

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

# THE EDUCATOR

*Pictured: Commencement Summer 2020*

2021

**Embrace the Struggle**

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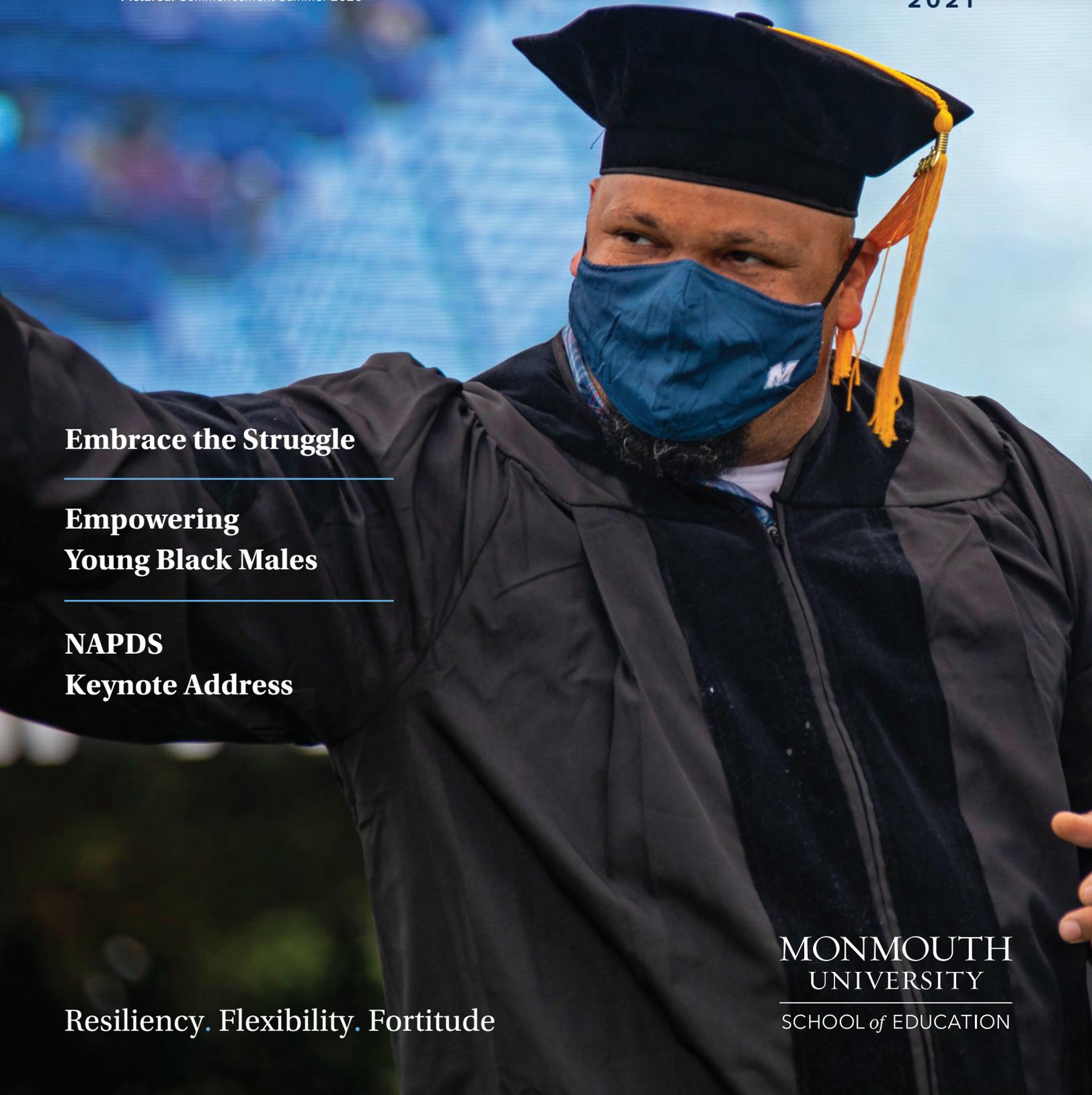
**Empowering  
Young Black Males**

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**NAPDS  
Keynote Address**

**Resiliency. Flexibility. Fortitude**

**MONMOUTH  
UNIVERSITY**  
SCHOOL of EDUCATION



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# Message From The Dean

## Responding to Adversity

The challenges faced by educators in 2020 have been well documented. For many, the impact of the pandemic has been devastating and cannot be overstated in its tragic impact. But because much has been said and written about these challenges, I will not add anything further here.

Instead, the theme of this year's *Educator* is the School of Education's response to these challenges. It was inspired by Damon Colbert's story, which you can find on the next page. A recent graduate of the Ed.D. program in Educational Leadership (see cover photo), Damon faced tremendous hardships in his life both at home and during his military service in Iraq. Those challenges led him to his philosophy on life. In his words, "Embrace the struggle: the outcome will take care of itself."

To me, Damon is saying that we can't always control what fate has in store for us, but we can control our response. Accordingly, I would like to focus this year's message on the School of Education's accomplishments in the year 2020, despite the severe challenges we faced.

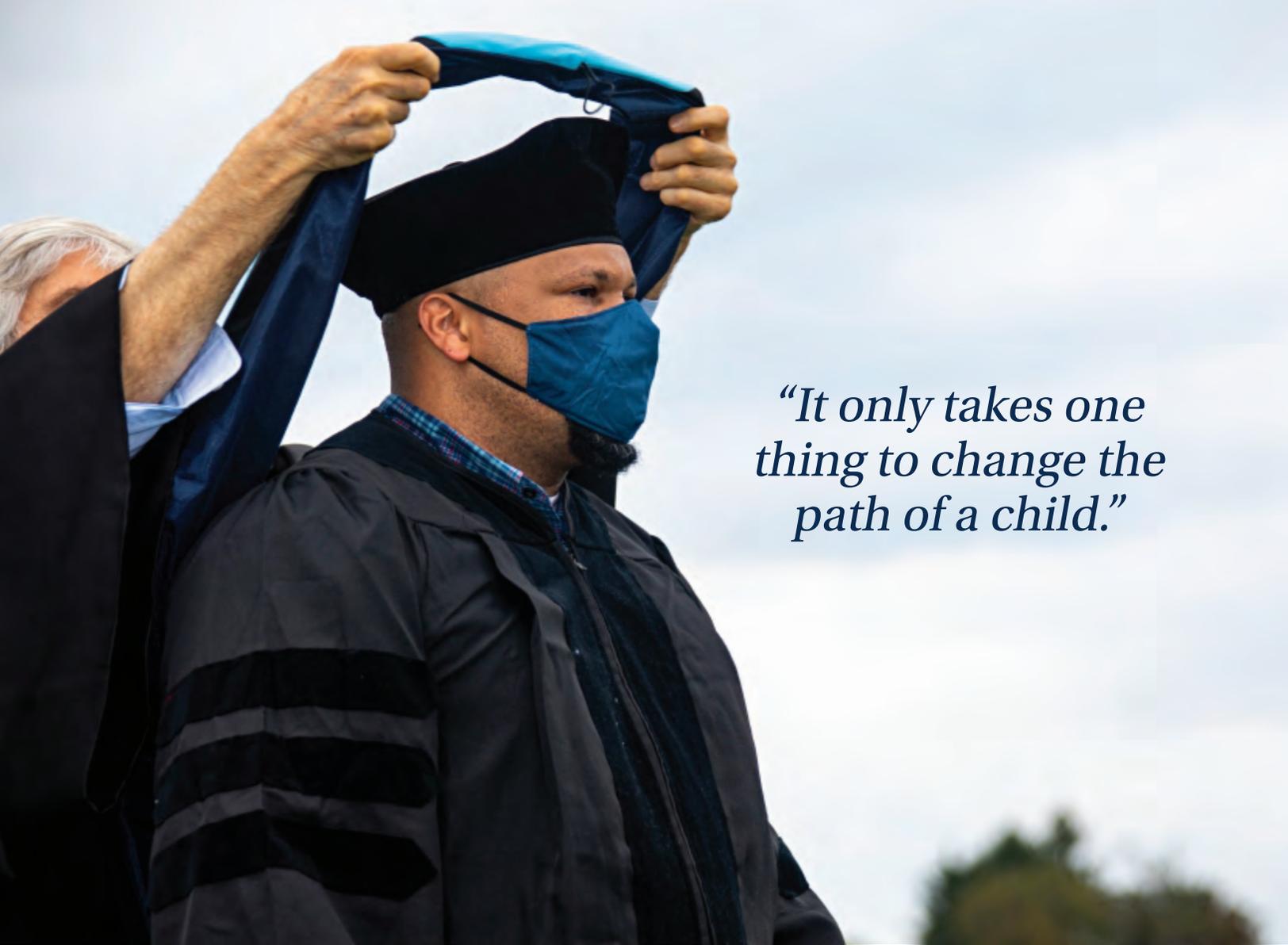
Some examples include the Speech Center's move to teletherapy during the pandemic; the three-fold increase in membership in the Central Jersey Consortium for Equity and Excellence after moving to a virtual format; increased membership in the Superintendents and Principals Academies in a virtual environment; the wonderful execution of our first virtual Student Scholarship Exhibition; the initiation of the Virtual Teaching Academy; the Frank Murray Recognition for exemplary performance during CAEP accreditation; the approval and enrollment of our first cohort in the Higher Education track for the Ed.D. program; and the internal approval of the Supervisor in Educational Technology program. Future plans also include other virtual events: our third Women's Leadership Conference; our first-ever Sustainability Conference; and the initiation of the School Change Academy for principals and aspiring principals who are seeking to lead school innovation.

In no way has the energy and enthusiasm of the School of Education faculty and staff waned during the pandemic. In fact, in many cases, the faculty have used the pandemic as an opportunity to expand current initiatives or initiate new ones. It is with a sense of enormous gratitude that I thank the students, staff, and faculty for their hard work, their resilience, and their optimism. I am very proud to work among such an outstanding group of professionals.

As you read through *The Educator*, you will note that part of the 2019-2020 academic year occurred before the pandemic. To the best of my knowledge, there is no activity on these pages that furthered the spread of COVID-19. All School of Education functions were conducted with sober intent and the safety of the students, staff, and faculty as our first consideration.

Sincerely,  
**John E. Henning**  
Professor and Dean

MONMOUTH  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL of EDUCATION



*“It only takes one thing to change the path of a child.”*

# Embrace the Struggle: **THE OUTCOME WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF**

Ed.D. Graduate Damon Colbert

# DISSERTATION DEFENSE

EXAMINING THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON EDUCATORS WORKING WITH  
TRAUMA AFFECTED AT-RISK YOUTH

*“I always wanted to work with kids  
because of the way I grew up.”*



When Damon Colbert, Ed.D., was 29 years old, no one could have possibly predicted that he would graduate from Monmouth’s Ed.D. program in Educational Leadership – least of all him. He came from an unstable home life, he had not been a good student, and he had been homeless for more than a decade.

*“I left home when I was 16... I put myself through my last year in high school. I was just living in the streets. I was sleeping at the train stations. I would sleep in doctors’ offices, abandoned hallways, sometimes at a friend’s house.”*

Colbert left home during his last year in high school after a major disagreement with his mother. No one at the school was aware of Colbert’s circumstances, even though during the football season he was considered “the greatest thing ever.” But after the season ended, Colbert was once again considered the bad kid or the “kid that had the attitude” in the school. For more than a decade, he was a “couch surfer,” sleeping here, sleeping there, maybe in a motel room, maybe an apartment for a month and a half, all supported by dead-end jobs.

A major change in Colbert’s life came when he met his wife. Her self-discipline and ambition inspired him to join the military at the age of 29 so that he could finance his education. In the military, he became more organized, more disciplined, and soon began to excel. He was away for four years and was eventually discharged in 2012 for injuries he received in Iraq.

*“My wife is a major inspiration because of her ambition, which inspired me to get my life together.”*

After the military, Colbert asked himself, “What’s next?” He knew that he wanted to help children avoid the struggle and trauma he had experienced. Although his first thought was educational counseling, he decided on a social work degree as the best path. In quick succession he received an associate’s degree from Brookdale Community College, then a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Monmouth University.

But he found himself working with adults rather than children. So, he came back to Monmouth two years later to explore the possibility of a degree in Student Affairs and College Counseling (SACC). A funny thing happened when he came to campus to ask about the SACC degree; he saw a flyer for the Ed.D. program. He asked about the program, learned that he was eligible, applied, and was accepted. He liked the small numbers, personalized attention, and in-person classes.

For his dissertation, Colbert researched the emotional impact on educators who work with trauma-affected, at-risk youth.

He wanted to know how the emotional trauma of at-risk youth affects educators. His interest in the topic came from multiple influences: his circumstances as a child, his interest in social work, and the self-work he did to address the post-traumatic stress syndrome he suffered from his experience in Iraq.

According to his dissertation chair, Dean John Henning, Colbert did an outstanding job on his research study. “Damon’s passion and his close personal experience with the research made his experience a memorable one. What is astounding to me is that Damon began in higher education at age 33 and has now received a doctoral degree at age 41.”

Colbert considers the trauma he experienced as a child and young man the foundation of all his accomplishments. Among them, he most values his ability to provide for his family, to inspire them, and to be a role model for them. It also accounts for his desire to help young children who are faced with challenges similar to his own.

*“It only takes one thing to change the path of a child. Children sometimes just need a little guidance or a little advice. If they take that seed of advice and they apply it, they can sometimes change their whole future. They don’t have to go through all the trauma or all the hell that I went through.”*



# AN ASSETS-BASED APPROACH

## Empowering Young Black Males Leadership Mentoring Program



*“Education can either be an opportunity or a barrier, it all depends on where you are sitting”.*

Assistant Professor Vernon Smith, Ph.D., is the inspiration and founder for the Empowering Young Black Males Leadership Mentoring program designed to provide support for Neptune High School students (mentees) and Monmouth Black male student mentors. This tri-partnership initiative also includes Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal and Northern New Jersey. Its main goal is to promote academic achievement among Black youth.

When Smith was a college counselor and marriage and family therapist in the Bahamas, he decided to pursue a doctorate in Counselor Education and Supervision at the University of South Florida. As Smith reviewed the research on Black males, he noticed that most researchers were viewing Black males from a deficit perspective.

“I started to think, what about the Black males who are achieving? I was thinking about myself and many others,” says Smith. He decided to approach the topic systemically by examining the foundations of supportive

families and households that raise successful Black males. Smith’s research showed that these parents had high expectations for their kids and they wanted them to achieve success. “There is structure and accountability for them,” says Smith.

Much of Smith’s work and research has focused on the importance of mentorship and the ability to establish an academic institution where students share their struggles and know that they are supported in their academic path for success. When Dr. Smith was considering Monmouth, he was excited to learn that the focus of the Educational Counseling program is social justice.

“I started to think about how we can use the research on Black males who have made it to college and help mentor others,” says Smith. From there, Smith proposed the idea of establishing a mentoring program for Black males.

Smith describes the goal of the Empowering Young Black Males Leadership Mentoring program as an



opportunity for Monmouth University to provide those who may sometimes feel isolated and not connected a chance to grow and give back to the community as both mentees and mentors. Smith hopes that all the students in high schools and universities could have equitable opportunities and feel valuable in their community.

For Smith, learning the difference between equality and equity is important, and educators should always

strive for equity because each student's needs are unique. "We have to teach equitably, and not equally, because each student's needs are different," says Smith. Smith's vision for the program's future includes enlarging the mentoring program, providing mentorship for Latinx and Black students in more high schools, and helping to develop and inspire leadership and connection among Monmouth's students who serve as mentors for the program.



# Ready for Anything: Virtual Teaching

*"I loved how Monmouth got me into the classroom so soon. It solidified my decision to become a teacher, in addition to learning lots of different strategies and ideas that I hope to use in my own classroom one day." - Janet Downing*

This year's clinical interns were part of one of the largest educational innovations in history - the enormous transition from face-to-face to virtual learning in P-12 settings. Students in Monmouth's teacher preparation program convincingly demonstrated they have the flexibility, the resiliency, and the stamina for the teaching profession. Challenged like no other class before them, this spring's teacher candidates rose to the occasion and provided much needed help to their mentor teachers and their students.

*"Although this year didn't end how we wanted, it was great to be able to teach this awesome group of kids. This class has allowed me to learn the qualities it takes to be a good teacher. Working with this class has been amazing and I'm forever grateful for this experience." - Erica Autiero*

During their full-time clinical internships, Monmouth students co-taught virtual lessons, worked with students in small groups, graded papers, and provided individualized instruction through phone calls. They were challenged by ever-changing working conditions that shifted from classroom teaching to remote learning back to the classroom and then back to remote learning again. The uncertainty and ambiguity were daunting to even the most experienced teachers.

*"Attending Monmouth University to study elementary education was the best decision I could've ever made. The professors and peers that I've worked with have helped to shape me into the student and teacher I've become today, and I am eternally grateful." - Aliyah Frank*

All the teacher candidates who graduated in 2020 completed their hours, submitted their completed edTPAs, and met all the other requirements for teacher licensure required by Monmouth and the State of New Jersey. What resilient and capable teachers they will be! Thank you for choosing Monmouth and best of luck to you as you begin your careers.

*"A huge thank you to Monmouth University's School of Education for their constant support throughout my four years. This hands-on program allowed me to experience real-world classrooms and begin my journey. Grateful for the time and experience at Monmouth." - Emily Berger.*

# A Deeper Understanding: Community Cultural Walk

*“Now that we are in the COVID-19 experience, this culture walk has gained even greater value. I am so thankful that we were able to do this before the quarantine.”*

**- Ruth K. Morris, Ed.D.**

Great teachers know their students really well. On March 4, 2020, future teachers in four sections of ED 250 learned more about their students by taking a “culture walk” through the Long Branch community. Under the direction of Curriculum and Instruction faculty Jiwon Kim, Ph.D., Jason Fitzgerald, Ph.D., Tony Estudillo, Ph.D., and Ruth K. Morris, Ed.D., 85 Monmouth teacher candidates participated in a culture walk as part of their service-learning partnership with Amerigo A. Anastasia Elementary School, a project developed in collaboration with Marcus Rodriguez, student advisor. Also joining was Assistant Principal Aisha Wickes and Nicole Trainor, Ed.D., student advisor. Morris Avenue Early Childhood Center provided the opportunity for future teachers to learn about their students’ community while serving as mentors and tutors.

*“Having the students go into the elementary school was wonderful because they can see the neighborhood where the school exists, meet the teachers, staff and children,”* says Ruth Morris, Ed.D., chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Department at Monmouth University.

The idea of doing a culture walk was sparked when multiple professors suggested that students have the opportunity to learn more about their students by visiting the neighborhoods and interacting with the students at a deeper level. Students read articles about culture walks and researched

facts about the City of Long Branch. Morris related her own experience with a culture walk and conducting home visits in her previous career as a preschool teacher.

*“Looking back on this experience, I had a completely different perception and understanding of my students when I was able to be in their homes and see them for who they really are, rather than what I perceive them to be from the lens of the classroom.”*

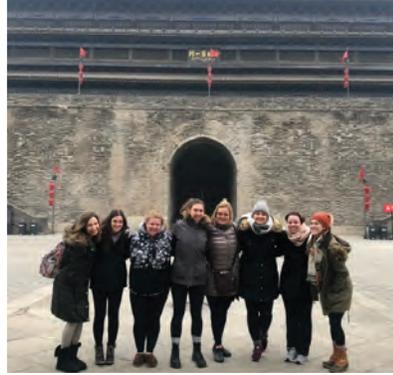
**At 8:30 a.m.**, Tonya Garcia, Director, Long Branch Public Library, met the students and introduced them to Mayor John Pallone. Then Kimberly Leavy, Long Branch Police Department, escorted the students east on Broadway Avenue. Along the way, Leavy pointed out strategic landmarks and community facilities serving downtown Long Branch. The culture walk continued to the Portuguese Club, a landmark for Long Branch community culture. The hallway was filled with family and community photos of generations of Long Branch families. Then the students were welcomed to the Portuguese Club banquet hall, where Captain Carl Griffin and the Long Branch Fire Department greeted the students. The culture walk culminated with a Portuguese buffet catered by Michelle Delaia, owner of Bom DMais. *“Our hosts were very welcoming and happy to work with us. Our vision is to challenge students to develop cultural understanding,”* said Morris.



Adventure in China:

# Travel Abroad





# Students' reflections showed cultural differences and overall surprises

This year's School of Education study abroad experience took place in China over a 12-day period during winter break 2020. Students had the opportunity to learn about the Chinese education system, visiting tourist attractions, and interacting with a different culture. They also took Education 300 taught by Tracy Mulvaney, Ed.D. The trip was completed before the world learned of the COVID-19 outbreak, and fortunately, no one on the trip became ill from the virus.

The students visited several tourist attractions, including a tea house, the Great Wall of China, and the Summer Palace. "We rode our bikes on the Great Wall, and got to go to Disneyland in Shanghai," said Mulvaney. Moreover, the students interacted extensively with curious Chinese citizens while they were walking around. "Many of the rural Chinese had never seen Westerners, so it was a chance for them to practice their English," said Mulvaney.

Even though the trip took place during academic exams in China, students from the Education 300 course still had the chance to interact with Chinese teachers and pupils during breaks and lunch time. "Although students couldn't teach in Chinese schools, they still had a great experience," said Mulvaney.

During the trip, the students wrote journal entries regarding their reflections on the trip. "Students' reflections showed cultural differences and overall surprises, said Mulvaney. "It was a thrill to share language, culture, and ideas with other educators who came from such a different tradition."



In the School of Education, the concept of teaching through interaction is highly important. Through providing international trips every year, the Education 300 course allows students to broaden their horizons and learn about completely different cultures.



# Building Bridges: Monmouth Future Scholars

The annual Monmouth Future Scholars Immersion Day marked a memorable occasion for six high school graduating seniors. These first-generation college-bound students celebrated their graduation from Long Branch High School and their involvement in the Monmouth Future Scholars (MFS) program for over six years.

MFS offers a variety of on- and off-campus activities and events for first-generation middle and high school students that help them acquire information about higher education, career readiness, social change, and the many opportunities available at Monmouth University. The main goal of MFS is to encourage college-bound students in the Long Branch Public School District to think about university studies and to know that there are valuable experiences and mentoring opportunities available to them in their community. Throughout this endeavor, the Long Branch students attend specialized support groups that are led by Monmouth University School of Education graduate student mentors.

One of the program's recent graduates, Emily Martinez, expresses that all the years involved in the program have encouraged her to find her ultimate goal of acquiring a business degree from Monmouth

University, and establishing a hotel franchise for dogs afterward.

Martinez was officially accepted to Monmouth University, began attending in the fall of 2019, and received a \$1,000 MFS scholarship. She says, "I stayed in MFS for many reasons, most importantly because Monmouth is my dream. I loved the field trips and relationships and I've realized that a degree at Monmouth University means I can do anything."

Martinez, who is now involved in the field hockey club at Monmouth, explains that as a young girl, she always knew that Monmouth University was the proper educational institution for her. "I find Monmouth to be the best place for me, especially because it's close to home. I love to be close to family, and I think that the campus here is very safe and pretty."

Martinez explains that her years of being a part of MFS have taught her many skills that have been to her advantage. During the weekly meetings and support groups with MFS mentors, she learned time management, resume writing, and other techniques that helped her focus on her academic goals. In addition to the fun events and diversity within the MFS

program, Martinez stated, "Mentors at MFS talked to us about staying organized, getting ready for college, and keeping up our GPA."

With events such as Immersion Day, MFS brings together prospective college students, as well as graduate mentors to discuss ways of approaching college, as well as academic and community involvement. The recent event featured guest speaker Michael Spence, as well as first-generation college students from diverse backgrounds. Through personal anecdotes, and humorous demonstrations on the power of confidence, Spence's talk allowed students to feel a sense of community and to know that higher education is always attainable and worth the investment.

For the six graduating seniors from Long Branch High School, the seventh annual Monmouth Future Scholars Immersion Day marked a momentous occasion. All six began MFS in sixth grade and remained involved in the program until their high school graduation. Over the years, they remained dedicated to the program, involved in all Monmouth-organized events, and enthusiastic about the reality of someday attending a university themselves.



Immersion Day was attended by approximately 60 students, ranging sixth to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The event, as well as the MFS program, was led by co-coordinators Alyson Pompeo-Fargnoli, Ph.D., and Cynthia O'Connell along with their graduate assistant, Erica Turtz. According to Pompeo-Fargnoli, MFS was created through the School of Education Educational Counseling and Leadership department.

*"Counselor education programs should strive not only to educate and prepare socially responsible and ethical future counselors but should also encourage connections to the local community and to work for social change through action; the MFS program is a University-Community partnership, which strives to do exactly this."*

**- Alyson Pompeo-Fargnoli, Assistant Professor, Educational Counseling and Leadership**

The six seniors reminisced about the fun they've had and the things they've learned, laughing as they recall making a mess in the dining

hall, exploring the different buildings on campus, and spending time with their Monmouth mentors. By far, their most precious memories revolve around the relationships made with the Monmouth University graduate student mentors.

*"My favorite mentor, Miss Mora, was open and honest with us. She put things into perspective and made me feel more open to talk about myself and to learn from her."*

**- Guilherme Deoliveira, MFS graduate**

Alyssa Bulhao, another senior, explains that interns like Miss Mora "helped me not be so scared of college. She got me here." The seniors agree that MFS helped them break down stereotypes and assumptions about the inaccessibility of college for first-generation college students, as well as learn about the resources and advisors available to them. Thanks to the program, all six of the graduating seniors are committed to a future that includes higher education.



# NAPDS Keynote Address



A team from Monmouth University's School of Education delivered a powerful keynote address on Monmouth's Teacher Residency program at the National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) National Conference 2020 in Atlantic City.

Dean Henning opened the keynote symposium by outlining the program, which enables teacher candidates to work additional hours in schools during the academic year. Participants in the program perform the roles of substitute teacher, paraprofessional, or tutor as part of a pilot to create paid internships in teacher education. The program is intended to replace part-time work outside of their chosen field in education with work in P-12 school classrooms to better prepare teacher candidates for their teaching careers.

*"Just as you wouldn't want a surgeon who has never gone through a significant residency before taking a practice, why would you want a teacher who hadn't spent a significant amount of time in schools making the critical decisions that benefit children?"*

**- John Henning, Dean of the School of Education**

Funding for the program comes from the school budgets to compensate for the teaching fellowship positions. The financial pressure on teacher candidates who often must work to pay their tuition and residential bills can serve as a barrier to the profession for first-generation students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. A more sustainable model for the teacher residency program would include paid residency that utilizes local school budgets as the primary source of funding.

*"I believe in the Teaching Residency program because it helped me to achieve my goals as a future teacher. It helped me to bring a more confident teacher to my students because I was able to stand*



*in front of the students with a better perspective and was able to connect better. But most importantly, I was able to also support my family.”* **Angello Villarreal, ‘20**

William George, Ed.D., then superintendent of Middletown Township Public Schools and now an assistant professor in Educational Leadership, spoke of the Teacher Residency program as a multi-year opportunity to develop a relationship with students, staff, and administration in public schools. Because of the strong relationship that Monmouth has created with their partnership districts, the Monmouth students are highly successful in the job marketplace in Monmouth County. The Teacher Residency program has added value to the placement of a significant number of student teachers by providing opportunities to tutor before and after school, substitute teach, and work as a paraprofessional and in the summer program.

*“The multi-year relationship of the Teacher Residency program allows us to confidently hire staff and know that these first-year*

*teachers have the necessary knowledge.”* **Bill George, former superintendent, Middletown Township Public Schools**

Recently graduated, Angello Villarreal, also spoke about his experience in the Teacher Residency program. Villarreal, originally from Peru, came to teaching from a corporate background and without the benefit of experience in American school systems. The Teacher Residency program opened new opportunities for him to serve as a substitute teacher, a bilingual instructional assistant, a long term substitute teacher, and a summer ESL bilingual teacher. By his last semester, he was a very confident teacher who received job offers from four different school districts.

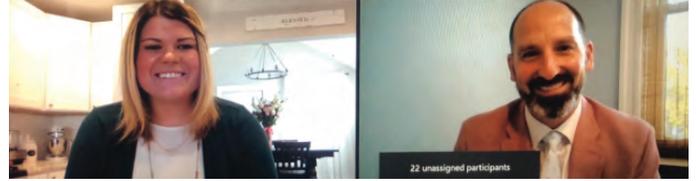
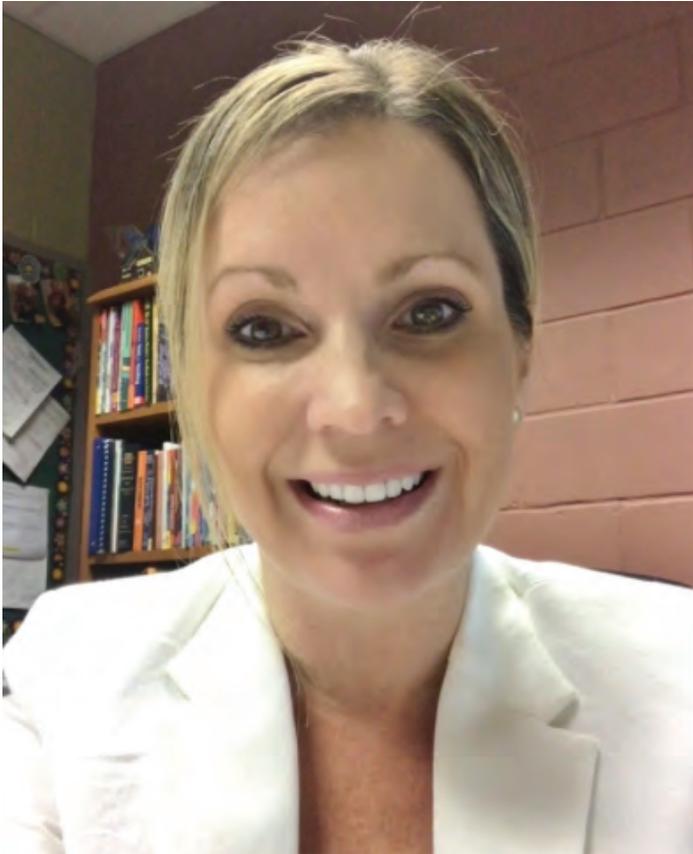
*“The best part was I was able to apply everything I learned in my former classroom to my students.”* **Angello Villarreal, ‘20**

Assistant Dean, Tracy Mulvaney, Ed.D., presented research on the program during a follow-up breakout session.



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# A Virtual Celebration: Zooming Doctoral Defenses



The Coronavirus crisis inspired a new wrinkle in the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership program – the Zoom dissertation defense. Since the first dissertation defense in April 2019, 24 more dissertation defenses have taken place. Since March 2020, when Monmouth moved to online instruction, 12 of those defenses have been conducted over the Zoom platform.

“Zoom has worked well for doctoral defenses,” said John Henning, Ph.D., dean of the School of Education. “More people are attending due to the convenience, and Zoom features allow us to mimic a face-to-face defense really well.” Henning adds that the “share” feature allows doctoral candidates to present their research much as they would in a room on campus, and the “breakout” feature allows the dissertation committee to meet separately from the rest of the group to discuss their feedback to the candidate.

“Of course, it hasn’t changed the fact that doctoral candidates get very nervous before their defense,” said Henning. “I don’t think Zoom has a feature for that yet.” Henning adds that he is pleased to see so many students attending the defenses – 20 at the last one. “To see the process is an important part of the learning experience.”

**“At the core of the success of the Ed.D. program amidst the pandemic is the quality of students and professors committed to maintaining the integrity and enthusiasm for the program, no matter what challenges we’ve faced in instructional delivery and zoom defenses.”**

**- Assistant Dean and Program Director Tracy Mulvaney, Ed.D.**

During the Coronavirus crisis, the School of Education has continued to celebrate successful doctoral defenses on social media, and classes have been conducted through Zoom. “In many ways, the program has not missed a beat, although I am sure the doctoral students would like to see their classmates in person.” Henning credits program director Tracy Mulvaney, with keeping the program energized.

# YEAR IN

2019



Sept 2019

## Academic Welcome

The School of Education greets new education majors at the annual Academic Welcome.



Oct 2019

## Women's Leadership Conference

A conversation with New Jersey First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy at the School of Education's Women's Leadership Conference, in partnership with the New Jersey Association of School Administrators.



Nov 2019

## Buddy and Me Celebration

The Buddy and Me Celebration of Literacy with President Patrick Leahy.



Dec 2019

## School of Education Student Scholarship Exhibition



Jan 2020

## Mentoring Academy

James Falco, Ed.D., leads Mentoring Academy for partnership school teachers.



Feb 2020

## International Committee

International Committee hosts international foods at the faculty lunch.

# REVIEW

2020



## Virtual Learning

Monmouth School of Education students and faculty go virtual.



**Colleen Finnigan  
named Student  
Employee Supervisor  
of the Year for  
Monmouth University.**



**New Teacher  
Graduates Celebrate  
Virtually**

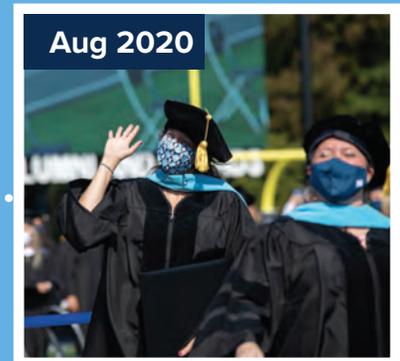


**Educational  
Leadership doctoral  
students graduate  
virtually.**



## Superintendents Academy

President Patrick Leahy speaks at the Superintendents Academy.



**Monmouth School of  
Education students  
celebrate graduation  
in person.**



## TALENTED TEACHER AND RESEARCHER:

# Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D.

Kathy Scaler Scott, Ph.D., brings to Monmouth an international reputation in speech-language pathology. She is known for her research on the communication disorder cluttering and how to best treat children who have disfluencies and co-occurring diagnoses, such as autism spectrum disorder. She has also been engaged in school and medical settings on projects relating to communication patterns in dementia and advocacy for clients.

Scaler Scott is the author of three books, numerous peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and conference presentations. For her outstanding work in this field, she received the Deso Weiss Award, an international award for her contributions to the field of cluttering.

*“What attracted me most to Monmouth was the spirit of growth within the SLP program and the School of Education in general. It was obvious that those I spoke with were enthusiastic about collaborating, and this potential collaboration within and between departments was exciting. I also was attracted to the focus on diversity and social justice at the university in general.”*

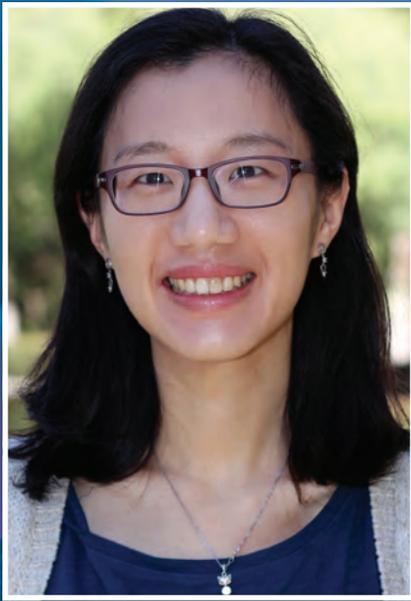
Scaler Scott worked for 11 years at Misericordia University, a teaching university similar to Monmouth. At Misericordia, she received the Judge Max and Tillie Rosenn Excellence in Teaching

Award. Scaler Scott has a passion for helping students grow in understanding themselves as learners and clinicians.

*“It is inspiring to follow each student’s growth and at graduation reflect on how far they’ve come since beginning the program. I also have passion for my research and for advocating for the patients and school students served by speech-language pathologists.”*

The foundation of her teaching is 27 years of experience as a speech-language pathologist in school, medical, and private practice settings. She is Board-certified in fluency disorders, which involve treating children and adults who stutter, clutter, or have atypical disfluencies. She also specializes in treating clients who have autism spectrum disorder and language-based learning disabilities.

*“The SLP department is filled with talented individuals and leaders. I hope to see the department grow in terms of the types of curriculum and research opportunities we can offer to students. The ultimate goal is to increase our visibility and recognition within the state and nationally. With the right resources this is not an unrealistic goal.”*



## A Passion for Innovation: Yao Du, Ph.D.

*“My passion is to bring innovation to my field not only with speech pathology but also human and computer interaction.”*



Yao Du, Ph.D., is passionate about investigating the intersection between humans and technology. A new assistant professor in the Speech-Language Pathology department and recent graduate from the University of California-Irvine, she has already started clinical supervision in teletherapy at the Monmouth University Center for Speech and Language Disorders. She is also interested in assistive technology specifically for clients who use augmentative alternative communication devices to communicate.

*“The technology should be designed with a user-centered approach, rather than forcing users to adapt to the technology. As a researcher and clinical practitioner, I have found that these users have a lot to tell us based on the user experience. We can think of these users as not just students, patients, or clients; these are individuals that have the power of the voice to change and give meaning to the technology.”*

She has worked with assistive technology for several years in clinics and special education schools for children and young adults with moderate to severe autism. Fifty percent of them relied on assisted technology devices. She has tapped into research areas such as using voice assistance (e.g., Amazon Alexa) and voice games for interactive activities during therapy.

Du has three active lines of research. The first is to investigate how clinicians are using technology, an area she believes to be currently lacking in research. The second is to study how virtual play experiences (e.g., Minecraft) for youth and adolescents can be used to understand their social/emotional development and use that understanding to develop educational interventions. The third line is to continue developing voice games for children using Alexa, which is currently a collaborative effort with the University of California-Irvine and Chapman University.

As a bilingual Mandarin-English speaking clinician, Du has worked with many culturally and linguistically diverse clients. That experience has led to several research projects in the areas of bilingualism and multiculturalism. “Many clients we are serving are multilingual/bilingual individuals who speak another language at home. Our field is desperately in need of more service providers to support them. It would be wonderful to have classes/clinics dedicated to providing training and clinical experiences specifically working with multilingual individuals.”



## Exemplary Accreditation Performance: Frank Murray Recognition

*“The Frank Murray Leadership Recognition is a tremendous accomplishment and a tribute to the faculty and staff in the School of Education’s teacher preparation program.”*

**- John Henning, dean of the School of Education**

The Monmouth University Teacher Preparation program recently received The Frank Murray Leadership Recognition from The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Monmouth was one of 13 providers from nine states and Puerto Rico that were recognized for their leadership and commitment to continuous improvement. Recipients of the Frank Murray Leadership Recognition are selected from the pool of educator preparation providers that earned CAEP accreditation in the previous year.

“CAEP accreditation is a sign of commitment to quality through purposeful use of evidence. The Murray Leadership Recognition recipients should be proud of their accomplishments,” said CAEP President Chris Koch.

The award was recognition that Monmouth received accreditation without any stipulations or areas for improvement. It reflects the Monmouth teacher preparation program’s mission to achieve continuous improvement, to use informed and consequential assessments, and to demonstrate the reliability and validity of the evidence provided for accreditation.

“The pride we have for receiving this award is only surpassed by our pride in the teams that make it possible, including students, staff, faculty, administrators, school partners, and the New Jersey Department of Education,” stated Assistant Dean Tracy Mulvaney, Ed.D.

Currently, more than 800 educator preparation providers participate in the CAEP Accreditation system, including many previously accredited through former standards. CAEP is the only accreditor recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

Said CAEP President Chris Koch. “These recipients reflect the creativity that CAEP affords in achieving excellence by meeting the standards in a variety of ways for the diverse populations they serve.”



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