, has completed paralegal certification at the Blackstone Career Institute and is taking advanced paralegal courses. **Edward Manes** tells us he's working on his MBA at Southern Connecticut State University and expects to receive his degree by year's end. **James Martin** received his M.Ed in Instructional Technology from American Intercontinental University Online. **Marilyn McDonald** is a mental health technician at a residential behavioral health facility in Towanda, PA and has plans to enter Elmira College's master's program this fall. **Brenda (Hunter) Murphy**, who works for the HoChunk Renaissance, the native language program of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, anticipates receiving her teacher certification from the University of Nebraska in December. She is also pursuing an MA at the University. **Brian Perkins** teaches ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) in High Point, NC. Following her Charter Oak graduation, **Sandy Reavill** completed Connecticut's Alternate Route to


Teacher Certification program and now teaches 9th grade in the Bloomfield, CT school system. She is in the process of earning an MA in Mathematics at Central Connecticut State University. **Lisa Rublowsky** is enrolled in the MS Community Counseling program at the University of Bridgeport. **Frank Shekosky** has been inducted into the U.S. Martial Arts Hall of Fame as Weapons Master of the Year. He and his wife operate a martial arts school in Cromwell, CT. **Lou D. Shing, Jr.** is working on his master's degree in business Administration in Human Resource Management at American Military University. **Aaron Thomas** has completed a specialized degree in Nuclear Medicine at Gateway Community College. **Vanesa White-Cameron** is an account manager at St. Paul-Travelers and Vice President of the company's Toastmasters Club. **Christopher Wilton**, who earned his Charter Oak degree while deployed with the U.S. military in Iraq, has returned to his home and family in Cordova, TN.

## 2005

**Tracy Adamski** happily announces that son, Bryce Stephen, recently celebrated his first birthday. **Kimberly Bowles** is now a resident of Pikesville, MD. **Shari Bozorgzad** is a kindergarten teacher at the American School of Dubai, United Arab Emirates. **William Briggs** is a sales representative for Slocum & Sons wine distributors. **Frank Colonese** serves as commander of campus police at the Avery Point campus of the University of Connecticut. **Essodjolo Kodom** is pursuing his master's in Structural Engineering at North Carolina A&T State University. **Karenmarie LaConte** is enrolled in the Naturopathic School of Medicine, Bridgeport, CT. **Dawn Mason-Affinito** serves as Child Development Associate Program Coordinator and Early Childhood Specialist at Area Cooperative Educational Services in North Haven, CT and is in quest of her master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education at Southern Connecticut State University. **Linda Murno** has entered the teacher certification program at Sacred Heart University. **Brenda Page** is attending Florida Coastal School of Law. **Elsie Rogers** began her master's degree studies in January, at

St. Joseph College. **Celena Tana Rucker** has been promoted to the position of Pathology Gross Technician at the Colorado Region office of Kaiser Permanente. She is also pursuing a master's degree in Project Management at Colorado Technical University. A great deal is happening in the life of **Alicia Slota**. She is living in Arizona where she teaches kindergarten at a charter school; she was recently engaged to be married; and she is enrolled in the University of Phoenix' master's program in Elementary Education. **Chanoch Spetner** is seeking his MS in Accounting at SUNY, Westbury. **Judy (Lajeunesse) Stebbins** has earned her master's in Business Management from the University of Phoenix Online. **Marybeth Wallet** writes that earning her Charter Oak degree was directly responsible for her promotion to Marketing Manager at Loctite Automotive's Aftermarket Division. **Marie Warren** excitedly notes the arrival of her first granddaughter after having played 'Grandma' to three grandsons. Following receipt of her degree, **Joanne White** was promoted to the position of Educational Trainer in the Fairfield (CT) public school system where she doubled the salary she'd been earning as a paraprofessional.

## 2006

**Adene Fordyce**, a recent Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor Society inductee, has been accepted into the Master of Social Work program at Sacramento State University. 

### SAVE THE DATE!

*Sunday, November 4*

*Second Annual*

### ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ROAD RACE

*Check out details*

*on the Charter Oak Web Site  
[www.charteroak.edu/race2006](http://www.charteroak.edu/race2006)*

## Trio's GPAs Impress State Legislature



June Sangapore (l) and Martha Aigner (r), are shown at Connecticut's State Capitol with their academic advisor, Josi Zendzian.

The Connecticut State Legislature, which annually recognizes the achievements of students attending Connecticut colleges and universities, honored three Charter Oak graduates at ceremonies, held in April, at the State Capitol. The three, Martha Aigner, of Trumbull and Dorothy Arcovitch and June Sangapore, both of Milford, graduated with impressive Grade Point Averages separated by only fractions of a point. Out of a possible

4.0, Aigner achieved a GPA of 3.947; Sangapore's GPA stood at 3.943; and Arcovitch (see photo atop page 4) maintained a GPA of 3.942.

The Legislature's annual College Academic Day is held to honor those students who "possess outstanding academic qualities." Each of the three Charter Oak graduates recognized received Bachelor of Science degrees, with honors.

## Alum Scholarship to Florida Single Mom

A single mother of three – her eldest serves overseas with the U.S. Military – has received the 2006 Charter Oak State College Alumni Association Undergraduate Scholarship.

Paula Smith, a resident of Cantonment, Florida, is a curriculum specialist for a Head Start program that focuses on youngsters with learning disabilities. She was delighted to learn of the scholarship award which is presented to a Charter Oak Baccalaureate candidate who shows both academic promise and financial need. Her other children attend junior college and middle school.

Paula, who has been sole supporter of her family for several years, is pursuing a program with an Individual Studies Concentration and is on target to receive her degree in January. In reflecting on her job, she says she finds the opportunity to help empower, strengthen and uplift a child's spirit very rewarding. Plans are already in the works, she says, to attend Charter Oak's 2007 commencement ceremonies as a proud graduate.