

# RowanAdvances

A PUBLICATION OF ROWAN UNIVERSITY'S ADVANCEMENT DIVISION

FALL 2021/WINTER 2022



## A Gift of a Gift\*

Longtime leader in fashion media and publishing Stephanie George '78 celebrated her birthday by visiting Glassboro for the first time in 43 years.

"I couldn't stop crying when I saw how different the campus was," said George. "It's amazing, absolutely amazing, how much the University has transformed."

Turns out, her birthday wasn't the only reason George was visiting campus. Her husband, Bill Lenchinsky, had arranged for a \$50,000 endowment to be established in her name to fund student scholarships at Rowan University.

"I said to myself, 'What in the world do you get the love of your life of over 40 years for their birthday?'" Lenchinsky shared. "And that's when I thought, 'What about a legacy?'"

Being high school sweethearts from Vineland, New Jersey, the couple has planned decades of birthday gifts for each other.

"While he always comes up with the most creative ideas, this one is special," said George. "He knows how much the school means to me. The quality of

my education was far beyond what I could have ever expected, so it was a wonderful surprise."

George's aunt also attended Glassboro State College and was a math teacher for 48 years, inspiring her to major in education.

"She was a rock star," said George. "She told me Glassboro had the best education to offer me and that's how it all started; I was a legacy student. I also didn't want to be too far from home. I'm a Jersey girl, you know?"

While she is currently retired and residing in Montclair, NJ, George had a remarkable career in fashion media, serving as one of the nation's most prominent women in the field for close to four decades. Shortly after graduation, she spent time teaching college students at the Fashion Art Institute in Dallas (what George referred to as the number one fashion hub in the 1980s) and went on to hold positions including Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer of Time Inc., President of Women's Wear Daily Media Worldwide and Executive Vice President of Fairchild Publications.

"My confidence and determination in my career came from Glassboro," said George. "I knew I wanted to be the one communicating something greater, whether as an educator or something else, and I was supported immensely in that journey. Professors like Judy Naydell and Richard Mitchell were some of my greatest influences. They made me the best writer and gave me the tools I needed to grow in my industry."

George's impressive accolades include leading popular style and entertainment brands such as People, People Español, People Style Watch,

Entertainment Weekly, In Style, Essence and Real Simple. She presided over the successful launch of Jane as part of Fairchild Publications and has been recognized for her generosity by the American Cancer Society as the 2008 Dream Ball honoree and the 2009 Woman of the Year by the United Service Organizations.

“My career has been filled with so many opportunities, places and people,” said George, “and giving back has always been important to me.”

Both George and her husband support multiple charities including Lenchinsky’s alma mater, Rider University, and their daughter Ali’s alma mater, Ole Miss.

“I’m at a phase in my life where I’ve been reflecting a lot on what got me to where I am today,” said George. “The first thing I think of is my family and the second is Glassboro State. My husband couldn’t have been more right in giving me the gift of a gift. To be able to help those who may not have the means, but have the talent, drive, mission and clarity to become the best they can be? That’s why we do it.”

**The Stephanie George Lenchinsky and William Lenchinsky Endowed Scholarship Fund** will support students enrolled at the College of Education and the Ric Edelman College of Communication & Creative Arts who are studying writing arts with a dual major in education.

“Judy Naydell changed my life,” said George. “She was just one teacher and that’s what I hope to do with this scholarship. To be that person who changes someone’s life.”

Thinking back, George has nothing but joyful memories of her time in Glassboro—writing a paper about the mysticism in Moby Dick, renting out the basement of a local couple who would cook her pasta for dinner every Friday, seeing one of her professors on The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson and even playing collegiate basketball for two years.

“I’m very instinctive about things,” said George. “I always knew I had come to the right place and returning to campus brought me right back to those years where my life really began. I’m confident that the students impacted by this scholarship will go on to do great things with their education because of how much that same education did for me.”