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# inside cgs

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH • COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES

SUMMER 2016

Pictured above: Karl Gibson  
Read his story on page 2.

## CGS Hosts Special Continuing Education Events as Part of Pitt's Year of the Humanities in the University

This past March, the University of Pittsburgh College of General Studies (CGS) hosted several events to provide a platform for exploring the role of the humanities in the field of continuing education. The events were hosted in conjunction with the Pitt Office of the Provost's designation of academic year 2015–16 as the Year of the Humanities in the University. The designation was "designed to highlight the important role that humanistic thinking plays in research and education across the University," said Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Patricia E. Beeson.

### "Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters"

Michael S. Roth, president of Wesleyan University and an award-winning author, spoke at the University Club on March 2 about his most recent book, *Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters*. Roth offered insight into the broader and practical value of a liberal arts education in today's increasingly competitive and global society. His book takes a positive stance on the interconnectedness of the humanities and sciences and their importance for our students' future success and in creating a more humane world.

The Association of American Colleges & Universities announced Roth as the 2016 winner of the Frederic W. Ness Book Award for *Beyond the University*. The Ness Award is given for the book that best illuminates the goals and practices of a contemporary liberal education. Roth is a leading public intellectual who advocates for a pragmatic liberal education and the continued significance and role that higher education plays in American society.

### Humanities in Continuing Education

Humanities in Continuing Education, which took place on March 23, was a one-day series of three successive programs, each engaging with

the humanities as a means of connecting the academic, personal, and professional worlds with aspirations.

### "Baroque Art: A Global Style"

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Pitt hosted a public lecture, "Baroque Art: A Global Style," presented by Rachel Miller, a PhD candidate in the University of Pittsburgh Department of History of Art and Architecture. The conversation revolved around the following questions: What is the Baroque? What characteristics enabled the Baroque to become a truly global style? How were the works of celebrated Baroque artists like Peter Paul Rubens and Rembrandt affected by this global turn? Through examples drawn from around the world, participants came to understand the elements of the Baroque that facilitated the style's tendency to move: its theatricality, licentiousness, engagement of the senses, ornamentation, and ecstatic elements.

OLLI at Pitt is a learning community of adults age 50 and better that offers a broad range of courses and seminars in the liberal arts and humanities, each designed with new learning opportunities and enriching experiences for OLLI members.

### Enriching or Riches? A Panel on the Role of the Humanities in Our Professional and Personal Lives

CGS students and alumni came together to discuss how their academic paths have been influenced by their studies in the humanities

and what a degree in the humanities means for one's present and future career prospects.

### Human Beings/Being Human: CGS Photography and Video Exhibit

A culminating event in the series, this public exhibit showcased the work of CGS students by thematizing and visualizing students' encounters with people and human landscapes during their studies at home and abroad. A judge's award as well as a public award were given to those students whose works received the highest recognition.

"Many CGS students are veterans, retirees, working parents, reentry students, transfer students, or professionals seeking educational advancement and personal fulfillment. Collectively, they bring knowledge, perspectives, needs, and experiences that offer a unique contribution to the ongoing dialogue that happened this year at Pitt," says Boryana Dobrev, director of academic programs at CGS.



Mary Ganska, a CGS social sciences major, won the Judge's Choice Award in the Human Beings/Being Human CGS photography and video exhibition for her photo, titled *Father and Mother*.

Alexis Donaldson, Leadership certificate student and social work major, won the People's Choice Award in the Human Beings/Being Human CGS photography and video exhibition for her photo, titled *Near the End of the Road*.



**CGS students can earn a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in humanities.** The major focuses on courses from three humanities departments and can be customized to meet a student's interests and personal or career goals.

Graduates who majored in humanities have a variety of skills that make them attractive to prospective employers. Career fields pursued by humanities graduates include the following:

Acting and drama	Journalism	Publishing
College administration	Marketing and advertising	Real estate
Event planning	Occupational therapy	Social work
Human resources	Politics	Teaching
Insurance	Public relations	Travel and tourism

## A Message from Jessica Sevcik, CGS Student Government President



To describe the College of General Studies (CGS) in one word would be to understate the compassion, commitment, dedication, and unwavering support that it gives to all its students. CGS accepted me into its program as a student with enormous dreams and average test scores (not to mention eight years removed from high school) with encouragement and exceptional advising.

After a rocky start in pursuing my initial dreams of engineering and business management, advisor Jessica Roscoe and former CGS director of the McCarl Center for Nontraditional Student Success Sherry Miller Brown guided me toward my future career path in mass media communication aided by my involvement in CGS Student Government (CGSSG).

As a committee composed of nontraditional students and advising staff, CGSSG organizes student and alumni events throughout the year as well as provides support for new CGS students. Most importantly, though, CGSSG has fun doing it all. For example, here is a sampling of events that CGSSG sponsored for CGS students, alumni, faculty, staff, and their families during the last academic year:

- **Welcome Back BBQ:** a kid-friendly event featuring games, prizes, and karaoke (September 2015)
- **National Nontraditional Student Week:** a week of academic and social events with a global theme (November 2015)
- **Monte Carlo Night:** an evening featuring free-to-play games, prizes, food, and music (January 2016)
- **CGS Excellence Awards:** a reception honoring exceptional students, faculty, and staff (April 2016)
- **Make Finals Week a Walk in the Park:** a free lunch and a relaxing afternoon in Pittsburgh's Highland Park (April 2016)

What does it mean to be a nontraditional student? The University of Pittsburgh defines it simply as any student who did not enroll in college immediately following high school graduation. Many CGS students are veterans, parents, or working students who attend school either part or full time or students of any age continuing their higher education.

CGS and the University of Pittsburgh have given me and CGS alumni a tremendous opportunity to be part of a historic, prestigious, award-winning research university and the chance to give back to the world using the education that we have earned here.

I look forward to my new role as CGSSG president, and I hope to attract more attention to CGS and the programs and services that it has to offer. We always are looking for student feedback and comments on how we can improve, and we always are happy to meet other CGS students.

## SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

### Determination Fuels Student's Quest to Succeed

In 2010, **Lenora Austin** decided that it was time to apply to the University of Pittsburgh to complete her college degree. It had been 33 years since she first attended Pitt in 1977. Austin felt good about her decision and was ready for the challenge. But the first challenge she encountered was not the one she was anticipating: Somehow, the University could not locate her previous college records. Austin was surprised but certainly not ready to give up the search.

"You probably know the saying 'It ain't over 'til the fat lady sings.' Well, I thought to myself, she hasn't even cleared her throat yet," says Austin. Eventually, Pitt found Austin's records and in 2011, she was accepted by the College of General Studies (CGS) and returned to Pitt.

Austin is majoring in administration of justice—the field that she has been pursuing since childhood—and is deeply honored to be the inaugural recipient of the Anthony G. Novosel Memorial Scholarship. Novosel was the father of Tony Novosel, a CGS alumnus and undergraduate advisor and senior lecturer in Pitt's Department of History, who teaches a course on Ireland for CGS (*see related story on page 4*).

Gifts to the Anthony G. Novosel Memorial Scholarship can be made by visiting [giveto.pitt.edu/givecgs](http://giveto.pitt.edu/givecgs).



Throughout his life, Anthony Novosel's philanthropic and personal endeavors created opportunities for people to improve their lives. He also was a strong believer in education and the valuable benefits that an education can provide. It is in this spirit that his children established the fund in his name. They want to continue Novosel's good work and to provide opportunities for nontraditional students to pursue their passions and achieve their goals. Austin was nominated for the scholarship for her dedication to her education.

"I was thrown back a little when I learned the news and I am so grateful to the Novosel family for their support and for helping to make my childhood dream become a reality," says Austin. "I love Pitt. Several of my family members are alumni, and someday I hope my grandson becomes one, too," she adds.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### Student Stays the Course to His Education Destination

**Karl Gibson** was an ambitious University of Pittsburgh student pursuing three degrees: a Bachelor of Science in natural sciences in the College of General Studies, a Bachelor of Science in psychology in the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, and a Bachelor of Philosophy in sociology in the University Honors College. With three terms on the Dean's List and six terms on the Dean's Stars list (achieving a 4.0 GPA), Gibson, who graduated summa cum laude in May, is on his way to medical school to study either psychiatry or primary care medicine. He also may pursue teaching opportunities down the road.

Gibson comes from a proud Pitt family: His grandfather, grandmother, mother, aunt, and brother are all alumni, and his sister will be a senior at the University this fall. Given his family's long line of Pitt alumni and the unparalleled research opportunities provided by the University, Gibson knew that Pitt was a perfect fit for him. His research activities included working in a lab examining neurobehavioral outcomes of cardiac arrest and studying the factors associated with mid- and late-life suicide. Gibson also conducted his own research examining neighborhood distress, race, and suicide. His findings were accepted for publication in the *Journal of Interpersonal Relations, Intergroup Relations and Identity*. You can read Gibson's article at [jiriri.ca/volumes/JIRIRIVolume9.pdf](http://jiriri.ca/volumes/JIRIRIVolume9.pdf).

Gibson has been recognized for his academic excellence by being nominated for the Avery Award for Undergraduate Students in the Department of Sociology and receiving a Brackenridge Research Fellowship and the CGS Success and Determination Scholarship. He also was the CGS Emma Locke Award nominee for 2016.

In addition to his academic achievements, Gibson wanted to share some important advice with his fellow students. "Do not let illness or any kind of adversity prevent you from completing the education or experiences that you want from Pitt," he said. Gibson knew this firsthand from dealing with his own health issues resulting from a car accident. Even though he had to take several terms off for surgeries, he stayed the course and overcame adversity.

"Being a nontraditional student has made me stronger, and I believe I gained a richer education because of it," Gibson said.



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

# Amy L. Ridgeway (BS '80)

**Amy L. Ridgeway** works for the U.S. Army as director of the Network Enterprise Center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Fort Lewis, Wash.

### Why did you choose to pursue a degree from the College of General Studies (CGS) at the University of Pittsburgh?

"After I graduated from high school, I enlisted in the U.S. Army and found that I liked it and was doing well. While stationed in California, I began taking CLEP [College Level Examination Program] tests and courses at a local junior college. Pitt's College of General Studies accepted my CLEP credits, and my CLEP credits combined with my Monterey Peninsula College credits meant that I was an academic junior.

"I then applied for a two-year Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) scholarship and was selected—and could therefore accept the two-year ROTC scholarship, as the University of Pittsburgh accepted me as an academic junior. So Pitt was it for me! However, I always knew that I would eventually attend the University of Pittsburgh, as both my mom and dad were Pitt graduates and my grandfather used to be the head of Pitt's history department. Since then, my two sisters and my brother also have graduated from Pitt."

### Did your degree prepare you for your career?

"Yes, it did. My major was psychology, which helped me to better understand why people do the things that they do and how they go about making their decisions. I was able to interact with so many different people at Pitt as a student, as a member of ROTC, and as a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs work-study student.

"More so than the courses preparing me, the total experience at Pitt prepared me for my career and further studies. Since earning my Bachelor of Science degree at Pitt, I have gone on to earn a Master of Science in systems management at the University of Denver, a Master of Science in Information Systems at George Mason University, and a Juris Doctor at Seattle University. I graduated from law school in 2007 and passed the Washington State bar exam in 2008."



### What was your most memorable moment as a student?

"There are so many memorable moments, but I'll just mention two. First, I was a member of the Pershing Rifles when I attended Pitt, and we usually provided the color guard for Pitt home football games. It was an honor and quite a thrill to march out onto the field with the American flag as the national anthem was played. My second memorable moment was about five days before I graduated. In my last term, I decided to try to take 21 credits to see if I could, and I signed up for what I thought was a history of computing course. Because it was 1980, I didn't think there was much computing history yet. In reality, it was an introduction to Fortran programming for engineering majors taught by a teaching assistant [TA]! I had never used a computer before, but I actually enjoyed the course. When I checked on my grade, the TA tried to talk me into majoring in computer science. I quickly informed him that I would be graduating the next week and it was too late for me to change my major. Little did I realize that this must have been foreshadowing, as I now work in the information technology field."

### What is your advice to current CGS students?

"My advice is to make the time to enjoy being a college student and to make time for your family and friends instead of just going from work to school to sleep, then repeat. Also, if you feel that you don't understand something or that you need some extra help in a subject, ask for help. Make the most of the opportunities that you have, because Pitt is a great university. I have come to appreciate how special Pitt is, more so now after having time to reflect and look back on Pitt."

### What do Pitt and CGS mean to you?

"Pitt and the College of General Studies represent resilience and perseverance to me. It takes a special person to want to push themselves into going that extra mile and taking classes at night and on the weekend. The easy way would be to just relax and enjoy yourself after spending the day working or raising your family. I am very proud to be a University of Pittsburgh graduate, and I am proud to have earned my degree at the College of General Studies."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### SAVE THE DATE: HOMECOMING 2016

University of Pittsburgh homecoming festivities will take place during the week of October 3–8, 2016. Visit [alumni.pitt.edu/homecoming](http://alumni.pitt.edu/homecoming) to learn more, and check [cgs.pitt.edu](http://cgs.pitt.edu) for the latest details about CGS homecoming events.

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Whether you graduated last year or 20 years ago, you are part of the CGS alumni community. We would like to hear from you. Please take a few minutes to complete an information form to tell us about your most recent achievements.

Visit [cgs.pitt.edu/tell-us-about-yourself](http://cgs.pitt.edu/tell-us-about-yourself) today!



## Letter from the CGS Alumni Society President

### Dear CGS alumni,

It is my pleasure to be able to share with you the latest news from the CGS Alumni Society and the Pitt Alumni Association. In this issue of *Inside CGS*, I would like to talk about the alumni association board retreat that was held at Alumni Hall on January 30, 2016. Our theme was the Plan for Pitt: Making a Difference Together. The event was hosted by Associate Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations Jeff Gleim and Pitt Alumni Association President Jeff Kondis, and the guest speakers were Pitt Athletic Director Scott Barnes and Executive Vice Provost David DeJong. Association staff members; student representatives of the Blue and Gold Society; and representatives of each of the University's schools, colleges, and regional campuses shared their thoughts. In the near future, the board will release a strategic plan.

The goal of the alumni association is Pitt for Life, and discussions were held focusing on how the association can best contribute to making a difference at Pitt. The Pitt Alumni Association promotes lifelong connections between Pitt alumni and the University through outreach and engagement as well as by expanding opportunities for continuing education. I particularly feel that the opportunities for continuing education will be of interest to the CGS community. CGS, which has a long tradition of welcoming nontraditional students to Pitt, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Pitt, which serves adults age 50 and better who have a passion for learning, seem uniquely positioned to contribute.

I welcome the opportunity to share your thoughts and suggestions with the alumni

association board and the School and College/Regional Campus Committee as we move toward the goal of Pitt for Life. I can always be contacted at [bmountjoy@alumni.pitt.edu](mailto:bmountjoy@alumni.pitt.edu).

Thanks and hail to Pitt!

**Bruce Mountjoy (BA '91)**

*Pictured from left to right are Bruce Mountjoy; Debra Thompson, SCR director at the School of Nursing and Pitt Alumni Association committee chair of the Pitt Advocates; Jeff Kondis, Pitt Alumni Association president; Jeff Gleim, associate vice chancellor for alumni relations; and Arnold Epstein, Pitt Alumni Association board member.*





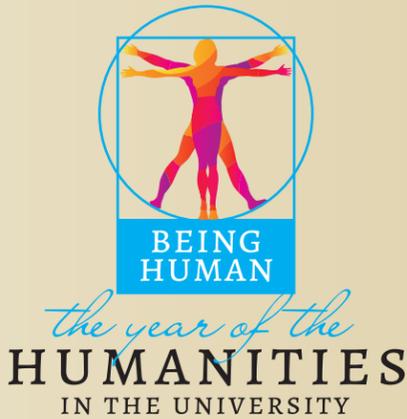
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## Word on the Street: Thank you, CGS faculty!



**“When a person doesn’t have gratitude; something is missing in his or her humanity.”** —Elie Wiesel, American novelist, Nobel Laureate; and professor emeritus at Boston University, where, among other positions, he served as Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities

As Pitt concludes its celebration of the Year of the Humanities in the University, it seems only fitting that CGS students took the opportunity to express their gratitude to the faculty members who guided and inspired them in their studies.

“Thank you, Dr. Denova, for making material that could be dry very interesting and for opening up new worlds to your students.”

“Thank you, Professor Fullerton, for bringing your real-life experiences to our classroom and for being there to help students reach for professional opportunities in the criminal justice field.”

“Thank you, Professor Hufford, for your enthusiasm and the energy and care you take to provide stimulating discussion in your classroom.”

“Thank you, Professor Lotz, for your enthusiasm in the classroom and your ability to individualize your students’ experiences, even in your large classrooms.”

“Thank you, Professor Meldon, for taking one of the most difficult classroom subjects—math—and making it possible for students to achieve academic success.”

“Thank you, Professor Sloss, for your ability to deliver your courses in such a way that your students take meaning and for being [accessible] when students need you.”

The University of Pittsburgh is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution. Published in cooperation with the Department of Communications Services. DCS105385-0616



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**TONY NOVOSSEL**  
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

**Tony Novosel**, who graduated from CGS in 1989 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and political science, is an undergraduate advisor and senior lecturer in the University of Pittsburgh Department of History as well as an instructor in the College of General Studies. He also knows how important a scholarship can be to a college student—he himself was a 1987 recipient of the Chancellor’s Evening Scholarship.

When Novosel’s father, Anthony G. Novosel, passed away in 2014, the younger Novosel and his siblings agreed that there was no better way to honor their father’s memory than to use the proceeds from the sale of his house to set up a scholarship fund in his name.

“My dad grew up during the Great Depression. He and his family benefited from several of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal programs, which helped to improve the lives of many people. My dad believed in giving people second chances, and he never forgot the help that he received,” Novosel says.

“My father believed that if you have money, you should use it to do good and help other people,” Novosel adds. “I remember a phone call he once received from

a politician asking about health care and taxes. My dad told the politician, ‘Well, if my taxes have to go up a little to help someone else have health care, then that’s fine with me.’”

In addition to establishing the scholarship in his father’s memory, Novosel and his wife started the Ervine-McCourt Study Abroad Scholarship for outstanding history students in 2007. Novosel travels extensively throughout Europe (especially in Ireland), and he wanted his students to experience those kinds of opportunities as well.

Novosel also was the recipient of the 2011 Ampco-Pittsburgh Prize for Excellence in Advising. Sponsored by the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, the Ampco-Pittsburgh Prize is given annually to a full-time faculty member who has served as a departmental advisor on the Pittsburgh campus for at least three years. “I always tell my students not to take unnecessary risks but to definitely take opportunities as they present themselves to you during your life,” he says.

*In the fall of 2015, the first recipient of the Anthony G. Novosel Memorial Scholarship was Lenora Austin (see her story on page 2).*