

FORT SCHUYLER

THE MAGAZINE FOR MARITIME COLLEGE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

WINTER 2026





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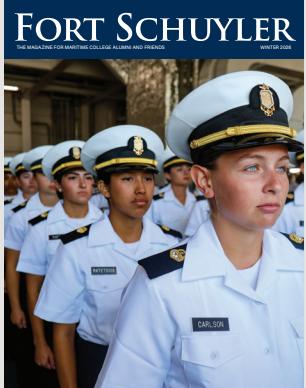
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ON THE COVER:

Cadets at INDOC Graduation
August 2025

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LETTER FROM STEPHEN J. CARBERY '80

President, Maritime College Alumni Association



Dear Alumni and Friends of Maritime College,

As we close out another meaningful and productive year, I find myself reflecting with genuine pride and gratitude on the remarkable momentum within our Maritime College community. This past year has brought exciting developments, strong leadership, and a renewed commitment to our shared mission — educating and preparing the next generation of maritime professionals while nurturing the camaraderie and spirit that define the Fort Schuyler experience. Every student who walks through the Sallyport becomes part of a legacy that continues to grow because of you.

Under the leadership of Rear Admiral John Okon '91, now eighteen months into his tenure, the College has remained firmly focused on student success, academic excellence, and hands-on learning. His clear vision and steady direction have strengthened our identity as a truly student-centered institution — one rooted in discipline, integrity, and service. His emphasis on **Loyalty, Valor, and Leadership** has become a guiding light for the entire community, inspiring us to uphold the traditions that have shaped generations of cadets. We have heard from alumni and industry leaders, and they are all providing positive feedback on the trajectory of the College.

The Alumni Association continues to play a vital role in advancing this mission. Our signature events — from our **Annual Golf Classic**, our inaugural **Sporting Clays event**, our **Ancient Mariner Golf Outing**, **Homecoming Weekend** and our **Annual Meeting**, to our **class reunions**, **Chapter gatherings**, **networking events**, and the upcoming **MCAA Distinguished Alumni Honors Dinner** at Manhattan's Tribeca Rooftop in January — are more than just gatherings. They are celebrations of who we are: a network of dedicated graduates united by shared experiences, lifelong friendships, and a deep commitment to supporting the College and its students. These traditions strengthen our bonds, honor our history, and help us invest in our collective future endeavors.

Looking ahead, we are energized by new initiatives designed to spark even greater alumni engagement and expand opportunities for mentorship, networking, and philanthropy. I encourage every member of our community to stay involved, reconnect, and take pride in the continued success of our alma mater. Your participation, whether through events, financial donations, volunteering, or simply staying connected, makes a meaningful impact. Please make sure that we have your updated contact information at our office at the Fort and in our database. **If we can't reach you, we can't keep you informed.**

On behalf of the Maritime College Alumni Association, thank you for your unwavering support and dedication. Together, we honor the proud traditions of Fort Schuyler and ensure that its legacy of excellence endures for generations to come.

As always, in the words of Joe Gerson '47:

"Steaming ahead smartly and checking compasses frequently."

With sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen J. Carbery".

Stephen J. Carbery '80

President, Maritime College Alumni Association

LETTER FROM JOHN A. OKON '91

President, SUNY Maritime College



Dear Maritime College Family,

Warm greetings from Fort Schuyler. Valerie and I hope you each enjoyed a peaceful and joyful holiday season. As we settle into the winter months—with shorter days and longer nights—I remain incredibly optimistic about the future of THE Maritime College. The momentum we have built together continues to translate into remarkable recognition and growth:

- #1 in enrollment increase across **all** SUNY Colleges/Universities for 2024–2025, and #2 overall from 2023–2025
- The only public institution ranked among Forbes' Top 50 Small Colleges in America
- #1 State Maritime Academy for ROI, according to Money.com

These distinctions affirm what we already know: the value of a Maritime College education is powerful, tangible, and deeply respected. Prospective students and their families are taking notice. Enrollment is up 10% from last year and 15% from 2023, bringing us to 1,552 students on campus. All indicators point toward approaching 1,700 students by the start of the 2026–2027 academic year – the first time in nearly 7 years.

This fall, we hosted the largest open houses in the College's history, welcoming more than 375 attendees in October, a record that was surpassed just three weeks later with over 400 attendees in November. Applications are up 25% year-to-date over 2024 and nearly 40% over 2023. Our message is clearly resonating: **It's not just an education—it's a job.** I ask for your continued support in amplifying that message and invite you to consider becoming a PROP. For more information and ways to get involved in recruiting the next generation, please read my article.

Our New Strategy: The Voyage Plan. In this edition, you will find our updated strategic plan, The Voyage Plan, a living document reflecting our renewed vision, mission, core values, priorities, and objectives. Developed through shared governance, it outlines the actions faculty and staff are now implementing through rigorous assessment and accountability. As the environment around us evolves, so too will our Voyage Plan—guiding us steadily toward our shared future.

Students First – Maritime Always. Last year, I introduced a new motto for the College: "Students First, Maritime Always." Many have asked about its meaning. Inside this edition, I share my reflections on the motto—why it matters, how it shapes our choices, and what it calls us to be. Our students are at the heart of Maritime College, and I am committed to placing their best interests at the center of every decision we make.

Looking Ahead to SST 2026. With our new Master, Captain Chris Zola '92, at the helm and more than 580 cadets preparing to depart Olivet Pier on May 12, Summer Sea Term 2026 promises to be another transformative chapter in the College's history. This 66-day voyage includes port calls in Charleston, Málaga, Belfast, and Albany. To deliver this experience, we urgently need Mates, Engineers, Instructors, and Staff. I ask all who are able to consider supporting SST with your time and expertise.

This past year, we advanced our mission in meaningful and measurable ways—expanding enrollment, strengthening our financial foundation, enriching the student experience, and elevating the College's national reputation. Your dedication, pride, and belief in our mission fuel this extraordinary momentum. Together, let us continue to show the global maritime industry that New York Maritime stands First and Foremost.

With gratitude and resolve,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JOA".

Rear Admiral John A. Okon '91, USN (Ret.), USMS
President, SUNY Maritime College

PRESIDENT'S CABINET	
RADM John Okon '91, USN (Ret.)	President
Dr. Todd Lidh	Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
Jennifer Mahoney	Vice President for Institutional Advancement
Roxanne Thompson	Vice President for Finance and Administration
Captain Morgan McManus '92	Master of T/S Empire State VII & Vice President Regimental Affairs
Lu-Ann Plaisance	Assistant Vice President for Human Resources & Chief Diversity Officer
CAPT Thomas Murphy '93, USN (Ret.)	Chief of Staff and Executive Director of External & Government Affairs
Danielle "Danny" Robinson	Dean of Admissions
Adam Grohman	Dean of Students
Pamela Jones	Director of Marketing & Communications

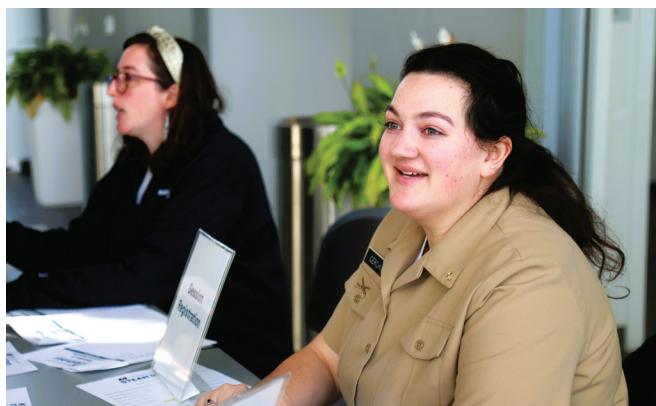
ANCHORED IN CURIOSITY: MARITIME COLLEGE INSPIRES THE NEXT GENERATION THROUGH STEAM DAY

Every year, Maritime College opens its doors to the next generation of thinkers, builders, and innovators through its annual STEAM Day. This hands-on celebration of science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics has become a program of promise and opportunity for students across the Bronx and the surrounding areas. What began as a means of introducing local students to the possibilities of maritime and STEM/STEAM careers has evolved into a cornerstone of the College's community engagement, reaffirming our commitment to inspiring curiosity, elevating our standard of applied learning, and serving as a proud partner to the New York City community.

Katie Donahue, Waterfront Program Director and STEM Coordinator, joined Maritime earlier this year and brought a unique perspective to STEAM Day. By incorporating elements of marine environmental science, chemistry, data science, and more, participants learned more about themselves and their capabilities. There was so much energy and excitement from students, parents, and Maritime staff alike that it is evident this has become a staple event for the College and the community.

Behind the scenes, Maritime's faculty, staff, and students volunteered with their time and expertise to make the day a success. From leading hands-on demonstrations to mentoring participants, their collective effort reflected what truly defines the Maritime community: a family that knows we are stronger together. Their dedication ensured that every visiting student not only learned something new but felt welcomed and inspired to keep exploring.

The greatest takeaway from this year's STEAM Day was its lasting impact. Many families shared that attending has become an annual tradition, while others expressed gratitude for Maritime's year-round youth engagement programs, such as Boogie Down the Sound and Splash Camp. As the maritime industry and sciences continue to evolve, so does our responsibility to ensure that all students, especially those in our local communities, have access to transformative learning experiences. Together, we remain committed to empowering the next generation to dream boldly, learn deeply, and navigate their futures with confidence.



A TRADITION REIMAGINED: CELEBRATING FALL COMMENCEMENT AT MARITIME COLLEGE

Every year, we celebrate the accomplishments of those students who are graduating by their participation in either the Winter or Spring Commencement Ceremonies. This year, we celebrated a cohort of students who graduated in September. This tradition that was once forgotten is now back at its rightful moment – Fall Commencement.

Adorned in their Salt and Pepper uniforms, our Cadets, as well as several Traditional students in their caps and gowns, entered the Maritime Academic Center, greeted by friends, family, and members of the Maritime community. The ceremony was enriched by remarks from our guest speaker Kyron Cooper '15. This marked a special occasion for all. Through academic rigor and various personal and professional lessons, it was a memorable experience to ensure our students had the opportunity to celebrate their moment, graduating from THE Maritime College.

President Rear Admiral John A. Okon '91, USN (Ret), USMS, also ensured that this Commencement was memorable for one family in particular. Fellow Maritime College student Christopher D. Moscatello, passed away suddenly over the summer, just weeks before receiving his degree. President Okon presented the Moscatello family with his degree – Bachelor of Science, Marine Operations – posthumously. It was a moment felt by everyone in the room, and it's truly a moment that will not be forgotten.

Here at Maritime College, we take pride in the success of our family, from our students and alumni to our strong academic and industry presence. To all who graduated in 2025, congratulations! We are excited to see what the next chapter in your life brings.



OPEN HOUSES FALL WRAP UP



Our Admissions team had a highly active and engaging Fall recruitment season. We connected with over 1,300 prospective students at over 200 college fairs, welcomed more than 180 visitors for campus tours, hosted over 100 attendees at our information session, and attracted more than 800 participants across both Open Houses. With these robust recruitment efforts and support from SUNY initiatives, Admissions is happy to report a 25% increase in applications year-to-date over 2024. This growth reflects the success of our outreach strategies, strengthened partnerships, and continued commitment to showcasing the exceptional academic and student experiences our institution offers.

ANCHORED IN SERVICE: PRIVATEERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE ACROSS NEW YORK AND BEYOND

At Maritime College, community service is integral to our identity. Our students embody our core values of Loyalty, Valor, and Leadership, demonstrating that these values extend well beyond the classroom and Fort Schuyler. This year, Privateers have actively strengthened communities through hands-on outreach and meaningful moments that showcase the best of who we are. From preserving maritime heritage and spreading joy during the holidays to supporting unhoused New Yorkers, our efforts continue to make a positive impact.

MIDNIGHT RUN: COMPASSION ON THE MOVE

This year's Midnight Run brought Maritime students into the heart of Manhattan, where they distributed essential supplies, warm clothing, and food to unhoused individuals. Yet what mattered most were the conversations shared and the dignity restored. It was a moment for students to listen to someone's story, offer encouragement, and provide connection, proving that leadership and valor are as much about empathy as they are about action. Their service stands as a powerful testament to our commitment to the greater New York City community.

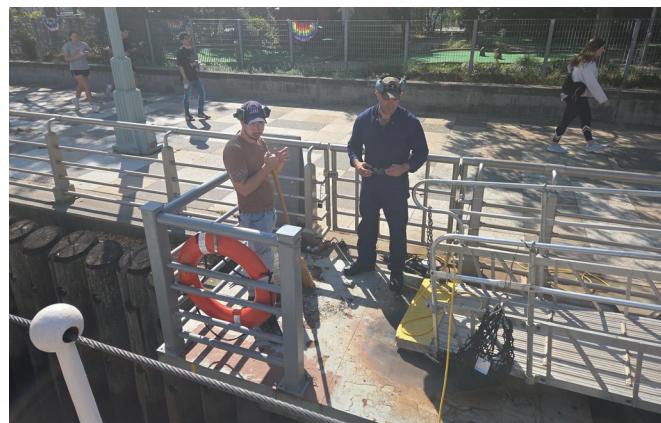


A LIFESAVING IMPACT: THE FALL BLOOD DRIVE

The annual Fall Blood Drive, in partnership with the New York Blood Center, highlighted the generosity of the Maritime community. An impressive 126 donors participated, including 61 first-time donors, among them members of the leadership team, faculty, and staff. Their lifesaving contributions reflect the loyalty our students have to one another but also to the greater community. This strong turnout demonstrates the power of community action and just how much our Privateers are willing to help others.

PRESERVING HISTORY: RESTORING THE U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTER LILAC

The Student Veterans Association continued its tradition of hands-on service by volunteering aboard the historic U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Lilac, berthed at Hudson River Park in Manhattan, NY. As the oldest lighthouse tender still afloat, the vessel is a cherished symbol of maritime history. Students worked diligently to restore and preserve the ship, honoring its legacy while ensuring it remains a vital educational landmark. Their efforts show that service isn't only about giving back to the present - it's about safeguarding the past and preserving history for generations to come.



HOLIDAY JOY AT THROGGS NECK REHAB & NURSING HOME

Ahead of the holidays, our students spent a heartwarming evening at the Throggs Neck Rehab & Nursing Home, where their presence and energy filled the room. Thanks to Ms. Patricia Norman of the Office of Student Affairs, students and residents enjoyed a night of entertainment and connection. Our students had the opportunity to witness firsthand how important it is to spread holiday cheer and how small acts of kindness can affect individuals as well as make a big impact. A special 'Thank You' goes to Professors Augustine and Crilley and their talented friends for providing outstanding music and performances throughout the evening. Their spirit and generosity created an unforgettable night, and we look forward to returning in the future.



TOYS FOR TOTS: A TRADITION OF GIVING

Our student veterans capped off the season with the annual Toys for Tots drive, showing once again what leadership, valor, and loyalty look like in action. This campus-wide initiative encourages the campus community to get involved, ensuring all children have an equitable holiday season. Their efforts helped bring joy to children and families during the holidays, reminding our community of the power of giving.

Whether offering warmth on a cold night, donating blood to save lives, restoring a historic vessel, performing for nursing home residents, or collecting toys for families in need, Maritime students continue to embody the spirit of service that defines the College. Their actions, grounded in compassion, integrity, and purpose, create a positive ripple effect across New York City and beyond.

“ As future leaders on land and sea, Privateers show that service isn’t just an activity – it’s a legacy they proudly carry forward. ”

RADM John A. Okon '91

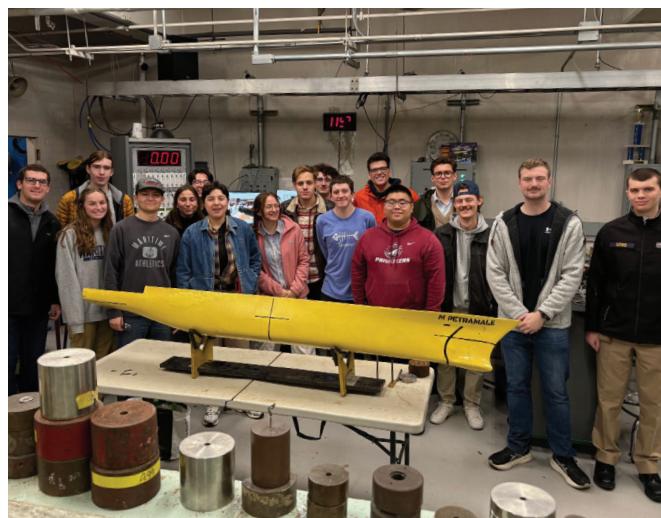
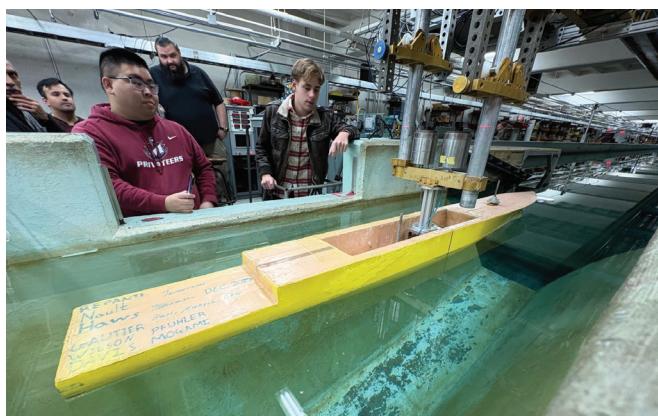
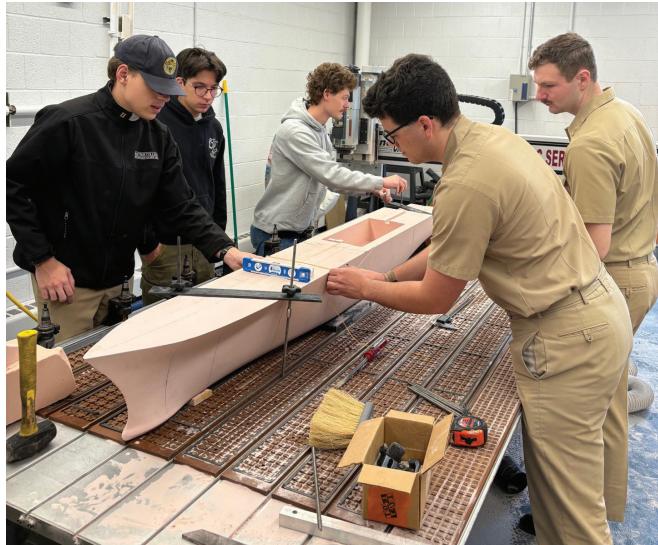


DESIGN IN MOTION: NAVAL ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS PUT THEIR WORK TO THE TEST

Maritime College's Naval Architecture seniors took a major step in their ship design journey on December 6th, conducting towing tank testing at Stevens Institute of Technology. Coordinated by Professor Hari Balasubramanian, the students spent weeks preparing a scaled hull model using Maritime's in-house CNC machine under the guidance of Prof. Charlie J. Munsch, transforming digital designs from the Ship Design series into a precise physical prototype in ship resistance and propulsion course. Stevens Institute Fast Towing Tank facility Director, Prof. Raju Datla and PhD candidate David Plaza, along with Maritime's Dmitry Gorivodsky, provided guidance throughout the day, helping students navigate a professional-level testing environment.

The test marks more than a single day's effort. Data collected will be analyzed throughout the spring semester to determine the vessel's required powerplant, refine hull performance, and inform critical engineering decisions, replicating real-world practices of naval architects and marine engineers. While one senior design model was selected for this experiment due to facility availability, students from other senior design projects contributed to scaled hull model preparation, instrumentation, and testing methods, fostering collaboration across the cohort.

From concept to CNC machining to dynamic evaluation, this milestone highlights what sets Maritime College Naval Architects apart: applying principles of naval architecture, technical expertise, and the perseverance to turn classroom theory into practice. More than nine students participated in the test, with juniors observing the process to gain insight for future experiments. As the Class of 2025 continues refining their designs, this successful test stands as a testament to their skill, dedication, and the power of hands-on experiential learning.



The students who participated in the program are:

- Mathew Pfuhler
- Oliver Davis
- Kariya Mogami
- Julian Nault
- Nicholas Haws
- Arseny Tarasov
- Isabelle Gautier
- Jacqueline Repanti
- Morris Wilson
- Observers Juniors: Fiona Crean, Julia Augello, Brendan Mastella, Elton Endress
- Observer Freshman: Alexander Gitre

COMMANDANT OF CADETS' UPDATE

A REGIMENT ON THE RISE:

This past August, the Regiment of Cadets proudly welcomed 390 new cadets, the largest entering class in decades—a powerful reflection of Maritime College's continued enrollment growth and the rising demand for our U.S. Coast Guard license programs. These new cadets, known as Mariners Under Guidance (MUGs), represent the next generation of maritime leaders and licensed officers entering a global industry that urgently needs them.

The Class of 2029 began its journey through a rigorous 10-day Indoctrination (INDOC) program conducted on campus and aboard the Training Ship Empire State VII. Under the leadership of dedicated Indoctrination Officers (IDOs) and cadet regimental leaders, MUGs were immersed in the fundamentals of regimental life and professional seamanship. Training included drill and ceremony, physical fitness, lifeboat operations, basic firefighting, room and uniform inspections, watch standing, seamanship skills, and customs and courtesies. Just as importantly, INDOC marked the beginning of lifelong friendships and the shared identity that defines our Regiment.

At the heart of INDOC are the Indoctrination Officers, who serve as mentors, role models, and leaders during this pivotal transition. IDOs lead by example—instilling discipline, professionalism, and pride—while helping transform motivated students into basically trained mariners. The success of INDOC is a direct result of its commitment to service and leadership. The Regiment of Cadets and Regimental Affairs Officers extend sincere appreciation to the Class of 2029 Indoctrination Officers, whose dedication ensured a strong foundation for our newest cadets.



STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP, STRENGTHENING THE REGIMENT

The Regiment welcomed new leadership with the appointment of Commander Michael McNerney as Deputy Commandant of Cadets and Leadership Development and Operations Officer, and Barnabas Ali as First Battalion Officer.

Commander McNerney brings a lifetime of service to Maritime College. A United States Marine Corps veteran, retired New York City Police Officer, and community leader, he has served his city, state, and nation with distinction. His career spans infantry service, emergency response, hazardous materials operations, federal service, and leadership development. With decades of experience mentoring and leading others, Commander McNerney now applies those skills to shaping the future leaders of the maritime industry.

Mr. Ali brings extensive international maritime, naval, and academic experience to the Regiment. A former commissioned officer in the Nigerian Navy and a graduate of Maritime College's International Transportation Management program, he combines operational expertise with research, industry insight, and a deep commitment to student development. His leadership further strengthens the Regiment's academic and professional mission.



SETTING THE STANDARD AT SEA AND BEYOND

Our cadets continue to excel beyond the classroom. Maritime College was proud to host the Marine Society of New York Monomoy Races, welcoming teams from Massachusetts Maritime, Maine Maritime, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. Our cadets demonstrated exceptional seamanship, teamwork, and competitive spirit—earning victory in the MUG vs. KP Plebe Race.

Cadets also proudly represented Maritime College alongside fellow state maritime academies from Maine, Massachusetts, and Texas during the New York City Veterans Day Parade, honoring those who have served our nation. Marching together, our cadets showcased the shared values of leadership, service, and commitment that unite the nation's maritime academies.

With record enrollment, strong leadership, and continued excellence in training and competition, the Regiment of Cadets is growing stronger each year—preparing licensed officers and maritime professionals ready to lead at sea and ashore.



HONORING THE LEGACY OF SEPTEMBER 11 – NEVER FORGET



Each year on what is now known as Patriot Day, the Regiment of Cadets and the Maritime College community come together in solemn remembrance of the lives lost on September 11, 2001. This year's observance was no different. If anything, it carried an even deeper sense of reflection and emotion as we approach the 25th anniversary.

On a clear September morning, Cadets stood together with quiet strength and unwavering respect to honor the victims, survivors, and all who were impacted by the tragic events of that day. Among those lost were members of the extended Maritime family, including friends, mentors, and loved ones whose bravery and sacrifice continue to surround and inspire us.

Throughout the day and into the evening, the Student Government Association (SGA) led the College's annual Candlelight Vigil, a student-organized tradition that unites generations of Maritime students and alumni. Faculty, staff, and students gathered to share stories and reflect, bridging the experiences of those who remember 9/11 firsthand with those who know it only through history books. It was a reminder that the most powerful lessons often come from those who lived them.

As a community, Maritime College remains dedicated to preserving the memory of that day, honoring it with grace, dignity, and a collective spirit of courage and resilience that continues to define who we are.

TEN YEARS LATER: REMEMBERING THE CREW OF THE SS EL FARO

On October 1, 2015, the SS El Faro set sail for Puerto Rico and never returned. What began as a routine voyage turned into one of the most heartbreakening maritime tragedies in modern history. When Hurricane Joaquin rapidly strengthened into a Category 4 storm, the El Faro was caught in its path, claiming the lives of all 33 mariners aboard.

Among them was a member of our own Maritime College family, Chief Engineer Rich Pusatere '03, whose passion for the sea and dedication to his profession embodied the very spirit of this institution. His loss has been felt deeply throughout time, and it continues to resonate within our community today.

This year, as we marked the tenth anniversary of that day, the Maritime College community gathered to honor and remember the crew of the El Faro. On a quiet campus morning, students, faculty, alumni, and families stood together, united by memory, gratitude, and love.

We were especially honored to welcome Frank and Lillian Pusatere, parents of Chief Engineer Rich Pusatere '03. Their presence was a poignant reminder that behind every name etched in remembrance is a story, a family, and a legacy that continues to live on through all who sail in their wake.

For the Maritime College community, the story of the El Faro is not just history - it's part of who we are. It reminds us of the risks mariners face, the strength of their commitment, and the responsibility we carry to honor them through our actions, our training, and our service.

Ten years later, the memory of the El Faro and her crew endures, not only in ceremonies and words, but in every Cadet who steps aboard a ship, determined to carry forward their legacy of courage, professionalism, and heart. Their spirit continues to guide us, reminding us why and who we sail for.



FALL 2025 ATHLETIC HIGHLIGHTS

- The men's soccer team posted its most wins since the 2019 season and was selected to play in the ECAC Tournament, its first postseason appearance in six years
- Men's soccer players Jeferson Blanco & Jack Young were both named Second Team All-Skyline
- The volleyball team notched double-digit victories for the first time since 2017 and Addison Weist received Second Team All-Skyline honors
- The women's cross country team finished third at the Skyline Championships and Cindy Chen earned Second Team All-Skyline recognition after placing 11th individually
- Ava Morrill became the women's soccer program's all-time leader in assists, ending her career with 19
- The football team hosted a bowl game for the second consecutive year, taking on Hobart in the ECAC James Lynah Bowl
- In football, Maritime landed four players on the All-NEWMAC First Team and five on the All-NEWMAC Second Team
- Nate Casaburi tied the football program's all-time record for receiving touchdowns with the 21st of his career
- For the second consecutive season, Maritime football senior defensive lineman Vinny Fundaro, has been honored by the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference (ECAC) with a Second Team All-ECAC selection. Fundaro becomes the first Privateer to earn ECAC recognition in back-to-back years since Liam Bailey in 2018-19.



MARITIME WELCOMES NEW COACHES



Four new head coaches joined the Maritime Athletics staff this fall. **Anthony Trotta** was named the Privateers' Head Football Coach this season and led Maritime to the ECAC James Lynah Bowl, its second straight postseason appearance. In his first season at the helm, **Dan Cinelli** guided the men's soccer team to the ECAC Tournament, its first time playing in the postseason since 2019. **A.J. Batcher** took over as head coach of the men's and women's cross country programs, mentoring the women's squad to third-place finishes at both the Skyline Conference and ECAC Championships. **John Fimmano**, meanwhile, jumped in feet first as Maritime's Head Men's and Women's Swimming & Diving Coach, as well as the College's Aquatics Director.

HONORING EXCELLENCE: MARITIME COLLEGE CELEBRATES THE 2025 ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

For decades, the Athletics Hall of Fame has stood as one of Maritime College's most treasured traditions, honoring the student-athletes, coaches, and teams whose achievements have shaped the spirit and legacy of the Privateers. After the triumphant reinstatement of the ceremony in April 2025, Maritime College President RADM John A. Okon '91 and Athletics Director Jamel Ramsay reaffirmed their shared commitment to celebrating excellence both on and off the field.

That commitment shone brightly once again on October 4, when the College proudly welcomed the 2025 Class of Athletics Hall of Fame inductees. This year's honorees include seven extraordinary athletes and the coaches and players of the 2010 Football Team, each leaving a lasting imprint on Maritime's athletic legacy.

Their achievements span generations, sports, and stories, but they all embody what it means to be a Privateer: perseverance, teamwork, leadership, and heart. Their contributions continue to inspire our current student-athletes and will influence future Privateers for years to come.

As we celebrate these individuals and teams, we also celebrate the enduring spirit of the Privateer community. Our Athletics Hall of Fame not only reflects the triumphs of the past—it lights the way for future generations who will build on this remarkable legacy.

2025 ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Thomas Merrell '77 – Football

AJ McAllister '80 – Hockey

James Perduto '91 – Lacrosse

Andrew McCarthy '96 – Soccer & Basketball

Donald "DJ" Toby '08 – Lacrosse

Marissa Danzy '10 – Basketball

2010 Football Team & Coach Clayton Kendrick-Holmes



PROP: BECOME A MARITIME COLLEGE ALUMNI RECRUITER

By Rear Admiral John A. Okon '91, USN (Ret.), USMS

President, SUNY Maritime College

HELP BUILD THE FORT SCHUYLER LEGACY

Maritime College's strength has always come from its people—especially its alumni. Today, as higher education becomes increasingly competitive and the number of high school seniors declines nationwide, alumni engagement plays a more critical role than ever. One meaningful way graduates can give back is by becoming a recruiter in our **Privateer Recruiting Officer Program (PROP)**.

PROP Officers serve as alumni ambassadors, representing Maritime College at college fairs and recruitment events in their local communities. By sharing personal experiences and firsthand insight, PROP Officers help prospective students understand not only what Maritime offers academically, but also what it truly means to be part of the Fort Schuyler legacy.

ADMISSIONS MOMENTUM AND GROWTH

This past fall, we delivered one of our most active recruitment seasons to date. The team connected with more than 1,300 prospective students across 200 college fairs, welcomed over 180 visitors for campus tours, hosted more than 100 attendees at information sessions, and engaged over 800 participants through two Open House events.

Supported by targeted outreach strategies, marketing, and branding efforts, these initiatives resulted in a **25% year-to-date increase in applications over 2024**. This growth reflects the strength of Maritime's academic programs, the appeal of its hands-on learning environment, and the powerful stories shared by students, faculty, and alumni alike. It also underscores Maritime's undisputed Return on Investment (ROI) – **#1 in SUNY and #1 Public College in America** by PayScale.com.

WHY ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

Despite this momentum, challenges remain. Nationwide demographic shifts and heightened competition in higher education mean that personal connections and authentic storytelling are more important than ever. Alumni are uniquely positioned to make that connection—bridging the gap between Maritime's proud traditions and its future.

Becoming a PROP Officer is an opportunity to pay it forward by introducing future mariners, leaders, and professionals to the institution that helped shape our careers and life paths, while reinforcing the exceptional value of a Maritime education.

GET INVOLVED

The next on-campus **PROP Training** will take place on **February 13**. Alumni interested in serving as a recruiting officer can scan the QR code.

By sharing your story—and the impact Maritime had on your life—you can help ensure the College continues to thrive for generations to come.



Apply Today!



SUPPORT THE MARITIME INDUSTRY MUSEUM AT FORT SCHUYLER!

LETTER FROM MATTHEW BONVENTO

Executive Director, The Maritime Industry Museum at Fort Schuyler



Dear Friends and Members of the Maritime Industry Museum at Fort Schuyler,

I am writing to seek your support for the work of the Maritime Industry Museum at Fort Schuyler (MIM). Major positive changes are coming to the museum and we need your partnership more than ever to continue our work to preserve and interpret the vital role of the maritime industry in our city, across our nation, and around the world.

Our museum is unique because of its setting in a historic fort set on a picturesque campus next to classrooms where the nation's future merchant mariners are being trained. For this reason, the exhibits and objects that make up our collection provide students, faculty, and visitors with instantly relevant materials to learn about the essential role that seafaring and maritime commerce have influenced human development since the dawn of history.

I am proud to say that the museum staff supported by our board of maritime experts is committed to curating this collection so it can continue this impactful mission. Our dynamic board and new leadership is going beyond the traditional audiences to promote greater awareness of the maritime industry. To this end, this year we launched a children's program to share the storied history of the maritime industry with younger generations. Looking forward, next April, MIM is sponsoring an American Shipbuilding Conference bringing together national shipyard leaders to discuss steps to rejuvenate the industry. To tell the story even better, this year we improved wifi service in the solid granite halls of Fort Schuyler and launched a nifty museum guide app that allows anyone with a smart phone to view our collections with context and depth like never before. These exciting programs continue MIM's tradition of interpreting maritime history while looking to the future.

It goes without saying that the crucial resources to enable this work are made possible thanks to donations from our members and friends like you. Your contribution will allow the Museum to develop new exhibits, refresh current exhibits, and bring new initiatives to life. Your contribution is vital for the continued health and success of this important piece of New York Maritime history.

Please be as generous as you can! As a 501(c) organization, we rely solely on the support of our members and contributions of our friends. Any contribution are greatly appreciated.

On behalf of the President, Board of Directors, and the Staff of the Maritime Industry Museum, and the cadets of Maritime College, **"Thank you and Best Wishes for a Happy Holiday and a Healthy & Prosperous 2026!"**

Sincerely,

Matthew Bonvento
Matthew Bonvento, Executive Director

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Regular Member	\$100.00
Senior Citizen Annual	\$75.00
Chief Mate's/First Assistant Engineer's Club Annual	\$125.00
Captain's/Chief Engineer's Club Annual	\$250.00
Annual Corporate Annual	\$1,000.00



**Become a member
and donate!**



John Bree '78, President



Michael Chalos '70, Vice President

LETTER FROM JOHN BREE '78 AND MICHAEL CHALOS '70

President and Vice President, SUNY Maritime Foundation

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the extraordinary support and engagement of the Maritime College community. The growth we have seen in fundraising, participation, and connection across the maritime industry is both encouraging and inspiring. Most of all, there is an unmistakable renewed sense of pride in Maritime wherever we go.

That pride is reflected in the increasing number of alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and industry partners who are involved and investing in the future of the College. Their generosity has strengthened scholarship support, expanded opportunities for students, and reinforced the Foundation's ability to support Maritime's mission in meaningful ways. These investments ensure that students are prepared to succeed academically, professionally, and as future leaders in the maritime industry.

This year, that momentum has been especially visible beyond campus. In December, the College's presence at the WorkBoat Conference in New Orleans was met with much enthusiasm. Alumni and industry partners alike shared how proud they were to see Maritime College represented and how valued our graduates remain across the maritime sector. The conversations and connections made there reinforced the College's reputation and the strength of its alumni network while opening doors to new relationships and future collaboration.

That same enthusiasm was clear during recent travels by Rear Admiral Okon and College leadership to Washington, DC and Norfolk for industry meetings and the SNAME conference, as well as to Florida for industry meetings and alumni events. These visits reinforced the deep respect for Maritime College, the lasting impact of its graduates, and the importance of staying connected and visible within the maritime community. They also underscored the value of sustained engagement with industry partners who play a critical role in shaping opportunities for students and alumni alike.

The College is achieving unprecedented growth, and we are committed to keeping pace to ensure future success. The collective contributions of those who support the Foundation and the are not only appreciated, but essential to sustaining the momentum and advancing Maritime's mission.

Thank you for your continued commitment and confidence in the SUNY Maritime College Foundation. We are proud of what we have accomplished together and excited for what lies ahead as we continue to build a strong and vibrant future for THE Maritime College.

With sincere appreciation,

John Bree '78
President,
SUNY Maritime Foundation

Michael G. Chalos '70
Vice President,
SUNY Maritime Foundation

SUNY MARITIME FOUNDATION

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RADM John Okon '91

Roxanne Thompson

Jennifer Mahoney

Stephen J. Carbery '80

SUPPORTING MARITIME'S MISSION: THE WORK OF THE SUNY MARITIME COLLEGE FOUNDATION

The SUNY Maritime College Foundation advances the mission of Maritime College by raising funds that strengthen academic programs, expand scholarships, and support campus projects. Its work helps ensure that students receive a rigorous, career-focused education and are well prepared for leadership in the maritime and transportation industries.

Working year-round, it supports every area of the institution, enhancing campus life, funding academic and research needs, and connecting students with the broader Maritime community of alumni, parents, industry partners, and friends.

A central focus of the Foundation's work is raising critical scholarship support. As enrollment continues to grow, sustained scholarship funding is essential to attracting and retaining qualified, motivated students. These scholarships reduce financial barriers and make the Maritime education accessible to students with the talent and commitment needed to succeed in a demanding environment.

The Foundation also supports hands-on learning at the waterfront by providing the College with large and small boats, sails, trailers, and related equipment. Its boat donation program generates revenue that helps sustain waterfront operations and expand experiential learning opportunities for students.

In addition, the Foundation also fosters engagement that directly benefits students and the college. Signature events such as Homecoming and Reunion Weekend bring alumni back to campus, while recognition events including the Athletic Hall of Fame Dinner and the College's summer golf outing celebrate achievement and strengthen institutional pride.

Beyond events, the Foundation helps connect students with alumni and industry leaders through industry panels, the Tomb Lecture Series, sponsoring students to attend and participate in industry technical conferences and trade shows and similar programs. These exchanges provide practical insight, mentorship, and career perspective that enrich the classroom experience.

That sense of connection was on full display this past summer when the Empire State VII returned home. The college welcomed its largest-ever group of alumni to greet the training ship and ride her back to campus, marking a powerful moment that bridged generations.

Fundraising remains at the core of the Foundation's mission. This past year's inaugural Giving Day brought together students, alumni, parents, friends, and industry supporters to raise funds for scholarships, academic departments, student

services, and athletics. It also served as a unifying community event that highlighted the collective impact of giving.

The Admiral's Dinner is its signature fundraising event, dedicated exclusively to raising scholarship support through the generosity of industry partners, alumni, parents, faculty / staff, and friends of the college.

Through its fundraising, engagement, and stewardship, the SUNY Maritime College Foundation plays a critical role in sustaining the college's growth and ensuring that students have the resources, opportunities, and financial support they need to succeed.

“ As THE Maritime College continues to grow, scholarship support is essential to attracting and retaining the talented students who will lead the maritime industry into the future. ”

RADM John A. Okon '91



Left to right: Maritime College Foundation President John Bree '78, Capt. Timothy Ferrie '78, and Foundation Past President Robert Johnston '69



FUELING DREAMS: FROM THE ADMIRAL'S DINNER TO STUDENT SUCCESS

On Tuesday, September 16, 2025, nearly 500 alumni and friends gathered for the annual Admiral's Dinner at Marina del Rey, overlooking the NYC skyline with clear views of the Empire State VII docked at Olivet Pier.

Maritime College's premier networking and fundraising event dinner brings our community together to honor individuals and companies who have made a significant mark on the industry and raise critical scholarship funds for current and future students.

College President RADM John A. Okon '91 led us in honoring Captain Timothy J. Ferrie '78 and Overseas Shipholding Group (OSG), OSG Ship Management and Alaska Tanker Company. Captain Ferrie serves as President of the United New Jersey Sandy Hook Pilots Benevolent Association and as Vice President of the Pilot Group of the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots. OSG's honor for their substantial ongoing support to Maritime and our cadets was accepted by Kerri Bancroft '05, OSG's Director of Marine Labor Relations and Manning, and David Shevlin, Career Development and Licensing Specialist with OSG.

During his welcome, RADM Okon reflected on his first year in office, celebrating important milestones: The 50th anniversary of women at Fort Schuyler, the 75th anniversary of our first African American graduate, Carl Burnett '50, and the 150th anniversary of the College. The school's reputation is on an upward trajectory, with increasing enrollment, successful Summer Sea Terms, a refreshed website, upgraded spaces and facilities across campus and our first-ever day of giving.

RADM Okon acknowledged that this growth is only possible in partnership with donors and sponsors. Together, we continue to fuel the "engine of upward mobility" that is a Maritime College education.

Cadet Fiona Crean 2/C, a Naval Architecture major pursuing her Engine License, remarked on her Maritime journey thus far and the impact scholarship donors have. Growing up on the water, her Dad (an alumnus from 1991) taught her how to line handle and drive a boat. They bonded through hands-on activities with engines and mechanics. After her parents' divorce when she was 16 years old, their financial situation changed drastically. The middle of seven children, Fiona found herself faced with a crucial decision.

"I considered my younger siblings – twins who would enroll in college simultaneously and my youngest sister's future. I was working 25 hours a week at Wegmans, taking care of my younger siblings and now suddenly looking for a school that would provide the premier education and return-on-investment I needed to succeed."

Fiona 'locked in' on Maritime College, became the recipient of a generous scholarship award, and began to thrive.

"I was promoted to Chief MUG and enrolled in a year-long internship. I am a Resident Advisor, Lead Ambassador for Admissions, and cadet shipped this summer. Without the substantial scholarship I receive from funds raised at the Admiral's Dinner, I would not be able to attend Maritime College. Thank you, on behalf of myself and my family, for helping me succeed."

ADVANCEMENT NEWS



Fiona, on behalf of the student body, appealed to the attendees to 'give generously' so students experiencing financial hardship can succeed at Maritime and in the industry. Following a standing ovation in her honor, attendees began raising pledge cards – reaching \$145,000 in just the first minute! For the third consecutive year, our community came together to provide over \$1,000,000 for student scholarships.

Later in the evening, Tim Ferrie accepted his outstanding honoree award. He reflected on his life and career, noting the sea was 'in his blood'. He recognized that Fort Schuyler was moving 'full ahead and about to come up to sea speed'. He spoke with pride as President and Vice President of several organizations- Sandy Hook Pilots, Marine Society of the City of New York, the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots – all of whom designate scholarships to Maritime College students yearly.

Commitment to service rang true in Kerri Bancroft's remarks, as well, as she accepted the outstanding honoree award on behalf of her employer, OSG. She described the act of supporting the next generation as not just a responsibility, but a 'privilege'. She reflected on her own scholarship journey as a student and noted that several Fort Schuyler alumni work for OSG and students cadet ship with OSG, who has committed over \$300,000 in scholarships and initiatives since 2024.

As the festive evening concluded, RADM Okon raised a toast and thanked sponsors for their support.

"Scholarships open doors for talented students and help strengthen the future of the industry. Together, we – THE Maritime College – will continue developing the leaders of tomorrow. Through our actions, leadership and service, we will always keep New York Maritime first and foremost!"

The Admiral's Dinner is hosted by the SUNY Maritime Foundation Board and made possible by our generous sponsors. The 2026 dinner will take place on Tuesday, September 15. Honorees will be announced!





GIVING DAY

SAVE THE DATE

DAY
APRIL 21-22
One Day. One Hand. Our Maritime.



NEW WILL WRITING SERVICES FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF MARITIME COLLEGE

Maritime College has partnered with Crescendo Interactive, a trusted planned giving platform offering free, secure tools to help you create or update your will—at no cost.

This tool is available to help you plan for the future, regardless of whether you choose to include a charitable gift to Maritime College.

We invite you to explore how this new tool can help you put plans in place that protect your loved ones and reflect what matters most to you.

Maritime College is more than just a college—it's The Peninsula of Opportunity and an Engine of Upward Mobility, shaping the maritime industry for over 150 years. Our legacy, rooted in loyalty, valor, and leadership, will continue to guide us into the next 150 years.

This is your opportunity to establish your legacy, strengthen Maritime's mission, and support the next generation of Fort Schuyler graduates, ensuring our proud tradition continues for years to come.



For questions, contact:
Jeanne K. Murphy
Senior Director of Development
jmurphy@sunymaritime.edu | 347.842.1691

ALUMNI EVENTS

2025 FALL NETWORKING & NOMINATIONS RECAP

The MCAA hosted its annual **Fall Networking & Nominations Night** at Reichenbach Hall in midtown Manhattan, drawing a crowd of more than 50 alumni, including an especially strong showing from the 2020s. The evening brought together graduates across multiple decades to reconnect, exchange career insights, and strengthen professional ties. Guests enjoyed food and beverages provided by the MCAA, while Alphonse Guardino '71 once again volunteered his time and talents to photograph the event—continuing his longstanding tradition of capturing the Association's NYC networking gatherings. We were also delighted to welcome the evening's furthest-traveled attendee, Anna Silva '98, who joined us from Florida.

During the program, Nominations Committee Chair, Mike Trotta '99, presented the proposed 2026 slate for MCAA Officers and the Board of Directors, and opened the floor to additional nominations. Voting is scheduled to run from mid-December to mid-January, with Sustaining Members receiving an online ballot invitation. As this issue will go to print before the election concludes, the election results will be published digitally. The MCAA extends its appreciation to all nominees and volunteers whose commitment continues to strengthen our alumni network.



MCAA Board Member, Mike Trotta '99, informs the crowd of the nomination process and the current nominees on the slate.



Left to right: James Lynn '23, Brian Kreppen '09, Nick Demetriades '24, Michael McGrath '24

2026 OFFICIAL BALLOT MCAA OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS (One-Year Term)

- President: Stephen J. Carbery '80
- 1st Vice President: Seth Lucas '01
- 2nd Vice President: Richard McClain '14
- Secretary: Dennis Hanley '20
- Treasurer: Sam Reilly '95
- Assistant Treasurer: George Gacser '87

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Three-Year Term)

- Joshua Burton '14
- Marissa Danzy '10
- Christopher Grupp '08
- Theodore T. Mason '57
- Andrew McNamara '08
- Vinod (Vin) Melwani '02
- Kathleen (Campbell) Tart '02

Per MCAA Bylaws, ballots are issued to Sustaining Members. Officers serve one-year terms; Board of Directors members serve three-year terms. Three Board candidates will be elected. Election period: December 23, 2025 – January 15, 2026, 11:59 pm, EST.



MCAA President Steve Carbery '80 addresses the attendees.

HOMECOMING 2025

Homecoming 2025 wasn't just one for the books – it was a moment of gratitude, community, and reflection.

This year, the Maritime College community welcomed back alumni from classes ending in 0 and 5, with the Class of 1975 proudly celebrating their 50th reunion. It's not uncommon for St. Mary's Pentagon to be filled with alumni who have given their all through service and community, while the newest generation of mariners pays homage to those who came before them. With pride and grit, alumni across generations joined Maritime College President RADM John A. Okon '91 in a tribute to two of our community's greatest giants.

Established by the Class of October 1946 as their 50th reunion gift to the college, Heritage Hall has played an integral role in the culture of Maritime College. It was a deeply moving celebration of impact, emotion, and purpose – one that honored **Captain Theodore 'Ted' Mason '57** and **Captain Jeffrey 'Jeff' W. Monroe, MS '92**, for their extraordinary contributions to the maritime community.

Ted Mason, a Marine Engineer by trade and a U.S. Navy Captain by service, has a distinguished career that spans the military, corporate, and financial worlds. For more than 30 years, Ted has served Maritime College and the Alumni Association in nearly every role imaginable, including President, Treasurer, and Committee Chair. Ted is a steadfast presence on campus as an avid rower, mentor, and tireless advocate for our College. His dedication ensures that the opportunities he helped create continue to serve as invaluable contributions to our community. It is people like him, who are passionate about our college, that promote opportunities for future generations on and off the Peninsula of Opportunity.

Captain Jeffrey Monroe, MS'92, former Chair of Marine Transportation and co-founder of the Maritime Industry Museum, was also inducted. Jeff was not only a guide and a mentor, but he also left an indelible mark on the college. Although we lost Jeff in 2025, his legacy continues to inspire all who call Maritime College home. A steward of high standards inspired across generations, Jeff's legacy and

influence continue to live on. Honoring him this fall was a fitting tribute to a man ahead of his time, whose passion and vision shaped the maritime world and our community alike. We thank Charlie Hudson '80 for accepting this award on behalf of Jeff's wife, Linda.

After the ceremony, friends and family filled the Riesenbergs Gym parking lot for a lively tailgate. From the MCAA's must-have merchandise booth and the Student Government Association's capsule collection (including bourbon glasses, apparel, the iconic '1874' baseball cap, and yard flag), to smoky barbecue grills and steamed lobsters, there was something for everyone – regardless of age. The campus came alive like never before as future Privateers met Privateer Pete, who made his presence known at every booth. There's something about the community at Fort Schuyler that draws you back in – as if it's ever easy to step away.

Once the tailgate festivities wrapped, we watched as the MUG Class of 2029 marched on Reinhart Field, alongside our fellow alumni. This was a powerful reminder and moment of gratitude, as we saw members of our community come together on the field, celebrating all that our institution has to offer as we celebrate milestone years. From the presentation of colors and coin toss to the cheers of friends and families in the stands, homecoming continues to be a tradition that brings people together.

The celebration concluded with a 42-0 victory over Norwich University, with perfect weather and alumni scrimmages adding to the day's energy. It was an opportunity to honor our traditions while bridging generations – past, present, and future.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to our alumni for your presence, generosity, and unwavering support. Your contributions are felt deeply by College leadership, the Alumni Association, students, and families alike. You are the heart of our community and the legacy that continues to inspire future Privateers. We look forward to welcoming you back at next year's Homecoming, scheduled for Saturday, October 24th, 2026!





“ This is a school where tradition is honored, legacies are built, and loyalty and valor run deep in our veins. ”

RADM John A. Okon '91



FEATURE

STUDENTS FIRST, MARITIME ALWAYS

By Rear Admiral John A. Okon '91, USN (Ret.), USMS
President, SUNY Maritime College

When I began my presidency on July 1, 2024, I shared a simple but powerful philosophy with the Maritime College community – **“Students First – Maritime Always.”** On the surface, it may appear to be just a motto. But for us, I hope it is much more. It is a compass, a commitment, and a reminder of what has defined this institution for more than a century and a half.

I am often asked where the idea came from and what it truly means. The answer lies in both our present and our past—rooted in our history, shaped by our mission, and inspired by the extraordinary students who walk our campus and sail our training ship each year.

WHY “STUDENTS FIRST” CAME FIRST

When I arrived as President, I wanted to make it clear: The College’s greatest strength has always been its students, and they are why we exist. They come here with ambition, grit, and purpose—ready to take on a demanding curriculum and an equally demanding profession. They are resilient, driven, and deeply invested in their futures.

But great institutions do not leave student success to chance. They build systems, cultures, and commitments that support students at every step of their journey. That is why **Students First** anchors the philosophy. It means:

- Designing academic programs and support structures that meet students where they are and help them reach where they aspire to go;
- Investing in faculty, staff, and facilities that elevate the student experience;
- Fostering a community in which students feel seen, heard, valued, and supported;
- Shaping leaders—not only officers and engineers, but thinkers, problem-solvers, and citizens of character.

Putting students first is not a slogan. It is a daily responsibility and a shared promise.



WHY "MARITIME ALWAYS" STILL MATTERS

Our Legacy endures. SUNY Maritime College is not simply a maritime institution—it is the nation's **first**. Our story begins in 1874, when Stephen B. Luce's vision led to establishing the New York Nautical School aboard the USS St. Mary's, launching a bold experiment that would transform maritime education in the United States. Luce believed in preparing young people not just with technical competence, but with discipline, character, and a deep understanding of the maritime profession's demands.

Over the decades, the vessels changed—from St. Mary's to Newport, Empire State, and eventually the series of training ships that have carried generations of Cadets around the world. As the College moved from a ship to Fort Schuyler, the curriculum evolved, the technology advanced, and the student body expanded. Yet through each era, one thing remained constant: **our identity as an institution shaped by the sea and by the people who answer its call.**

As the College grows into new academic fields, engages in emerging technologies, expands partnerships, and welcomes an increasingly diverse student body, some might wonder whether our maritime focus could become diluted.

The answer is a resounding **no**. "Maritime Always" reminds us that:

- Our roots shape our values;
- The standards of professionalism, discipline, and excellence that define the maritime world remain the foundation of all we teach;
- The maritime industry will always be integral to global security, global commerce, and global connection—and, therefore, integral to our mission;
- We are stewards of a legacy that spans 150 years and countless voyages.

Even as we innovate and adapt, the maritime ethos founded on our core values of loyalty, valor, and leadership, continues to guide our community and the broader Maritime Nation.

The phrase "**Maritime Always**" honors that long and unwavering legacy and points to a bright future.



ANCHORED IN TRADITION, ADVANCING WITH PURPOSE

Together, "**Students First – Maritime Always**" captures the dual identity that makes OUR College distinctive:

- **A student-centered institution** committed to mentorship, growth, success, and endless opportunities;
- **A maritime institution** grounded in tradition yet preparing graduates for a future shaped by new technology, new challenges, and new horizons.

In an era of rapid change, the College's ability to balance heritage with innovation is not only a strength—it is our signature. It is what connects today's students to those who sailed aboard the St. Mary's and what will connect tomorrow's graduates to the proud history of New York Maritime College.

LOOKING FORWARD

Every generation of Maritime graduates has carried a piece of this institution with them—on ships, in boardrooms, across oceans, and into communities around the world. We are proud Alumni. Today's students will do the same. As they prepare to chart their own courses, our philosophy ensures that they do so with confidence, character, and a deep appreciation and commitment to never forget where they come from.

Now, we invite you to continue that tradition of impact as we propel Maritime forward. Whether through mentorship, engagement, or giving, your involvement directly strengthens the next generation of Mariners.

Thank you for your continued support of our College, our students, and the maritime profession – it is not just appreciated, it is essential. Together, we honor our legacy and shape our future.



THE MARITIME COLLEGE: STRATEGIC VOYAGE PLAN

At THE Maritime College, we believe American shipping and the global maritime industry are vital forces in New York, the United States of America, and a connected world. Their impact on trade, security, and sustainability drives us to innovate and lead in maritime education, creating solutions that shape a better future.

The Strategy of SUNY Maritime College was developed through the Planning, Budget, and Assessment Committee (PBAC)—a campus-wide shared governance process that encouraged input from every corner of our community. From collaborative committee work to open dialogue at faculty and staff town halls, this inclusive effort helped shape a Strategy that truly reflects the spirit and direction of the College.

Our updated Strategy—our Voyage Plan—is a forward-looking evolution of the 2018 Strategic Plan. It remains firmly grounded in the College’s ‘Why’ and our enduring Core Values.

At THE Maritime College, we believe American shipping and the global maritime industry are vital forces in New York, the United States of America, and a connected world. Their impact on trade, security, and sustainability drives us to innovate and lead in maritime education, creating solutions that shape a better future. We cultivate the next generation of maritime leaders by combining exceptional small-class-room education with applied learning in state-of-the-art labs, simulators, and aboard our training ship. Through real-world experiences on land and at sea, we develop practical leadership skills in every student. We prepare resilient, ethically grounded leaders who are highly educated and trained to make a lasting impact in the global maritime industry.



VISION

We are the world’s foremost maritime educational institution, setting the standard in training, innovation, and leadership development for the global maritime industry.

MISSION

We forge adaptive and critical-thinking leaders ready for the evolving global maritime industry.

CORE VALUES

Our Core Values: Loyalty, Valor, and Leadership. At THE Maritime College, our Core Values are the foundation of everything we think, say and do. They guide our actions, define our culture, and shape the leaders we become.

LOYALTY

We are courageous and focused, determined to face challenges and obstacles with unwavering resolve. Honest and moral, we actively seek opportunities to support and uplift others, going beyond expectations to make a positive impact on the lives around us.

VALOR

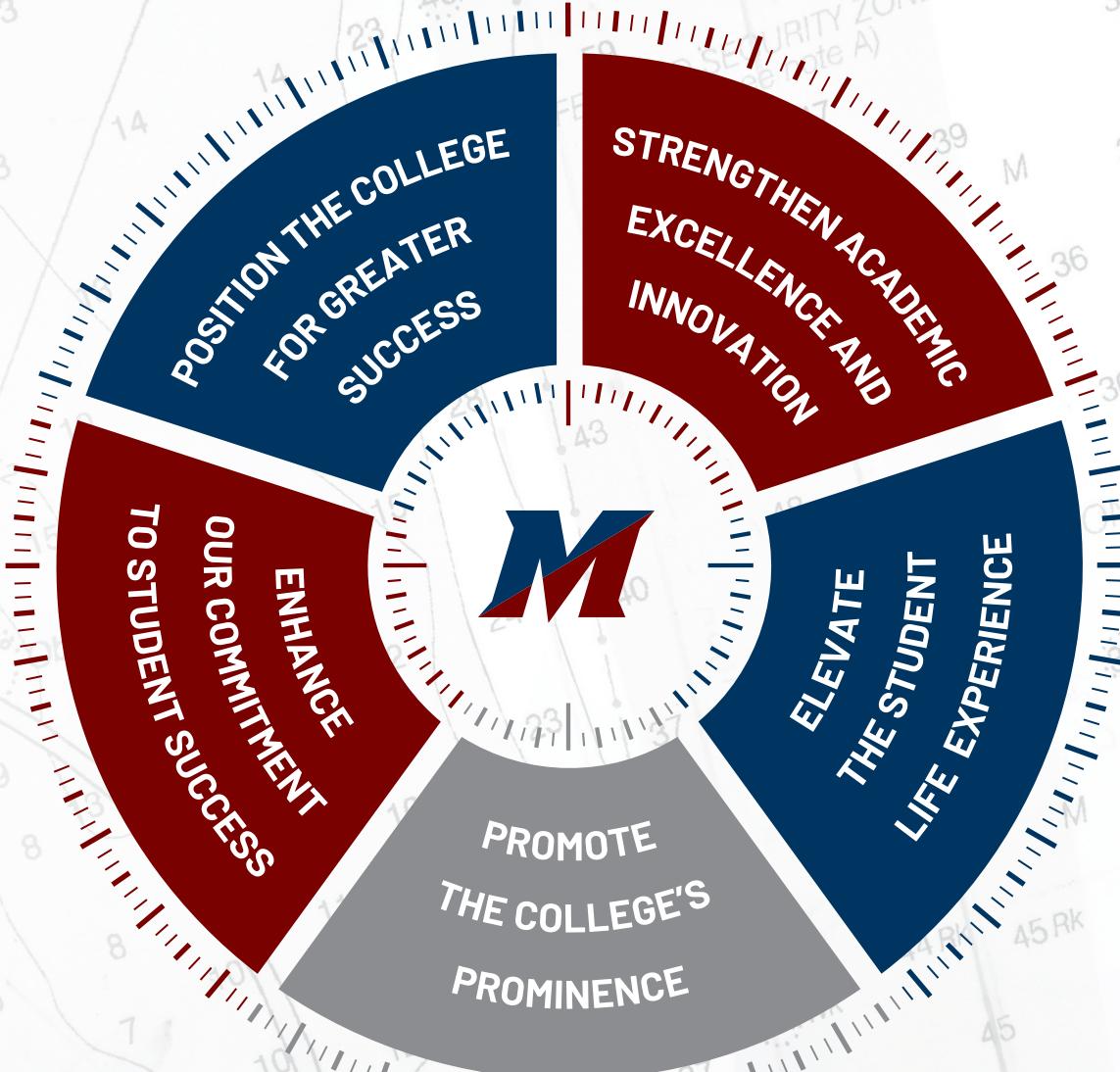
We possess a strong sense of duty and a deep commitment to our classmates, colleagues, family, friends, and Maritime College. We accept the responsibility as the dedicated stewards of the college, entrusted with its legacy and future.

LEADERSHIP

We consistently strive for excellence and uphold the highest standards of integrity in all that we do. We are committed to uplifting others, empowering them to reach their full potential while ensuring the collective success of the team.

FIVE KEY PRIORITIES

This Voyage Plan has 5 key priorities, and through our core values, we will deliver on the college's Vision and Mission.



POSITION THE COLLEGE FOR GREATER SUCCESS

Strategically align resources to meet current and future needs, ensuring the College remains adaptive, competitive, and innovative in an ever-evolving academic and global landscape, setting the stage for sustainable growth, enhanced academic reputation, and greater opportunities for students, staff, and faculty. Accordingly, we will:

- Grow enrollment.
- Strengthen the College's financial sustainability.
- Build discretionary financial resources through targeted fundraising and other external revenue initiatives that engage alumni, donors, and industry and community partners.
- Implement environmentally sustainable operations and practices.



STRENGTHEN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

Prepare students to excel in the global maritime industry by offering programs that seamlessly integrate in-depth disciplinary knowledge, applied learning experiences, and the adaptive skills necessary to navigate an ever-evolving field. Ensure our graduates are well-versed in technical expertise and prepared to adapt to emerging trends, technologies, and global challenges. Accordingly, we will:

- Offer rigorous academic programs that are accessible to a diverse range of students.
- Enhance applied-learning experiences aligned with industry standards, ensuring students gain practical, real-world skills directly relevant to their future careers.
- Foster a diverse and consistently high-quality faculty who are practitioners and experts in their disciplines and actively engaged within the broader college community and the maritime industry.



ENHANCE OUR COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SUCCESS

Establish a supportive ecosystem that bolsters enrollment and prioritizes academic excellence, personal growth, and career readiness. Students are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and experiences needed to thrive in their academic pursuits and future endeavors. Accordingly, we will:

- Implement and scale evidence-based practices that enhance academic performance and foster student success.
- Develop data-informed retention strategies tailored to each stage of the student journey that improves success metrics, including graduation and job placement rates.
- Offer targeted resources, personalized guidance, and applied developmental opportunities in and out of the classroom.



ELEVATE THE STUDENT LIFE EXPERIENCE

Foster an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages personal and interpersonal development while nurturing a strong sense of community that empowers students to succeed academically, socially, and professionally.

Accordingly, we will:

- Create a more dynamic student-centered campus.
- Enhance engagement opportunities that strengthen the campus community by fostering academic and personal growth and cultivating meaningful connections.
- Broaden leadership, ethics, and teamwork initiatives by integrating co-curricular activities that are accessible to all student populations, fostering essential skills for personal and professional success.



PROMOTE THE COLLEGE'S PROMINENCE

Advance a distinctive identity that elevates the College's visibility, recognition, and global reputation. Develop and strengthen collaborative partnerships and leveraging networks to provide students, faculty, and staff with valuable insights, real-world experiences, and expanded opportunities for professional growth, research, and innovation.

Accordingly, we will:

- Elevate the Maritime College brand.
- Strengthen alumni engagement and presence by fostering meaningful connections between graduates and the institution.
- Deepen existing relationships and cultivate new partnerships across the full spectrum of the maritime industry, from shipping and logistics to technology and regulatory bodies.
- Initiate and strengthen partnerships with educational institutions and community groups to create opportunities that benefit students and the broader community.
- Use data-informed decision-making to identify and engage new maritime industry sectors while strategically elevating the College's standing.



ALUMNI EVENTS

INAUGURAL SPORTING CLAYS

Timeless traditions help us to endure the winds of change, and those of the Alumni Association are no exception. On October 6, 2025, we launched our **Inaugural Sporting Clays** at **Hudson Farm Club** in the richly forested hills of Andover, New Jersey—an event we expect will become an annual favorite. Nearly seventy alumni and friends of the Association tested their mettle, poise, and aim through an afternoon of clay pigeon shooting. Joining us from Maritime College, Rifle Coach Tom White took “High Overall” with his score of 91. Accolades to Joe Colella ’79 for his efforts, along with those of the MCAA Sporting Clays Committee, in coordinating this event. Special thanks go to the generosity of H. M. Hughes Co. for their two squad sponsorships and for the cannon pull. With funds raised from Sporting Clays earmarked to support the MCAA scholarship programs, this event promises to be another Association tradition with purpose, generating camaraderie, excitement, and fond memories among its participants.



**Next Annual Sporting Clays event:
MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2026**

Be sure to mark your calendar!



Joe Colella ’79, left, with Highest Overall Score (91) winner, Tom White, Maritime Rifle Coach.



Sporting Clays participants gather for the instruction and safety meeting.



Hudson Farm shooting instructor with Steve Carbery '80, MCAA President, right.



Taking aim is Ryan Modruson '01, winner of the silent auction - getting pointers from Hudson Farm staff.



A family sporting event! Left to right: Petey Lorino '26, Voula Lorino and Joe Lorino '87.



Joe Colella '79 at far left, with TSES VII Sponsor Jack Conway '04 at middle with plaque, and MCAA President Steve Carbery '80 at far right. Flanking Jeff Conway, from left to right, are his squad of industry partners Jon Homler, Robey Hammer, and Andrew Mignola.



Sporting Clays Committee & MCAA Staff, from left to right, front row: Jack Conway '04, Tom Breglia '80, Joe Lorino '87, Maggy Giunco, Saira Yoo, Taylor Netchert, Tom White, Joe Colella '79. Back row: Darren McGowan '86, Steve Carbery '80.



Left to right: Mike O'Connor '83, Brandon Horn '13, Jim Hurley '83, Ray Marquardt '77, Brian Rau '99, Jim Yahner '86, Dave Walters '71, Greg Dolan '13.



Captain sponsor & former MCAA President, John Valvo, with his foursome of, from left to right, Dan Lehane, Rich Gilliland, John, and Mike Hinchcliff. All Class of 1983.



Left to right: Maritime grads & Klima colleagues, John Moore '89, Joe Karcher '02, Anthony Tyska, Brian Reid '21. Klima is an Ancient Mariner & Paddy's sponsor.



A family affair! Left to right: Aisling Donnelly '25, John Donnelly '01, John Donnelly '25, and Anthony DeSimone '06.



Left to right: Former MCAA President Jennifer Hayes '80, Bill Kreppen '80, Tom Breglia '80, and Petey Lorino '26.

ALUMNI EVENTS

ANCIENT MARINER GOLF OUTING

Under breezy yet mild autumn skies, alumni and friends convened on Friday, October 17, 2025, for the MCAA's annual **Ancient Mariner Golf Outing** (AMGO) at Pelham Bay and Split Rock Golf Courses—the traditional start to Homecoming weekend. With their distinctive and varied terrain, the courses offered a spirited challenge and an enjoyable round for golfers across all abilities.

AMGO 2025 proved a banner event with a record 175 golfers hitting the links! The MCAA thanks all who showed up to play and all who stepped up to the plate with sponsorships. Many kind thanks to our Captain Sponsor John Valvo '83 of Fresh Meadow Power NE, and to Chris Grupp '08 of Philly Ship Services, who generously sponsored six foursomes, among which were 15 alumni. A special mention goes to Dave Walters '71 who donated to the MCAA staff and many others a "Signal Flag" windbreaker depicting a montage of the NATO alphabetic flags! Finally, **many** thanks to Wayne Schepens '91 who, when we auctioned off one Signal Flag jacket at the end of the event, stepped up with a winning bid of \$500! NOTE: It was too small for Wayne – so, MCAA Executive Director Maggy Williams Giunco took the one originally given her and traded with Wayne.

Located just six miles north of the Maritime College campus, with lush vistas overlooking New York City's largest park, the course, founded in 1901, is convenient to the Fort, for those attending the whole weekend of festivities.... so be sure to mark your calendars for Friday, October 23, this fall for the Ancient Mariner Golf Outing 2026!

**Next Annual Ancient Mariner Golf Outing:
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2026**

Be sure to mark your calendar!



A few of the Philly Ship Service representatives – 6 foursomes! Left to right: Moira Kelly '09, Sean Mooney '09, Chris Grupp '08, Kyle (Kenny) Grupp '11, Treasa Murphy, Gene Dolce, Kayla Dolce, and Kevin Barry '19.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

PEOPLE-CENTRIC AND MEETING THE CHALLENGE:

KERRI BANCROFT '05



Kerri (Herrmann) Bancroft '05 graduation photo



Kerri, second from right, enjoys a day with her "crew" at the Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge attractions at the Walt Disney World Resort.



Kerri Bancroft '05, third from right, attends a campus Women of Maritime Club event with cadets. Ashlyn Mullan '24, second from the left, has since served as Third Mate with OSG following graduation.



Back row, left to right: Patrick Ferrie '11, Kerri Bancroft '05, David Shevlin, OSG Career Development and Licensing Specialist, and Robert Michael Bunch IV '13. Pat Ferrie and Mike Bunch are currently Chief Mates with OSG. The five cadets in the foreground accompanying Kerri and her colleagues all sailed with OSG in 2025.

What are the biggest problems facing the maritime industry today? Among operating costs, emissions regulations, cybersecurity, and myriad other challenges, industry professionals roundly cite a talent shortage among the most pressing. In her position as Director of Marine Labor Relations and Manning with Overseas Shipholding Group, Inc. (OSG) and with her Maritime College background, Kerri Bancroft '05 is well-trained and focused to regularly counter that headwind.

Growing up in Islip, New York, Kerri learned of SUNY Maritime at a college fair while attending St. Anthony's High School in Huntington. Unfamiliar with the industry and the College, she asked about it. "We sail to Europe every summer on a ship!" she says she was told, to which she says she responded, "Great! Sign me up!" As a Deck cadet, Kerri says that situational awareness – recognizing problems and planning solutions to overcome them – was the most valuable aspect of her education. While this was related primarily to vessel operations as a cadet, Kerri says that it has translated differently but profoundly to her career today.

After graduation, Kerri moved to Tampa, Florida. In the years following, she worked with Mike Vinik '03 and his newly founded towing company, Vinik Marine in New Jersey, was a certified instructor teaching U.S. Coast Guard licensing courses, and worked aboard a local Tampa passenger vessel. From 2008 to 2015, Kerri worked with Port Tampa Bay shipping and logistics agency A. R. Savage & Son. Becoming acquainted with OSG as one of Savage's clients and through area professional organizations and events, Kerri accepted a Marine Labor Relations position with OSG in December 2015, a move proving transformational from ship operations and logistics to a human-centered aspect of her maritime career.

Kerri's work with OSG's marine labor recruiting and training program includes recruiting dozens of cadets annually from maritime academies. To ensure a robust and sustainable talent pool, Kerri's position with OSG involves outreach to the academies as well as to local high schools. Kerri explains:

“The academies’ output is our input. We’ve made a big push to help the industry, through community outreach in high schools, because student awareness of maritime helps input to the academies and increases the number of mariners who become trained, licensed, and qualified for merchant marine careers.”

Kerri adds that cadets who sail on an OSG ship in lieu of their school's training ship cruise also gain commercial vessel experience and training not available otherwise.

As such, one of the industry's most urgent challenges is central to Kerri's occupation, which she passionately pursues. Relating to her situational awareness training at Maritime, Kerri says, "I'm continually looking ahead with my contracts and my fleet to make sure that we have the right people with the right credentials to keep our vessels moving. I think of it like what they teach you about damage control: figuring out what your next move is going to be to meet the need. As a Battalion Executive Officer at Maritime, I was responsible for the battalion watch schedules throughout the year and made sure all the different positions were covered and all cadets completed their required watches, which translates very closely to what I do now."

Attrition and diversity further exacerbate the maritime talent sustainability problem. "Many mariners retired or changed industries during COVID, whereas people from other industries generally can't easily move into maritime. We also have a more diverse work force than ever, with mariners of different ages, generations, backgrounds, even nationalities, all with different needs, among whom I need to effectively communicate," Kerri says. In her OSG-sponsored outreach to local high schools and through the Junior Achievement program of Tampa Bay, Kerri directly counters the first challenge while her cadet leadership role at Maritime has enabled her to meet the second.

This feeds into her advice to today's Maritime students: "Enjoy Maritime and capitalize on every opportunity you are given. Make connections. Your career really starts while you are at Maritime because you are already growing in what you will do after graduation. It's not just the diploma or the license that gets you the job. It's the skills and what you learn that make you succeed more and faster in a career when you graduate."

Kerri offers this plea to alumni: "Give back in any way that you can, through time, talent, or financially. Supporting the next generation of mariners isn't just our responsibility; it's a privilege. The next time you are given the opportunity to give back as you grow in your career, bring someone with you." Kerri adds that she attended Maritime College with the generous help of a scholarship from Captain Joe R. Gerson '47 and the Valiant Foundation, established to fund philanthropic causes worldwide.

It was therefore truly fitting when OSG was recognized at the 2025 Admiral's Dinner for their industry impact and support of mariner training that Kerri accepted OSG's honor on their behalf. In 2023, OSG pledged \$90,000 over three years to the Women of Maritime Club at the College and has committed over \$330,000 to scholarships and maritime student support since 2024. Kerri Bancroft '05 has clearly adopted a prominent role in this stewardship, and with her people-centric focus, born of her Maritime training and honed in her career, she is helping OSG and the industry to meet an urgent challenge.

AUGUST STOEFLER '45 LEGACY

New York State Maritime Academy Class of 1945 graduate August "Augie" Stoeffler celebrated his 100th birthday in March 2025, an occasion marked with joy by Maritime College and the Alumni Association through a special on-campus recognition and a Class Note in the Summer 2025 issue of Fort Schuyler. Now, Augie and his daughter, Jill Stoeffler, share more about his background, his Academy days, and his remarkable career.

Growing up in Locust Point (The Bronx), Augie was an avid sailor and racer in the East River Fleet, sailing his sloop-rigged Star Class keelboat. At the Maritime Academy, he specialized in the Deck Department, studying navigation, seamanship, and the maritime Rules of the Road, and even taught sailing to fellow cadets. One of his favorite "Maritime memories" recalls a race challenge from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy: "Fort Schuyler had no boats; we had to use Kings Point's boats. Fort Schuyler won—using Kings Point's boats!" Clearly, Augie's sailing instruction left a lasting mark.

After earning his Second Mate Unlimited license, Augie joined the Naval Reserve and briefly sailed with Grace Shipping between New York and western South America before pursuing a civil engineering degree at Rutgers University. His engineering career took him to major infrastructure projects, including the construction of man-made islands for the 1952 Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the 1972 excavation for Giants Stadium in the New Jersey Meadowlands. He later spent many years with Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company (GLDD), contributing to global marine construction efforts and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers coastal reclamation projects along the Atlantic seaboard.

In retirement, Augie settled in Florida and continued sailing with his wife, Doris, exploring the Bahamas, from West End to the Exumas and islands in between. Doris passed away in 2022 after 76 years of marriage and a life full of shared adventures. Augie attended Maritime reunions until about 2018, gathering with '45 classmates Richard V. Kadison and Arthur R. Murray, who have since passed, leaving him the sole surviving member of his class.

Today, with the support of his daughters, Augie still lives in his Florida home and enjoys playing golf twice a week. His timeless advice to the Maritime family of students and alumni: "Pursue your passions, and you will never work a day in your life."

Scan the QR code to read Augie Stoeffler's full story



Augie Stoeffler '45 in uniform during his U.S. Naval Reserve service.



Augie wearing Maritime swag he was gifted by the Alumni Association.



Augie is a life-long avid sailor. From his experience racing his Star Class keelboat around the East River, he instructed cadets at New York Maritime Academy, leading to a school victory over the Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point.



Augie celebrated his 100th birthday March 11, 2025. Pictured left to right are Jill Stoeffler's sister (and Augie's daughter) Gay, Augie's daughter Jill, Augie, and Jill's other sister Kim.

DICK BRACKEN '56 VISITS MARITIME CAMPUS

A balmy Thursday, June 5, 2025, was a sort of "early Homecoming celebration" for MCAA Past President Dick Bracken '56, two days before his 91st birthday. Dick, his daughter Colleen, and eight other members of his family, toured the Maritime College campus, escorted by Dick's long-time friend and former TS Empire State II shipmate Ted Mason '57, also an MCAA Past President, who continues to be a frequent visitor on campus nearly seven decades after graduation. During the visit, Dick was favored by a meet-up with College President RADM John Okon '91. As a historic note, while not a Maritime graduate, VADM Calvin Durgin USN (Ret.), the College's 25th President at the time Bracken and Mason were cadets, had, like Okon, our 12th President, come to Maritime as a U.S. Navy veteran.



Left to right: Ted Mason '57, Dick Bracken '56, and RADM John Okon '91

TED MASON '57 CELEBRATES 90TH BIRTHDAY



A date was set for Ted Mason '57 to meet with MCAA Past President Jennifer Barnes Hayes '80 and her husband, Robert, Friday, November 21, 2025, for dinner at Harvest On Hudson, a local Italian restaurant in Hastings, New York. But when Ted and his wife, Carol, showed up, he was met by a table full of alumni, together with his friend Tim Hays, all assembled to surprise Ted with a 90th birthday dinner and party! Given Ted's legacy with the MCAA, his service as the Association's fiftieth Past President in 2002-2003, and his ongoing activity on the Board of Directors and with multiple Committees, it's with little surprise that his birthday was celebrated in the company of several Past MCAA Presidents. Seated at table, left to right, are Tim Hays, MCAA Past President Ted Mason '57, Carol Mason, MCAA Past President Jennifer Barnes Hayes '80, Robert Hayes, Tom Breglia '80, and Christine Breglia. Standing to the rear, left to right, are Caroline Gulotta, MCAA Past President Steve Gulotta '80, MCAA Past President and current Committee Chair to the Audit and Scholarship Committees John Valvo '83, Wendy Carbery, and MCAA President and Past President Steve Carbery '80. Ted's dedication to the Maritime College community was recognized by his induction into Heritage Hall this past October at Homecoming. John Valvo '83 is cited in 2026 as the MCAA's Alumnus of the Year and will be recognized at the Association's annual Distinguished Alumni Honors Dinner January 29, 2026.

CLASS OF '65 SCHOLARSHIP HONOREES

Established in 2015 to mark the Class of 1965's fiftieth anniversary, the Class of 1965 Scholarship Fund supports Second Class cadets participating in Summer Sea Term. To date, the Fund has awarded \$168,000 to forty cadets, with each scholarship dedicated to an individual—traditionally a deceased classmate. In recent years, however, the enduring camaraderie and longevity of the Class have inspired the Scholarship Committee to also honor living classmates and individuals who have been especially meaningful to '65 graduates.

The Fund has recognized a range of honorees, including former faculty. In 2022, the committee paid tribute to Norman G. Wennagel, a former Maritime College engineering professor and 2002 Engineering Hall of Fame inductee, alongside three deceased members of the Class.

For Summer Sea Term 2025, four scholarships – two for Engine and two for Deck license cadets—were awarded at \$6,000 each in celebration of the Class's sixtieth anniversary. This year's honorees reflect the breadth of accomplishment and character within the Class of '65 community.

Ron Aubel, a native of Dobbs Ferry, NY, was active in Student Council and served as an INDOC officer and platoon leader. His work on the desalination plant during his First Class cruise aboard Empire State IV earned him the nickname "Evaporator King." After graduation, he sailed with U.S. Steel Corporation before building a long career with Electric Boat Corporation and later United Technologies' Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. A founding member of the Class of '65 Scholarship Committee, he now divides his time between Connecticut and Florida.

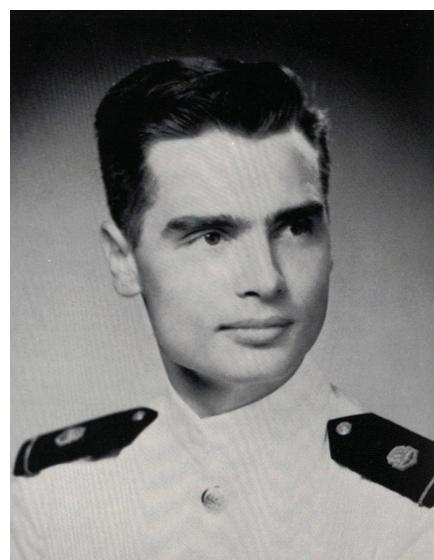
The late Dennis Schroeder, the first in the Class to earn a Master Unlimited Oceans license, commanded the SS Seatrain Texas and later served as port captain for several major shipping companies. He returned to sea with Puerto Rico Marine Management, Inc., notably navigating the SS Humacao safely through Hurricane Floyd in 1999. After coming ashore, he taught continuing education and retired as an adjunct professor emeritus. He passed on March 7, 2025.

Two additional scholarships honor the deceased spouses of Class of '65 members—women whose strength, resilience, and professional achievements supported both their families and the maritime careers of their partners. Their contributions remain an enduring part of the Class's legacy.

"Love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation." – Kahlil Gibran



Ron Aubel '65



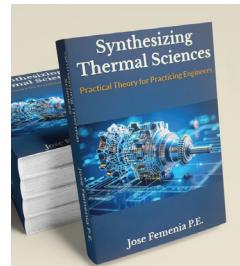
Dennis Schroeder '65

Year 2025 recipients for the four Class of '65 Scholarships were:

- 2nd Class Deck - Matthew Murray - Rockaway Park, NY
- 2nd Class Deck - Eily Kochon - Ulster Park, NY
- 2nd Class Engine - Augusto Lebron - Valley Stream, NY
- 2nd Class Engine - Devon Rose Etienne - Garden City, NY

'64

José Femenia '64, a well-loved veteran instructor of engineering and former Chair of the Engineering Department at Maritime College from 1974 to 1995, has leveraged the breadth and depth of his academic and industry experience in creating his new textbook "Synthesizing Thermal Sciences: Practical Theory for Practicing Engineers". Proofread and edited by MCAA's Editor Don Gale, Professor Femenia's book promises to be an all-encompassing primer and ready reference on matters related to heat engines, their underlying scientific theory, practical design, use, and life-cycle considerations, both to students and to seasoned engineers.



Femenia's book covers the following topics in depth and provides many practical examples of applications with descriptive illustrations, charts, and diagrams:

- Basic Heat Engine Cycles
- The Air Standard Brayton Cycle and Gas Turbines
- Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engines
- Vapor Cycles
- Heat Recovery and Cogeneration
- Carbon Capture, Storage, and Recycle

We can soon expect to see Femenia's book in the possession of today's Maritime College students, and many alumni, among others who will value this comprehensive reference.



'73



Gathered at Wikander's Yacht Yard in Eden, Maryland, from left to right, are Classmates of '73 Frank Wiegand, Tim Gardner, yard owner Stu Wikander, and Jim Rich. After their get-together at Tim's home at Smith Mountain Lake in June, mentioned in the Summer 2025 issue, the four friends took time for another mini-reunion to close out the summer over the weekend of September 20 and 21. To honor the occasion, Stu prepared and delivered a greeting toast, commemorating his classmates and others who had passed:

"We have shared a friendship since graduation. Enjoying class reunions and individual get togethers, a few being Operation Sail and Tattoo in Norfolk, sightseeing in Philadelphia, and, most recently, at Smith Mountain Lake. Not all our initial group are here today. John (Wolak) and Tom (Miller) crossed the bar and Richie (Wills) and Tony (Winig) could not join us. We were fortunate to graduate from Schuyler and have successful careers. We have endured life crises and face the challenges of aging. I believe a big part of our success and our ability to face future challenges comes from the support of family and friends. I am honored to be your friend. I know we can count on one another to offer a sympathetic ear when needed. I look forward to many more shared times in the future."

During their reunion, the foursome dined at keynote area restaurants, visited Bordeleau Vineyard and Winery, enjoyed a boat tour on the Wicomico River, and partook of an Eastern Shore crab feast - enhancing the relations and memories of these longtime friends. Sadly, their shipmate Tony Winig passed away October 26, 2025 after a long battle with cancer.

'82

Congratulations to **John Dabbar '82**, who, on July 22, 2025, was appointed as Executive Director of the National Petroleum Council (NPC) by NPC Chair Alan S. Armstrong. The NPC is a federally chartered and privately funded advisory group representing the oil and gas industry's interests to the U.S. Secretary of Energy with which John has been active for years. Recently, John chaired the Council's Coordinating Subcommittee for the 2024 NPC report, "Charting the Course: Reducing GHG Emissions from the U.S. Natural Gas Supply Chain." After graduation, John built a decade of career experience as a marine engineer, concurrent with U.S. Naval Reserve service, before gravitating to management in companies such as American President Lines, Atlantic Richfield, and British Petroleum. With more than two decades' experience across multiple roles with ConocoPhillips, John is well-equipped for his leadership position with the NPC, demonstrating the achievements attainable with a Maritime education



Ready to tackle the zip-line are '85 classmates Dan McGuire and Roberto Calderon



Happiness glows in the faces of these Class of '85 couples in Costa Rica! Except for Jeanne (Gibney) Fandozzi '85, the alumnus is the gentleman of each couple. From left to right: Andrea and Jim Roche, John and Anna Borchert, Cristina and Dave Williams, Mike and Lisa Boniberger, Chris Cooke, Mike Pausche, Dan and Francine McGuire, Roberto and Ana Paulina Calderon, Sheila and Brian Gaskin, Jeanne (Gibney) and Mike Fandozzi, Mike and Patty Lynch, and Judy Lam (Cooke).

'85

Jeanne (Gibney) Fandozzi '85 describes the reunion she shared with ten classmates and their spouses in Costa Rica:

"The Class of '85 celebrated a 40th reunion in Costa Rica May 2-9, 2025 – and what an unforgettable experience it was! The week was a whirlwind of laughter, nostalgia, and adventure. Thanks to the tireless planning efforts of Roberto Calderon and Dan McGuire, the group enjoyed a fabulous week reconnecting and reminiscing about Domer days set against the stunning backdrop of the Arenal Volcano, enjoying the La Fortuna hot springs, experiencing a trek through the rain forest, and swimming and relaxing at the beautiful beach in Manuel Antonio.

Accommodations were spectacular and many a delicious meal were enjoyed by all at our numerous group meals. Journeying together on the private coach was an especially fun time to reconnect and enjoy the beautiful countryside imbued with snacks and beverages – including bottle service!

With side tours plus time to relax and explore independently, there was never a dull moment. Cigars were shared, ping pong matches were fierce, and relaxing conversation and cocktails in the beautiful pools were delightful. Many in the group were adventurous enough to zip-line through the treetops, an experience filled with screams and cheers. The highlight of the reunion for all was likely the catamaran excursion off the Pacific coast that surfaced fond and funny Summer Sea Term memories as well as forged new ones while plunging into the gorgeous ocean from the onboard slide or diving platforms.

The trip ended with discussion about how soon we can do it all again – notional considerations being Las Vegas in 2026 and Norway in 2027."

'80s



A summer get-together on Friday, July 18, 2025, finds a group of early '80s Domers gathering poolside at the home of Victor Corso '83. Enjoying the warmth of sunshine and Maritime camaraderie are, left to right, Mike Rohan '83, Brian Bernhard '82, John Bradley '83, Dan Wickstrom '83, Jay Mulhall '84, Dan Godfrey '85, Joe Cordero '83, Mike Driscoll '82, John Valvo '83, Mike Hinchcliffe '83, and Vic Corso '83. This photo was featured on page 26 of the Summer 2025 issue of Fort Schuyler accompanying news of the Victor Corso '83 Hope Fund, an unrestricted endowment established by Corso with a \$100,000 gift, announced at Maritime College's 2024 Admiral's Dinner.

'90

August 10, 2025 was a warm summer Sunday at the Larchmont Yacht Club (LYC) in Larchmont, New York, which found three Maritime College sailors from the Class of '90, together with their wives, enjoying a reunion. Located on Long Island Sound just a few nautical miles northeast of Throggs Neck, LYC hosted the 2025 Lightning Women's, Junior, and Masters North American Championships in which the Starcks, an avid family of sailors with a long legacy, participated. Pictured here enjoying evening drinks under the stars, from left to right, are Joe Starck, Jr. '90 and his wife Becky, Frank Burkhardt '90 and his wife Jen, and Jody Starck and her husband Dave Starck '90.

All the classmates sailed on Maritime College's sailing team. Dave, who competes internationally, was the Lightning World Champion in 2024, with Jody twice a Rolex Yachtswoman of the Year. Joe also competes at a high level to this day, and his son, Adam, is currently a Maritime College student on the sailing team. At the Lightning WJ&M this day, both Joe and Dave sailed, although not together, and mainly sailed to support other sailors in the Masters Division. Likewise, Jody Starck and Becky Starck sailed separately, supporting youth female sailing. The children of both Starck couples sailed that day in the Junior Division, Dave's two daughters winning, and Joe's son and daughter coming in second. Frank Burkhardt '90, who lives in the area, says, "Jen and I were there for the camaraderie, dinner, and cocktails. I'm more of a casual sailor these days!"



'91

On Thursday, November 13, 2025, **CAPT "Navy Bob" Roncska USN (Ret.) '91** held a virtual Fireside Book Talk, hosted by the International Association of Black Professionals in International Affairs (BPIA) and the Colin Powell Leadership Institute. Roncska was joined by VADM Bruce E. Grooms USN (Ret.), his commander and role model while serving aboard the nuclear submarine USS Asheville (SSN-758). Their relationship drove Roncska's benevolent, people-centric command practices with his submarine crew, in naval personnel management, and, later, with his peers and employees in health care management, a philosophy he calls Leading with Love.

Bob is the founder and CEO of his consulting business, "Navy Bob", his nickname adopted in service as Military Aide to former President George W. Bush, providing training services based on his leadership practices emphasizing empathy, trust, and love, to business clients who seek peak performance through optimal employee relations.

Admiral Grooms, a 1980 U.S. Naval Academy graduate, spoke of "The Centennial Seven", the first seven Black U.S. Navy submarine commanders through the force's first hundred years, of which Grooms is the seventh. Grooms cited his mother and his religious faith as key influences on his benevolence in leadership. Grooms says, "People want and need to be seen, to be heard, to belong to something special, and to be loved."

Bob Roncska '91 lauded Grooms as a prime influencer of his Leading with Love philosophy, sharing accounts under Grooms's command with further examples of his own charge over Navy sailors. The entire Book Talk can be viewed on YouTube at the Navy Bob channel, Virtual Fireside Book Talk 'Leading with Love' with Navy Bob and Retired Admiral Bruce E. Grooms.



CAPT "Navy Bob" Roncska '91

ALUMNI SWORN IN TO SANDY HOOK PILOTS ASSOCIATION

On Tuesday, June 24, 2025, Maritime College alumni Captain James Hasson '15, Captain Michael Pino '16, and Captain Jesse Wynn '12, were sworn in as Deputy Grade 6A Sandy Hook Pilots by the Board of Commissioners of Pilots of the State of New York (BCPNY), each thus marking a key waypoint in their career voyage. In this photo taken at the BCPNY's Battery Park Plaza office in New York City are, left to right, BCPNY Executive Director Kyle Weist (USCGA), President of the Sandy Hook Pilots Association James Mahlmann (USMMA), BCPNY Commissioner Joe Ahlstrom '92, Capt. James Hasson '15, Capt. Michael Pino '16, and Capt. Jesse Wynn '12, BCPNY President James Mercante (USMMA), and Commissioners Jeff Loechner, Rich Hendrick, and Bill Rowland (USMMA). Captains Hasson, Pino, and Wynn carry on a trade and tradition dating to 1694 in guiding ships into and out of a port that consistently ranks among the nation's top five cargo handlers.



CHAPTER GATHERINGS



Over the past several months, the MCAA's chapter network has experienced remarkable growth and renewed energy. Across the country—and even internationally—**alumni have been stepping up to host events, build communities, and spark new chapters** at a pace we haven't seen in years. From long-established leaders offering guidance and support, to new groups forming in regions like Albany, Savannah, the Hudson Valley, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, the Space Coast, the Pacific Northwest, Greece, and even Turkey, this surge of engagement reflects the strength and dedication of our alumni community. The collaboration among chapter leaders has not only brought us closer together, but has inspired others to join in and expand the MCAA presence in their own regions. With this momentum carrying us into 2026, the future of our chapter network has never looked brighter.

Fraternally,

Seth Lucas '01
1st Vice President
Chairman of Membership & Chapters

CALENDAR OF PAST CHAPTER EVENTS IN 2025

Houston

- April 24 - Happy Hour
- September 29 - 2nd Annual Golf Classic
- November 13 - Happy Hour

Hampton Roads

- April 29 - Happy Hour
- October 29 - Happy Hour with RADM John Okon '91

Tampa Bay

- May 8 - Happy Hour at Four Green Fields
- August 21 - Happy Hour at Cigar City Brewing
- November 18 - Fall Gathering at Tampa Bay History Center

NOLA

- May 22 - Inaugural Meeting!
- June 11 - TSES VII in port - WWII Museum
- September 25 - Chapter Steak Night

South Florida

- July 17 - Happy Hour at YOT Bar & Kitchen
- September 11 - Social at Fairwater
- November 17 - Evening with RADM John Okon '91

New Jersey

- April 16 - Country Night at Bar A
- October 9 - Happy Hour at On the Deck
- October 16 - Liberty Nautical Education Center Annual Dinner

Charleston

- June 14 - Inaugural Meeting - Salty Mike's
- October 18 - Top Golf Watch Party of the Homecoming Football Game

Del Val

- September 12 - Ports of Philadelphia Crab Fest
- December 18 - Holiday Party

NE Florida / JAX

- November 19 - Happy Hour with RADM John Okon '91

Hudson Valley

- December 4 - Inaugural Meeting - Winter Brews - Sloop Brewing Company

Space Coast

- December 10 - Chapter Kick Off



CONTACT OUR CHAPTER LEADERS

Visit our website to view contact info
of the chapter leaders near you!

CHAPTER GATHERINGS

HOUSTON

The Houston Chapter continues to thrive with a robust year-round calendar of events. Their second annual Golf Classic in September drew 70 attendees and strong corporate support. Chapter President Greg Wagner '01 was actively involved in the New Orleans Chapter gathering while TSES VII was in port this past summer. Their steady participation in industry-wide events keeps this chapter highly engaged.

HAMPTON ROADS

Alumni show up in Hampton Roads. Two of this year's largest gatherings took place here, with both the April and October events drawing more than 50 attendees. The chapter's strong turnout and spirit reflect true Maritime Pride, thanks in large part to the planning efforts of Chapter President Ed Hulick '03 and his wife, Vicky '05. Both events also received meaningful support from the College, with Lexy Rivera joining in April and President RADM Okon '91 attending in October.



TAMPA BAY



Admiral John Okon '91, left, with Gary Mueller '52



Left to right: Brian Cronk '01, Rory McNulty '23, Kerri Bancroft '05, and Kieran Kindle '17

One of the MCAA's newest chapters, Tampa Bay has quickly built impressive momentum. They regularly host events for local alumni and have expanded their reach to industry partners, friends, and even local high school students to help recruit future Mariners. Their recent gathering at the Tampa Bay History Center offered a memorable evening in a unique venue. Special thanks to Ashley O'Brien '17 and Kerri Bancroft '05 for driving this chapter forward.

NEW ORLEANS (NOLA)

The NOLA Chapter launched with a well-attended inaugural meeting at the New Orleans Yacht Club— they had such a great time at the Club with their inaugural chapter gathering in May that they returned in September. Their second event was one of the biggest the Association has seen in the past few years – in coordination with the MCAA office and Houston Chapter, they hosted an evening at the WWII Museum while TSES VII was in port for SST 2025. With support from more than 10 corporate partners, the event welcomed 80 attendees, including 30 sponsored cadets.

CHAPTER GATHERINGS

SOUTH FLORIDA

Thanks to the leadership of Rich Mehrige '83 and Christine Battles, South Florida offers reliable quarterly events supported by corporate partners who provide not only food and beverages but valuable networking and educational opportunities. Their September event at Fairwater, with help from Jorge Del Rey '05, was another success. True to their waterfront surroundings, you can count on this chapter to gather outdoors in the sunshine.

Left to right: John Okon '91, Manuel Burgos '91, Tim Klaybor '91, Patrick Dupuis (not an alum), Rich Mehrige '83, Noah Collins '14



NORTHEAST FLORIDA / JACKSONVILLE (JAX)



When word spread that RADM Okon '91 would be in town, the Jacksonville Chapter quickly rallied for an impromptu gathering at alumni favorite Pusser's Bar & Grille Ponte Vedra Beach to hear updates on Fort Schuyler. Led by Kevin Killoran '91, the chapter continues to bring alumni together for camaraderie and strong local connections.

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey alumni gathered for line dancing at Bar A in April and enjoyed a Fall Happy Hour at On the Deck in October. Members also stay active in the broader maritime community, frequently attending events with the USMMA Alumni Association (NJ Chapter), the LiNE Foundation, and more. The chapter mourned the loss of Charlie Hoffman '60 this October—an enthusiastic regular whose presence will be greatly missed.

The NJ Chapter attended the Third Annual Fundraising Dinner for the Liberty Nautical Education Center (LiNE) on October 16, 2025, where Maritime College President RADM John Okon '91 served as keynote speaker. As part of its maritime outreach to high school youth, LiNE supports the local Sea Scout ship Sea Dart II. One Sea Dart II alumnus has since founded maritimebadge.org, an effort to develop a Maritime Industry Merit Badge for Scouting America, thus furthering awareness of the Merchant Marine among young people.



Left to right: James Spear '11, Christa Bonnett '18, Ian Wilson '25, Amie Carter '00, Capt. Jeff Spillane '02, Capt. Mike Vinik '03, Paulina Trzepacz '05, Capt. Chris Begley '82, Capt. James Zatwarnicki, Jr. '02, Capt. Steve Richter '81, Capt. Jamie McNamara '94, Capt. Steven Werse '79, Maritime College President RADM John Okon '91, Valerie Okon '92, Sebastian Heredia '24, Fr. John Corbett of Stella Maris Chapel, and Brandon Horn '14.

CHAPTER GATHERINGS

DELAWARE VALLEY PHILADELPHIA

The Delaware Valley Philadelphia Chapter closed out summer 2025 with two longstanding traditions. On August 7, the Chapter hosted a return party for two Third Class cadets completing their MUG Cruise aboard Empire State VII. Alumni and supporters gathered for food, drinks, and a surprise reunion between Class of '67 classmates John Hagedorn and Carl Mattia. On September 15, members participated in the 56th Crab Feast hosted by the Ports of Philadelphia Maritime Society at Fort Mifflin, joining maritime community partners for an afternoon of crab and camaraderie.



Left to right: Herman Woolfrey '15, Chapter President Art Sulzer '74, Carl Mattia '67, Ryan McBride, John Hagedorn '67, Liam McBride '28, Derrick Kennedy '21, Jimmy O'Connell '24, Skip O'Connell, friends of the Chapter Nathan Hauser and Scott Cointot, and Dave Chalson '74.

CHARLESTON

Launched this year thanks to Joshua Burton '14, the Charleston Chapter is already making strides. After an informal June meetup at Salty Mike's, they hosted a fun October event at Topgolf, livestreaming the Privateers football game to share in the Homecoming spirit from afar. This chapter is poised for continued growth, especially with TSES VII scheduled to call in during SST 2026.



Left to right: Steve Bergmann '14, Shannon Brady '18, Stephanie Morris, William Morris '18, Sean Brady '21, Kayliegh Lockwood & future-domer Henry, Maxwell Lockwood '13, Sophie Ramsbotham, Melanie Bergmann '17, Pat Ramsbotham '13, Sydney Carella '15, Chris Tomich '19, Jeff Markarian '15, Kat Markarian '20, Lucas Meyers '20, Robert Millington '95, Krista Deleva '20, Ashley Millington, Robert Resino '22, Joshua Burton '14

NEW CHAPTERS

The **Hudson Valley** and **Space Coast** chapters held their inaugural meetings in early December—small but enthusiastic beginnings that show great promise. With interest growing in Turkey, Las Vegas, Baltimore, Albany, and Savannah, more chapters may soon be joining the network in 2026.

Attending the MCAA Space Coast Chapter's inaugural gathering on December 10, 2025, are, left to right: Capt. James De Simone '73, Jeff Robert '03, August Werdenberg '82, Sabrina Marcus Taraboletti '82, Joseph Muniz '92, Tom Power '89, Christine Power '89, David Sackman '91, Willie Wehrman '77



EBB TIDE

John Messersmith	'48
Philip "Phil" Haskin	'56
CAPT Charles Piersall, Jr.	'56
Harold "Harry" Polus	'57
Robert Martin	'58
Thomas "Lou" Letizia	'59
Frank Mutolo	'59
CAPT Charles Hoffman, Jr. (USN)	'60
Donald "Don" Bresnan	'62
Robert "Bob" Getty, Jr.	'65
Michael Cooper	'66
Vladimir Petrov	'67
Richard Mayer	'70
Robert Santonocito	'70
Roger Paulus	'73
Anthony "Tony" Winig	'73
John Kiever	'75
Mark Rothenberger	'75
Joseph Walsh, Jr.	'75
Capt. Thomas "Tom" Scott	'77
Joseph Tyson	'84
Timothy "Tim" Lewis	'85
Anthony "Tony" Sidlauskas	'92
Luke Serkanic	'14

Please inform the MCAA Editor as soon as possible after the death of an alumnus by emailing Editor@maritimecollegeaa.org. If available, please include a link to an obituary.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FOR MARITIME COLLEGE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

January 23 **Winter Commencement**
Riesenbergs Gymnasium, SUNY Maritime College, Bronx, NY

January 29 **Distinguished Alumni Honors Dinner**
Join us as we honor John Valvo '83 and Charlie Munsch '73 for their personal and professional accomplishments at the Tribeca Rooftop, New York City.

Spring 2026 **New Alumni Night**
Upcoming and recent graduates will have the opportunity to meet with alumni and industry professionals in a casual atmosphere for an evening of mentoring.

Spring Networking
Join us for our bi-annual networking evening in New York City.

March 10 **Tomb Lecture Series-9/11 Great Boat Lift**
Maritime Academic Center(MAC), SUNY Maritime College, Bronx, NY

March 10-12 **CMA Conference**
Booth #124, Stamford, CT

March 11-12 **Spring Career Fair**
To represent your company and register email Michelle Reina mreina@sunymaritime.edu, Riesenbergs Gymnasium

April 21-22 **Giving Day**

May 8 **Spring Commencement**
Fort Schuyler, SUNY Maritime College, Bronx, NY

May 12 **SST Departure**
Olivet Pier

June 8 **37th Annual Golf Classic**
Plainfield Country Club, Edison, NJ

July 16 **SST Arrival**
Olivet Pier

August 22 **INDOC Graduation**

September 10 **Fall Commencement**
SUNY Maritime College, Bronx, NY

September 15 **Admiral's Dinner**
Marina Del Ray, Bronx, NY

October 5 **Annual Sporting Clays Outing**
Hudson Farm, Andover, NJ

October 22 **Maritime College Athletics Hall of Fame**

October 23-24 **Homecoming Weekend**

Friday, October 23
Ancient Mariner Golf Outing at Pelham Bay & Split Rock Golf Courses, Bronx, NY

Saturday, October 24
Maritime College Alumni Association Annual Membership Meeting
Class Reunion events
Heritage Hall Induction
Alumni Post-Game Celebration at Paddy's on the Bay
Alumni March-on

November **Fall Networking and Nominations Meeting**
Cast nominations for open Board Trustee and Officer seats while networking with fellow alumni and industry professionals.



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Maritime College Alumni Association's

JANUARY
29

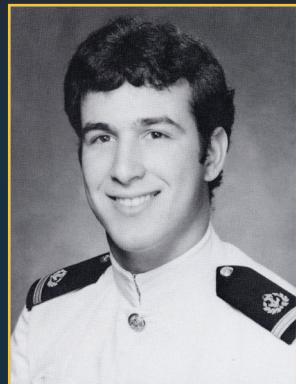
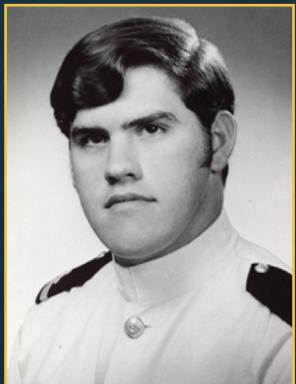
2026

TRIBECA
ROOFTOP

Distinguished Alumni Dinner Honoring

Lifetime Achievement
**CHARLES J.
MUNSCH**
Class of 1973

Professor of Engineering
SUNY Maritime College



Alumnus of the Year
JOHN VALVO
Class of 1983

Vice President
Fresh Meadow Power, NE

