

## Gift from Foundation Board Chair makes a splash

Newly appointed Rowan University Foundation Board chair, 1993 graduate and former butterfly stroke standout Jack Hafner has generously gifted \$100,000 to honor the late Rowan University swimming and diving coach Anthony (Tony) Lisa.



The funds will be used to establish the Tony J. Lisa Endowment for the Swimming & Diving Program as well as renaming the University Rec Center Pool in Lisa's memory.

Lisa took on the swim coach position in the late 1970s when the team was in need of a coach—with no experience in the sport himself. He spent a lot of time studying competitive swimming through any resource he could find, reading books, attending trainings and seeking advice from swimmers in the community. But it was his natural coaching ability that made him a perfect fit for the job.

"Tony was never a swimmer!" said Connie Lisa, Tony's wife. "That tells you just how great of a coach he was. He had always been a teacher and he just knew how to get people to understand things in a way that no one else could. He was always good at that."

And someone who Tony helped immensely when it came to simply understanding himself was Jack Hafner.

A wealth management advisor and professional investor with J.P. Morgan, Hafner credits much of his positive student experience at Rowan to Tony's ability to instill a level of confidence in him that inspired him to lead a fulfilling, successful life.

"Rowan will always be the center of a pivotal life change for me, and Tony was a huge part of that," said Hafner. "When you're 19 or 20 trying to figure out who you are, it can be hard. Tony believed in me no matter what and that really gave me the self-confidence I needed to get where I am today."

Hafner, who grew up in Burlington County, New Jersey, started swimming when he was eight years old—one of eight children who all took up swimming during their childhood.

"Swimming was just what you did where we grew up," said Hafner. "I have seven sisters and we were all swimmers. Two of my sisters also swam for Tony."

Hafner stopped swimming to pursue football in high school but was quickly recruited by Tony during his first year at Rowan due to his family's reputation among the swimming community and Tony's ability to recognize talented athletes.

"He wasn't taking no for an answer," added Hafner. "I was only 20 percent convinced that swimming again would be a good idea, but there was a void I needed to fill because I wasn't playing football anymore."

Hafner went on to become the fastest zoom butterfly stroke swimmer after only a month and a half of training, surpassing athletes who hadn't taken a four-year hiatus.

"One of the unique things about Tony is that he always had very high expectations," said Hafner. "There was no other option but to live up to those expectations. He had no doubt in his mind that we couldn't be the best. He was a born coach and a born motivator."

Tony Lisa's supportive and inspiring coaching style not only deeply impacted Hafner during his time as a student, but many other students and swimmers as well. Connie Lisa called the swimming community Tony's "second family."

"I was so overwhelmed to hear about what Jack had done," said Connie. "Tony touched so many lives and had such a huge influence on his athletes—maybe larger than I realized."

Hafner, the once unsure of himself freshman, went from 20 percent confident to 100 percent committed when it came to succeeding in his career and making a difference at Rowan.

He joined Rowan University's Foundation Board in 2012, served as treasurer and recently assumed the role as Board Chair, noting that he knew all along he would one day lead this group of professionals.

"I definitely imagined being the Chair one day, but I know I still have a lot to learn," said Hafner. "I think my experience as an investor can be beneficial, and I want to be a part of the University's momentum. It's a perfect reason for me to make a large gift as well, and to do it in honor of Tony means a lot to me."

His gift will commemorate Tony's legacy among decades of the University's former swimmers and divers while establishing an endowment to support future generations of Rowan athletes.

"Tony had a lot to give to the world," said Connie. "I remember Jack, and I'm so thrilled that he's chosen to keep my husband's memory alive." RA

**"I want to be a part of the University's momentum... and to [make a gift] in honor of Tony means a lot to me."**

**—Jack Hafner**

Rowan's Athletics Department will host a ceremony on January 26, 2019 to officially rename the university pool and to recognize Coach Lisa's career. Visit [go.rowan.edu/lisadedication](http://go.rowan.edu/lisadedication) to learn more.

## Rowan Pride is in her DNA

**S**andy Maxwell '69, M'84 isn't just an alumna, a volunteer, a donor or a leader with 30 years served on the Rowan University Alumni Board—she's all of the above. Sandy arrived at Glassboro in 1965 to pursue a career in teaching. Coming from a family of educators, she had a huge heart for helping children and knew her ability to teach was simply "there within her."

A Salem County native, she spent years working throughout South Jersey supporting



*Rowan President Dr. Ali A. Houshmand, Sandy and Bill Maxwell, and Farah Houshmand*

students through teaching, counseling and supervising, and eventually administrative level positions. She spent a large portion of her career in Penns Grove, New Jersey with K–8 students and even adjunct taught after her retirement from the field.

"If it wasn't for Glassboro State, I wouldn't be where I am now," said Maxwell. "I've been able to pursue so many passions, and that's what has kept me around since the beginning. It's astonishing to see the outstanding University it has become."

Sandy began volunteering in Rowan's student calling center during her teaching career and

also joined the Alumni Board in 1986 where she transitioned from secretary to vice president and finally to president over the span of three decades.

"I loved being around fellow alumni and really enjoyed the change from teaching young children to helping college-aged kids," said Maxwell. "It was so rewarding to see what their dreams were and where they were headed."

Sandy and her husband, Bill, have established seven individual scholarships to support students fulfilling their dreams at the University—two in education, two in engineering, two in music and one for a student studying at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University.

Sandy credits Henry Rowan's historical gift for igniting her and Bill's desire to give such overwhelming support in the form of scholarships.

"My time working with the students was of course a contributor, but Mr. Rowan was really our impetus to give," said Maxwell. "We had explored leaving a gift to Rowan in our will, but because of the impact Henry made, we thought, 'Why wait? Why not do something now?' We were actually able to get to know him and his wife, Betty, and they just inspired us so deeply that we wanted to give back as much as we could as soon as we could."

Although Bill graduated from Drexel University, becoming an extremely successful engineer known as the father of Mobil 1 synthetic motor oil, he felt closer to the story behind Rowan and the major changes happening in southern New Jersey because of it.

ExxonMobil offered a generous matching gift program that not only increased the Maxwells' scholarship contributions, but also uniquely matched Sandy's volunteer time with additional funds, boosting their total giving history to just over \$360,000 to date.

"My time spent on the Alumni Board and volunteering in the Office of Alumni Engagement left me feeling so fulfilled and with so many memories and wonderful relationships," said Maxwell. "It was just an added benefit that I could volunteer and contribute to our scholarships at the same time."

Sandy and Bill's extraordinary scholarship contributions remain unparalleled.

Sandy officially retired from the Alumni Board in June of 2018. In 30 years, she spent countless hours volunteering and serving in volunteer leadership positions across campus, attended and worked innumerable events, engaged with Rowan students, faculty, staff and alumni, served as an alumni ambassador, and enthusiastically participated in more than 50 years of the University's evolution.

Three of the couple's four children are teachers—of music, physical education and for the visually impaired—including their son, Rick, a 1994 graduate of Rowan's College of Fine & Performing Arts.

"Like teaching, I knew there was always something there within me that wanted to help in any way that I could and Rowan was the place to do it," concluded Maxwell. "It's in my DNA. I just wanted to make something already great even more profound." **RA**

## Funding to address educational inequality

**J**obs for the Future (JFF), an organization dedicated to transforming the education system to ensure access for all, has awarded Dr. Shelley Zion and her research team a grant of \$400,000 over two years. Dr. Zion, executive director of the College of Education's Center for Access, Success, and Equity (CASE), will co-lead the project which seeks to support student agency by inviting them to participate in creating more equitable structures in their schools and communities.

The award—and a second grant of \$1 million over three years from the Hewlett Foundation—will help design, sustain and expand opportunities to promote student voice and Critical Civic Inquiry (CCI) in schools. The project is a research-practice partnership with Rowan University, the University of Colorado Boulder, the University of Colorado Denver, Denver Public Schools Student Voice & Leadership (SVL) and the Philadelphia Student Union (PSU).

SVL provides an opportunity for students to take a leadership role within their school by serving on the Student Board of Education, allowing them to build powerful relationships with their peers and adults. PSU is an independent community organization that partners with Philadelphia public schools by leading school-based student chapters that meet after school to discuss and implement ways to improve their schools.

The project will be housed in CASE, whose work is focused on partnering with students, faculty and education community members to transform education.

"This funding will allow us to expand the project beyond a school setting to include youth-organized activities in an after-school context," explained Dr. Zion. "Expanding the program will allow us to compare the strengths of each setting and how that can inform future student-centered learning initiatives."

For almost a decade, Dr. Zion and her team—Dr. Ben Kirshner, University of Colorado Boulder; and Dr. Carlos Hipolito-Delgado, University of Colorado Denver—have designed and studied youth civic learning with a focus on improving the quality of education.

For this project, the team will work to better understand how historically marginalized students can be supported to take ownership of their learning. Students will engage in participatory action research which includes students identifying a compelling problem or challenge related to equity, studying that problem through original research, and then advancing their ideas by sharing their work with school leaders, policymakers or other public audiences. **RA**



# Amplifying impact through the story of sound



**T**wo unique funds established by one passionate donor will benefit hundreds of Radio, Television & Film (RTF) students at Rowan University.

Keith Brand, the Radio, Television & Film Chair in the College of Communication & Creative Arts has generously contributed \$200,000 to create The Keith Brand Endowed Scholarship Fund and The Eldridge Johnson Memorial Lecture Fund.

Brand chose to establish a scholarship specifically to recruit the best first year students into the RTF program to offer four years of valuable support in the field. His creation of a Lectureship Fund will not only bring light to the history of sound in the region, but will also illustrate the extraordinary field in which RTF professionals operate.

“I’ve had the idea of a lectureship for years,” says Brand. “I teach courses in sound and audio recording and one of the things that is unique about New Jersey is that the seminal developments of sound and audio actually happened here.”

Brand was intrigued by the very intricacies and complexities of sound through the music emanating from his radio at a very young age. After earning his undergraduate degree from West Virginia University in technical theatre and his graduate degree from Temple University in educational media, he spent 27 years on the radio at WXPB in Philadelphia, PA with his own weekly radio show. He later found an outlet to further share his love of music through freelance journalism for National Public Radio.

“For me, music and NPR really exemplified an attempt at excellence

in storytelling using only sound,” said Brand. “They crystalized my interests in sound as a storytelling medium, and that’s what we do in Radio, Television & Film—we are story tellers.”

Brand spoke enthusiastically about the beginnings of audio and sound in Camden, New Jersey and a man with the determination to start a business there. By the 1920s, that business became one of the largest communication companies in the nation, pioneering some of the most popular developments in sound recording and the creation of one of the first major record labels at the time.

That man? Eldridge Johnson.

Johnson was the founder of the Victor Talking Machine Company, based in Camden, NJ and one of the premier communications corporations at the beginning of the twentieth century. They later merged with the Radio Corporation of America and had a powerful presence in southern New Jersey for many years.

“To fund this lectureship in honor of a man who I don’t feel has been recognized in American culture or American science is very special to me,” adds Brand. “I’m very excited to use this fund to bring in lecturers who exemplify the major role sound and audio play in technology development and other aspects of our lives while also recognizing that a lot of these developments began in southern New Jersey through Eldridge.”

Brand teaches his students about Eldridge Johnson in addition to the development and history of sound recording technology. “It is always important to know from whence we came. How do we know what we are unless we know what we came from?”

“I think Rowan is a great investment for this,” concludes Brand. “I believe in this institution. I believe in what we are trying to do for the students in this region. It was kind of a no-brainer for me to make a planned gift of this caliber where I can leave a legacy to benefit the students at Rowan for many years to come.” **RA**

**Create your own giving legacy!** Visit [rowan.plannedgiving.org](http://rowan.plannedgiving.org) or contact Brittany Petrella, Director of Major Gifts & Planned Giving at 856-256-5419 or [petrella@rowan.edu](mailto:petrella@rowan.edu) to learn more.



## Celebrating donor impact

With over \$2.6 million awarded in Rowan University Foundation scholarships in 2018, scholarship support plays an essential part in furthering Rowan’s mission. On November 8, the Foundation held its annual Scholarship Reception & Dinner to recognize those who have created endowed scholarships. Over 225 donors and their student recipients spent the evening together and heard firsthand the impact donors’ generosity is having on Rowan students. **RA**

1. Dr. Ali Houshmand and Anthony Galvin '89 (right) with current Anthony J. Galvin Scholars.
2. Dr. Ali Houshmand and Linda Rohrer (second from right) with current William G. Rohrer Scholars.
3. Charles H. Fink, Jr. and Rebecca Fink (left) with current Inductotherm Scholarship recipients and Dr. Ali Houshmand.

# Inaugural CMSRU Research Day highlights research excellence



It was a fantastic day of scientific discovery and networking at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University on October 2, as more than 350 people filled the first floor of the medical education building to participate in the school's inaugural Research Day.

The event featured plenary sessions by two nationally renowned guest speakers and a poster session with 130 presentations by researchers from across Rowan's colleges.

CMSRU Dean Annette C. Reboli, M.D., highlighted the importance of collaboration to advance research across the University and expressed gratitude to Rowan President Ali Houshmand and the Rowan University Board of Trustees

for their support of biomedical research

Last year the President, with approval of the Board, created a \$50 million fund to expand research opportunities and collaborations with various health care entities in Camden. The funds will allow

for continued cooperation with Cooper University Health Care to develop a program of medical research at CMSRU in collaboration with the colleges and schools of Rowan, and in partnership with Cooper University Health Care/MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper, Coriell Institute, and other life sciences partners.

Rowan University Provost James Newell highlighted the dramatic evolution of research by Rowan faculty and students over the past eight years and described the importance of creating an environment where research can grow and thrive. He also discussed how Rowan's recent research commitment will enhance medical and bioscience research in Camden.

"We see a large percentage of this money going to help fund collaboration research in health and health sciences between Camden, Stratford and Glassboro," noted Newell.

Provost Newell announced that 86 submissions. Despite a short turnaround time for proposal submissions to access the research funding were received by the September 30 deadline and are currently under review, with announcements of awards anticipated in December.

Reboli was pleased with the participation in the day and its ability to "help everyone to see the scope of the incredible research happening at Rowan." **RA**



## Committed to support for education students

Bill and Joanne Runner are no strangers to philanthropy.

The couple strongly believes the most responsible way to spend money is to give it to someone who may need it more. Someone, for instance, like a college student in pursuit of their degree.

In memory of their son, Greg, the Runners began their support of higher education with Luzerne County Community College (LCCC) in Nanticoke, PA, due to the valuable resources and experiences offered to students with learning disabilities, and the Hiram Andrews School in Johnstown, PA, where Greg specialized in warehousing.

"Luzerne gave Greg so many valuable life skills," said Bill. "They were a big help to him right out of high school and in earning his first job."

Bill and Joanne later established The Runner Family Scholarship at Rowan University in 2013 to honor Bill's father and his commitment to education as well as Bill's mother and sister (Carol and Lisa) and his niece, Peggy, who all attended Rowan University and/or Rowan College at Gloucester County.

As another profound gesture in honor of their son, the Runners' scholarship at Rowan supports upperclass students in the College of Education specifically pursuing the Teacher of Students with Disability endorsement.

"All of the places we've given have offered me or someone in my family an opportunity," said Bill, originally from Woodbury, NJ and now residing in Shavertown, PA. "I felt like we truly owed them for the good they had done."

In addition to LCCC and Rowan University, the Runners have also established scholarships with Bill's alma mater, The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania; Joanne's alma mater, Drexel University; and King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania as it played a large role in Bill's career in the brokerage business.

"Giving back is honestly what we think everyone should be doing with extra funds," said Bill. "You don't need a bigger house or a fancy car when there's a student out there who might be struggling to pay for their education."

Out of the many institutions the Runners support, Rowan is unique as it has not only touched the lives of many of Bill's family

members, but it has also made significant academic progress while leaving its sense of community alive and well.

"We feel very strongly about education and we love that we get the opportunity to meet the students at Rowan," said Bill. "We've attended scholarship dinners and intimate lunches where we can get to know the recipients each year and hear about why they want to teach special education."

"Rowan has just done such a great job," concluded Joanne. "It's expanding so much and it's been wonderful supporting that progress. Teaching special education is a difficult thing, and we feel responsible to give back to students who really need the help."

The Runner Family Scholarship at Rowan University is now supporting its fifth recipient throughout the 2018-19 academic year. **RA**

**You can help!** By providing financial assistance to promising Rowan students in need, scholarships like those supported by the Runner Family provide resources that help ensure a Rowan education remains accessible and affordable. To learn more, please visit [giving.rufoundation.org](http://giving.rufoundation.org) or call 856-256-4095.



# Sporting support on the field and beyond

In the late seventies, a law and justice major with tremendous talent on the football field had dreams of joining the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

But after graduating in 1980 and realizing federal law enforcement opportunities were scarce, he took a huge risk, changed the play and dove into medical sales.

From that moment on, he says he “never looked back.”

Now Bill “Bo” Niland ’80 has established The Bill Niland ’80 and Kim Niland Family Fund to support the Rowan University football team and students in the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering.

Growing up in Buffalo, New York, Niland always had a passion for sports. He played wide receiver on Rowan’s football team, winning three conference championships during his time as a student.

A longstanding member of the University’s Brown & Gold Gridiron Club, Niland funded the designated Athletics challenge in March 2018 during the 4th annual RowanGIVES Day. The challenge sparked fierce competition between 14 athletic funds, ultimately unlocking a \$2,500 gift from Niland to support the top supported team.

“I’ve always felt Rowan is the place I should give back to,” said Niland. “I had a great connection with my team and Coach Wackar, so I’ve made sure to remain active and

involved because that experience has meant a lot to me.”

After making the move into medical sales, Niland worked his way up into sales management, eventually earning himself upper level executive positions. He started his first business in 1992, National Sleep Technologies, followed by a second company, Vapotherm, developing critical care breathing devices.

Niland sold both companies and later started Harpoon Medical—a company out of the University of Maryland that developed a device specifically for heart disease and repair of the mitral valve—due to his understanding of the regulatory paths to take medical products through clinical trials and onto the market.

His extensive career inspired his appreciation for the engineering professionals and the work that goes into building the devices that are changing the course of advanced medical technology.

“I began in medical sales and surprisingly never left,” said Niland. “It takes a lot of skill to create innovative medical devices. It’s an extraordinary talent, and I wanted to be able to support the field of individuals who are making these changes in medicine possible.”

After selling Harpoon Medical, Niland has recently taken on the role of CEO of the newly founded company, ReGelTec Inc., in collaboration with Dr. Tony Lowman, Dean of the Henry M. Rowan College of

Engineering. The Rowan University Foundation’s Innovation Venture Fund has committed to help finance the

startup of the company, making this new opportunity an exciting chance for Niland to offer his expertise in a position closely connected to his alma mater.

“This opportunity is wonderful, especially to be involved with Dr. Lowman,” said Niland. “There’s so much innovation happening today and new ways to help doctors treat patients, so supporting the engineering field is very important to me.”

The Bill Niland ’80 and Kim Niland Family Fund will equally support a graduate student pursuing experience as a collegiate level coach who can also enhance resources available to the Rowan University football program as well as a clinic team or student working on a Biomedical Engineering project aimed at innovative solutions to healthcare problems.

“My plan was to start this fund and continue to grow it over the years,” adds Niland. “My wife and I wanted to do more, and supporting both of these areas at the same time means a lot to us.” **RA**



## Celebrating the legacy of Dean Witten

On September 9, the College of Performing Arts hosted a Memorial Concert to celebrate the life and work of professor and percussionist Dean Witten (1951–2018). The event paid homage to Professor Witten, who served as Director of Percussion at Rowan University from 1979–2018. The event featured alumni, faculty, student and guest performers as part of a program that included an Alumni Marimba Orchestra, an ensemble performance of

“The Downfall of Paris,” and the Rowan University Percussion All-Stars performing Jennifer Higdon’s masterwork, “Like ClockWork,” in addition to testimonials and reflections. An additional tribute was the official dedication of the Percussion Studio in Dean’s name.



*Dr. Matthew Witten (center), acting director of the percussion program at Rowan, and other percussionists perform at the September concert.*

The event also served as a catalyst for the Dean Witten Memorial Percussion Scholarship. To make a gift, visit [go.rowan.edu/supportwitten](https://go.rowan.edu/supportwitten).

## Among the elite

During a spirited, early morning pep rally on November 3, Rowan University was honored as a national banner Special Olympics Unified Champion School. The honor, presented by Special Olympics and ESPN, places the University among the elite schools nationwide in providing inclusive sports and activities for students with and without disabilities.

Rowan is the only university in the U.S. to be named among the Top 5 Unified Champion Schools this year—and the first college or university ever to be chosen to be featured by ESPN.

The first program of its kind in the nation, Rowan Unified Sports, a Campus Recreation sports club, was founded nearly seven years ago. Through Unified Sports, Special Olympics athletes with intellectual disabilities and their Rowan student partners compete side by side in soccer each fall and basketball each spring. On average, more than 50 athletes and 75 Rowan students compete together each season in Rowan Unified Sports. **RA**

Visit [go.rowan.edu/supportunified](https://go.rowan.edu/supportunified) to make a gift.



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*Rowan Advances* is published three times a year by the Division of University Advancement to highlight the involvement and generosity of Rowan's alumni, friends and corporate partners.

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Standout volunteer  
leads by example

Grant support will help  
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Professor's support is a  
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Event advances research  
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Couple committed to  
support for students

Gift supports students  
on the field and beyond

Celebrating the legacy  
of Dean Witten



### ROWAN PRESIDENT ALI A. HOUSHMAND NAMED EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

The Research & Development Council of New Jersey presented Dr. Ali A. Houshmand with its Educator of the Year Award at the 39th Edison Patents Awards Ceremony and Reception at the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City on November 1. The Council collaborates with academia, industry and government, propelling STEM education, innovation and the economy. The award, which recognizes Dr. Houshmand's vision and initiatives, also confirms the University's growth and achievements, including Rowan's position as the sixth fastest-growing research institution in the nation.

Visit [go.rowan.edu/houshmandvideo](http://go.rowan.edu/houshmandvideo) to view the tribute video shown at the awards ceremony.