

# THE POWER OF STEVENS

## OUR CAMPAIGN. OUR IMPACT.

CAMPAIGN NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS – FALL 2020



### Dear Alumni and Friends,

I am excited to introduce this issue of *The Power of Stevens* newsletter. Since I began my post in May, I have recognized qualities that define the Stevens community through 150 years: bold thinking, resilience, and compassion, to name a few.

This issue covers major stories at Stevens, and beyond, during 2020. You'll find exciting pictures of the Student Housing and University Center. The construction progress over the summer has been astounding, and we are on pace to open the buildings later next year. We are also pleased to report new support for this transformational project.

Alumni and friends are rising to the challenge of the pandemic by supporting the Stevens Rises Relief Fund. Their philanthropy is alleviating stress for students and enables them to continue their education, though we will continue to need this support for as long as the pandemic lasts.

Another priority is ACES. Events of the past few months emphasize the importance of these scholarships and the impact they have. To quote President Farvardin, "Talent is evenly distributed in our society, but opportunity is not. ACES brings talented students to Stevens and provides them with a world-class education and a suite of support services to create limitless opportunity."

Of course, the campaign itself is a major story. We are now just 10% away from our goal. Because of generous alumni and friends, we are in position to cross the \$200 million line soon and finish the first big story of the university's next 150 years.

Sincerely,

**Laura Rose**  
Vice President  
Development and Alumni Engagement

**ABOVE LEFT:** True to the Red & Gray spirit, Castle Point remains a vibrant campus.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Laura Rose joined Stevens in May as the Vice President for Development and Alumni Engagement.

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# Stevens Rises

The warnings started in January. Campus leaders sent alerts about a strange new virus. By March, the disease had spread to metro New York. On a Wednesday evening, the country shuddered when President Trump announced an emergency travel ban, Tom Hanks said he was sick, and the NBA cancelled games. The next day, Stevens moved classes online for the rest of the semester. The day after that, Hoboken reported its first case.

Such is the speed by which the coronavirus pandemic shocked communities across the country, including the one at Castle Point. But the Stevens community has responded to the crisis with agility, fortitude, compassion, and philanthropy.

The Stevens Rises Relief Fund supports students affected by the pandemic, especially those facing sudden financial distress.

“This fund has provided emergency support for some of our students who had significant financial need,” said Sara Klein, the assistant vice president for student affairs. “A number of our students experienced unemployment (their own or their parents) and faced food and housing insecurity, while



*Dr. Sara Klein is a trusted guide for students navigating life at Stevens.*

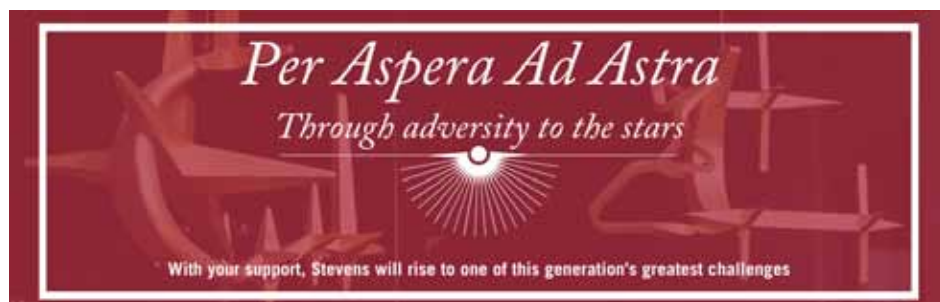
others were struggling with internet connectivity while trying to log into courses. The Stevens Rises Relief Fund allows us to provide immediate support to each of these students during a difficult time.”

“These unprecedented times have presented a lot of uncertainty within my family,” reported a student who received assistance (and who shall remain anonymous). “With the funds provided to me, I can proudly say that a huge weight has been lifted off our shoulders because food is now one less thing we have to worry about. We truly appreciate the generosity and urgency to help.”

Another challenge involves lack of internet access at home, making it hard for students to engage with online classes. The Stevens Rises Relief Fund has provided wi-fi hotspots. “I have many younger siblings who are required to be on video chat the whole day and our internet often goes out,” a student said. “Many times, I have to wait to view recorded classes after the fact or call in on my phone unable to see my professors or the work being completed. I’ll now be able to attend all my classes on time without interruption!”

The Stevens Rises webpage was live by April 15, following quick collaborative work by multiple campus offices who were also suddenly working remotely. Thus far, more than 900 individuals, including dozens of students, have raised more than \$100,000 and counting for the fund.

Early on, John Dearborn '79 M.Eng. '81 appealed to fellow members of the Board of Trustees about



*The Stevens Rises Relief Fund echoes the university's resilient motto.*

seeding the Stevens Rises Relief Fund. “This pandemic,” Dearborn wrote, “has impacted us all in one way or another from the loss of loved ones or those in our communities, inability to visit with friends, family, and work associates among many other changes to the life we once knew. In this time of need, I am hopeful that some of the more fortunate would be willing to pay it forward to help Stevens students who are really in need.”

Joan Sitler '87 is another alum who gave, both for herself and for her family: husband Edward '87, daughter Julianne '18, and son Justin '19, who is staying at Stevens to pursue a doctorate in mechanical engineering.

“The Stevens motto *per aspera ad astra* (*through adversity to the stars*) really spoke to me during this pandemic,” Sitler said. “The world has seen so much adversity because of the coronavirus, and I felt there was so much beyond my control or ability to help. The Stevens Rises

Relief Fund gave me the opportunity to give back to the community that has meant so much to my entire family. Hopefully this fund will allow students to continue to strive for the stars.”

Klein said that while the Stevens Rises Relief Fund has already helped several students, there will still be a need for support throughout the year.

“As long as the pandemic is an issue, we will have students in need of support,” Klein said. “No matter what, we are committed to making sure they can stay on track to complete their education.”

*We will continue to call upon those who have the interest, passion, and financial ability to provide our students stability during these difficult times. To learn more about supporting the Stevens Rises Relief Fund, please visit [astrafunding.stevens.edu](http://astrafunding.stevens.edu) or contact Matt Gwin at [mgwin1@stevens.edu](mailto:mgwin1@stevens.edu) or 201-216-3346.*



The Sitler Family gathered at a familiar spot to celebrate Justin's graduation in 2019.

## IN HONOR OF

On the Stevens Rises [online donor wall](#), some donors left notes about why they gave. Here are just a few of the many meaningful reasons:

### ***In honor of the Stevens mathematics department and staff***

–Allan Cox M.S. '67

### ***In honor of the Class of 1965 55th anniversary***

–Frank Semcer '65

### ***In honor of Dean Nilsen and the student affairs team. Thanks for all you do!***

–Greg McNeil '18 M.Eng. '19

### ***In honor of our mommy for helping Stevens students***

–Xavier and Alexander Brown

### ***In memory of Victor Gialanella '70***

–David Bencze '70, John Dalton '60, Ed Eichhorn '69, Steven Feller '70, Tom Nathanson '74, James Stockton '71

### ***In honor of all the essential workers at Stevens, our cleaning staff and others who keep us safe***

–Anonymous

# The ACES 500

The social movement of this past spring has inspired many to ask what they can do to confront inequality. Stevens is answering this call by seeking to achieve the *ACES 500*, a goal to offer 500 scholarships every year to talented students from backgrounds underrepresented in STEM.

ACES, which stands for Accessing Careers in Engineering and Science, started in 2017 and builds on the university's commitment to expand STEM education. While the Stevens Technical Enrichment Program (STEP) has nurtured students from diverse backgrounds since 1968, there is an unmet need for scholarships. Without scholarships, many students cannot enroll to participate in STEP and all the other opportunities Stevens offers.

The first undergraduates to receive ACES scholarships enrolled in 2018-19, and they are thriving. These students earned a collective GPA of 3.29, and 98% returned as sophomores. In the second



*Through ACES, Stevens has formed partnerships with local high schools, including in Hoboken, Jersey City, Newark and New York City. Stevens provides guidance to the schools on teaching STEM.*

year of ACES scholarships, an additional 41 students benefited, and they earned a GPA of 3.52.

*ACES 500* expands this impact by offering scholarships to 100 students in every class, for a total of 400 every year. Comprehensive four-year support is vital to enable students to complete their degrees at Stevens.

“One of the goals of our strategic plan is to increase the numbers

of underserved students on our campus,” said Vice President Marybeth Murphy. “With ACES, we are working to level the playing field. But these programs are not cheap. By the nature of the socioeconomic backgrounds of these students, ACES requires a lot of financial support, and for all four years, because we want the students to succeed here from the day they enroll to the day they graduate.”

The other 100 scholarships of *ACES 500* will go to high school students who participate during the summer in an immersive pre-college experience. Students live in residence halls, attend courses taught by faculty, collaborate on research projects, attend workshops on college applications, tour STEM workplaces, and expand their networks during social activities and cultural excursions.

A pre-college experience can help students make what is often the first major decision of their adult lives, whether and how to apply for college. Arika, a student from



*Survey results from students who experienced pre-college on campus in 2019 show 83% grew more excited to attend college.*

Brooklyn Technical High School, gained insight about becoming a doctor after receiving a scholarship for pre-college in 2019. “I was immersed in multiple classes focused heavily on lab work,” Arika said. “I was given the opportunity to watch a live kidney tumor removal surgery at Hackensack Hospital. I learned how to ask for internships and build a profile to gain acceptance into medical school. I learned about the process colleges use to accept students, and I learned how to stand out through my application. The program helped me reconfirm my love for biology and made me realize how much I want to help people and leave my mark on the world.”

The early success of ACES has garnered attention throughout New Jersey. In October 2019, the New Jersey Technology Council selected Stevens to receive an Innovation in Education Award, and in August 2020, the New Jersey Business and



Several corporate and foundation partners have supported scholarships for ACES, including ADP, AT&T, Bristol-Myers Squibb, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and PSEG.



Among 1,003 students who were accepted for pre-college in 2019, 193 requested financial aid. However, Stevens was able to provide a scholarship to only 40%.

Industry Association recognized Stevens with a Diversity and Inclusion Award. Earlier in 2020, Governor Phil Murphy signed bipartisan legislation that identifies ACES as a model for colleges throughout the state.

However, though ACES is having an impact, students will face roadblocks without further support. In 2019, Stevens was able to provide pre-college scholarship support to only 40% of the students who were eligible for assistance. The problem is even greater at the undergraduate level.

Fortunately, alumni and friends are stepping forward with inspiring support. During a summer meeting the Board of Trustees unanimously agreed to reiterate the university’s commitment to ACES, and 100% of them made personal philanthropic commitments to support the initiative. President Farvardin also vowed to further his support for ACES.

The generous investments that donors are making in ACES address a university goal while offering talented students a proven path to success with a Stevens degree. That is an asset that can help students improve communities across the country and add critical STEM-skilled workers to the national economy.

“ACES is an extremely successful program,” said President Farvardin. “We find talented young people, we expose them to a premier STEM educational environment, and we prepare them for great jobs. We are limited only by resources.”

*ACES is the way for Stevens and alumni and friends to make a difference. As the university rises to meet this moment, we invite others to stand with us. To learn more about supporting scholarships for ACES, contact Dawn da Silva at [ddasilva@stevens.edu](mailto:ddasilva@stevens.edu) or 201-216-5521.*

## Donor Spotlight

### MARY ANNE CANNON '86



*Mary Anne Cannon '86 spoke at the 2018 Scholarship Luncheon.*

It is fitting there is now an endowed scholarship at Stevens named for Teresa and Thomas Cannon M.S. '63. The encouragement they gave while raising their daughter Mary Anne '86 propelled a legacy that will continue for generations.

Mary Anne established the scholarship in honor of her parents in 2018. Now a corporate executive, she remembers the values she learned while growing up. Her father enjoyed a successful career with positions at RCA and MetLife, and he and Teresa inspired Mary Anne to think boldly about her future.

"When I was growing up in the 1970s along the Jersey Shore," Mary Anne recalls, "it was almost unheard of for women to study engineering. However, my parents were extremely encouraging for me to get an engineering degree."

When she was old enough for college, Mary Anne decided to apply to Stevens, the school her father talked about advancing his career with a

graduate degree. In fact, she was so set on Stevens, it was the only college where she applied.

"I only needed one campus visit," Mary Anne said. "I vividly remember that fall day, walking onto campus with my mother. This is where she saw me, as a student on this campus. That was her vision and dream."

Mary Anne earned a degree in mechanical engineering. She was a member of the student council, honor board, and interdormitory council. She also competed on the women's fencing team. "As tough as the course material was, outstanding professors really sparked an interest in me to continue and want to keep learning."

Today, she enjoys a thriving career as a vice president with Pratt & Whitney, a global aerospace and defense manufacturer. Her responsibilities include developing product line life-cycle strategies and ensuring projects meet customer specifications. Mary Anne has been

with Pratt & Whitney for 29 years, having worked as an engineer on parts for fighter planes, among other roles. She was also a vice president in charge of environment, health, and safety programs, and maintaining compliance with corporate, federal, and state requirements.

Mary Anne lives in Florida with her husband, and together they have a son. She has stayed engaged with her alma mater, including participating in a panel on the history of women at Stevens, and currently serving as a member of the President's Leadership Council and on the selection committee for the Stevens Awards Gala.

In addition to the undergraduate scholarship honoring her parents, Mary Anne has supported pre-college scholarships through the ACES initiative. She is a member of the Gear Society, the Edwin A. Stevens Society, the Lifetime Giving Societies, and the Stevens Legacy Society, making her one of only a handful of alumni to complete the "philanthropy grand slam" by joining all four groups.

After establishing the Thomas and Teresa Cannon Endowed Scholarship, Mary Anne gave the keynote speech at the annual Scholarship Luncheon, sharing what inspired her to support a new generation of students at her alma mater.

"I've done well in life," Mary Anne said, "and it really is because of the support of my parents. In giving back, I hope that current and future Stevens students take advantage of the same opportunities I had. It's a hard journey to get to Stevens, it's a hard journey through Stevens, but it truly is rewarding."

# Building Bulletin



## STUDENT HOUSING AND UNIVERSITY CENTER UPDATE

The construction crews have been resilient, the progress is astounding, and the “Groundbreakers” are growing in number.

Those are the latest updates on the Student Housing and University Center. Over the summer, Anthony Diaco '73 established the Diaco Family Skybridge Lounge. A few more alumni, such as Antonio Varela '80 M.S. '83, have become Groundbreakers, a generous group of early, leading supporters whose names will be displayed on a wall inside the university center. Following an informational letter from Richard Harries '58, Joe Schneider '46 decided to name the A. Joseph Schneider '46 Residential Lounge inside the Harries Tower. Schneider also recently made his own appeal to his Stevens friends.

Another notable gift came from Laura Staffin and her family. Staffin's husband Kenneth was a longtime professor of chemistry at Stevens and received an honorary degree in 1964. Laura and Kenneth's daughter Susan Metz has worked at Stevens for more than 30 years, currently as the executive director

of diversity and inclusion and as a senior research associate.

“My father loved teaching and inspired students with his passion for mathematics and engineering,” Metz said. “He advised many doctoral candidates, some of whom worked as summer interns at Procedyne, the engineering company he founded. When I was young, while boating on the Hudson River, I recall my father proudly pointing out a ‘relatively recent addition’ to the Stevens campus – the Howe Center. My mother, sister and I agreed that he would have been even more

impressed with the engineering of the Student Housing and University Center, and without a doubt, the spectacular view.”

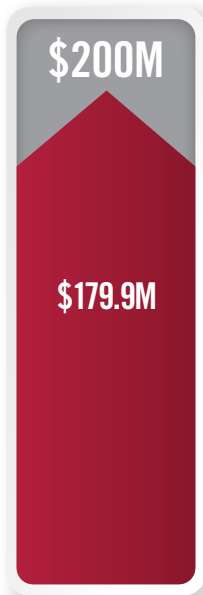
*We are so grateful to the alumni and friends who are supporting this monumental priority, and we heartily welcome others who are interested in getting involved. To learn more about the Student Housing and University Center, the Groundbreakers wall, or naming opportunities, please contact Sarah Wells at [swells@stevens.edu](mailto:swells@stevens.edu) or 201-216-8295.*





**STEVENS**  
INSTITUTE of TECHNOLOGY  
THE INNOVATION UNIVERSITY®

Office of Development and Alumni Engagement  
Stevens Institute of Technology  
1 Castle Point Terrace  
Hoboken, NJ 07030



[power.stevens.edu](http://power.stevens.edu)

## CASTLE POINT CONNECTIONS

Studies, sports, socializing and more. The names, faces and spaces have evolved over the university's 150 years, but the Stevens experience has always left an indelible impression on alumni. Adding the Class of 2020, there are now more than 50,000 undergraduate and graduate Ducks spanning ten decades and thriving across the world.

