



Winter 2024



**Alexa Rossi and friends tailgates before the Nova Basketball Game**



**Kathleen Cellucci**  
Executive Director's  
Message

We have officially launched our planned giving campaign. Over the next year and a half you will receive different post cards every 3 months with messages on how you can ensure we are here for our 100th Anniversary.

We can't say thank you enough to the family of Ed Rhodes Class of 1960 who left approximately \$500,000 to the Blue White Scholarship Foundation. Read more about why they gave on the next page. I hope that everyone will want to become part of our Blue White Legacy Society. It's easy. We are asking everyone, and I mean everyone. ( That means even students ) to name Blue White in their will. You can designate a fixed percentage of your estate, a fixed amount, or a residual amount after all your heirs have been provided for. We thought to make it easy and to be respectful that we would ask everyone to consider 2%.

We also wanted to let everyone know our big news. We now offer annuities through a subsidiary of the Dechomai Foundation that manages over \$1.4 billion in unrestricted assets backing charitable gift annuity payments.

A charitable gift annuity is where you, the donor, contribute property in exchange for a guaranteed lifetime income. (Dechomai follows the American



Imagine the surprise and delight of reading some one's Last Will and finding out that a person wants to leave a lasting message of good will by supporting an organization they loved— FOREVER

Council on Gift Annuities suggested rates which typically average from 4 to 8 percent.)

To ensure continuity of the operations of the Foundation we will be passing on more of the responsibilities to our past Scholars who know the feeling of anxiety regarding tuition payments. These graduated students want to "Pay it Forward" and help relieve the stress for others. In this issue we introduce these new young board members.

*Kate*

## What will your legacy be? CALL TO ACTION - The 2% Solution

If we can get people to leave 2% of their estate to the Blue White Scholarship Foundation we will be able to ensure scholarships for students in perpetuity. That means forever! It's that an exciting challenge.



# Ann W. Cwirko, daughter of Edward P. Rhodes, Class of 1960 becomes the “Family Representative” for her family legacy after donating \$500,000 to the Foundation to honor her baby sister, Andrea Leanor Rhodes.

## Who is Ann Cwirko?

**Ann W. Cwirko is a leader in Education. This isn't her first rodeo. Here is an article about her vision of the future of St. Raphael School**

July 29, 2019 at 12:37 p.m.

**Christina Leslie | Staff Writer  
Trenton Monitor**

In a letter to her new school community, St. Raphael principal Ann W. Cwirko quotes encouraging words from the prophet Jeremiah to welcome back students and staff:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to give you hope and a future.” [Jeremiah 29:11]

The newest principal of the Hamilton Catholic grade school, dubbing herself “first and foremost, no matter how old I am, a child of God,” aims to fulfill her mission to foster a spirit of family and love of God during her term of leadership.

Cwirko attended St. Charles Borromeo School, Cinnaminson, and Holy Cross High School, Delran, before graduating with a bachelor's degree in education of the handicapped from Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey), Ewing. She began her teaching career in an elementary multiple handicapped class in Lumberton, then taught at the high school level in Delran for five years.

After taking a hiatus to raise her daughter,

Cwirko returned to the classroom as a fourth grade teacher in Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, Maple Shade, for two years. The educator then transitioned from fourth grade to the junior high level, teaching sixth through eighth grade students while acting as co-coordinator of the language arts program and co-moderator of the school's student council.

“It was during my twelfth year at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School that I was invited to consider educational leadership,” Cwirko recalled in her biographical profile. “After much prayer and personal reflection, and the support and encouragement of my family and colleagues, I stepped out in faith, left my beloved school, and began the next chapter of my journey, with the teacher now becoming the student.”

Cwirko returned to school to earn a master's degree in school administration from Rowan University, Glassboro. While completing the graduate program, she returned to two of her alma mater schools, this time as teacher; Cwirko taught second grade in St. Charles Borromeo School, and served as graduate intern in Holy Cross High School.

Cwirko expressed her admiration for the fellow faith-based teachers who have gone before her, stating, “I stand on the shoulders of giants. I have also been blessed with the amazing opportunity to journey with so many amazing children, their parents, and the parish community fostering a spirit of family and love of God. I am confident these experiences will continue at St. Raphael School.”

The principal's “plans to give hope and a future” can be found within her mission statement to the St. Raphael community:

“The mission of a true educator and educational leader is to recognize and celebrate the unique, God-given gifts and talents that each learner possesses, teacher and student alike; to guide

them on their journey, empowering them to become active participants in their learning by fostering a spirit of inquiry and discovery, collaboration, and reflective practice; to encourage each individual to rise to meet the challenges of our ever-changing world, and to instill

a sense of wonder and desire to become life-long learners who plan for a future where they can achieve their full potential and make a positive contribution to our world.”

**Here is the Email message I received**

**from Ann on Jan. 3, 2024:**

Good evening Kathleen.

I have received your communication from my parent's estate attorney, Thomas D. Begley, III, LLC. My father, Edward P. Rhodes was an EXCEPTIONALLY PROUD graduate of Villanova University ... Class of 1960. As parents of five ... Catholic education was INCREDIBLY important to my father and mother. They worked tirelessly to provide us with everything we needed ... and most of what we wanted ... the priority being a faith based, Catholic education. As their oldest child, I can speak to the true depth and breath of their desire to instill in us the importance of our faith as well as having a Catholic education. As a Catholic school educator and later a Catholic school principal, I celebrated each and every day the GIFT of my faith and the ability to witness my love of God and love of learning with my students, teachers and community. After my baby sister, **Andrea Leanor Rhodes**, passed away from cancer when she was 17 years old, my parents ... along with my brother and two sisters ... wanted her legacy to live on beyond her 17 years. To celebrate her life and honor her memory, the family's heart's desire was/is to provide opportunities for students who may not have the financial means to attend Villanova University to do so.

To establish the **Andrea Leanor Rhodes Memorial Scholarship of the Blue and White Scholarship Foundation** would honor her legacy. I would be VERY interested in being involved in the scholarship process. Please let me know as to the next steps of this process. I. Look forward to hearing from you soon. God Bless. Ann Cwirko  
Ann Cwirko



**Part of the requirements of receiving a Blue White Scholarship is "Give Back Time."**

Students donate their time to help the Foundation raise money and help with mailings and communications. These pictures represent the time and effort it took to bake 3,000 cookies, assemble boxes, bag the cookies and label the boxes for shipment.

**Students also have "Friends time" where students get to know the other BW Scholars.**

Each Fall we go to Linville Orchards, have a couple of football tailgates and this year we had a Halloween party after Home Coming. In the Winter we have a bowling contest. Of course there are cash prizes! In the Spring, The Casino Night Fundraiser is always a hit!



**Over 3,000 cookies were made by Kate and the students.**

Six to eight cookies per box plus 2 chocolate pretzels and chocolate candies were added to make 1 box. The 16 Blue White Scholar students also assembled and labeled the boxes. We wish we could have mailed to everyone, but time and money are limited so cookies were mailed to those who gave \$250 and above. It was the students way to say "Merry Christmas" and "thank You" for you're your generosity!



# The 2024 Board of Directors



**\* Brian Armstrong '20**  
Senior Associate  
KPMG



**\* Eponine Auddino '13**  
Manager Customer Success  
Change Healthcare



**Frank Auddino '12**  
Info Security  
Compliance Expert  
SAP



**\* Andrew Camaj '19**  
Consultant  
Deloitte Consulting



**Robert (Bob) Catelli '98**  
First Vice President  
Wealth Management  
UBS Financial Services



**Ken Christovich '76**  
Senior Sales Manager  
(Ret.)  
SAP



**\* Patrick Ciapciak '16**  
Associate Attorney  
Hassett | Donnelly



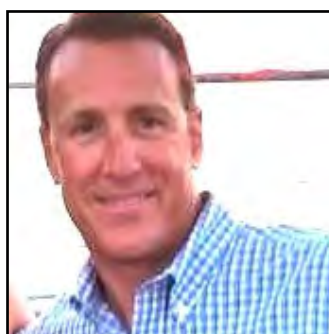
**Brendan Cox '92**  
Partner  
EY



**Joe Hare '72**  
Attorney



**Mike Helmick '64**  
Finance (Ret.)  
First Manhattan



**Roger Kent '90**  
Senior Vice President  
Merrill Lynch



**Mike Seeger '91**  
Vice President of Sales  
Kettle Cuisine

# Passing The Torch for the Next 50 Years



**Tim Seeger '94**

Senior Vice President  
Wealth Management  
UBS Financial Services



**\* Steve Szaroleta '05**

Compliance & Operational  
Risk Manager  
ConsenSys



**Alfred (Fred) Wolanin '73**

Oral & Maxillofacial  
Surgeon



**Kathleen (Kate)  
Cellucci**

Executive Director

## Passing the Torch Over the Next Ten Years

We celebrate births, enjoy birthdays, and then mourn deaths of our loved ones, but foundations have the opportunity to last forever if the right management is in place.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, it is important to start passing the torch of responsibility to the next couple of generations. We have started to implement our continuity plan by inviting on to the Board of Directors a combination of established alumni and much younger alumni. The board members who have a star \* next to their name are former Blue White Scholars. These past students who benefitted from receiving a BW Scholarship, will now be involved with managing the Foundation.



## Help spread the word!



### Q: How do you create a legacy?

**A.** For families that wish to create a true legacy and keep future generations involved with the perpetual award of scholarships, we offer Naming Rights with legacy benefits. Your heirs remain involved with the applications for scholarships funded by your endowment. The amount of these annual scholarships is calculated based on the earnings attributable to your endowment gift.

**Q: How much money does it take ? A:** There are two key types of gifts

Scholarship in Perpetuity - \$25,000+ will establish a named scholarship in your name or your beloved's name. This scholarship can be targeted for a particular major or school such as the Engineering School or a particular major such as Biology. The student will be chosen based on your guidelines

Family Legacy Fund - -\$150,000+ gift will also establish a named scholarship with the above benefits plus full participation in the selection of the student by you and multiple generations of your family, who may participate in selecting each Scholarship, including reviewing Scholarship applications. Each succeeding generation in your family will be reminded of your generosity.

In addition you will be permanently remembered by each scholar by the presentation of your bio to he or she upon receipt of their scholarship.

### Q: Do I need to fund my gift in one payment?

**A: No.** We can accept pledges for up to five years, or you can create a gift through a planned gift (will, trust, life insurance policy). You can even invite friends and family to donate to your fund.

### NEXT STEPS

**Consult your financial legal advisor.**

**Legal Name: Blue White Scholarship Foundation  
Federal Tax ID Number (EIN) 23-3095631**



### Mike Dominguez '24

#### Hometown

New Hyde Park, NY

#### Major

Finance & Italian Studies

**School Activities:** Wildcat Fund, Intramural Sports (Soccer, Softball, Dodgeball) Special Olympics, Italian Club

**Career Aspirations:** I aspire to be an integral part of a finance / analytics team for a corporation that matches my core values and impacts society for the better, possibly being able to work

**Favorite Quote:** *“Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, and difficulty.” – Theodore Roosevelt*

**How the Blue-White Scholarship helped me:** My parents were able to contribute what they could for the first two years of school, but I've been solely responsible for payment since then and through my senior year. I've already taken out a great amount of student loans and will need to take out much more, but this scholarship will go a long way to help reduce that overall number for when I graduate

#### Jobs I've worked to help pay for school:

- Paid internship at Morgan Stanley (NYC) for their Fund Services division ( last summer)
- Camp Counselor
- Park Attendant
- Door Dash
- Started a Power Washing Business.

**Extraordinary Circumstances:** My mother a couple of years ago had to leave her job to take care of my grandmother, so we've been forced to rely solely on my father's income. I'd be lying if I said it's been easy to fund both my college education and my brother's education. My brother and I have been working tirelessly for the past few summers but realize that we'll both be tasked with paying off large amounts of debt after we graduate. The opportunity that you have given me relieves some of our short-term stress while also allowing my parents to put more money away for my brother, so he doesn't feel held back when pursuing his degree/career that he feels passionate about.





## Alexa Rossi '24

### Hometown

Point Pleasant NJ

### Major

Chemical Engineering & Business

### School Activities:

Delta Gamma Sorority, Intramural Sports, IIE Investment Fellow, Society of Women Engineers, Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society, Women in Business, Special Olympics, American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE)

**Career Aspirations:** Work in Pharmaceuticals specifically with digital health technologies and AI to drive forward innovation and health outcomes.

### Favorite Quote:

"The Future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. –Eleanor Roosevelt

### How the Blue White Scholarship helped me:

Upon notification of this scholarship, so much financial stress was lifted off my family's shoulders

### Jobs I have Worked to help pay for school:

- Soccer referee
- Waitress at Bay Head Yacht Club
- Babysitter & Pet sitter
- Academic tutor
- Villanova bookstore cashier
- Paid internship at Merck

**Extraordinary Circumstances:** Allow me to share with you the extenuating circumstances that led me to apply for this scholarship and the financial stress my family has been experiencing. During my sophomore year at Villanova, our family faced an unexpected financial setback when my grants were cut due to my sibling graduating from college. This placed a significant burden on us as we had to reevaluate our finances and ultimately we decided to downsize and move houses. In the midst of these challenges, our new home in Florida was devastated by Hurricane Ian, causing extensive damage and rendering it uninhabitable. The repair costs amounted to \$116,000, which depleted our savings and left us burdened with loans. The Blue and White Scholarship has been a lifeline for us, alleviating some of the financial stress and allowing me to continue my education at Villanova.



## Nick Sofianakas '24

### Hometown

Clark, NJ

### Major

Computer Engineering

### School Activities:

Villanova Sports Analytics Club, Institution of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), Villanova Club Roller Hockey, St. Thomas of Villanova Day of Service

**Career Aspirations:** Leverage my technical background in a consulting role to help improve a variety of different companies and solve real life problems in society

### Favorite Quote:

"The fact is, none of us controls what happens to us in life-but we do control our response to those circumstances."-Jay Wright

### How the Blue White Scholarship helped me:

This scholarship will help in regard to alleviating a great deal of the financial pressure I feel and allow me to focus more on my coursework and my passion for serving the community. Because of this, my family and I are beyond grateful to the foundation and all the donors who contribute to it. I look forward to becoming part of this great foundation and paying it forward to help future Villanovans who are in the same situation as I am now!

### Jobs I have Worked to help pay for school:

- VU Center -Office Assistant
- Teacher Assistant
- Data Science intern at CBB Analytics
- Intern at Eze Castle Integration
- Customer Service Associate at Target
- Internship at Ernst & Young ( Tech Consult)

**Extraordinary Circumstances:** Living most months out of the year at Villanova, I am not home much of the year. However, during breaks and in the summer, I am often reminded of the financial stress that my family endures. My dad is the only person who brings in income to my family's home as my mom is the primary caretaker for both my grandma and grandpa. When I am home from school, my mom is gone to my grandparents by the time I wake up and does not get back until around 10 pm at night. My dad alone cannot afford to pay for all of my tuition and because of this I pick up as many jobs as I can handle at school in addition to my coursework. However, this still does not cover all the expenses at school and has forced me and my parents to take on a great amount of loans.

# SPOTLIGHT: Mike Dominguez '24 *Morgan Stanley*##



## Interning at Morgan Stanley

I'd like to talk about my experience so far interning at Morgan Stanley in their Manhattan office for their Fund Services division. From a high-level view, Morgan Stanley Fund Services is a global hedge fund administrator



providing best-in-class service and product solutions. The division is relatively new and is rapidly growing, with offices in New York, London, Hong Kong, Glasgow, Mumbai, and Bangalore.

The internship is a ten-week program, including two weeks of training and four, two-week rotations (below is a pic from our orientation day at the Intrepid Museum). The rotations are in the Middle Office and Investor Services, the Anti-Money Laundering (AML) rotation, and the program on the Product Development (ProdDev) team. If I had to pick a favorite, I think the Middle Office rotation suits my strengths as a finance major the best. Within Middle Office, there are two functions: Trade Affirmation and Treasury Services. Trade Affirmation deals more with making sure the hedge funds' trades execute properly and facilitating the relationship between the hedge funds and their prime brokers. Treasury deals more with cash management, wire, and swaps margin services. Though Middle Office has been my favorite so far, I enjoyed the ProdDev rotation as well, as I was able to demonstrate my creative capabilities.

Being from Long Island, I've watched

my dad commute to work with the LIRR every morning for as long as I can remember. Now that I'm doing the same, it's been both exciting and surreal at the same time. Over the past few years, I feel like I've come a long way from working as a Door Dash driver and power washing houses to now working at one of the most respected, successful financial firms in the world. To the right is a view of Bryant Park, very close to the building I work in!



You may remember Mike from our Holiday Newsletter. He and his friends made the front cover.



# 5 Things You Might Not Know About Mike Dominguez



## 1.

I am half Croatian: Even though my last name is Dominguez (my paternal grandfather's family originated from the Galicia region of Spain), I am actually a majority part Croatian (my maternal grandparents' families both originated from the Istria region of Northern Croatia). The history is complicated, though, as originally the region was part of Italy, but after the trials and tribulations of World War II, the region was considered part of Yugoslavia until Croatia finally was able to declare its independence in 1991. My maternal grandmother (we call her Nonna, or grandma in Italian) has told us stories of the war and how she first learned Italian, then was forced to learn Croatian, and then had to learn English when she immigrated to the United States.

## 2.

I played the clarinet for 9 years: from 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, I played the clarinet in my school bands and also participated in NYSSMA, a yearly musical competition in New York

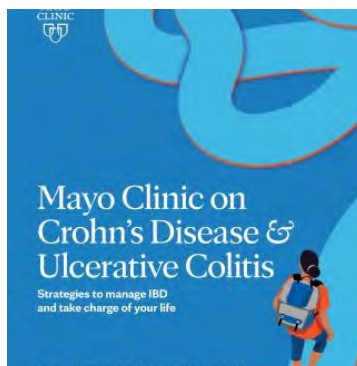


where you pick a piece to practice for the year and perform in front of a judge. Even though my mom was the main force behind my continuation and it wasn't my favorite activity to undertake in, I look back on it now as a time where I tried something new and gave it my full effort, even if in the end I concluded that it wasn't particularly my favorite.

## 3.

I was diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis: Back in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, I was diagnosed with

Ulcerative Colitis, a chronic disease of the large intestine,



in which the lining of the colon becomes inflamed and develops tiny ulcers that affect the functions of the large intestine. This disease had a huge impact on my childhood, preventing me from being able to do regular "kids" things like go to soccer practice or even school for a considerable amount of time. Everything is great now, as I am in remission, but because of this condition, I've found a new sense of gratitude for the everyday things that some might take for granted.

## 4.

My number one bucket-list item is to go Great White shark diving: Many people call me completely crazy for wanting to do this, but when I was a kid, the Great White was my favorite animal, and to be in the water with one (in a cage, of course) seemed like one of the coolest experiences one can have. Growing up, Shark Week was one of my favorite times of the year,



and I was extremely jealous of the divers and photographers that got to spend their lives following and filming these crazy animals. Let's just say I definitely plan on visiting South Africa in the future I love art! Throughout middle school high school, I've always been very creative. My favorite mediums to work with are charcoal and acrylic paint. I wish I had more time in college for creating!

## 5.

Bob Marley is my favorite artist of all time: Ever since my family and I took a



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trip to the Caribbean when I was 12 and I heard "Three Little Birds" for the first time, Bob Marley, the Jamaican Reggae artist has been a primary piece of my music rotation. His relaxed, vibey music style is perfect for looking out the window to on a long drive or watching the sun go down on a summer night. However, the part I love most about his music is his uncanny wisdom; his very simple, straight forward lyrics provide life lessons in every song, and they've truly gotten me through some tough situations.

# SPOTLIGHT: Alexa Rossi '24 *VU in the Valley* #



## SPOTLIGHT: Alexa Rossi Villanova in the Valley Trip

Last winter I was accepted to join the 2023 cohort of Villanova in the Valley. Villanova in the Valley program provides students from across Villanova's campus the opportunity to engage with the innovative and entrepreneurial ecosystem of Silicon Valley. Over a six-day period, participants develop a deep understanding of the ecosystem through company visits, networking events, and educational tours. Participants hear first

hand from investors, entrepreneurs, startups, large companies and innovators to learn what makes the ecosystem tick, the associated opportunities and challenges, and how to start a career in Silicon Valley/San Francisco.



Entrepreneurship has evolved significantly over the last couple of decades, and the future is still opportunistic for the individuals who dare to take the risk. Within the Villanova in the Valley program, students seek to grasp an understanding of the willful attitudes and realistic abilities it takes to become a successful entrepreneur.

This immersion program was truly transformative. The program provided me with a deep understanding of the innova-

tive and entrepreneurial ecosystem of Silicon Valley through company visits, networking events, and educational tours. I had the opportunity to hear firsthand from investors, entrepreneurs, startups, large companies, and innovators to learn what makes the ecosystem tick and the associated opportunities and challenges.

Some of the week's highlights included touring Nvidia and learning about AI capabilities, meeting early-stage entrepreneurs at Accel, and learning from investors at Kleiner Perkins. Each site visit and conversation I had, whether it was with Villanova alumni, our speakers, or my cohort members, taught me something new and opened my eyes to the unique opportunities in the Valley.



# 5 Things You Might Not Know About Alexa Rossi



1.

I love all things sports! Growing up, I immersed myself in a variety of activities, from lacrosse and soccer to gymnastics, field hockey, and softball. Even during elementary school, you could spot me on the field playing flag football or kickball during recess. While I love all sports, lacrosse holds a special place in my heart, and I don't think I will ever get over Covid canceling my high school senior lacrosse season. At VU I continue my passion for sports by playing intramural soccer and basketball and cheering on the D1 teams whenever I get a chance.

2.

I have a soft spot in my heart for animals. Currently, I am the proud pet parent to two English Doodles named Surf and Maverick, as well as one cat named Princeton. However, during my childhood, our family also cared for fish, hamsters, snakes, and lizards. This passion for animals runs deep in my family. My



Mom, who grew up on a farm surrounded by horses, once raised Saint Bernard puppies. Similarly, my Dad, who spent his youth on a plant nursery, once nurtured a baby raccoon back to health.

3.

One of the things I am most grateful for in life is growing up next door to my grandparents. This proximity meant that whenever I felt bored, sad, or scared as a kid, all I had to do was knock on their door, and I would be greeted with the biggest hug and sweetest smile from my grandparents. Loving near them allowed my grandma, whom I call Nonna, to teach me all her hobbies, such as sewing and cooking. Learning these skills from a young age has been invaluable to me. Also, having Nonna nearby meant that I always had the coolest Halloween costumes in town, thanks to her custom touch.

4.



During the peak of Covid in 2020, I had the honor of delivering a speech at my high school graduation. Fortunately, my high school was among the lucky ones that could hold an in-person ceremony, with adjustments for safety. They divided the graduating class into two ses-

sions, with each session accommodating half of my grade to ensure social distancing. As valedictorian, I felt deeply grateful for the opportunity to address my peers after dedicating four years of hard work for my studies.



5.

Growing up in New Jersey, just a short drive from NYC, meant that I could drive into the city to see a Broadway show from time to time. After realizing how much my love of Broadway shows would cost me, I stumbled across the variety of ticket lotteries many Broadway productions offer. I would enter up to 10 different lotteries every single day for the chance to score a great deal on tickets. Thanks to these lotteries I have seen Hamilton front row, The School of Rock, Annie, Mean Girls, and Wicked.



# SPOTLIGHT: Nick Sofianakos *Sports Analytics*

## Combining Passions of Mine-Sports & Technology

By Nick Sofianakos

Growing up, two constants in my life were always sports and technology. In elementary school, my favorite part of the day was when the school laptop cart rolled into the classroom, and I got the chance to browse the web and play around with all the cool settings that a computer has. Eventually this passion for just utilizing a computer transformed into a passion for coding once high school hit. Outside of school while growing up, everything for me revolved around sports. You could name a sport, and at one time in my childhood I probably played it. From the baseball diamond to the football field to the ice hockey rink, I was always playing any sport I could once the school day ended.

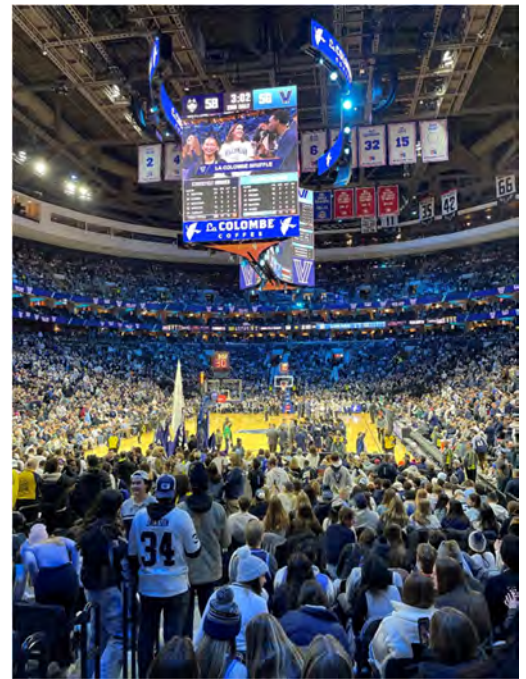
Fast forward to college, and the Villanova Fall Involvement Fair my freshman year. As a freshman, the involvement fair is the best opportunity to find clubs and student organizations that can be vital in making your college experience a great one. It was at this involvement fair that I discovered a new club at Villanova: The Villanova Sports Analytics Club. It was a brand-new club just started and was ran by a now good friend of mine who was the president at the time. My sports analytics journey began just like that. Going into my last year at Villanova now, I am the President of the Villanova Sports Analytics Club. I just kept getting more involved each year going from member to junior chair to President. The club has allowed me to leverage my technical skills to analyze sports and see games in a different lens. I am honestly not sure if I ever would have got as involved in the sports



analytics space if it were not for joining the club here at Villanova.

Given my interest in analyzing sports as I have talked at length about and Villanova Basketball's tough season last year, I think it's a perfect time to do a brief analysis to see how the Wildcats should be doing this season. Villanova lost 3 key players from last year's squad who were all starters in Caleb Daniels, Brandon Slater, and Freshman phenom Cam Whitmore. Daniels averaged 14.2 pts per game, Slater averaged 9.7 pts per game, and Whitmore averaged 12.5 pts per game. That totals to 36.4 pts per game that Villanova will have to make up for some way to have their offense be just as good as last year. Villanova brought in 4 transfers for this upcoming season. Looking at their point scoring averages on their teams from last season, TJ Bamba averaged 15.8 pts per game, Hakim Hart averaged 11.4 pts per game, Tyler Burton averaged 19.0 pts per game, and Lance Ware averaged 2.0 pts per game. That totals to 48.2 pts per game that Villanova should have gained in point scoring this year, while they only lost 36.4 pts per game. Thus, Villanova should be having a much better season than in Head Coach Kyle Neptune's first year at the helm. However, this has certainly not been the case. The Villanova Men's Basketball Team is currently on the Bubble to make the NCAA Tournament after another brutal loss to Xavier on Wednesday February 1<sup>st</sup>. The Wildcats lost 56-53 and

now sit at 12-11 on the year and are 5-7 in Big East Conference play. Villanova's NCAA tournament hopes are currently on life support as according to ESPN, Villanova will be left out of March Madness given their current tournament resume. So, what's wrong with the Wildcats? Well, going back to my initial and simple analysis using points per game, the Wildcats are not getting the offense they expected out of the players they picked up in the transfer portal. TJ Bamba is averaging 10.5 pts per game, Tyler Burton is averaging 8.5 pts per game, Hakim Hart is averaging 7.3 pts per game, and Lance Ware is averaging 1.5 pts per game. All of which are significantly less



than the pts per game they had on their previous teams last year. This means Villanova lost 36.4 pts per game in players that left the program last year, and only replaced it with 27.8 pts per game in scoring in reality this year. Not the 48.2 they were expecting from all of these transfer additions. Thus, being able to score on the offensive end has once again proved to be a struggle this year. If the Wildcats are going to shock the college basketball world and get back to the big dance after missing the NCAA tournament last year, their key transfer portal additions are going to have to step it up.

# Giving Thanks by Nick Sofianakos



My name is Nick Sofianakos, and I am writing to you to express my gratitude and thanks for your generous donation to the Blue White Scholarship Foundation. Without the support of individuals like you, students similar to myself would not be able to afford an education at a phenomenal university such as Villanova. Being a 2023 recipient of this scholarship provides my family and I a great deal of financial relief, and for that I am eternally grateful for your kindness. In addition to extending my thanks for your contribution that will allow me to continue my education here at Villanova, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little more about me.

I am a rising senior from Clark, New Jersey majoring in computer engineering while also pursuing minors in both statistics and computer science. At home, I live with my mom, dad, and older brother who happens to be a recent Villanova alum. I chose Villanova because of its core values of *unitas*, *caritas*, and *veritas* or in other words truth, unity, and love.

The Villanova community is truly special. Everyone who is a part of Villanova lives these values each and every day. Not every university has students who willingly help their

classmates succeed or a full day dedicated to serving the local communities in the surrounding areas around the university.

As a computer engineering major and statistics and computer science double minor, most of the courses I take are technical and require coding in some fashion. However, all my courses require problem solving skills and the ability to solve problems when starting from step one. This is why I love my majors and minors. It has allowed me to build up my problem-solving skills which I look forward to applying in the working world one day to make the world a better place.

In addition to my academic courseload, I am involved in a few organizations and



clubs outside of the classroom. I am the President of the Villanova Sports Analytics Club, the Vice President of the Villanova Club Roller Hockey team, and finally the treasurer for the Institution for Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE). I would be remiss if I did not mention that my favorite day each year at Villanova is the St. Thomas of Villanova Day of Service. It is truly spectacular to see the entire student body come together to achieve the common goal of helping underserved communities.

This summer I have had the privilege of interning as a tech consultant with Ernst

and Young (EY) in New York City. Working at EY has really made me think and utilize my problem-solving skills to help businesses out and in true EY words "Build a Better Working World." The opportunity to intern at such a great company whose core values align very closely with Villanova's is not something I take lightly. It is a true privilege to be able to work with such talented and thoughtful people daily. Additionally, it has provided me with some much-needed income, of which almost all will be put towards loans.

Being a full-time college student at Villanova, I am not home most of the year. That means most of the conversations I have with family occur over a phone call where I cannot truly read how they are feeling. However, when I do come home for holidays or school breaks, I am always reminded of the financial stress that my family endures. My dad is the only one in my family that brings in income and helps me pay for college as my mom is the primary caretaker for my grandparents. When I am home from school, my mom is gone to my grandparents by the time I wake up and does not get back until around 10 pm at night. My dad alone cannot afford to pay for all my tuition and because of this I pick up as many jobs as I can handle at school in addition to my coursework. This year I was a TA for multiple classes, and I even took on a part time internship at a tech start up called CBB Analytics. Most weeks I worked 30 to 40 hours in addition to my coursework. However, this still did not cover all the expenses of college and has forced me and my parents to take on a great amount of loans. I see the total amount of money taken on for my student loans, but my parents do not let me get the specifics on the other loans they take out as they constantly remind me to just focus on my schoolwork. (continued...)

## Habitat for Humanity Trip

Mike Dominguez is not only super intelligent but he has a heart of gold. Here is his description about his experience during fall break volunteering for Habitat for Humanity in Marion-Dillon County, South Carolina.

*In a general sense, Habitat for Humanity works toward the vision “of a world where everyone has a decent place to live” by building and improving homes in partnership with individuals and families in need of a decent and affordable place to live. During this particular trip, the nine of us were tasked with constructing bunkbeds for the hurricane shelter in town. Maxie, the man who was in charge of the construction, said that the hurricane shelter was essential, not only for the citizens of*



*the town, but also for the volunteers that come from out of state, as they would otherwise have no place to stay. We constructed them from scratch, using plywood, buzz saws, and nail guns, and once all completed, we stained them.*

Although I loved building the beds, my favorite part of the trip was being welcomed by the Marion community. For both breakfast and dinner every day, we were cooked a wonderful homemade meal. We got to visit with local parishes and learn about their stories, as well as their famous southern dishes. The picture to the bottom right is the group, along with Maxie in blue, at a local firehouse. The food we have on our plates is called chicken bog, a mixture of rice, sausage, and shredded chicken, similar to the Spanish paella. The dish actually only existed in the region of South Carolina where Marion is located, which was very cool to learn – it also tasted amazing!



## ..... Giving Thanks by Nick

The Blue White scholarship will help immensely in regard to alleviating a significant amount of the financial pressure I feel and allow me to focus more on my coursework and my passion for serving the community. I will never forget the feeling I felt **when I opened the email notifying me that I was selected as one of the Blue White Scholar recipients for this year. Pure relief was what I felt. Others had finally recognized my financial situation and rewarded me for my hard work in and out of the class-**

**room. I truly cannot express enough thanks for your generosity. By helping “bridge the gap” for students like myself who are still short even after receiving aid from every source withing the university, your donation will allow me to realize the true value of a Villanova education which I am been blessed to have access to.**

Thank you again for the privilege of joining such a special organization. I wish you and your family nothing but the best and hope one day I will be able to meet



you in person to express my gratitude!

Gratefully, Nick Sofianakos



# Get to know One of Our New Young Members of the 2024 Board of Directors



**Brian Armstrong is a Senior Associate in KPMG's Accounting Methods and Credit Services practice in Philadelphia, specializing in corporate tax planning for multinational technology and pharmaceutical companies.**

Brian provides a valuable young alumni perspective to our board as a proud recipient of the Blue White Scholarship as part of our Class of 2020.

Originally from Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, Brian is a 2017 graduate of Avon Grove High School and has lived in the greater Philadelphia area his whole life. He is a proud second-generation wildcat: his dad, Daniel, graduated from Villanova Law School with his JD as part of the Class of 1989.

As a past scholarship recipient, Brian is committed to "paying it forward" and understands the vital importance of our mission in building a fruitful legacy for our future classes of scholars. During his application process, Brian came to the Blue-White board with over \$35,000 in privately-funded student loans. Around the same time that he received the scholarship, his grandmother moved in full time with his family when she could no longer support herself independently. Throughout his time at Villanova, Brian consistently worked a work-study

## Did You know?

### Tax Tips for Students

#### **American opportunity tax credit....**

lets you claim all of the first \$2,000 you spent on tuition, books, equipment and school fees — but not living expenses or transportation — plus 25% of the next \$2,000, for a total of \$2,500.

#### **Lifetime learning credit...**

lets you claim 20% of the first \$10,000 you paid toward tuition and fees, for a maximum of \$2,000. Like the American opportunity tax credit, the lifetime learning credit doesn't count living expenses or transportation as eligible expenses. You can claim books or supplies needed for coursework.

#### **Student loan interest deduction**

borrowers write off up to \$2,500 from their taxable income if they paid interest on their student loans.

#### **Saver's credit**

runs 10% to 50% of up to \$2,000 (\$4,000 if filing jointly) in contributions to an IRA, 401(k), 403(b) or certain other retirement plans. The percentage depends on your filing status and income.

or part-time job to help finance his education at Villanova. He completed two internships with KPMG in their tax practice and an internship with Comcast as a Finance Intern on their Budgeting team for Cable Headquarters, which provided him with valuable work experience in his field while offsetting the cost of school.

Brian is a 2020 summa cum laude graduate of Villanova School of Business with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting. Following his graduation, Brian was one of 125 students selected nationwide to receive a full scholarship from KPMG to pursue a graduate degree with a focus in data analytics in the accounting profession. Brian was matched with Villanova School of Business to continue his studies and was awarded his Master in Accounting and Data Analytics with a Taxation specialization (now Master in Business Taxation) in 2021.

In addition to his service on Blue-White's board, Brian is a young alumni representative on VSB's Tax Advisory Council and frequently returns to campus for recruiting and mentoring activities. In his free time, Brian enjoys exploring new restaurants in the Philadelphia with family and friends, trips down the Jersey shore, and stopping by the local library to pick up a few new books.



# Get to know One of Our New Young Members of the 2024 Board of Directors



**Patrick Ciapciak is an attorney for Hassett | Donnelly, a law firm in Boston that specializes in commercial defense litigation. As a recipient of the Blue White Scholarship in 2015-2016, Ciapciak looks forward to offering a young alumni perspective to the BWSF Board.**

Originally from Walpole, Massachusetts, Ciapciak is a 2012 graduate of St. Sebastian's School, a Catholic high school in the Independent School League he attended on scholarship. At Villanova, he was a history and political science double major in the Honors program, gradu-

ating *magna cum laude* and receiving the Richard L. Bates Memorial Award, the top honor by the History Department. Perhaps more importantly, at freshman orientation Ciapciak met his now wife, Dr. Ashley Ciapciak; one of their favorite Villanova memories is attending the 2016 Final Four games their senior year to see the school win the national championship. After college, Ciapciak attended Boston College Law School, where he interned with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and was selected to represent the school in the Jessup national moot court competition.

Ciapciak is committed to "paying it forward" because he knows first-hand the financial challenges of higher education, and believes the next generation of Villanova scholars deserve BWSF's vital help. He knows the value of hard work: he began working at age 13 on a landscaping crew, was his family's only income earner in high school, availed of the maximum work-study hours at Villanova, and even found part-time work running a dog sitting business during law school. Ciapciak incurred a combined \$180,000 in student loans in college and law school, but saved and budgeted dili-

gently to pay off his loans in full in three years after starting work as an attorney.

Ciapciak looks forward to offering his counsel to the BSWF board, mentorship of young alumni, and guiding the scholarship into the next generation. In his free time he enjoys backcountry skiing, hiking, travel, woodworking, making craft cocktails, and spending time with his wife and dog, Flapjack.

Patrick T. Ciapciak, Esquire

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May the gifts  
of Easter  
Cause you  
much delight  
And the sun  
of Easter  
Make your  
pathway  
bright





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[www.BlueWhiteScholarship.org](http://www.BlueWhiteScholarship.org)



## An Irish Prayer:

MAY God give you, For every storm, A rainbow,  
For every tear, A smile,  
For every care, A promise,  
And A blessing in each trial.

For every problem life sends, A faithful friend to share,  
For every sigh, A sweet song,  
And AN ANSWER for each prayer.



A Special  
Thank  
you  
To those  
people  
who an-  
swered  
my re-  
quest to  
send my  
Father  
mail for  
him to  
open.  
He was  
thrilled!