

2022 SUMMER SCHEDULE

LECTURES • DISCUSSIONS

DISTINGUISHED VISITING
SPEAKERS

SATELLITE
PROGRAMMING

JEFFERSON
EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

3207 STATE STREET
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA
814.459.8000

JESerie.org

2022 Summer Schedule

All programs listed below are held at times scheduled at the Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State Street, Erie, PA or at Erie City Hall, 626 State Street, Erie, PA. For more information or to register, call 814.459.8000 or visit www.JESerie.org

SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Lectures, Panel Discussions, Performances, and Tours

When	What	Who	Program Type
Monday, July 18 7 to 8:30 p.m.	Independence of Pa. Courts Threatened	Deborah Gross, Esq.* Jay Silverblatt, Esq.*	Lecture
Tuesday, July 19 7 to 8:30 p.m.	Are Amendments to the Constitution Good or Bad?	Deborah Gross, Esq.*	Free Lecture
Wednesday, July 20 Noon to 1:30 p.m.	Alternative Ways to Pick Judges	Deborah Gross, Esq.* Phil Friedman, Esq.	Community Conversation Free Lecture
Tuesday, July 26 noon to 1:30 p.m.	Erie County Career Pathways Alliance: Preparing for Life after High School	Mary Bula, M.A. Jennifer Pontzer, B.A.	Community Conversation Free Lecture
Wednesday, July 27 7 to 8:30 p.m.	Mindfulness or How to Respond to Life Challenges in More Positive Ways	Kim Hill, M.A.	Lecture
Tuesday, August 2 7 to 8:30 p.m.	Hospice and Palliative Care: Making Smart, Careful Decisions	John L. Barnett M.S.N.; Renee Plyler, B.S.; Christopher Strzalka, M.D. Moderator: Karin Adams	Free Lecture
Wednesday, August 3 7 to 8:30 p.m.	History and Healing: Spotlight on African American Heroes	Johnny Johnson, M.Ed., Dr. Chris Magoc, Ph.D. Melinda Myer, MBA	Free Lecture
Tuesday, August 9 7 to 8:30 p.m.	No 'Exit' in Brexit: Negotiations Continue Two Years Later	Christopher Harben, Ph.D.	Lecture
Wednesday, August 17 7 to 8:30 p.m.	NATO, Germany, Ukraine: Crucial Next Steps	Jackson Janes, Ph.D.*	Distinguished Visiting Lecture
Friday, August 19 4 to 5:00 p.m.	Erie's New Downtown: Flagship City Food Hall and Public Market	John Persinger, JD	Free Walking Tour at Celebrate Erie
Saturday, August 20 2 to 3:00 p.m.	Lower Parade Street: Erie's 'Ellis Island'	Ed Whitbred, B.S.	Free Lecture at Celebrate Erie**
Saturday, August 20 3 to 4 :00 p.m.	Erie's MCRC: Welcoming and Promoting Opportunity for the New American Population	Katie Kretz, B.A.	Free Lecture at Celebrate Erie**
Saturday, August 20 4 to 5:00 p.m.	Celebrating Lake Erie: Working Together to Protect Our Greatest Asset	Jenny Tompkins, B.S.	Free Lecture at Celebrate Erie**
Sunday, August 21 2 to 3:00 p.m.	Erie Politics: Old, New, and Notable	Pat Cuneo, B.S.	Free Lecture at Celebrate Erie**
Sunday, August 21 3 to 4:00 p.m.	When Erie Was the Freshwater Fishing Capital of the World	David Frew, Ph.D.	Free Lecture at Celebrate Erie**

*Denotes Visiting Expert from outside the Erie community.

ECGRA GRANT MONEY WORKS HERE!
ecgra.org 814-897-2690



****Free Jefferson Lectures at Celebrate Erie** will be held at:
Erie City Hall, Bagnoni Council Chambers, 626 State Street,
Erie Pennsylvania 16501

Jefferson Digital Programming





Live-streamed on www.facebook.com/JeffersonErie

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

When	What	Who	Program Type
Wednesday, July 20 4 to 5 p.m.	1968/2022: The Seeds of Our Discontents	Phillip Payne, Ph.D. Andrew Roth, Ph.D. Ben Speggen, M.A.	Free Digital Program
Thursday, August 11 Noon to 1 p.m.	Erie, PA and Lublin, Poland: Opportunities and Threats in a Changing World Economy	Bruce Kibler, Ph.D. Pawel Paserbiak, Ph.D.*	Free 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, July 7 6 to 8:30 p.m.	“Fixing Where We Rest Our Heads:” A Candid Conversation with Two African American PA Mayors on the Personal and Political	Mayor Jaime Kinder of Meadville*, Mayor Dwan B. Walker of Aliquippa* intro by Mayor Joe Schember of Erie	Free Lecture Reception 
Thursday, July 14 7 to 8:30 p.m.	Eastside Grassroots Coalition: The Implementation of a Strategic Plan for the Buffalo Road Corridor	Gary Horton, B.A.	Community Conversation 
Thursday, August 4 7 to 8:30 p.m.	The Slap Heard ‘Round the World: Why Toxic Masculinity Just Will Not Die	Rhonda Matthews, Ph.D.	Free Lecture 
Thursday, August 11 7 to 8:30 p.m.	Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM) and Second Chance Sentencing	Maria Goellner, J.D.	Free Lecture 

Fairview – Lincoln Community Library			
When	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
Monday, July 11 6 to 7:30 p.m.	Barn Stormers and Cloud Busters	Sabina Freeman, B.A.	Free Lecture
Monday, August 29 6 to 7:30 p.m.	Securing Freedom: Are the Slavery Amendments Relevant in Today’s America?	Johnny Johnson, M.Ed.	Free Lecture

Corry - Corry Higher Education Council			
When	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
Tuesday, June 28 6 to 7:30 p.m.	Pennsylvania’s Role in D-Day	Richard Arthur, M.A.	Lecture
Tuesday, August 23 6 to 7:30 p.m.	When Corry Led the Leather Tanning Industry	Lisa Puckly	Lecture

*Denotes Visiting Expert from outside the Erie community.

Visiting
Speakers from
outside the Erie
Community



Mayor Jaime Kinder



Mayor Dwan B. Walker

Distinguished Visiting Speaker



Jackson Janes, Ph.D.

**Wednesday, August 17
7 to 8:30 p.m.**

Breakdown of Program Costs (unless otherwise noted):

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

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

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

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. The Jefferson Educational Society no longer accepts cash as form of payment for events.

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

Jefferson Satellite Programming during the Summer Term will be held at the Erie Center for Arts and Culture (ECAT, 650 East Ave Suite 120, Erie, PA 16503), Corry Higher Education Council (221 N Center St, Corry, PA 16407) and the Lincoln Community Center Library (1255 Manchester Road, Erie, PA 16505). All Jefferson Satellite Programs are free and open to the public.

For full program descriptions, please visit 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.

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.

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

JES Lecturer Biographies

Karen Adams is currently the Ex. Director of Inter-Church Ministries of Erie County and a VNA Hospice Chaplain after retiring from a career as a church music/ liturgy director and pastoral minister. She has been a NODA (No One Dies Alone) volunteer in Cleveland, Roanoke, VA and now at UPMC Hamot and was a hospice volunteer and doula in Roanoke prior to her return to Erie in 2019. She has been a strong proponent of hospice for 35+ years since both of her parents were in hospice care in rural upstate NY. Karen is also a member of the Board of Advisors for Julia Hospice and Palliative Care and believes that there is much education needed about the practices of palliative medicine and hospice care.

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.

John L. Barnett MSN, CRNP graduated from Edinboro College in 2004 with his bachelor's degree and from Clarion University in 2010. John has been employed in many different specialties including Gastroenterology, Interventional Pain Management and Family Practice. He has worked in Palliative Care in both the inpatient and outpatient settings throughout his career. His interest in end-of-life care and hospice was fostered by his time working as a Registered Nurse in the MICU. During this time, he came to understand that patients and families often need specialized guidance when making decisions and clarifying goals of care. A native of Erie, Pennsylvania John and his husband of 22 years enjoy spending time with friends and family, raising organic vegetables and playing with their Yorkshire Terrier, Boo-Boo.

Mary Bula, M.A., has led Erie Together, a countywide collective impact movement to make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work and thrive, since April 2012. Before joining Erie Together, Mary was vice president of the Growth Partnership Division of the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership (ERCGP). Mary serves on a number of education and youth-related boards and committees. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Allegheny College and a Master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs.

Pat Cuneo, B.S., serves as the Director of Publications at the Jefferson. He is a former reporter, editor, and columnist for the Erie Times-News. An Erie native, he is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and studied journalism at Poynter Institute and the American Press Institute. Pat is the Editor of the Journal of Erie Studies and taught journalism at Edinboro University, Gannon University, and the former Alliance College. He is a board member of the Boys and Girls Club of Erie and a member of the Planning Board of the Town of Mina, N.Y.

Sabina Shields Freeman, B.A., holds degree in Journalism from The 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 Tenpas in 1982 for the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Freeman's books are available through the Fairview Area Historical Society, the Erie County Historical Society, two local bookstores and her website: hightlightpress.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. Frew has written or co-written 35 books and more than 100 articles, cases, and papers. He has authored or co-authored 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.

Phil Friedman, Esq., is a partner at Conner Riley Friedman & Weichler based in Erie, Pennsylvania. Philip B. Friedman has a well-deserved reputation as a superior trial attorney. Representing clients throughout Pennsylvania, he focuses his practice on federal and state criminal defense and personal injury and wrongful death litigation. He is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and a former chairman of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. He is a past president of the Erie County Bar Association and a past member of the Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. Mr. Friedman attended Washington and Jefferson College and received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in political science in 1975. He received his legal education at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and obtained his Juris Doctorate in 1978. Admitted to practice in both Pennsylvania and New York.

Maria Goellner, Esq., is a public interest attorney and advocate for equal justice. She is the Pennsylvania State Policy Director for FAMM, a nonpartisan reform organization that strives to create a more fair and effective justice system that respects our American values of individual accountability and dignity while keeping our communities safe. Goellner is a graduate of Fordham University and New York Law School and previously acted as the sole Assistant Federal Defender for the Western District of Pennsylvania's Erie Division. She also served as a defense attorney in Florida's 20th Judicial Circuit and clerked with the Legal Aid Society in Queens before joining FAMM. She has protected the rights and dignity of thousands of families over the last decade. She has served on the Board of the Erie County Bar Association, co-founded its Diversity and Inclusion Division, and organized participatory defense and bail fund hubs. She also sat on the Third Circuit Lawyers Advisory Committee and has been recognized by the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers for exceptional advocacy and commitment to education and equal justice. She is a second-generation American and lives in Erie, Pennsylvania with her family.

Deborah Gross, Esq., comes to Pennsylvania for Modern Courts from over 35 years of private legal practice in federal and state courts all over the country concentrating on complex commercial litigation. She was Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association in 2017 and focused her efforts during the city's extraordinary legal nonprofit community. She spoke out on behalf of the Philadelphia Bar Association on the importance of judicial independence as the cornerstone of democracy and both received a commendation proclamation from the Mayor as a result of the work they did to train lawyers to assist lawful permanent residents in becoming naturalized citizens. Debbie also served as President of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation in 2013 and 2014, and as a Trustee of the Foundation from 2004-2020 and served on the Bar Foundation's Fundraising, Grants, and Finance Committees. She has served on the boards of many organizations such as Drexel's Kline School of Law, the Public Interest Law Center, Philly VIP, Temple Adath Israel of the Main Line, Women's Philanthropy of Jewish Federation. Debbie teaches at the Villanova University School of Law and received her J.D. from Boston University School of Law and her B.S. in Economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Christopher Harben, D.S.L., teaches the capstone class for senior Business Majors at the Black School at Penn State Behrend. Dr. Harben also teaches International Business and is an adviser for International Business students, as well as the International Business Club. He is President of HLMC, LLC, a consulting/coaching firm specializing in small-business strategy, organizational behavior/design, and leadership development. Clients have included businesses in construction, manufacturing, professional services, retail, restaurants, and hospital systems. He designed and is the Coordinator of Fulton Leadership University—a nine-month leadership development program in Fulton County, Ohio. He holds a Certified Global Business Professional designation from the National Association of Small Business International Trade Educators.

Kim Hill, M.A. is an Erie native and has worked in the field of wellness her entire career. She is currently a mindfulness facilitator with over 40 years of teaching experience. Kim received her Training in Mindfulness Facilitation (TMF) certification from UCLA's Semel Institute for Neuroscience & Human Behavior in 2018 and has been an active certified member of the International Mindfulness Teachers Association since that time. She currently runs Mindfulness Strategies, a consulting firm that provides mindfulness training and programming to businesses, schools, universities, and other organizations. Prior to running Mindfulness Strategies, Kim taught health and physical education at the grade school, high school and college level. She received her undergraduate degree in Kinesiology from the Pennsylvania State University, her masters in Wellness for the University of Michigan and BSN in Nursing from Villa College. Currently Kim is a member of the National Ski Patrol and does volunteer work for Outdoor Emergency Response.

Gary Horton, B.A., is the founder and CEO of the Urban Erie Community Development Corporation (UECDC) and the current President of the NAACP branch in Erie. Gary Horton is a passionate advocate for building vibrant communities by helping people to remove barriers to self-sufficiency. Horton is a co-founder of the Minority Community Investment Coalition as well as the neighborhood improvement group Eastside Grassroots Coalition. He also currently serves on the Erie Neighborhood Growth Partnership board and the Governor's Advisory Board for Environmental Justice. Since graduating from Cheyney University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor's degree in Social and Behavioral Sciences and a minor in Political Science, Gary has given more than 30 years to public service. In addition to holding positions in the mayor's office, the governor's office and the federal Department of Health Education and Welfare, he also was elected to two terms as a School Board Director.

Jackson Janes, Ph.D., is the President Emeritus of the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies at the Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC, where he has been affiliated since 1989. Dr. Janes has been engaged in German-American affairs in numerous capacities over many years. He has studied and taught in German universities in Freiburg, Giessen and Tübingen. He was the Director of the German-American Institute in Tübingen (1977-1980) and then directed the European office of The German Marshall Fund of the United States in Bonn (1980-1985). Before joining AIGCS, he served as Director of Program Development at the University Center for International Studies at the University of Pittsburgh (1986-1988). He was also Chair of the German Speaking Areas in Europe Program at the Foreign Service Institute in Washington, DC, from 1999-2000 and President of the International Association for the Study

of German Politics from 2005-2010. Dr. Janes is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and the Atlantic Council of the United States. He serves on the advisory boards of the Berlin office of the American Jewish Committee, *Beirat der Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* (ZfAS), the Robert Bosch Foundation Alumni Association, and the American Bundestag Intern Network (ABIN) in Washington, DC. He is a member of the Board of the German American Fulbright Commission and serves on the Selection Committee for the Bundeskanzler Fellowships for the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He is a member of the Cosmos Club in Washington DC. Dr. Janes has lectured throughout Europe and the United States and has published extensively on issues dealing with Germany, German-American relations, and transatlantic affairs. In addition to regular commentary given to European and American news radio, he has appeared on CBS, CNN, C-SPAN, PBS, CBC, and is a frequent commentator on German television. Dr. Janes is listed in Who's Who in America and Who's Who in Education. In 2005, Dr. Janes was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, Germany's highest civilian award.

Johnny Johnson, M.Ed., is a native of Covington, Georgia, and has been a resident of Erie for 45 years. Mr. Johnson taught health and physical education at various middle and high schools in Erie's Public Schools for more than 30 years before retiring. He coached many athletic teams and was the first African American to coach a varsity basketball team in Erie's history. He earned his master's degree in Curriculum and Administration in HPE from Slippery Rock University after earning his bachelor's degree in education from Fort Valley State University. He is one of the founding members of the Harry T. Burleigh Society, has participated in numerous historical programs, and is the author of *Erie African Americans in the 1880s*.

Bruce A. Kibler, Ph.D. attended the University of Maryland, College Park for a BS in Political Science and a MA in German Language and Literature, Johns Hopkins for an MAS in Business and Information Technology and Matej Bel University in the Slovak Republic for his PhD in Strategic and International Management. Dr. Kibler has performed projects in diverse countries such as the acquisition of Voicestream (T-Mobile) by Deutsche Telekom (\$53 bn) and the business transformation of Hrvatski Telekom, in Croatia. After a successful career in the business world Professor Kibler moved into academia and has championed community engagement via class projects uniting student learning, community involvement and economic development here in Erie, championing the alleviation of food deserts, fiber optic to the home, the creation of a land trust and much more. Professor Kibler has forged partnerships with international universities in Esslingen, Germany and Lublin, Poland, Erie's sister city. He has recently become more active in sustainability and economic development, specifically, engaging with Africa GreenTec to bring solar solutions to sub-Saharan African villages.

Jaime Kinder, B.A., is the current Mayor of Meadville, PA. On January 3rd of this year, she was sworn in as Meadville's first woman and Black woman mayor. Jaime Kinder is a mother of three and lifelong resident of Meadville along with her mother, grandparents, and great grandparents. Jaime attended Edinboro University as an adult student and studied sociology and African American history. Jaime has worked in sales and management for most of her life, and she has a wide range of work experience, including cleaning services at Allegheny College, cashing and factory work in Meadville. Currently, Kinder is the co-owner of Evolution Printing Systems, a custom printing and promotional product retail store that has been a part of the Meadville community since 2017. She has a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Edinboro University.

Katie Kretz, B.A., is the Executive Director of MCRC. Katie has been a resident of Erie since 2008. She was brought into the MCRC family in 2021 to help lead the organization into the future and to enhance services for the Latino, Refugee, Immigrant and New American population that MCRC serves. She brings a wealth of non-profit financial, managerial, organizational development and leadership skills to MCRC. Katie is a graduate of Averett University where she studied Business Administration and Equestrian Studies, and served twelve years with local human service agencies, providing services to children and adults with intellectual disabilities and autism. She participated in the Leadership Erie program of 2012 and served on the board of directors with the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Educational Institute. She is currently serving as a board member for Voices4Autism and is a member of the New American Council with the City of Erie.

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 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 several 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 & women's studies, sociological theory, popular culture and stratification. She is a long-time fan of science fiction, superheroes and comic books, is married and has one daughter.

A Shared Heritage is co-led by Johnny Johnson (Burleigh Legacy Alliance), Dr. Chris Magoc (Mercyhurst University), and Melinda Meyer (Erie Yesterday). Johnny Johnson, M.Ed., is a native of Covington, GA, and has been a resident of Erie for 50 years. Mr. Johnson taught health and physical education at various middle and high schools in Erie's Public Schools for more than 30 years before retiring. He is one of the founding members of the Harry T. Burleigh Society,

the current president of the Burleigh Legacy Alliance has participated in numerous historical programs and is the author of *Erie African Americans in the 1880s*. Dr. Chris Magoc is a professor of History at Mercyhurst University whose most recent book is *A Progressive History of American Democracy Since 1945: American Dreams, Hard Realities* (Routledge Press, January 2022). He is a 2012 recipient of the Mercyhurst Teaching Excellence Award. Melinda Meyer is an experienced public historian, educator, project consultant, grant writer and nonprofit administrator. As a public historian, she consistently pursues avenues to share local history with all audiences. Ms. Meyer has also taught museum studies and historic preservation undergraduate courses at Mercyhurst University.

Pawel Paserbiak, Ph.D., is the head of the Department of World Economy and European Integration at the Institute of Economics and Finance, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland. In his research, he focuses, firstly, on the phenomena and processes taking place in the global economy, with particular emphasis on the area of international trade and investment, and secondly, on the processes of regional economic integration, particularly in the area of Asia-Pacific. As part of the project SPEAC (Jean Monnet Network), with scientists from South Korea, Singapore, Germany, and Sweden, he is researching the phenomenon of connectivity between Europe and Asia. Also, under the Erasmus+ program, he cooperates with Gannon University, Erie. Pa. Paserbiak is the author and co-author of numerous scientific papers, books, and book chapters. Professor Paserbiak lectured in numerous universities in Germany, Japan, Spain, and the United States.

Phillip G. Payne, Ph.D., is a professor of history at St. Bonaventure University. He joined the faculty in 1998. Dr. Payne teaches a wide variety of classes on post-Civil War United States History and courses in digital and public history. He is the author of *Dead Last: The Public Memory of Warren G. Harding's Scandalous Legacy* (Ohio University Press, 2008) and *Crash! How the Boom and Bust of the 1920s Worked* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015). You can learn more about his work here.

John Persinger, J.D., is the first CEO of the Erie Downtown Development Corporation, which was formed by community leaders in 2017 to revitalize downtown Erie through property development. Since taking on this role, the EDDC has been featured by the White House, the Wall Street Journal, and Forbes, and Persinger has testified before Congress. Prior to joining the EDDC, Persinger worked as an attorney with MacDonald Illig Jones & Britton. Before law school, he served in the White House and at the U.S. Embassy in Canberra, Australia. He is a graduate of Harvard and Notre Dame Law School.

Renee Plyler, B.S. is a Licensed and Certified Grief Professional who acts as the Bereavement Coordinator for LECOM Visiting Nurse Association. Renee holds a Bachelor of Social Work Degree (BSW) from Mercyhurst University and a Master's in Science and Social Administration Degree (MSSA) from Case Western Reserve University where she focused on the study of Children, Youth and Families. Renee feels as though this field and career has chosen her to assist families with the various stages and challenges of grief following their loved one's death. Renee has a PA Social Work License (LSW), Certification as a Grief Professional (CGP) and is in the process of obtaining her licensure as a PA Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). In addition to assisting families after their loved one's death, Renee assists patients and families as they begin to adjust to their decision to place their loved one on Hospice services.

Jennifer Pontzer, B.A., currently serves as director of Career Street and has been with the project since its launch in February 2014. In this role, she has overseen the launch and development by collaborating with local business and industry, as well as local educators. Prior to her involvement with Career Street, Jennifer worked as a constituent service representative for U.S. Congressman Mike Kelly. Jennifer has a B.A. in education from Westminster College. She serves on several boards and committees focused on education and workforce development.

Alisa Puckly is a local business owner who grew up in Corry. Over the years a love for genealogy and local history has led her to become a lifetime member of the Corry Area Historical Society eleven years ago. During this time, she served as president, treasurer, executive board member, and event planner, and is presently curator for the Society's museum. She is also very active in helping Veil Maternity Hospital adoptees find their biological family through DNA. This work has led to speaking engagements and newspaper interviews over the years. She has found all local history fascinating and loves sharing it with others.

Andrew Roth, Ph.D., has been working in the higher education sector for 49 years, and his experience is global. Beginning at Gannon University (nee College) and then Mercyhurst University (nee College) he was a faculty member in three departments: English, Communications, and Business; a coach – he founded Mercyhurst's women's soccer team; and for more than 20 years, a senior administrator: Director of Admissions, VP for Enrollment, Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the College. In 2003 he assumed the presidency of Notre Dame College, from which he retired in 2014 after receiving an Honorary Doctorate for his leadership and service; he was named President-Emeritus. After a brief retirement, he served as Interim-President of St. Bonaventure University during 2016-2017. Currently, he is a scholar-in-residence at the Jefferson Educational Society, where he directs its Raimy Fellows Program as part of the Jefferson Civic Leadership Academy and doing extensive research & offering presentations on "America in 1968" and "American Tapestry: 'We Tell Ourselves Stories'" – deep explorations into the "culture wars" and the stories Americans tell themselves about what it means to be an American.

Jay Silberblatt, Esq., currently serves as the 128th President of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. He is a partner with the Pittsburgh law firm of Silberblatt Mermelstein, P.C. He is Board Certified by the National Board of Trial Advocacy as a Civil Trial Advocate. Silberblatt concentrates his practice in civil litigation with a particular emphasis on lawyers' professional liability matters. He is a member of the Board of Governors of the Allegheny County Bar Association, and a Fellow of the Academy of Trial Lawyers of Allegheny County. Silberblatt has served as Chair of both the Civil Litigation Section of the Allegheny County and of the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA). He has served on the Board of Governors of the Academy of Trial Lawyers of Allegheny County and as a Director of the PBA, served as its Zone 12 Governor and is a member of the PBA House of Delegates. He is a current member of council of the PBA Minority Bar Committee, a member of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania's Continuing Legal Education Board, and a Hearing Committee Member for the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. He received his B.A., cum laude, from Allegheny College in 1977 and his J.D. from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in 1980.

Ben Speggen, M.A., joined the JES team in February 2015. Prior to his current role, chiefly focused on the growth and development of the think tank's hallmark Global Summit speaker series, he led the group's introduction of digital programming; guided its satellite programming initiative; directed its year-round programming and its Civic Leadership Academy; and put his writing and editing skills to work on a wide range of publications; and more. Born in Morgantown, West Virginia, Ben grew up in the southwestern corner of Pennsylvania in Carmichaels and went on to study literature, history, and journalism at Gannon University, where he also earned his master's degree.

Christopher Strzalka, MD, is the President of Julia Hospice and Palliative Care Board of Directors, and the Medical Director of JHPC. Dr. Strzalka brings passion, professionalism, and medical experience to these roles. A physician for over 32 years, he has spent his entire professional career in Erie, PA. After completing his surgical training at the University of Buffalo, he practiced as a cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon at Hamot Medical Center for over 16 years and pioneered many new surgical procedures indicative of his commitment to improving both the safety and success of complex heart surgery. After retiring from the practice of surgery and completing a fellowship in hospice and palliative medicine at the Cleveland Clinic, he served as the Director of Palliative Medicine and Supportive Care Services at Saint Vincent Health Center and as the medical director for Regional Hospice. During his training in Cleveland, he worked at a residential/inpatient hospice facility and recognized that this type of facility was needed in Erie County.

Jenny Tompkins, B.A., is PennFuture's Campaign Manager for Clean Water Advocacy. She leads the "Our Water, Our Future" campaign, focused on implementing sound policy solutions to improve water quality and ensure the health of communities in the Pennsylvania Lake Erie Watershed. She earned a B.A. in Environmental Studies at Allegheny College. Prior to joining PennFuture, she served as a professional grant writer and community trauma reduction advocate. Mostly recently, she held the position of Crawford County Assistant Planning Director for Community Development. Having grown up on the Finger Lakes in Central New York, she said she gained an appreciation for freshwater ecosystems at an early age.

Dwan B. Walker, B.A., is the current mayor of Aliquippa, PA. Aliquippa is a third-class city located approximately 20 miles northwest of the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on the Southern border of Beaver County, overlooking the Ohio River. In November of 2011, Dwan B. Walker became the first African American in the city's 204-year existence to be elected Mayor, and only the second in Beaver County. As a lifelong resident of the city of Aliquippa and a 1994 graduate of the Aliquippa school district, Mr. Walker participated in student government and varsity athletics. He continued his education at Robert Morris University, Coraopolis Pennsylvania earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications in 1999.

Ed Whitbred, B.S., is an Erie "Lifer" that grew up about two blocks from City Hall. He attended Jones School, East High and Edinboro University. He taught for two years at Millcreek McDowell and then spent thirty-five years at Procter & Gamble. He has served on the boards of SafeNet and Bethany Outreach Center, both located near Parade Street. He is a Lay Worship Leader in the Lutheran SYNOD. He is Program chair for the Y Speakers Series and was an active member and sometime host of "The Amazing Grays" which was produced through the facilities of Community Access Media.



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