



# The Future Begins Now

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## Greetings from the Kean University Foundation!

*We are excited to share with you the latest edition of our eNewsletter. In keeping with previous publications, this eNewsletter is sent out quarterly to friends and members of the Kean Community, including content related to the many ways we can all support Kean University, as well as options available for making a gift to the Foundation. We look forward to keeping you updated on the Foundation's activities and the tremendous impact of our valued supporters!*



### **DONOR SPOTLIGHT:** *Wakefern Food Corp. Honors Legacy of Kean Alumnus Joe Sheridan '80*

Wakefern Food Corp. has announced a \$1 million donation for student scholarships at Kean University in honor of the company's recently-retired president, Kean alumnus Joe Sheridan '80.

The New Jersey-based supermarket cooperative that includes retail banners ShopRite, Price Rite Marketplace and the Fresh Grocer endowed the Joe Sheridan Resiliency Scholarship to help students in the University's College of Business and Public Management (CBPM) pursue their professional goals and dreams.

Sheridan, an Elizabeth native who retired as president and chief operating officer in December after nearly five decades with Wakefern, is an active supporter of the Kean University Foundation as well as many other social and community causes.

"Wakefern's generous gift honoring Kean alumnus Joe Sheridan creates a lasting legacy at Kean and offers students a financial safety net to continue their studies and follow in the footsteps of Joe and other prominent Kean alumni," said Kean President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. "We are grateful to Joe for his support throughout his years, and we thank Wakefern for their generosity in his name."

The Kean University Board of Trustees on May 6 voted to name the 6th floor boardroom at Kean's Hynes Hall after Sheridan and expressed gratitude to Wakefern for the support.

Sheridan said he was grateful for the education he received at Kean, which is New Jersey's urban research university.

"I have been blessed throughout my career to work in a field – the supermarket industry – that serves our communities every day and am pleased that Wakefern, where I spent so many happy and successful years, is helping students at Kean achieve their dreams," he said. "I look forward to continuing to support my alma mater and its students."

Steve Fastook '06H, chair of the Kean Board of Trustees, said Kean is pleased to honor Sheridan as a graduate and a supporter.

"Joe Sheridan was born and raised in Elizabeth, graduated from Kean, and has never forgotten his roots," Fastook said. "We are proud to count Joe among our many successful Kean alumni and deeply appreciate this incredible gift to our students."

The Joe Sheridan Resiliency Scholarship will benefit, in perpetuity, Kean CBPM students who maintain a GPA of 3.0 or above and who have demonstrated financial need.

"It is our great pleasure to thank Joe Sheridan and Wakefern, and express our deepest appreciation for this gift," said William Miller, chief executive officer of the Kean University Foundation. "Through Joe's vision and compassion, Kean's College of Business and Public Management students will get a helping hand to keep them on track to graduation and the chance to build their own successful careers."

Sheridan earned a Bachelor of Science degree in management science from Kean in 1980 and his wife, Joan Sheridan, received her master's degree in educational administration and supervision from Kean in 1986.

Joe Sheridan began working as a selector in Wakefern's Elizabeth warehouse in 1976, before he graduated. He rose through the ranks at Wakefern to become president of the company in 2011.

During Sheridan's tenure as vice president and president at Wakefern, he shepherded membership and store growth; launched one of the grocery industry's earliest online shopping platforms in 2002; and rolled out Wakefern's popular private label product lines Bowl & Basket, Wholesome Pantry and Paperbird.

Wakefern, a retailer-owned cooperative with 45 members and 365 supermarkets, including ShopRite, Price Rite Marketplace, the Fresh Grocer, Gourmet Garage, Fairway Market, Dearborn Market and Di Bruno Bros., also became a leader in social responsibility under Sheridan's stewardship.

"The creation of the Kean scholarship is in keeping with Joe Sheridan's desire to give back," said Wakefern Chief Communications Officer Karen Meleta. "Throughout his career, Joe furthered Wakefern's commitment to community through his support of our ShopRite Partners In Caring program, which was created in 1999 and to date has donated more than \$62 million to hunger-fighting organizations."

Sheridan has been an active volunteer with Special Olympics New Jersey and other nonprofits such as the Embrace Kids Foundation and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Creating the scholarship at Kean University was a fitting way to honor his legacy at Wakefern.

## Riccio Pick Me Ups Foundation

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Each April on Founders Day, alumni and friends come together online and in person to honor Kean's history and provide financial support for the University. Some give out of gratitude for their Kean education, and others choose to honor a faculty member or special mentor, but all help fund Kean's continued advancement. It is a day when Cougar pride is both celebrated and contagious.

In honor of Founders Day 2024, one contribution was a stellar example of how one person's good work can begin a cycle of caring: a special gift received from the Riccio Pick Me Ups Foundation in memory of Kean alumnus Brett Christian Coleman '18 to benefit the Kean University Wellness Center.

The Riccio Pick Me Ups Foundation was created by Amara Riccio '17, who after suffering a traumatic brain injury at age 13, spent nine days in a coma and needed to relearn how to walk, talk and eat. Amara and her family, in gratitude for the help they had received during this time, founded the Riccio Pick Me Ups Foundation with a mission to provide inspiration and joy to others suffering from life-changing medical issues. They started by giving "pick-me-ups," such as homemade gifts and cards, to chronically ill hospital patients. Over time, their work expanded to include financial, recreational, emotional and educational support to individuals and families with complex health needs.

Amara Riccio, who earned her bachelor of arts degree at Kean, spoke at a disability awareness event at the University several years ago. That is where she met Brett Coleman, then a Kean student. A friendship was born. Coleman became involved with the Riccio Foundation's work, while completing his Kean degree and managing his own chronic health challenges. He also built a career in finance, first as a project manager for Extell Development and later as Chief Financial Officer of Spec-X, before he passed away in February.

In memory of Coleman, the Riccio Pick Me Ups Foundation directed their Founder's Day gift to support the Kean University Wellness Center.

"Brett continues to help others as he lived his daily life, while facing medical challenges. Brett's legacy of kindness will live forever. His strength, determination, courage, compassion and genuine personality were the greatest pick-me-up," said Lori Riccio, Riccio Foundation president and Amara's mother.

Amara Riccio's goal to bring a smile to others who are ill has been realized through her family foundation. Her positive message continues even as her own health has had several setbacks. Most recently, she has co-authored a book, *This Is Why I Dance*, an uplifting memoir.

The Kean University Foundation is grateful for the Riccio Foundation's thoughtful gift, which will benefit wellness initiatives for our students. It honors a courageous alumnus and allows us to share Amara's inspirational story of how one young girl's altruism created a cycle of caring that continues to grow and inspire others.

[Riccio Pick-Me-Ups](#) is a 501(3)(c) nonprofit based in Howell, New Jersey with a mission to provide F.R.E.E. (Financial, Recreational, Emotional and Educational) support to individuals and families with complex health needs.

The [Kean University Wellness Center](#) provides holistic, integrated health and wellness services for the entire campus community. The Center's interdisciplinary, student-centered and culturally inclusive approach is designed to educate and empower students, faculty and staff to make informed lifestyle choices. The Wellness Center includes the Kean Counseling Center, Student Health Services, Alcohol and Other Drug Services, the Office of Accessibility Services and Cougar Food Pantry.





## 2024 Kean University Foundation Scholarship Recognition Ceremony

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The Kean University Foundation celebrated the spirit of generosity and academic achievement at a Scholarship Recognition Ceremony on Thursday, March 21st. The memorable event at Downs Hall had more than 600 attendees, including esteemed donors, guest speakers and scholarship recipients. It was an inspiring and uplifting acknowledgment of the power of education and philanthropy at Kean.

Read more about the event: Transforming Futures: [2024 Kean University Foundation Scholarship Recognition Ceremony](#).





## Legacy Gift in Memory of Dr. John O'Meara Made 43 Years After His Passing

In a testament to how planned gifts transcend over time, a legacy gift from the Forrest H. Judkins Trust has been made in support of the John O'Meara Annual Memorial Scholarship at Kean University 43 years after O'Meara's death.

John H. O'Meara was a professor of communication sciences at Newark State College, now Kean University. He joined the faculty in 1959 and served until his death at the age of 62 on February 28, 1981.

When O'Meara passed, donations were made to establish an annual scholarship in his memory, which was awarded to seniors demonstrating humanitarian qualities. An auditorium was also named in his memory in Hutchinson Hall on Kean's main campus in Union, New Jersey.



In addition to donations that followed immediately after his death, a charitable provision was included in the Forrest H. Judkins Trust, held by the late Lila O'Meara Judkins, O'Meara's sister-in-law. Judkins, whose first husband was O'Meara's brother, William, passed away in October 2023.

A unique individual in every respect, John O'Meara was characterized by his warmth, openness, enthusiasm and love of people. An extremely popular figure among students, alumni, faculty and staff alike, he touched the hearts of all who knew him in a very special way.

In his eulogy, the late Nathan Weiss, Ph.D., former president of Kean College, noted O'Meara's "marvelous sense of humor, cheery smile and sunny nature."

"With his ever-present bowtie, Dr. O'Meara always had kind words for everyone he met, and his optimistic view of life affected all of those around him." Weiss said. "If he were to look at a partially filled glass of water, he would view it as half-filled, never half-empty, thus characterizing his positive outlook on life. He had a certain charming innocence about him, always looking at the brighter side and believing that there is good in all people."



## Kean University Founders 5K and Founders Day Annual Day of Giving

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Thank you to everyone who generously supported Kean University's Founders 5K and Founders Day!

Kean University students, alumni, friends and employees celebrated the University's Founders Day with record-breaking gifts that will support the next generation of students at the state's urban research university.

Kean Cougars showed their pride and support for student scholarships and other University initiatives across the two-day event, which included the Founders Day 5K run on Sunday, April 14, and gatherings at the Union and Toms River campuses on Monday, April 15.

"Founders Day celebrates our proud history and traditions. It's a wonderful way for us to connect our story with philanthropy and giving," Kean President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., said. "I'm personally grateful to all those who contributed from across the country. Their generosity will help our students climb higher for years to come."

The Kean University Foundation hosts Founders Day to mark the anniversary of Kean's founding on April 14, 1855. Begun as the Newark Normal School, Kean started as a teacher-training school and the first public post-secondary institution in New Jersey. Kean has grown to become a global University with more than 17,000 students worldwide at campuses in Union, Toms River and Wenzhou, China.

This year students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends helped us raise over \$300,000 – triple what was raised last year – making it the most successful Founders Day on record! Please visit [this link](#) to watch a special thank you message from Kean students and President Repollet. Your support helps us create more opportunities for our students to pursue their academic and career goals.









## Kean University Medallion Society Reception

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The Kean University Foundation hosted the 2024 Medallion Society Reception on Sunday, April 21 to honor those who have supported Kean University through planned gifts. Also recognized at the event for his impact on Kean students and colleagues, was late Professor Emeritus W. Carl Burger.

Featured speakers included Dorothy G. Hennings, Ed.D., 'H10, who shared her and her late husband's connection and commitment to Kean. Speeches emphasized the importance of planned giving and its lasting legacy. The event celebrated generosity, inspired others to contribute and reinforced Kean University's commitment to excellence, innovation and service.

Read more about the event: [The 2024 Kean University Medallion Society Reception](#)





## Student Spotlight: Dyquan A. Waters

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Dyquan A. Waters has found his place at Kean University. The senior studying political science has embraced the opportunities that Kean has provided him, both academically and socially.

Waters graduated from Linden High School in 2021, having moved from Brooklyn only two years before. He describes himself as “curious and outgoing,” but because of challenges posed by the pandemic and his relative newcomer status in his community, he struggled to build a social network. His decision to attend Kean gave him the chance to meet new people, engage in local activities and build a community both on and off campus.

Waters’ involvement at Kean has opened doors for him, granting him remarkable opportunities. He had the privilege of visiting Capitol Hill with a delegation from Kean University, gaining invaluable work experience in the fields of diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as urban policy. As a student leader, Waters also developed a deep understanding of civic intelligence.

Waters calls his time at Kean “rewarding.” He said his favorite class, The History of Ireland, 1801-Present with the Human Rights Institute (HRI), was rigorous and offered opportunities to grow as a student and individual. The course, taken in the Spring of his sophomore year, required a research paper, a research project and a presentation during Kean’s Research Days. He also visited Belfast, Derry and Dublin as part of an HRI Travelearn to explore historical sites and hear firsthand accounts about Ireland’s history of human rights.

Beyond academics, Waters has enjoyed the beauty of Kean’s campus, utilizing the Learning Gazebo as his go-to study spot. He happily recalls preparing for New Student Orientation last summer when he took advantage of the quieter summer months on campus to bond with other students and enjoy the campus’ amenities and outdoor facilities. While at Kean, he has also ventured into outdoor activities like hiking, camping and roller skating, connecting with like-minded individuals along the way.

As he approaches his final year at the University, Waters affirms that Kean was the right place for him. He said he feels fully prepared for his next chapter after graduation, including continuing his education and turning his civic engagement into a career. He credits Kean for providing him with professional, leadership, academic and social experiences that have shaped him into a well-rounded individual. Those experiences include serving as a New Student Orientation leader, a member of the President’s Advisory Council, vice president of the Pan-African Student Union and a student intern with the Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research.

Waters’ journey at Kean University exemplifies the transformative power of education. As he navigates life and academia and prepares for his career, he finds himself reflecting on the words of blues great B.B. King, “The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you.” He said his mindset remains steadfast – he possesses all he needs to succeed.



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*“Attending Kean University has been a rewarding experience.”*

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## Corporate and Foundation Relations Awareness

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Claire Mulry, OTD, chair of the Kean University Department of Occupational Therapy, was honored at the second annual Housing Authority of the City of Elizabeth (HACE) Gala, held at Kean's STEM Building on Friday, April 26. The event recognizes community leaders who have had an impact on HACE residents and the Housing Authority's community at large.

Mulry's commitment to the community, her students and faculty, and the OT department's partnership with HACE, are longstanding and far reaching. Working with HACE's Deputy Executive Director Cathy Hart, Mulry has initiated various projects and programs, ranging from creating beautiful public murals that depict the life stories of HACE residents to multi-generational cooking classes and recipe sharing.

Through the work of Kean's occupational therapy program, partnership with HACE and engagement in the community, Mulry has collaboratively helped raise more than \$200,000 from private foundations, corporate partners and philanthropic individuals.

"Dr. Mulry's leadership of the occupational therapy department is extraordinary, as is her ability to foster meaningful connections between our neighboring communities and the University," said James Konopack, Ph.D., dean of Kean's College of Health Professions and Human Services. "Claire's partnership with HACE has directly benefited the lives of individuals and families in the City of Elizabeth and beyond, supported Kean faculty, and enriched the experience of Kean students. Claire richly deserved this recognition and award from HACE, as she continues to facilitate community partnerships of significance."

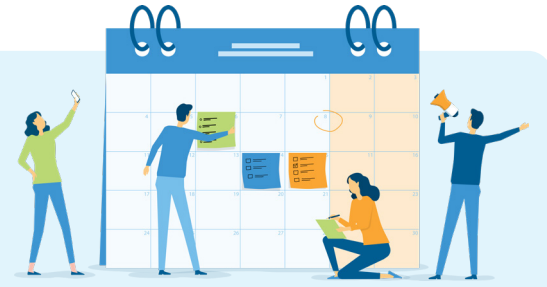
Congratulations, Dr. Mulry, on your well-deserved recognition for the important and compassionate work you do!





## Mark Your Calendars!

*Save-the-Dates for exciting events and celebrations happening in the coming months!*



## Save-the Date for the 2024 Kean Athletics Golf Outing!

**WHEN:** Wednesday, July 17, 2024

**WHERE:** Galloping Hill Golf Course

Join us for a wonderful day of golf and networking while supporting Kean Athletics at the 4th Annual Kean Athletics Golf Outing. For more information and to register, visit the event's webpage at [keanfoundation.org/AthleticsGolf2024](https://keanfoundation.org/AthleticsGolf2024).



## Save-the-Date for the 2024 Jazz & Roots Music Festival!

**WHEN:** Saturday, September 21, 2024

**WHERE:** The Lawn at Enlow Hall

Kean University and internationally acclaimed bassist/producer Mike Griot present the 4th Annual Jazz & Roots Music Festival, a free, outdoor music event that is open to the public and the entire Kean community. For more information, visit the event's webpage at [kean.edu/jazz-roots](https://kean.edu/jazz-roots).



## Extra! Extra! Kean University in the News!

Communication Students  
Learn About Media Careers  
Through Disney Behind the  
Screens

[CLICK HERE](#)

Kean Receives \$800,000  
NSF Award to Increase  
Diversity in Computing

[CLICK HERE](#)

Industrial Design  
Students Exhibit Work  
at Prestigious Design  
Show in Milan

[CLICK HERE](#)

Kean Students and Alumni  
Take the Stage for New  
Jersey Theatres

[CLICK HERE](#)

## A Tax Wise Giving Opportunity



KEAN UNIVERSITY  
**MEDALLION**  
SOCIETY

***“It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving.”***

– Mother Teresa

Don't miss the chance to make a charitable IRA (individual retirement account) gift this year! If you are age 70½ or older and own a traditional IRA, making a charitable gift directly from your IRA can reduce your taxes while maximizing your philanthropic goals.

Through a charitable IRA rollover, donors can make gifts totaling up to \$105,000 to their favorite nonprofit organizations throughout the year. We hope that the Kean University Foundation is at the top of your philanthropic priorities and that you consider supporting Kean through a gift directly from your IRA.

Your IRA Rollover gift to the Kean University Foundation achieves the following:

- Allows you to give from appreciated assets rather than from your regular checking account, which is typically budgeted for monthly expenses.
- Helps to satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year.
- Reduces your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions.
- Increases your philanthropic giving since the funds are transferred directly from your IRA and are not subject to the limitation on charitable contributions itemized on your tax return.
- Supports student scholarships and academic programs at Kean University.

An IRA charitable rollover is a very simple gift to make that can have a significant impact. Please contact Lori Funicello, Director of Planned Giving at the Kean University Foundation, at (908) 481-5336 or [lfunicel@keanfoundation.org](mailto:lfunicel@keanfoundation.org) to learn more, or simply contact your IRA administrator for assistance in making an IRA charitable rollover gift.

Visit our website at [keanlegacy.org](http://keanlegacy.org) to sign up for our monthly planned giving e-newsletter!





## Celebrate the Class of 2024!

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As the academic year draws to a close, we reflect on the incredible year Kean University has had along with its students, faculty, staff, friends and donors.

It has been a year filled with growth, learning and remarkable achievements, and we could not have done it without your support!

To commemorate this year, make a donation in the amount \$24, or more, in celebration of this year's graduating class, the Class of 2024. Let's take this opportunity to come together as a community and honor Kean's successes and the hard work and dedication of our students.

Please click the link below to make your donation today. Thank you for your consideration.

**[MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY!](#)**

*click here*

## Questions? Comments?

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Kean University Foundation, Inc.  
1000 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ 07083  
Phone: (908) 316-8920  
Fax: (908) 316-8921  
[kuf@keanfoundation.org](mailto:kuf@keanfoundation.org)



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