

[Apply or Nominate for an LAA Award](#)

The LAA welcomes applications/nominations for the Riki Jacobs Livingston Pride Award. This award is given annually to two undergraduate seniors (with a graduation date in the current calendar year, as defined in the application) on the New Brunswick/Piscataway campus. Two awards have been given each year since 2021. (Previously, one person received the award each year.) Applicants nominate themselves.

Applications for 2024 are due Monday, April 15, 2024. Download the application.

The following awards are given at occasional celebrations.

- Livingston College Distinguished Alumni Award
- Livingston Legacy Award (for faculty and staff members)

No date has been set for the next celebration. Nominations for those two awards are not open at this time.

[Executive Board and Council](#)

2023-2024 term (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024)

Officers

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- Vice Presidents: Rosemary Agrista, Marty Siederer, Stephen Yanick
- Secretary: Iris Martinez-Campbell
- Treasurer: Maria Mattera

LAA Executive Council: Rosemary Agrista, Jeffrey Armus, Joe Capo, Jason Goldstein, Lucille Lo Sapio, Iris Martinez-Campbell, Maria Mattera, Brenda Noble, Debra O'Neal, Eric Schwarz, Marty Siederer, Stephen Yanick.

2022-23 Executive Board and Council

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LAA board members at Theater Afternoon, April 23, 2023. Seated, from left, Lucille Lo Sapio and Debra O'Neal. Standing, from left: Joe Capo, Iris Martinez-Campbell, Eric Schwarz, Jeffrey Armus, and Rosemary Agrista.

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Jerome Aumente Remembered; Was a Distinguished Professor Emeritus and Founder of Livingston College's Department of Journalism and Urban Communications



With sadness, we join the Rutgers School of Communication & Information in announcing the passing of Jerome Aumente on February 13, 2023, after a long



illness.

Aumente was a Distinguished Professor Emeritus in Rutgers' School of Communication and Information (SC&I).

He was born on September 23, 1937, in Jersey City, New Jersey. He earned his undergraduate degree at Rutgers-Newark in 1959 and graduate degrees at the Columbia University School of Journalism and at Harvard University as a Nieman Fellow.

Aumente spent time in Europe and then worked for a decade at newspapers, including *The Detroit News*. He returned to Rutgers in 1969 to become a faculty member at Livingston College. At Livingston College, he founded and directed the Department of Journalism and Urban Communications, as well as the Urban Communications Teaching and Research Center.

He was the founding Director of the Journalism Resources Institute (JRI) and was the founder and former Chairperson of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies. Both units are in the School of Communication and Information, one of the first interdisciplinary schools founded in the United States, which he helped design at the request of the university provost.

He was Special Counselor to the Dean of SC&I from 2000 to 2015. The Journalism Resources Institute conducted nearly \$5 million in projects, and trained over 14,000 print and broadcast journalists under his direction, with over \$2 million in media training and journalism projects in Central and Eastern Europe. The JRI under Aumente's leadership had special projects in international affairs, journalism, and mass communications, new media technologies, health, medical, and environmental coverage, media and law, evaluation of professional training of journalists, business, and financial journalism.

Aumente had extensive experience in the international training of journalists; joint curriculum development with universities internationally and in the United States; as a trainer in health communication, the internet and newer media technologies; investigative and enterprise reporting; and in business, economic, and financial reporting.

In 2011, the Livingston Alumni Association (LAA) honored Aumente with its Livingston Legacy Award. The award recognizes faculty and staff who played a key role in the establishment and growth of Livingston College and its mission, and who have contributed to the overall Rutgers and global communities.

Anthony Rivera-Rosario, 2022 Pride Award Honoree: Helping Others Is a Privilege

Anthony D. Rivera-Rosario, a 2022 graduate of Rutgers' School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), was raised with the value of making a difference by helping others. The Livingston Alumni Association (LAA) of Rutgers University-New Brunswick has honored Rivera-Rosario as one of two recipients of the Riki Jacobs Livingston Pride Award for 2022. 

Rivera-Rosario, of Union City, New Jersey, majored in mathematics at Rutgers, and minored in statistics and philosophy. He is a first-generation Hispanic/Latino college student.

He worked as a research assistant at Rutgers' Proteomics Biochemical Laboratory throughout his college career. In the lab, he conducted protein synthetic and antibiotic experiments with graduate students, and programmed laboratory inventory and formatting protocols/material safety data sheets using the computer language Python.

He has worked as a financial analyst at Bank of America since June 2022, using his skills in computer programming, process improvement, and financial planning and modeling.

At Rutgers and in Union City, Rivera-Rosario has learned "the satisfaction of seeing how one's hard work can make a difference in someone's life" through multiple volunteer opportunities. He coordinated many of these events as an executive board member of the service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega.

In his Pride Award essay, Rivera-Rosario highlighted some of these volunteer efforts. They include:

- Spending the day with special-needs students at the Rutgers Special Friends Day event, making strong connections by playing board games and watching movies together.
- Volunteering with his family to clean, organize, and plant new flowers at a hospital.
- Serving meals at food pantries.
- Building homes with Habitat for Humanity.
- Creating personalized cards for hospital patients.

"Each member would be assigned a patient and get a quick summary of the

patient's diagnosis and what their interests are," he said. "After taking a few hours to create the card, we would send them to the hospital to get distributed. In return, the patients would convey their gratitude to us for thinking of them. This is an example that allows me to put reality into perspective, every life is precious, and exchanging words of positivity with one another can make everyone feel cheerful."

Rivera-Rosario is a graduate of the Academy for Enrichment and Advancement (high school) in Union City, where he organized a Hudson County science fair, orchestrated events inspired by Italian culture, tutored students, and worked closely with the school's office staff.

While in college, Rivera-Rosario returned to his high school (now known as the José Martí STEM Academy) to mentor students, judge a science fair, and develop an alumni networking platform.

He has earned certificates in peer health education, digital marketing, and Google Analytics. He has been honored by the Hispanic Heritage Fund and the National Society of Leadership and Success, both in 2021.

"Bringing about a change to the world does not necessarily mean doing something universal," Rivera-Rosario wrote in his award essay. "Even helping out one person can change someone's well-being for the better. ... To this day I am passionate about serving the Rutgers community and the world. I would not be the person I am today without the help of others who came before me, and I wish to impart the same mentality to those I help so that the cycle of helping continues."

Riki E. Jacobs (1957-2009) was the director of the Hyacinth Foundation, an AIDS support organization, among many roles she fulfilled to assist vulnerable populations. She also was one of LAA's first Livingston College Distinguished Alumni, honored in 2000.

[Tara Krishna Works to Amplify Voices by Telling Individuals 'I See You' and 'You Matter'; Honored with 2022 Pride Award](#)

Tara Krishna, a 2022 graduate of Rutgers' School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) and the Rutgers Honors College, was raised with the value of making a



difference by helping others.

The Livingston Alumni Association (LAA) of Rutgers University-New Brunswick has honored Krishna as one of two recipients of the Riki Jacobs Livingston Pride Award for 2022.

Krishna, of Scotch Plains, New Jersey, is a student at Rutgers' New Jersey Medical School, where she is studying to be a medical doctor specializing in infectious diseases. At SAS, she majored in cell biology and neuroscience, and minored in psychology and in women's and gender studies.

She has been active in clinical and volunteer work in medicine. These experiences include:

- Serving as a volunteer emergency medical technician with the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad since 2016.
- Working as an intern in the infectious diseases department at Eric B. Chandler Health Center in New Brunswick, NJ, servicing patients with HIV.
- Developing content for an app and a podcast to promote the physical and mental health of mothers, at the Robert Wood Johnson Women's Health Institute in New Brunswick.

Krishna's extensive volunteer work includes:

- Activism with Amnesty International.
- Serving as an ambassador for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), facilitating skill-building workshops for undergraduate women and non-binary students.
- Mentoring Honors College students in research, volunteering, clinical, and academic opportunities on- and off-campus.
- Tutoring students in general chemistry and teaching chemistry lab.
- Helping refugees learn English.
- Working to promote cross-cultural competency in collaboration with students and staff at the Honors College.

She has researched sex differences in drug addiction and addiction recovery. She presented her research on *Finding Feminism in Addiction Recovery*, at the Rutgers Undergraduate Writing Center in 2022. She is a co-author of another study, in preparation, on the mechanisms of biological sex differences in cocaine addiction.

"Stigmatization's power to harm well-being is highly underestimated, yet meeting unique people with different life experiences defined outside a one-dimensional label 'underserved' informed my ability to interact as an ally. I

am happy to also educate others outside the realm of healthcare on HIV, too,” Krishna wrote in her Pride Award essay. “Witnessing the stigmatization of substance abuse and gender identity affect patient quality of life and recovery efficiency, I resolved to investigate addiction humanely.”

“Teaching conversational English to refugees of war in the Middle East, I realized I was still affected by implicit biases, and had a lot to learn from my own students. I had been avoiding possible traumas to ensure a safe environment for my Syrian students facing vast disruptions to their education. Yet, I was attempting to speak for my students without consulting their perspectives beforehand,” she wrote.

Her students opened up, she said, when she stopped teaching English through discussions of food but instead talked about the real issues of stereotypes and personal bias. “My students who lived vastly different lives than I – some fled Syria, and some sought master’s degrees, while others pursued dreams in the arts – taught me a lot about this clear need to learn from one another.”

“Aligning oneself with a community is an honor when you truly learn from your neighbor; it is a service done to genuinely forge connections to improve lives, amplify voices, and recognize an individual by giving them the grace to simply say ‘I see you’ when institutions do not.”

One of Krishna’s “proudest achievements” at Rutgers was her work within the True Inclusion program at Rutgers’ Honors College.

“... I soon learned how many underrepresented students within my Honors College community felt their voices went unheard; I also learned more about microaggressions and traumas that other marginalized identities faced,” she wrote. “I constantly educated myself on microaggressions while pitching to executive deans every other week about the importance of requiring cultural competency within each school to better promote hundreds of self-aware, culturally competent young professionals. This encourages the recognition of inequities to promote student engagement in overlooked communities and beyond. Unlike my activism and direct aid in underfunded school systems aiding a handful, saying ‘You matter’ when institutions forgo doing so, here I actively changed structures to ensure the institution itself listened to all who needed it.”

Riki E. Jacobs (1957-2009) was the director of the Hyacinth Foundation, an AIDS support organization, among many roles she fulfilled to assist vulnerable populations. She also was one of LAA’s first Livingston College Distinguished Alumni, honored in 2000.

'Rutgers at the Races' at Monmouth Park (2022)



Rutgers at the Races was a fun day at Monmouth Park on June 26, 2022.

The event was sponsored by University College Rutgers New Brunswick Alumni Association (UCRNBA) and Livingston Alumni Association (LAA).

It included a buffet lunch served on the clubhouse patio terrace. There was a private betting booth, and the location was perfect for trackside viewing.

UCRNBA and LAA sponsored a race, and Monmouth Park provided the photo collage shown on this page, with representatives from the Rutgers Business School Alumni Association (RBSAA), Rutgers Alumni Association (RAA), UCRNBAA, and LAA.



(Center photo): Greeting the winner and presenting the trophy, from left: Peter Yuen (guest of an RBSAA member), Rosemary Agrista (LAA), Jeff Armus (LAA), Helen Pirello (UCRNBA), Jacob Alonzo (UCRNBA), James O'Neill (RAA), and Gloria Clark (guest of LAA).

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Livingston College Time Capsule

Livingston College created a time capsule on the occasion of its 30th anniversary in 1999-2000, and closed the capsule on April 18, 2000. The capsule is on a shelf in the double-height Great Hall of Tillett Hall on Livingston Campus.



The Livingston College time capsule, as seen in 2019.



Livingston College's Liberated Gospel Choir performs to celebrate the time capsule closing on April 18, 2000.



Students Michelle Massie, Melissa Carpini, and Marcella DiBenedetto, seen here, headed the Time Capsule Committee in 1999-2000.

The time capsule project and its contents were described in an article in the Livingston Alumni Association's newsletter of summer 2000 by Ruby Keise of the Rutgers News Service, as reprinted below. The time capsule is to be opened in 2029, the 60th anniversary of the opening of Livingston College.

By Ruby Keise, Rutgers News Service

Faculty, staff and students at Livingston College wrapped up the celebration of the college's 30th anniversary on April 18, by filling and closing a time capsule during a ceremony in The Great Hall in Tillett.

Among the items in the capsule are photographs of students dating back to the 1970s; an old term bill from 1969 indicating a tuition of \$280 for the semester (Spring '00 tuition was \$2,381); old student ID cards; and a 1973 recording by the Liberated Gospel Choir, a Livingston student group. The choir, which has continued to grow throughout the years, sang two selections for the capsule-closing ceremony.

Several personal items left by students were added to the capsule during the ceremony. Students also left messages written on archival-quality, acid-free postcards that were made available by the Time Capsule Committee, headed by students Michelle Massie, Melissa Carpini and Marcella DiBenedetto [Editor's Note: pictured above].

"When Livingston opened its doors in 1969 with some 800 students, the university very much needed the social and intellectual jolt that Livingston was to supply," stated Martin Gliserman, an associate professor of English and an early faculty member at Livingston, who was among the speakers at the ceremony. There have been great changes at Livingston over the years, he reflected, both in the physical plant – in the beginning there was "one elevator on campus that my 90-year-old father could beat any day" – and in academics.

Programs such as urban studies, Africana studies, anthropology, Puerto Rican studies, computer science, marketing, and women's studies originated at Livingston and have all now been integrated into the general university curriculum.

The closed capsule will be housed on a specially built shelf on the wall of The Great Hall. It will be opened in 30 years when the college celebrates its 60th anniversary.

Janelle L. Taliaferro Founded Black Business Association at Rutgers;

Honored with 2021 Livingston Pride Award

Janelle L. Taliaferro, a 2021 graduate of Rutgers Business School, has worked to amplify Black voices at the university and to educate students on hunger awareness. The Livingston Alumni Association (LAA) of Rutgers University-New Brunswick has honored Taliaferro as one of two recipients of the Riki Jacobs Livingston Pride Award for 2021. 

Taliaferro, from Lake Wylie, South Carolina, majored in supply chain management and marketing science, with a concentration in global business. As a student, she affiliated with both the Honors College and the Douglass Women's College at Rutgers in New Brunswick.

Establishing the Black Business Association (BBA) is Taliaferro's proudest accomplishment as a Rutgers student. "Having a platform for minority students to share their ideas, discuss their plights, and continuously learn in every academic area, is a necessity in education," she said. "It is specifically important when preparing for a career in corporate America or entrepreneurship. ... BBA is the only student organization on Rutgers' New Brunswick campus catering to Black students interested in business careers, and the first in many years."

In her work with the Rutgers chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Taliaferro helped to organize the first rally against racism and for Black solidarity in four years on campus, demanding equal treatment across all student demographics

Taliaferro also served as co-president of Student -Organized Rutgers Against Hunger (SO RAH), working with local farms, food banks, and soup kitchens, to feed the community and to educate students on food insecurity. In her Pride Award application, Taliaferro noted that 30 percent of college students are food insecure.

For 18 months, Taliaferro served as a career prep fellow in the Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT) program, traveling to Dallas and Minneapolis in 2019, before the pandemic hit.

"At each of our conferences we had the ability to demonstrate our analytical skills through case studies, our leadership through small and large group roundtables, and most importantly, become a family while having representatives from the top companies in the world interacting and leading our sessions," she said. "The deeper meaning, I see, behind supporting and fueling students of color is building up an army full of diversity of thought. Throughout my time in MLT, I was the only fellow on behalf of Rutgers New Brunswick in my cohort."

As a student, Taliaferro completed internships at GlaxoSmithKline, Corning Inc., and United Parcel Service. Some of her non-business interests include being a “world traveler (17+ countries traveled), avid concert goer, and passionate New York City foodie.”

Since August 2021 Taliaferro has worked as an associate product manager at Visa Inc. in the San Francisco area.

“I have always been passionate about creating healthy communities throughout my life and college career, championing inclusion efforts, and giving back,” she wrote in her Pride Award essay. “I would love to bring my activism efforts into corporate America to leverage the social responsibility of large institutions.”