

Reunion Week 2021

Virtual Reception & Awards Program



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Friday, July 9, 2021

INTRODUCTIONS

WELCOME REMARKS

RECOGNITION OF CLASS GIFTS

PRESENTATION OF ALUMNI AWARDS

ALMA MATER

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Sally Farrell Partner '78

Alumni Association Board of Trustees President



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REUNION CLASS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

James Brewer '71
Carol Bongo Kissam '71
Scott LaVine '71
Joyce Barnholt Yianoukos '71
Anne Bonnet '76
Debra Catlin Copeletti '76
Robin Salyer DeSantis '76
Nancy Knoblock Hunton '76
Carol McClurg Rourke '81
David Rourke '81
Karen Bigelow-Varney '86
Kristen Johnson-Jones '86
Sean Leous '86
Karen Bernstein '01
Nicole Lescarbeau Sutorius '01
Tiffany Dzembo '06
Steven King '06
Brandon Mendelson '06
Tiffany Conn Soricelli '06
Karen Kennison Ahlfeld '11
Latesha Fussell '11
Audrie MacDuff King '11
Jordan Walker '11
Kevin Agyakwa '16

Thank You!

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all of our alumni volunteers for their efforts and hard work to make our Virtual Reunion a success.

While we are not able to celebrate in person again this year, we are able to share our Potsdam spirit with each other virtually.

We look forward to seeing you in person in 2022!



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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2020-2021

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	Susan Perkins '93
	Romeyn Prescott '92
	Joshua Rich '10
	Courtney White Rust '15
	Beverly Santos '10
	Philip Shatraw '79
	Donald Tompkins '68

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Nicole Feml '08

Kathy White Finnerty '75

Janie Davies Fitzgerald '88

Gregory Geer '76

Johnathan Hirschey '05

John Liquori '12

Judith Comstock Liscum '62

Kim Dadson O'Neil '77

Leon Robert Jr. '77

Mary Steinburg Rutley '60

Sharon Sainsbury '86

Terry Tiernan '74

Susan Brown Todd '88



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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Alumni Scholarship is presented annually to a Potsdam student(s) whose parent or grandparent graduated from SUNY Potsdam. The student must be nominated by his or her parent or grandparent and can be an incoming freshman, transfer student or current student.

If you would like more information on how you can nominate your child or grandchild, please contact the SUNY Potsdam Alumni Relations Office or visit our website at: www.potsdam.edu/alumni/services/scholarship

The 2021 - 2022 Alumni Association Scholarship recipients are:

Nathan Giroux

Hannawa Falls, NY

Grandson of George Giroux '54 & Mary Ellen Jumps Giroux '53

Katherine McAuliffe

Rochester, NY

Daughter of Tina Bergdorf McAuliffe '93

Emily Oldfield

Pittsford, NY

Daughter of Amy Shaffer Oldfield '96

Emma Scianti

Ronkonkoma, NY

Daughter of Christine MacDonald Scianti '97

Josephine Smith

Amsterdam, NY

Daughter of Christopher Smith '94



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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARDS

ST. LAWRENCE ACADEMY MEDAL

Presented to an alum who has made significant contributions to the field of professional education or related fields.

In lieu of a single award, the St. Lawrence Academy Medal is dedicated this year to all of our teacher educators who continue to serve as front line heroes in our communities, during this time of Covid-19.

HELEN M. HOSMER EXCELLENCE IN MUSIC TEACHING AWARD

Presented to an alum in public school music education who has demonstrated exemplary service in any of the areas of choral, instrumental or general music education.

Russell J. Fauce '82 • Patricia Arnold O'Connell '77

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Presented to a non-alum who has made exceptional contributions to the Alumni Association and/or the College.

**Kathy Brennan • Chester W. Douglass • Rhea L. Noseworthy
Lonel Woods (posthumously)**

RISING STAR AWARD

Presented to an alum who has demonstrated outstanding professional achievement in the first decade following graduation.

John N. Liquori '12 • Daniel J. Mertzlufft '15

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Presented to an alum who has made exceptional contributions to the Alumni Association and/or the College.

Donnalyn Eaton Shuster '78

MINERVA AWARD

Presented to an alum who has demonstrated outstanding professional achievement.

Christine E. Haile '74



ST. LAWRENCE ACADEMY MEDAL

All Frontline Educators

SUNY Potsdam and the School of Education Alumni Board are proud of the many teachers and administrators who demonstrated admirable commitment to their students and communities during an extremely challenging year. This year, in lieu of a single award, the St. Lawrence Academy Medal is dedicated to all alumni in the field of teacher education who have served as front-line heroes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The medal was presented to the education community at a virtual event during Teacher Appreciation Week in early May of 2021. This event also included a question and answer session with several alumni panelists who represented varying roles in education in New York State.

Upon presenting the St. Lawrence Academy Medal, School of Education Alumni Board President David Vroman '83 shared the following:

“Today, we celebrate each of you for the incredible accomplishments and sacrifices you have made this year—for the hours you have logged learning new technology, caring for your students, worrying about their safety and ensuring that, during these crazy (and often scary) times, school and learning remain a constant in their lives.”

Dean of SUNY Potsdam’s School of Education & Professional Studies, Dr. Allen Grant, echoed David’s sentiments and offered gratitude for all that teachers and administrators have done to move the field of education forward, including the continued mentorship of future educators.

The alumni board hopes that this token of recognition helps all alumni teachers and administrators—near and far—recognize how appreciated and valued they are. They truly have been the unsung heroes of this pandemic.



HELEN M. HOSMER EXCELLENCE IN MUSIC TEACHING AWARD



Russell J. Faunce '82

While many music teachers across the state have experience with the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA), only one serves as the organization's president elect. Currently, that esteemed position is held by Russell Faunce.

After graduating with both his bachelor's and master's degrees from The Crane School of Music, Russ went on to establish a successful 34-year choral teaching career in the Watertown City Schools. During his tenure, he developed an extensive background in choral music, music theory, class piano and musical theater. His choirs regularly received "gold with distinction" ratings at NYSSMA festivals, and he traveled with them for honor performances in California, Florida, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York City.

Russ consistently pushed his students out of their comfort zone to show them what they were capable of and to help them believe in themselves. Through the years, 110 of Russ's Watertown High School students were selected to sing with the NYSSMA All-State Conference choruses.

NYSSMA has been an integral part of Russ's career. He served as the NYS-SMA Zone 5 regional representative for two six-year terms, which enabled him to promote the efforts of North Country music educators and students. He also acted as the All-State choral chair in 2006 and 2007, and he continues to be an All-State adjudicator for vocal, piano and choral major organization categories. Russ's long-standing history with NYSSMA demonstrates his dedication to the advancement and success of music education in New York.

After retiring from the traditional classroom in 2015, Russ continued to teach privately and serve as a College supervisor. He traveled extensively to meet with student teachers throughout New York State to observe them, conduct seminars and advise them in their certification requirements.

In recognition of his investment in the music education community in New York State, as well as his students and future music educators, the Julia E. Crane Alumni Association is proud to present the 2021 Helen Hosmer Excellence in Music Teaching Award to Russell Faunce, Class of 1982.

HELEN M. HOSMER EXCELLENCE IN MUSIC TEACHING AWARD



Patricia Arnold O'Connell '77

Patricia "Patti" O'Connell spent her career as an educator teaching young musicians not only how to read bass clef and prepare for auditions but how to build character traits that would prepare them for their futures.

Upon reflecting on her career, Patti shared, "It is humbling to realize the incredible number of students whose lives I have touched, even in the smallest way. The students' time in the final grades before graduation are so very important in formulating their views to become positive contributors and citizens to society. Participation in a music program fosters infinite life skills."

Before retiring in 2010, Patti spent 35 years teaching in the Vestal School District, the majority of which was at the high school level. As is the case in many band rooms, her band was a family. She pushed students to play their absolute best while making sure everyone in the room knew what they were doing and felt included. Patti often traveled with the high school bands for festivals and competitions, including those in Florida, Virginia, New York City and Toronto. Beyond the traditional band classroom at Vestal, Patti also directed the Golden Bears Marching Band and Winter Guard, in addition to conducting the high school musicals.

A French horn player, Patti frequently performs in local ensembles. She currently plays Principal Horn in the Downtown Singers Orchestra, Southern Tier Concert Band and Tri-Cities Opera Orchestra. She also performs in the Binghamton Community Orchestra, the Binghamton Philharmonic, The Fair Winds (a woodwind quintet) and various high school musical pit orchestras. In 2020, Patti developed and performed a 45-minute solo recital sponsored by the Binghamton Philharmonic to demonstrate the versatility of the French horn.

In recognition of her dedication to her students and the field of music education—whether in a band room, lesson room or stage, the Julia E. Crane Alumni Association is proud to present the 2021 Helen Hosmer Excellence in Music Teaching Award to Patricia Arnold O'Connell, Class of 1977.

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP



Kathy Brennan

SUNY Plattsburgh alumna and lifelong educator, Kathy Brennan holds an enduring love for SUNY Potsdam, the alma mater of her husband, Dr. Tony Brennan '75.

The couple met their freshman year of high school and married in 1974. When discussing the early years of their life together, Kathy is quick to share the role and impact Potsdam had on her and Tony, noting that she likely spent more time on Tony's campus than her own during their college years.

Decades later, their hearts still swell when they visit campus, and Kathy has developed a special affinity for SUNY Potsdam's Rebecca V. Sheard Literacy Center, which she and Tony have supported financially.

Kathy's passion for literacy extends back to the library of children's books she curated while raising their three children, whom she and Tony see as their greatest achievement. When their youngest daughter started school, Kathy took classes to earn a teaching certificate from the State of Florida and entered the field of education. She started by teaching home economics; however, upon realizing that the students' lack of reading skills was inhibiting their success in other subjects, she became an advocate for literacy.

During her 19 years of language arts education, Kathy served as both a high-school English teacher and a reading coach—a role in which she taught other educators how to incorporate literacy into their lessons. Her favorite part of teaching is seeing the "a-ha" moment on students' faces when they truly understand something new.

Kathy and Tony have ensured that students at SUNY Potsdam will experience such learning discoveries through their gifts to the College. Together, they have generously contributed over \$120,000 through the Brennan STEM Equipment Fund for the purchase of scientific equipment at SUNY Potsdam, enabling the College's students and science programs to grow and excel.

In recognition of her continued investment in SUNY Potsdam and its students, as well as leading a life and career that perfectly reflect the mission of the College, the Alumni Association is proud to bestow Honorary Lifetime Membership upon Kathy Brennan, Honorary Class of 1975.



HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP



Chester W. Douglass

A long-time advocate and financial supporter of SUNY Potsdam and The Crane School of Music, Dr. Chester (Chet) Douglass has embodied the same pride for the College as any former Potsdam or Crane student.

Chet met his wife, Crane alumna Joy (Anthony) Douglass '56, on a chorus trip to Europe in 1958. Part of the "All American Chorus" under James Allan Dash, they were among the 80 performers who toured the continent for eight weeks by boat. When they married, they started a new adventure as a family, raising two children while pursuing their respective careers in music education and dentistry.

Chet received his Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) from Temple University in 1965 and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan School of Public Health in 1971. He has published over 140 papers and has served on multiple medical boards. In 1978, Chet became chair of the Department of Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine and served in that role for 30 years. He continues to hold teaching privileges at Harvard.

While his professional accomplishments and contributions are significant, what Chet will choose to talk about with most anyone, especially any Crane alumni, is music. His vast knowledge and love for it is boundless and his commitment ever-present.

An alumnus of the renowned American Boychoir, Chet made it possible for the Boychoir to visit and perform at SUNY Potsdam in both 2010 and 2013. In 2011, Chet and Joy established the Joy Anthony Douglass Visiting Master Teacher endowed fund to bring master music teachers from around the world to Crane. For the past five years, the Douglasses have provided significant annual support for music education. Their lifetime financial support has already exceeded \$260,000, with the promise of annual lifetime support as well as a gift in their estate plan.

In recognition of his commitment to SUNY Potsdam, his love for the arts, and his and Joy's lasting legacy at The Crane School of Music, the Alumni Association is proud to bestow Honorary Lifetime Membership upon Dr. Chester Douglass, Honorary Class of 1956.



HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP



Rhea L. Noseworthy

To the trustees of the Potsdam College Foundation Board of Trustees, as well as many other alumni and colleagues, Rhea Noseworthy is an integral member of the SUNY Potsdam family.

In her role as Administrative Assistant to the Vice President for College Advancement/Executive Director for Potsdam College Foundation, Rhea serves as a point person for many tasks related to the work of the Foundation Board and frequently advances system improvements to help the Board operate more efficiently.

Each year, Rhea expertly coordinates two Foundation Board Weekends and manages the recurring meeting schedules for over eight Board committees, comprised of 40+ individuals. Her facilitation of these meetings encountered new challenges in 2020 and 2021 as all meetings were hosted virtually; yet she approached all technological hurdles with patience and attentiveness.

The Foundation Board trustees rely on Rhea and appreciate her loyalty to both the Board and SUNY Potsdam. One trustee recalls countless instances in which she emailed Rhea an inquiry at midnight and received a response before the start of the working day, not only answering the trustee's questions but directing her to others who might be able to assist with the issue at hand.

Rhea's colleagues in the College Advancement Office also revere her as a dependable and respected member of the team. Whether helping someone charge an invoice or ensuring the reliability of the department vehicle, Rhea enables the Office to complete its work effectively, while also supplying diverting quips and endearing Canadian slang.

Rhea not only supports the fundraising efforts of College Advancement through her work; she herself is also a loyal donor to the Pay It Forward Scholarship Program and College's Greatest Needs Fund, making a SUNY Potsdam education possible for more deserving students.

In recognition of over 20 years serving the College with dedication and distinction and the indelible impact she has had on the advancement of the College, the SUNY Potsdam Alumni Association is proud to bestow Honorary Lifetime Membership upon Rhea Noseworthy, Honorary Class of 2021.



HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP



Lonel Woods

At the end of the 2020-21 academic year, the SUNY Potsdam family was shaken by the unexpected loss of The Crane School of Music Dean Emeritus Dr. Lonel Woods.

Lonel was a dear colleague, professor, mentor and friend to many in The Crane School of Music and greater SUNY Potsdam community. At the time of his death, he served as the interim dean of Crane, a role he assumed in January 2021 after twelve years teaching as a professor of voice at the College. The title of Dean Emeritus was bestowed upon him posthumously by President Kristin Esterberg.

The impact Lonel has had on the SUNY Potsdam and The Crane School of Music community cannot be overstated. His positive, approachable demeanor shone through wherever he went—whether in the classroom, in studio lessons, on stage, in campus forums or in the community. His presence on campus was one that sparked joy, and his perspective and encouragement inspired students, colleagues and community members alike.

A tenor originally from Chicago, Lonel earned a bachelor's degree from DePaul University, a Master of Music degree at the Catholic University of America and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Michigan. Lonel had an outstanding record both in his teaching and professional career, resulting in receiving the highest award in the SUNY System, the Chancellor's Award for Faculty and Professional Service.

Lonel also served on many campus committees and had been a staunch advocate of SUNY Potsdam's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. As chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Action Coalition (DIAC), he worked with other committee members to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all.

Lonel is already greatly missed by his Potsdam family, but his legacy of kindness, inclusivity and music in The Crane School of Music will endure.

In recognition of twelve years of dedicated service to the College, its students and alumni, and his mission to spread peace and love to each person he met, the SUNY Potsdam Alumni Association is proud to posthumously bestow Honorary Lifetime Membership upon Dr. Lonel Woods, Honorary Class of 2021.



RISING STAR AWARD



John N. Liquori '12

In his seven-year career as an educator, John Liquori has already distinguished himself as a top-tier educator.

In 2014, SUNY Potsdam's School of Education and Professional Studies awarded John with its "Promising New Teacher" award.

In subsequent years, he was also selected as Stanton-Weirsdale's Rookie Teacher of the Year and Marion County's Rookie Teacher of the Year.

John has since settled in as a teacher in the Horseheads Central School District in New York's Southern Tier. He has become a leader through his involvement in the community and by assisting colleagues with technology, which has been especially valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to ensure they are offering the best remote education possible.

John is a Google Certified Educator and a Microsoft Certified Innovative Educator. He is an advocate for technological advancement in the classroom and has collaborated with a North Country teacher to write an article on rural school districts embracing technology, which was published for the New York State School Board Association.

In addition to his passion for technology, John loves teaching history in innovative ways to engage and inspire in students. Each year, he assigns his students the task of creating, designing and executing a history exhibition, which is then put on display in a local museum. For John, the process is just as important as the product of this exercise, as the middle school students work together and encourage each other.

John's classroom is one where students feel welcomed, cared for and valued. One former student shared, "The thing I loved the most about Mr. Liquori was that he would always make all of us laugh and he would do anything he needed to put us in a better mood when we were down. Having had anxiety since I was young, school has been hard for me. But, Mr. Liquori adjusted to what helped me succeed and he went above and beyond to help me handle situations that made me feel anxious."

In recognition of his excellent work in his career thus far and his inevitable future as a talented, compassionate educator, the SUNY Potsdam Alumni Association is proud to present the 2021 Rising Star Award to John Liquori, Class of 2012.



RISING STAR AWARD



Daniel J. Mertzlufft '15

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Daniel Mertzlufft turned to social media to create content that brought people together through music and comedy. His TikTok musicals soon rose to viral fame, uniting musicians and audiences from around the world.

Dan's first video sensation was a musical parody called "Grocery Store: A New Musical," which finds a couple fighting in the aisles during the pandemic. He also released an arrangement of "Remy the Ratatouille," by Emily Jacobson, which launched the Ratatouille Musical TikTok movement. He then served as music supervisor, songwriter and arranger for the resulting live-streamed fundraiser, *Ratatouille: The TikTok Musical*, which raised over \$2 million for The Actor's Fund. His work led him to appear on The Late Late Show with James Corden, where he performed his composition *The Thanksgiving Musical* along with renowned Broadway actors.

Though Dan has been composing music since he was a child, his education at The Crane School of Music helped him to hone his skills and gave him opportunities to share his work. For his senior project, he composed a 40-minute opera, "The Letter," which he conducted in Hosmer Hall in 2014. Two years after graduating at the top of his class, another one of his compositions was featured in a Crane performance hall, as his piece "far memory" premiered at the Fall Island Vocal Arts Seminar hosted on campus. He was the first commissioned composer for the annual seminar.

In 2021, Crane voice professor Dr. Donald George premiered a reworked series of Dan's called "Three songs of e.e. cummings." Regarding the song cycle, Dr. George shared, "They are really beautiful and effective songs. It shows another side of Dan and his ability to compose beautifully with a masterful setting of these texts." In addition to composing, Dan conducts, directs, arranges and orchestrates for organizations both nationally and internationally. He is also an active educator and leads workshops throughout the United States. During SUNY Potsdam's LoKo Arts Festival in 2021, Dan presented a musical theatre workshop for Crane students.

In recognition of his outstanding achievements so early in his career and the continued success he is sure to earn, the SUNY Potsdam Alumni Association is proud to present the 2021 Rising Star Award to Daniel Mertzlufft, Class of 2015.



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD



Donnalyn Eaton Shuster '78

There are not many people who are able to match the energy or time that Donnalyn Shuster has devoted to SUNY Potsdam as an alumna.

Donnalyn served on the Alumni Board of Trustees for 10 years and was recognized with emerita status upon stepping down in 2019. During most of her tenure, she served as the Greek Alumni representative. Through her efforts, Greek representation at Reunion Weekend grew considerably, as reflected in the Greek Life pictures taken in Minerva Plaza each July. She encouraged every fraternity and sorority to be represented during Reunion, either by hosting alumni at their houses or by partaking in the events that the College offered.

Donnalyn was also a champion of alumni involvement with undergraduates through their Greek affiliations. She maintained a close connection with All Greek Council and shared with alumni what undergraduates were accomplishing and how alumni could assist. Through her involvement with the Omega Delta Phi Alumni Association, serving as president from 2005 to 2017, Donnalyn has worked with alumni and student members to foster intergenerational relationships. Emphasizing the value of giving back, she was a part of building the Relay for Life event to include alumni on a team that consistently received honors. From Relay, to Omega's annual school supplies drive for Potsdam's Lawrence Ave. Elementary School, Donnalyn models the importance of giving back to the community and College, encouraging alumni to return for Reunion Weekend and sponsor alumni events during the weekend.

Beyond Greek Life, Donnalyn is an advocate for all SUNY Potsdam students and has invested a considerable amount of time in their success. Donnalyn has served as a mentor in the Women, Gender & Leadership Program, presented virtual workshops for students and alumni, and written encouraging cards to graduating students. She was also instrumental in forging a partnership with our Art Department to be a NYSATA conference sponsor since 2017.

A retired K-12 art teacher, Donnalyn received the 2013 St. Lawrence Academy Medal in recognition of her exceptional contributions to the field of education.

In honor of her dedication to the betterment the alumni community, the College and countless students, the SUNY Potsdam Alumni Association is proud to present the 2021 Distinguished Service Award to Donnalyn Eaton Shuster, Class of 1978.



MINERVA AWARD



Christine E. Haile '74

Christine Haile has been a leader among her peers since her time serving as Student Government Association Vice President at SUNY Potsdam. In the past 47 years, she has utilized her leadership skills to grow in her career in higher education, as well as to advance the mission of her alma mater.

After receiving her bachelor's degree in political science from SUNY Potsdam in 1974, Chris obtained a Master of Business Administration in finance from SUNY Albany. Shortly thereafter, she began a long and successful career in SUNY. Her professional experience covers a broad range of fields, including finance, health sciences, library systems and faculty development initiatives. Most notably, she served as Chief Information Officer (CIO) at the University at Albany until her retirement in 2015.

Chris joined the Potsdam College Foundation Board of Trustees in 2010 and continually goes above and beyond in her role, including serving concurrently as treasurer, a member of the Executive Committee and chair of the Investment & Finance Committee. As a trustee, Chris has worked diligently to improve the Board's systems and procedures, from implementing a new budget system to executing a complete review of SUNY Potsdam's IT systems.

In addition to her time on the Board, Chris has invested time and resources into the personal and professional development of many SUNY Potsdam students. She has individually mentored student leaders and, in 2015, endowed The Christine Haile '74 Women & Leadership Fund to give students access to networking opportunities and career advancement skills.

Chris was a trailblazer for women in her chosen field, and her endowed fund empowers current SUNY Potsdam students to follow in her footsteps by supporting the Women, Gender and Leadership Program on campus. This year-long program involves approximately 40 students each year who attend weekly leadership development workshops and are matched with alumni mentors in their career field. The mentors provide invaluable insights and advice to students on how to achieve success in the future.

In recognition of her inspiring professional achievements, and in gratitude for her service and generosity to the College, the SUNY Potsdam Alumni Association is proud to present the 2021 Minerva Award to Christine Haile, Class of 1974.



Reunion Week 2021

ALMA MATER

Performed by Shavon Lloyd '19

Music: Charles O'Neill

Words adapted by Marie Schuette
and Wilmer Trauger

On the banks of Rac-quette Riv-er, With its hills of blue, Stands our
hon-ored Pots-dam Col-lege, Stir-ring sight to view!
Hail Pots-dam Col-lege! In rev-'rence we ac-knowl-edge Strength from
thee, from thee, O Al-ma Ma-ter, Praise, all praise Pots-dam!