



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Media and Public Relations
Press Release
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Ramapo College Foundation to Celebrate and Honor Five Distinguished Citizens

MAHWAH, N.J. –The Ramapo College Foundation will honor five individuals for their professional achievement, commitment and community service on Saturday, June 5 at an outdoor event on the College’s beautiful campus in Mahwah, N.J.

This signature event, “Honoring & Celebrating Ramapo College and our Distinguished Citizens,” will recognize Ramapo President Peter P. Mercer, his wife Dr. Jacqueline Ehlert-Mercer, Eileen Comerford, Ann Marie Leichman and Joseph Sanzari for their dedication and support of the Ramapo College of New Jersey. Proceeds from the event benefit student scholarships, faculty and student undergraduate research and campus projects.

“The College is truly grateful for the dedication and service shown by these outstanding individuals,” said Dr. Angela Cristini, Executive Director of the Ramapo College Foundation. “We thank them for their support, commitment and determination to make a difference in the lives of so many in our community.”

DR. PETER PHILIP MERCER became Ramapo College’s fourth president on July 1, 2005. He has authored, co-authored and edited two books, numerous articles, book chapters and reviews. His publications have focused on the legal profession and professional standards as well as the unique features of higher education administration. He earned his L.L.M. and Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, and a J.D. from the University of Western Ontario. For 20 years, he also has served as principal instructor in the Senior University Administrators Course held at the Banff Center, Banff Alberta, each June and he is a member of the faculty of the Harvard University Seminar for New Presidents held every July.

President Mercer has led the College through Ramapo College through an ambitious and transformative campus-wide building program that has resulted in the completion of the Anisfield School of Business, the Bill Bradley Sports and Recreation Center, the Sharp

Sustainability Education Center and the Adler Center for Nursing Excellence, among others, as well as the College's soon-to-open renovated Library and Learning Commons.

Over the past 16 years, President Mercer has worked alongside the Foundation to identify institutional needs, to provide support to students, to further student/faculty research, and to advance the College as a most worthy recipient of philanthropic support. In 2016, he and Dr. Jacqueline Ehlert-Mercer established the Rev. William Mercer Endowment Scholarship in memory of his late father.

President Mercer will be stepping down on June 30, 2021.

DR. JACQUELINE EHLERT-MERCER is a registered dietitian, nutrition educator, author and researcher and has practiced and taught nutrition for 22 years. She practiced for most of that time in her native Canada. She taught nutrition in the faculty of dentistry at the University of Western Ontario, the nursing program at Columbia University Teacher's College, and the master of nutrition program at Montclair State University.

Six months after moving to New Jersey in 2005, Dr. Ehlert-Mercer established the Havemeyer House Edible Garden where college students engage alongside K-12 students and community members to learn about nutrition through a living curriculum. In 2011, the mission of the edible garden was enhanced with the introduction of beehives and programming focused on beekeeping and sustainability. Her research interests are centered on the eating and nutrition behaviors of college students as well as food ecology and sustainable food systems.

Dr. Ehlert-Mercer has been a strong advocate of the liberal arts and a frontline ambassador with students, parents, business and community leaders for the value of a Ramapo College education.

EILEEN COMERFORD '80 is Director of Municipal Investments, Gallatin & Company, LLC. She is responsible for the management of municipal bond investments for high net-worth investors and works closely with her clients to create customized portfolios that reflect their current needs, future goals and risk tolerance. Prior to joining Gallatin & Company, Eileen spent 29 years at J. & W. Seligman & Company, Inc., a privately owned investment advisory firm established in 1864. As managing director and co-portfolio manager, Eileen was responsible for the management of more than \$1 billion in municipal bond fund assets. Throughout her career, she was directly involved in developing efficient processes, establishing compliance procedures and supporting marketing efforts.

Eileen is a member of the Ramapo College Foundation Board of Governors, the Anisfield School of Business Alumni Advisory Board, the Learning Commons Campaign Cabinet, the Roadrunner Financial Group Advisory Board and recently she joined the Friends of Ramapo. Eileen also participates in the Ramapo College Foundation's Mentorship Program. Additionally, Eileen has been a volunteer advocate since 2012 for the State of N.J. Office of the Long-Term Care

Ombudsman, which seeks to protect the health, welfare, and civil and human rights of older individuals in long-term care facilities.

ANN MARIE LEICHMAN, R.N., MSN, NEA-BC, is Senior Vice President, Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer at The Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, New Jersey, where she has worked for the past 20 years. During her tenure at the hospital, she has been part of its' many accomplishments including four consecutive ANCC Magnet designations for nursing excellence, four-time recipient of the AACN Beacon Award for all critical care units including the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, and numerous Joint Commission Disease Specific Certifications. She has been recognized for her professional accomplishments by the Institute for Nursing with its 2018 Diva and Don Award and also by the Organization of Nurse Leaders – New Jersey in 2014 with the Nurse Executive of the Year award. In addition, she was the recipient of The Record's 2015 Tribute to Nursing award in Nursing Administration and was the recipient of the YMCA Tribute to Women and Industry award in 2007.

JOSEPH M. SANZARI is owner and founder of Joseph M. Sanzari, Inc., a highway and heavy construction business. Celebrating more than 50 years in business, his company is a driving force behind many significant projects in New Jersey and New York, including work with all major public agencies along with large private projects.

He is a self-made man and began working and learning about construction in his hometown as a teenager. He began his career as a member of Operating Engineers Local 825 as a heavy equipment operator. He began his business in 1969, performing municipal, county and utility public work with one dump truck, one backhoe and one pickup truck.

Dress is "classy outdoor." The cocktail reception begins at 5 p.m., followed by a video presentation recognizing the honorees. Guests will then be treated to food stations, roving entertainment and live music, including a performance by CantaNOVA, Ramapo College's award-winning student chorus. All preparations and events of the evening will be done under strict covid safety standards. The committee chairs are Peter Seminara '00 and Roy Putrino. All sponsorships and tickets purchased for the March 14, 2020 DCD event will be honored.

Sponsorship and participation information can be found at www.ramapo.edu/dcd or by contacting Liz Kloak at lkloak@ramapo.edu or 201-684-6834.

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Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The College is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by College Choice, has been named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *CondéNast Traveler*, and is recognized as a top college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger's*, Princeton Review and *Money* magazine, among others. Ramapo College is also distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by CollegesofDistinction.com, boasts the best campus

housing in New Jersey on Niche.com, and is designated a “Military Friendly College” in Victoria Media’s *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor’s degrees in the arts, business, data science, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master’s degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a post-master’s Doctor of Nursing Practice.