

# 2023 SPRING SCHEDULE

LECTURES

DISTINGUISHED VISITING  
SPEAKERS

DIGITAL & SATELLITE  
PROGRAMMING

JEFFERSON  
EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

3207 STATE STREET  
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

814.459.8000

[JESerie.org](http://JESerie.org)

# 2023 Spring Schedule

All programs are held at times scheduled at the Jefferson Educational Society,  
3207 State Street, Erie, PA. For more information or to register, call 814.459.8000  
or visit [www.JESErie.org](http://www.JESErie.org).  
**SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

## Lectures, Panel Discussions, and Distinguished Visiting Speaker Events

When	What	Who	Program Type
Monday, April 17 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>General Marquis de Lafayette, Part II: French Revolution and Return to America</b>	Judy Lynch, Ph.D. Richard Arthur, M.A.	Free Lecture
Thursday, April 20 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>“Americans and Their Games”: Sports in American History Part II: The Tales of Race and Ethnicity</b>	Andrew Roth, Ph.D.	Lecture Series
Friday, April 21 noon to 1:30 p.m.	<b>Invasive Species in the Great Lakes: A Brief History of the World’s Most Invaded Freshwater System</b>	James Grazio, Ph.D.	Free Community Conversation Earth Day Talk
Monday, April 24 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Places of Grace and Beauty: Reflections on Erie’s Christian Places of Worship</b>	Michael DeSanctis, Ph.D.	Free Lecture
Tuesday, April 25 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>A Humane Response to the Overdose Epidemic: Exploring the Impact of ‘Harm Reduction’ in Erie</b>	Daniel Schank, Ph.D.	Free Lecture
Friday, April 28 noon to 1:30 p.m.	<b>The Power and Potential of Philanthropy: Inspiring Generosity, and Fueling Community Transformation</b>	Karen Bilowith, M.P.A.	Free Community Conversation
Tuesday, May 2 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Why Africa and Geography Matter</b>	Ed Grode, M.A.	Lecture
Wednesday, May 3 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>New Americans: Demographic Trends and Immigration Patterns in Erie, Pennsylvania</b>	Baher Ghosheh, Ph.D.	Free Lecture Reception and book signing
Thursday, May 4 4 to 5:30 p.m.	<b>A WWII Veteran, His Experiences, and His Wishes for His Final Flight</b>	Yvonne Caputo, M.Ed.	Afternoon Lecture Book signing
Tuesday, May 9 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Impact of Social Media on the Capacity of Self-government in a Democracy</b>	Wendy Schiller, Ph.D.*	Distinguished Visiting Speaker
Friday, May 12 noon to 1:30 p.m.	<b>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Is It Just a #Hashtag, or Is It Real?</b>	Gary N. Lee, MBA	Free Community Conversation
Monday, May 15 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Crime as Political Capital: Comparing the Use of Crime as a Tool for Political Gain in the United States and the Philippines</b>	Chris Magno, Ph.D.	Lecture
Thursday, May 18 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>“Americans and Their Games”: Sports in American History Part III: The Tales of Gender and Women’s Rights</b>	Andrew Roth, Ph.D.	Lecture Series
Friday, May 19 noon to 1:30 p.m.	<b>Creating Engaged and Energized Public Spaces in Erie Downtown</b>	Emily Fetcko, B.S. Dave Tamulonis, B.S.	Free Community Conversation
Tuesday, May 23 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>American Presidents and the Constitution</b>	Ken Gormley, J.D.*	Hagen History Center Lecture Series Free Lecture
Wednesday, May 24 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Lake Erie Pirates: Dodgy Characters at the Cut</b>	David Frew, Ph.D.	Lecture
Friday, May 26 noon to 1:30 p.m.	<b>Revisiting and Reimagining Public Libraries in the 21st Century</b>	Karen Pierce, MLIS	Free Community Conversation

\*Denotes Visiting Lecturer from outside the Erie community.

## Courses and Lecture Series at the Jefferson

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ecgra.org 814-897-2690



When	What	Who	Program Type
Tuesdays from 3 to 4:30 p.m.	Great Conversations 6	Christine Riehl, M.P.P.	Discussion Group Limited Advanced Registration

# Jefferson Digital Programming

Live-streamed on [www.facebook.com/JeffersonErie](https://www.facebook.com/JeffersonErie)

Video on demand at <https://www.jeserie.org/program-videos-home>

When	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
Wednesday, April 19 4 p.m.	<b>The June Fourth Incident - Looking back at Tiananmen Square Uprising in China</b>	Robert Kibler, Ph.D.	Digital program

# Jefferson Satellite Programming

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## East Erie - Erie Center for Arts & Technology (ECAT)



When	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
Thursday, March 23 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Creating Affinity: A Look at How a Fortune 500 Company Fosters Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workforce</b>	Lyn Twillie-Darby, B.A. Regina Gaston, PMP	Community Conversation
Thursday, April 13 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Media Made for Us, By Us: Diverse Communication Outlets in Erie</b>	Sonya Byes Michael Kenton Mahler, B.S.	Panel Discussion
Thursday, April 27 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Environmental Justice: Exploring Urban Agriculture and Green Cities</b>	Raven Clark, B.A.	Earth Day Lecture
Thursday, May 11 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>You are More than a "Break in Case of Emergency": Knowing the Value of Your Voice When Making Change in Your Community</b>	Precious McKesson	Distinguished Visiting Speaker Lecture
Thursday, May 25 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Changing the Narrative: Overcoming the Challenges to Mental Health Treatment in the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Community</b>	Adrienne Dixon, Ph.D.	Mental Health Awareness Month Lecture

## Fairview – Lincoln Community Library



When	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
Monday, April 3 6 to 7:30 p.m.	<b>President Abraham Lincoln's Time in Erie County</b>	Sabina Freeman, B.A.	Lecture
Monday, May 1 6 to 7:30 p.m.	<b>What is White Supremacy &amp; Christian White Nationalism? - Perspective from a Unitarian Universalist Minister</b>	Charles Brock, M.Litt.	Lecture

## Corry - Corry Higher Education Council



When	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
Tuesday, April 18 6 to 7:30 p.m.	<b>Nimitz, Halsey &amp; Spruance - The Admirals who won the Pacific War</b>	Mark Squeglia, B.A.	Lecture
Tuesday, May 16 6 to 7:30 p.m.	<b>Reimagining Farming in Northwest Pennsylvania</b>	Julie Zajac, MPH	Visiting Speaker Lecture

## PennWest University Edinboro - William P. Alexander Music Center



When	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
Wednesday, March 29 6 to 7:30 p.m.	<b>Abortion and Personal Autonomy: A Discussion on How They are Changing in Post-Roe America</b>	James Fisher, Ph.D. Rhonda Matthews, Ph.D.	Women's History Month Lecture
Wednesday, April 19 6 to 7:30 p.m.	<b>What is Afrocentrism? - A Look at World History through a Different Lens</b>	Parris Baker, Ph.D.	Lecture

## Distinguished Visiting Speakers



**Wendy Schiller, Ph.D.**

Tuesday, May 9  
7 to 8:30 p.m.



**Ken Gormley, J.D.**

Tuesday, May 23  
7 to 8:30 p.m.

### Breakdown of Program Costs (unless otherwise noted):

**Lectures:** \$10/person; \$15 with a guest

**Visiting Speaker Lectures:** \$15/person; \$25 with a guest

**Community Conversations:** Free, lunch optional \$5/person

**Lecture Series and Courses:** \$50/person; \$75 with a guest

All Jefferson Programming is free to all Erie County students with advanced registration and proof of enrollment.

A \$1 service charge will be applied to each transaction. Payments must be made at registration. Visa, MasterCard, AMEX, and Discover accepted. Cash payments are no longer accepted by the Jefferson. The Jefferson Educational Society no longer accepts cash as form of payment for events.

Act 48 hours for the Erie Catholic Diocese, Erie Day School, Erie School District, Corry, Fort LeBoeuf, Girard, Harbor Creek, and Wattsburg teachers apply to ALL programs at no additional cost.

Programs at the Jefferson Educational Society will take place at 3207 State Street, Erie, PA 16508.

**Jefferson Satellite Programming** during the Spring Term will be held at the Erie Center for Arts and Culture (ECAT, 650 East Ave, Ada Lawrence Community Room, Erie, PA 16503), Corry Higher Education Council (221 N Center St, Corry, PA 16407), the Lincoln Community Center Library (1255 Manchester Road, Erie, PA 16505), and PennWest University Edinboro, William P. Alexander Music Center (110 Kiltie Rd., Edinboro, PA 16444). All Jefferson Satellite Programs are free and open to the public.

For full program descriptions, please visit [www.jeserie.org](http://www.jeserie.org), where advanced registration can be made. Registrations can also be made by calling 814.459.8000 or by visiting the Jefferson at 3207 State St., Erie, PA 16508.

#### Covid-19 policies remain in effect:

At this time, the JES proof of vaccination/negative test policy has been suspended. The JES will continue to monitor the Erie County COVID-19 community levels to ensure the safety of our members. As previously stated, masks are no longer required but recommended. If you or a member of your party are sneezing, coughing, running a fever or generally unwell, please stay home and visit the Jefferson on a day when you all are feeling better in the future. If possible, maintain the CDC-suggested 6 feet social distance between parties. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or longer. The Jefferson Educational Society of Erie cannot guarantee that any visitor will not contract COVID-19 while on its premises. By visiting the JES and its satellite locations, all visitors voluntarily assume all risks related to COVID-19 exposure and accept and agree to abide by the terms and conditions, posted signage, and verbal instructions. This policy will be re-evaluated on a rolling basis by the JES and its partners. To review the JES's entire Covid-19 policy and any changes, please visit [www.jeserie.org](http://www.jeserie.org).

*The views and opinions expressed in the program descriptions and during the events are those of the presenter(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Jefferson Educational Society or its employees.*

## JES LECTURER BIOGRAPHIES

**Richard Arthur, M.A.**, is a native of Pittsburgh who has a lifelong interest in American Colonial History. A retired Army officer and adult educator, he currently is serving as Chairman of the Washington Statue Centennial and Rededication Committee that is preserving the statue of 21-year-old Washington on his first public mission to Fort LeBoeuf in present-day Erie County. He and his wife Mary Lou operate Winter's End, a bird, bee, and butterfly habitat in rural Erie County. Richard is the Curator at Eagle Hotel Museum in Waterford.

**Parris J. Baker, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor and Director, Social Work, Mortuary Science, and Gerontology Programs, Department of Criminal Justice & Social Work, Gannon University. He received his undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees in social work from Gannon University, Case Western Reserve University, Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, and the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, respectively. In 2011, Dr. Baker became the first African American tenured professor at Gannon University. He most recently became a Jefferson Education Society Scholar-In-Residence and Harry T. Burleigh and Beyond Fellow.

**Rev. Charles Brock, M.Litt.** is director of the Brock Institute for Mega Issues Education at the Jefferson Educational Society. An Erie native, Rev. Brock is an emeritus fellow, chaplain, and director of Ministerial Education at Mansfield College, Oxford, UK, where he taught for 35 years. In addition to being a founding member of the Jefferson and serving as Secretary of the Jefferson Board of Trustees, Rev. Brock is acting minister of The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Girard.

**Karen Bilowith, M.P.A.**, joined the Erie Community Foundation in October 2021. She leads the foundation's efforts to improve the quality of life in the region in partnership with generous donors, effective nonprofit agencies, community leaders and a committed board of trustees and staff. Karen was formerly the president and CEO of the Idaho Community Foundation, and she held the position of president and CEO of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region as well as an executive position with United Way in upstate New York. Karen holds a master's degree in public administration from the University of Colorado and a bachelor's degree in economics from Boston College and is a current board member of Pennsylvania Association of Community Foundations.

**Sonya Byes** is someone familiar with the lights, cameras, and action! As an African American female-led media company operator in Erie, Sonya Byes is shattering glass ceilings in the media realm. Ms. Byes is the creator/owner/founder and host of Erie's local talk show, "Chatting with Sonya and Friends" and founding operator of Mocha Media Management, LLC. "Chatting with Sonya and Friends" is a diverse group of professional women of various talents and backgrounds engaging in relevant and unscripted conversations in the city of Erie on WICU-12. Sonya is an Erie native and proud mother of Johnathan Byes-Hopkins.

**Yvonne Caputo, M.S.**, was a teacher in the Erie City School District for 18 years. She went on to be a therapist and a trainer for the Penn Foundation Employee Assistance Program, and as vice president of Human Resources for Frederick Living, a retirement community. While she has retired from her full-time position, she continues to offer management training for St. Luke's Penn Foundation and private counseling on a part-time basis. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in elementary education, and a master's degree in clinical psychology from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Her first book, "Flying with Dad," was a finalist in the 2020 Best Book Awards American Book Fest competition.

**Raven Clark, B.A.**, is an Erie native and current Satellite Program Coordinator at the JES. In 2019, she graduated with her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Allegheny College and is currently working on her Master of Science in Communications at Syracuse University. Raven has a background in research and writing in the social sciences and is a lifelong artist (violin) and patron of the arts. She is interested in the intersections of business, politics, public policy, ethics, sustainability, economics, agriculture, art, culture, and fashion, and aspires to become a journalist.

**Michael E. DeSanctis, Ph.D.**, is professor emeritus of Fine Arts and Theology at Gannon University. He is a four-time recipient of the Student Government Association "Excellence in Teaching" award and has been honored with the Bishop Donald W. Trautman "Feed My Sheep" award for his commitment to the University's Catholic mission. Dr. DeSanctis is an active supporter of ecumenical dialogue and serves on the board of Inter-Church Ministries of Erie County. He and his physician-wife, Kelli, are members of St. Jude the Apostle Church, where they head up the OCIA/Adult Education initiative.



**Adrienne Dixon, Ph.D.**, is president and CEO of Sarah A. Reed Children's Center and teaches in the Counseling Program at PennWest Edinboro University. Adrienne holds a master's degree in Counseling, a post-master's Certificate in Marital and Family Therapy, and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. Adrienne has more than 35 years of clinical experience as a professional counselor, educator, and administrator. Her area of focus has been on Serious Mental Illness (children, families, and adults) and includes settings such as inpatient, residential treatment, drug and alcohol, and outpatient services. Additionally, she conducts professional training and workshops for organizations in the areas of Diversity, Organizational Competence, Clinical Interventions, Strengths Based Assessment, Supervision, and Enhanced Mental Health Services.

**Emily Fetcko, B.S.**, is the CEO of Erie Downtown Partnership. She has 20 years of community and economic development experience and works around the community to marry opportunity with resources writing grants that have contributed \$1.6 million toward downtown revitalization in Erie. She has led downtown public art projects that included collaborations with refugees, English as a Second Language students, minority artists, and educators. Emily has a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications and Public Relations. She represents the region as a board member of the Pennsylvania Downtown Center.

**James Fisher, Ph.D.**, is a professor of Politics and Legal Studies at Penn West Edinboro University. He has taught at the Edinboro campus since 2000 and is an alumnus of the school (with bachelor's degrees in political science and English). He holds a law degree from the College of William and Mary and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He teaches courses in law and politics, political theory, and American politics. He is particularly interested in reproductive politics, civil liberties, and the United States Supreme Court. He regularly gives public lectures and participates in public forums discussing constitutional and legal issues. Professor Fisher trained as a community organizer with the Gamaliel Foundation and has served in leadership positions on the boards of several nonprofit organizations. At Edinboro, he has served as interim provost and associate provost and is currently the PennWest interim dean of the College of Social Sciences & Human Services. He has been nominated twice for Edinboro's Educator of the Year award.

**Sabina Freeman, B.A.**, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from Ohio State University. Freeman currently has several books in print about people and places in the Erie area. Her first book was about Erie city and county women, "Erie History the Women's Story," which she co-authored with Margaret Tempas in 1982 for the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Freeman's books are available through the Fairview Area Historical Society, the Hagen History Center (Erie County Historical Society), two local bookstores and her website, [hiflightpress.com](http://hiflightpress.com). Freeman has contributed articles to several historical magazines and is currently working on a comprehensive biography of Girard's circus showman Dan Rice.

**David Frew, Ph.D.**, a prolific author and historian, is an emeritus professor at Gannon University, where he held a variety of administrative positions during a 33-year career. He is also emeritus director of the Erie County Historical Society and is president of his own management consulting business. Dr. Frew has written or co-written 40 books, most recently "Accidental Paradise: A 13,000-Year History of Presque Isle," and more than 100 articles, cases, and papers. His work has appeared in publications ranging from refereed journals such as the Journal of Applied Psychology to popular magazines such as Sail Magazine and Cruising World. Growing up on Erie's lower west side as a proud Bay Rat, Dr. Frew was known to join neighborhood kids playing and marauding along the west bayfront. He has written for years about his beloved Presque Isle and his adventures on the Great Lakes. In the "On the Waterfront Series" for the JES, the scholar-in-residence takes note of life in and around the water.

**Regina Gaston, P.M.P.**, is a native of Chicago, Illinois. She has 18 years of IT and business experience. As an employee of Erie Insurance, she is a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion leader, as she is involved in the nine Affinity Networks, particularly the African American Affinity Network. She enjoys teaching problem skills to inner city youth, bridging the technology gap for senior citizens, and teaching choir. She is a proud resident of Erie, where she lives with her family.

**Dr. Baher Ghosheh, Ph.D.**, is a scholar-in-residence at the Jefferson Educational Society in Erie, Pennsylvania. An expert in Middle Eastern Studies, he holds a Ph.D. in Economic Development from SUNY-Buffalo and was a Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, cultural and economic Geography at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania until retiring in 2022. He has graduate degrees in International Relations/Middle Eastern Studies, International Trade, and Comparative Economic Development. A native of Jerusalem, Dr. Ghosheh has lived in eight countries, traveled to 59 countries, and has taught in Japan, China, Russia, Italy, and Morocco. He was awarded a Fulbright to conduct research in Malaysia and Singapore and was selected as the Pennsylvania Geographer of the Year and Edinboro University's Educator of the Year.

**Ken Gormley, J.D.**, was the 11th dean of the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University and became Duquesne University's 13th president in July 2016. Gormley joined Duquesne's law faculty in 1994, after teaching at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and engaging in private practice. Gormley earned his B.A. from the University of Pittsburgh in 1977 and his J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1980. Gormley's work on myriad legal/historical topics has earned him a national reputation as a leading constitutional scholar. In 1997, he published *Archibald Cox: Conscience of a Nation* (Perseus Books 1997), the authorized biography of one of the leading lawyers and public servants of the 20th century. In 2010, Gormley published "*The Death of American Virtue: Clinton vs. Starr*" (Crown), a New York Times bestseller chronicling the scandals that plagued the Bill Clinton Presidency. Gormley has testified in the United States Senate three times. He also served as president of the Allegheny County Bar Association, the first academic to hold that position in the organization's 137-year history. From 1998 to 2001, he served as mayor of Forest Hills, Pennsylvania.

**Jim Grazio, Ph.D.**, serves as the Great Lakes biologist for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection based at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center. He provides scientific support to the agency on a wide variety of topics related to the environmental health of Presque Isle Bay and Lake Erie. Over the course of his career Dr. Grazio has developed a particular interest in Aquatic Invasive Species. He currently represents his agency on a number of state, regional, and binational management committees related to this topic and has served as the past chairman of the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species. Dr. Grazio is also an adjunct member of the School of Science at Penn State Behrend and currently co-teaches the capstone course in the Environmental Science major. His talk includes a history of biological invasions in the Great Lakes, as well as current hot topics related to AIS management.

**Ed Grode, M.A.**, is a former Fulbright Scholar to the United Kingdom, received his master's degree in American History from the University of Notre Dame. He later went on to serve as principal at Perry, Strong Vincent, and Technical Memorial high schools in Erie, and as the Director of the Institute for Geography Education at Mercyhurst University until his retirement. For close to a decade, he was a board member of the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, visiting refugee camps in Kenya, Rwanda, and Thailand. He has visited the Kakuma Refugee Camp 10 times and is currently working on a history of the camp with his colleague, Dr. Rahul Oka, of the Anthropology Department at the University of Notre Dame.

**Robert Kibler, Ph.D.**, is chairman of the Division of World Languages and Cultural Studies, and a professor of English and Humanities at Minot State University in North Dakota. His research focuses on the intersections of Latin, Chinese, and Modernist literatures, especially in respect to internationalism, travel, adventure, and ancient rituals and ceremonies. He has written and presented on ancient Chinese philosophy, African tribal life, British Imperial ventures in Africa and Asia, internecine war and violence in the Balkans, and on nationalism in all of its forms. Dr. Kibler's primary scholarly interest, however, follows the trajectory of his dissertation, which explores the debt owed by Ezra Pound's The Cantos poems to Nazi culture, a secluded tribe near the Chinese Tibetan border.

**Gary N. Lee, M.B.A.**, is the chief administrative officer for the Erie County Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission, also known as Diverse Erie. He leads a team on the design, facilitation, and execution of the commission's vision, mission, and goals. In working closely with the Board of Commissioners, Mr. Lee promotes and advances the commission's mission by leading the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion actions and initiatives throughout the region. Mr. Lee was born and raised in Erie. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in graphics communications technology from California University of Pennsylvania, and a Master of Business Administration degree from Gannon University. Mr. Lee has been recognized as one of America's Most Outstanding Men for outstanding, superior leadership ability and exceptional service to the community.

**Judith Lynch, Ph.D.**, has been a board member of the Jefferson Educational Society since its inception and served as its first chairwoman. She is the Jefferson's first and only Decadean Scholar and continues to serve as a scholar-in-residence. From 2004 to 2017, Dr. Lynch served as Associate Professor of Political Science and History at Mercyhurst University, and from 2002 to 2004, she taught at Allegheny College and was part of the Civic Engagement Institute. Prior, she worked as an analyst for the CIA and served for 20 years as Erie County executive, the county's top elected official. She received her Doctorate with Distinction in Political Science in 2001 from the University of Pittsburgh and her M.A. in Social Studies from Gannon University. Her undergraduate degree, a B.A. in History and Political Science, is from George Washington University.

**Christopher Magno, Ph.D.**, has been teaching criminal justice at Gannon University since 2013. He holds a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice, Department of Criminal Justice, Indiana University

in Bloomington. His research focuses on urban crime, urban issues and Geographic Information System. For his innovative teaching and engagement in the Globalization Speaker Series and Community-based Mapping Exhibit he received Gannon's Faculty Award for Excellence in Service-Learning and the Cooney-Jackman Endowed Professorship (2013-2016). Students in his class explore theories and realities of crime and justice. Magno developed crime web exercises over several years of teaching criminal justice and he orchestrates senior student projects for the community-based Mapping Exhibit.

**Michael Kenton Mahler, B.S.**, has been the co-editor of Erie Gay News since it was founded in December 1992. He is also a founding member of NWP Pride Alliance. He serves on the Erie Mayor's LGBTQ Advisory Council, the Pennsylvania Commission for LGBTQ Affairs, as well as on the boards for Community Health Net and Drenched Fur. He became the first LGBTQ person to be fully out in May 1992 when appearing on local television coverage. Michael currently works as a programmer and analyst for Erie Custom Computer Applications.

**Rhonda Matthews, Ph.D.**, is an associate professor of political science and women's studies in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice at PennWest Edinboro University. Rhonda has been with the university since 2002 and served as the director of the Dr. Robert C. Weber Honors Program for three years. Prior to her work at Edinboro, she taught at other institutions and worked in the fields of diversity affairs and residence life. Rhonda is dedicated to the advocacy and empowerment of women and children as a result of her previous work as a sexual assault survivor counselor. Using tenets of intersectional analysis, her primary areas of academic interest include gender and women's studies, sociological theory, popular culture, and stratification.

**Precious McKesson** was the first African American woman in Nebraska to cast an electoral vote in December 2020 for president since the passing of the electoral college act in 1992. In 2021, McKesson was appointed by the Joe Biden Administration to the Department of Education Office of Communications and Outreach working directly with Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona on his national parent and family engagement. She is the current executive director for the Nebraska Democratic Party, and former chairman of the NDP Black Caucus. McKesson focuses on increasing voter turnout, raising funds for candidates of color, recruiting candidates of color, and other issues such as notifying formerly incarcerated residents when they are eligible to vote. She is president of North Omaha Neighborhood Alliance, and National President of Neighborhoods, USA, also known as NUSA. When McKesson isn't fighting the good fight, she's caring for her brother who has been a quadriplegic for the past 14 years. She considers her biggest accomplishment being the mother of Taylor, who recently completed her first year at Creighton University.

**Karen Pierce, MLIS** has a passion for libraries can be traced back to her childhood library in New Jersey. It was a tiny but welcoming building built in the early 1700s. When she grew up and found herself at Slippery Rock University, she spent significant time working on community engagement and rural library development, building a new library in 2018. Karen has worked in the book industry for over 23 years, gaining experience in retail, wholesale, independent consultant book sales, and libraries. As a seasoned director she is passionate about advancing the education of technology and connecting people to information. She is excited to join the team at the Erie County Public Library and will help plan the new Millcreek Branch Library. In addition to Rotary, she is involved in the Lawrence Park Historical Society and the Iroquois School Foundation.

**Christine Riehl, M.S., M.P.P.**, is a retired Foreign Service Officer holding a master's degree in counseling from Gannon University and a master's degree in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School. She has been involved with the Jefferson since its inception, first as the founder of the Jefferson Global Summit speaker series and as a member of the JES Board of Trustees. She is also a passionate social activist concerned for justice, the end to racism, and fixing the problem of income inequality in the U.S. She is a member of AAUW, ACLU, NAACP, and the Erie Book Group, and Women United, the United Way's effort to "crush poverty in Erie" through community schools.

**Andrew Roth, Ph.D.**, has been working in higher education sector for 49 years, and his experience is global. Beginning at Gannon University and then Mercyhurst University, he was a faculty member in three departments: English, Communications, and Business. As a coach he founded Mercyhurst's women's soccer team, and for more than 20 years, he was a senior administrator: director of Admissions, vice president for Enrollment, vice president of Academic Affairs, and college dean. He served as president of Notre Dame College from 2003 to 2014 before being named President-Emeritus. After a brief retirement, he served as interim president of St. Bonaventure University during 2016-2017. Now a scholar-in-residence at the

Jefferson Educational Society, he directs its Raimy Fellows Program as part of the Jefferson Civic Leadership Academy and presents frequently on American cultural issues. He is also author of the Jefferson's popular "Book Notes" series.

**Daniel Schank, Ph.D.**, is an associate teaching professor of English at Penn State Behrend. He earned an M.F.A. from the University of California, San Diego in 2003 and has spent his adult life working in academia, the nonprofit sector, and the visual arts. Since 2014, he has been a frequent contributor to the Erie Reader, where he often explores issues related to crime, addiction, and social justice.

**Wendy Schiller, Ph.D.**, is the Royce Family professor of teaching excellence at Brown University. She is also a professor of political science, International and Public Affairs, and director of the Taubman Center for American Politics and Policy at Brown. She completed her undergraduate work in political science at the University of Chicago, served on the staffs of U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and New York Governor Mario Cuomo, and then earned her Ph.D. from the University of Rochester. After fellowships at the Brookings Institution and Princeton University, she came to Brown in 1994. She teaches popular courses titled "The American Presidency," "Introduction to the American Political Process," and "Gender and Public Policy." Schiller authored or co-authored three books, one edited volume, and one Introductory to a textbook on American Politics. Her latest book, "Inequality Across State Lines: How Policymakers Have Failed Domestic Violence Victims in the United States," was published by Cambridge University Press in March 2023. She has also published many articles in major American political science journals and offers political commentary to local and national news outlets.

**Mark Squeglia, B.A.**, is an Erie native and has spent most of his career working in the areas of information technology and marketing for Hammermill Paper, Erie Insurance, and General Electric. Squeglia is the president of the Hagen History Center Board of Directors, and he has been involved in governance, advancement, planning, facilities, and executive committees. Squeglia has a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Gannon College and has been involved in the Hagen History Center's speaker series for several years. He is also a frequent lecturer for the Jefferson Education Society on historical topics, specializing in military history, specifically World War II, and serves as a board member of Torch International's Erie chapter.

**Dave Tamulonis, B.S.**, is the Events and Marketing manager at Erie Downtown Partnership. A recent transplant to Erie, Dave's diverse background in community development includes work with a community neighborhood organization as well as an organizer of community projects, including working as a public art muralist. He oversees a diverse schedule of events in downtown Erie and serves on several community boards and committees. He graduated from Youngstown State University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design.

**Lyn Twillie-Darby, B.A.**, an Erie native, has served on multiple boards and is a lifetime member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Her career started at Erie Insurance 30 years ago as a commercial lines underwriter trainee. She has since been promoted several times, and now works as a commercial underwriting consultant. She is a graduate of Knoxville College in Knoxville, Tennessee, where she received a bachelor's degree in English/Communications. She is a former Who's Who Among American College & University Students, former First Alternate Miss Knoxville College, and Erie County Young Democrat of the Year nominee. Other accolades include the Humanitarian Award from the Bayfront NATO, Inc., Martin Luther King Center, YMCA Black Achiever Award and she was recognized for "Service Above Self" with the GECAC Paul P. Martin Community Service Award. Ms. Twillie-Darby was also awarded a Women's Empowerment Award from Her P.O.W.E.R in March 2022. Further, she was recently featured in the February 22, 2022, edition of the Erie Times-News. The article was titled "Black History Month – A Great Migration. Lyn is married to James Darby and has two children, Tony and Nia, eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

**Julie Zajac, M.P.H.**, grew up on the farm that provides the base of operation for 3 PillarZ Farm (3PF), in Columbus, Pennsylvania. The values of hard work, perseverance, and life-long learning mark her more than 30-year career in healthcare and public health. Her training also dovetails with 3PF's three-pronged mission of cultivating the next generation of farmers, reconnecting people to their food sources, and enhancing the quality of life in northwestern Pennsylvania. Julie knows the value of farming and agriculture as a way of life and wants to share the family farm to help new farmers realize their goals. She aims to use her expertise in policy, partnerships, and program evaluation to grow 3PF into an organization that will strengthen the resilience of northwestern Pennsylvania's food system.

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