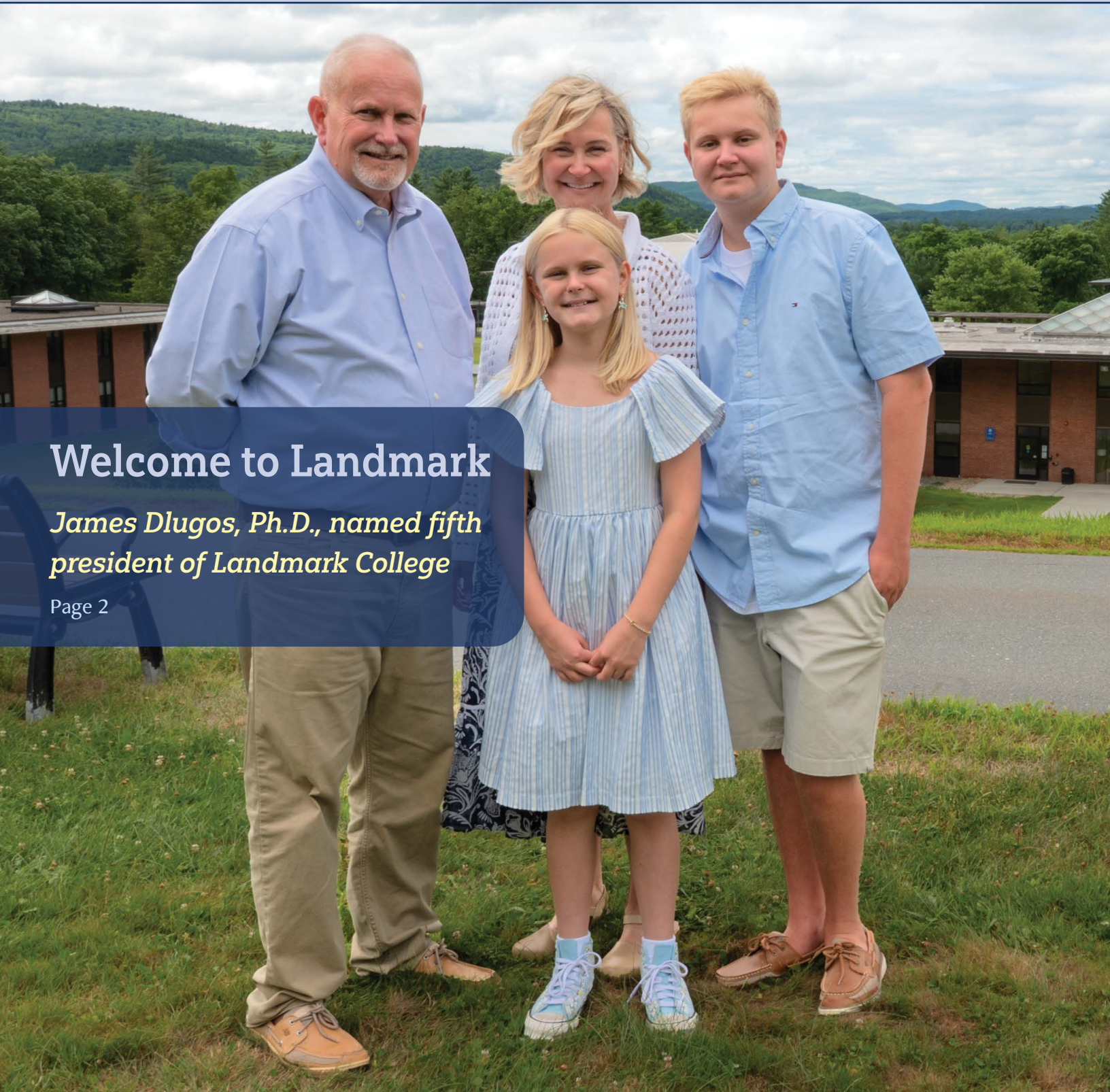


# Landscape

Fall 2025

For Alumni and Friends of Landmark College



## Welcome to Landmark

*James Dlugos, Ph.D., named fifth president of Landmark College*

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Photo by Valerie Cox

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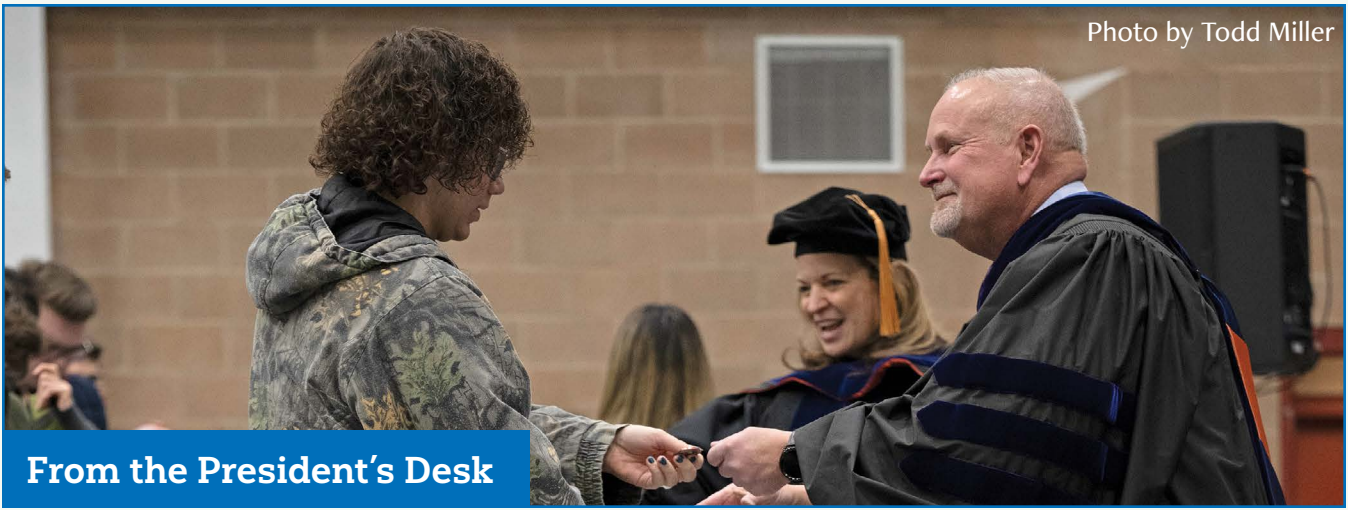
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## From the President's Desk

When I wrote the “From the President’s Desk” piece for the Fall 2024 issue of *Landscape*, I had only recently arrived at Landmark College to begin my service as interim president. At that time, I was essentially a “visitor.”

My interest in exploring and getting to know Landmark quickly turned into a deep admiration for what this institution has accomplished over the past four decades since its founding in 1985. As is often the case, Landmark’s accomplishments are a direct reflection of the energy, commitment, and passion of the people who have been and are at the center of this community.

Through meeting members of the Landmark community and listening to their stories, that sense of admiration evolved into inspiration, as I realized that Landmark is a place whose values deeply align with my own and where my energy, commitment, and experience could make a positive difference.

Needless to say, I was delighted when I was invited to extend my stay at Landmark as its fifth president and more permanent resident.

Much has changed since I first arrived here—at Landmark, in higher education, and in the wider world.

At Landmark, we’re introducing new degree programs, undertaking campus improvement projects that will add new spaces and renovate existing ones, and embarking on the College’s next strategic planning process as we imagine together Landmark’s future.

These are all activities one would expect to find happening at a thriving institution. Yet today, and for a variety of reasons, fewer and fewer institutions find themselves doing the expected things.

Across higher education, institutions are facing challenges and headwinds unlike anything we’ve seen before. Many members of the Landmark community have asked me what impact these realities are having on Landmark.

I’m pleased to report that the primary impact of what’s happening in the world beyond our campus has been a reaffirmation of what is and always has been at the heart of the College. At a time when diversity is under attack from various quarters, we recognize and celebrate the beautiful diversity (in all its aspects) that is a fundamental part of who we are as individuals and as members of a community.

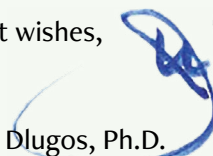
In this issue of *Landscape*, you’ll have the chance to hear from and about people whose energy and commitment have helped make Landmark the special place it is. From this year’s group of faculty and staff retirees, to former members of the community who have passed away recently, to graduates who are out making a difference in the world—their stories remind us of what inspires us to help build and strengthen this community every day.

Our 40th Anniversary Celebration will be a particularly fitting occasion to celebrate what Landmark has been, what it is today, and our aspirations for the future. I hope you’ll join us on campus September 27th and 28th for our celebration weekend.

I’ll look forward to seeing you there!

Best wishes,

Jim Dlugos, Ph.D.  
President, Landmark College



# Q&A with President Jim



Photo by Valerie Cox



By Chris Lenois, Editor

*By the time Dr. James Dlugos officially became the fifth president of Landmark College on May 1, 2025, he was already well-acquainted with the institution's pedagogy and its people, having served as interim president since July 2024 while a nationwide search was conducted to replace Dr. Peter Eden.*

*Previously, Jim had an 11-year tenure as president of St. Joseph's College of Maine in Standish. Upon his retirement in 2023, he and his wife Melissa founded a higher education consulting firm, Sea Glass Consulting. The firm specializes in driving innovation at smaller institutions through integrated planning and effective governance—very desirable skills and experiences for guiding this next phase in Landmark College's history.*

*"As we've gotten to know Jim, and he's gotten to know us, we came to realize this was an ideal fit for his experiences and the opportunities our institution presents. Through the search process, we came to realize he had the right vision and demeanor to be the next president," Landmark College of Board of Trustees Chair Barbara Epifanio said at the time of the announcement.*

*Trustee Maryellen Rancourt, Ed.D., who chaired the search committee, echoed Epifanio's thoughts about the outcome of the nationwide search.*

*"I so look forward to working with Jim as we all work together to continue to make Landmark College the best college for neurodiverse learning in the world, and to support the Landmark College Institute for Research and Training (LCIRT) in spreading the amazing work that is happening on campus. With Jim at the helm, and the continued dedication and hard work of faculty and staff, I see a bright future for the College," Rancourt said.*

*Dlugos, who often introduces himself as "President Jim," holds a doctorate in English from the University of Virginia, and master's and bachelor's degrees from Boston College. Prior to his time at St. Joseph's, he served as academic vice president of the College of St. Elizabeth in New Jersey and held various administrative and faculty roles (including academic vice president) at Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh. Jim is currently a trustee for Scholarship America, a nonprofit organization that has facilitated the distribution of \$5.7 billion in scholarships since its founding in 1957. He and Melissa have two children, Matthew and Sophie.*

*This interview was conducted in April 2025 as part of the initial announcement of Jim's appointment. Scan the QR code at the end of the article to watch video excerpts.*

**CL: You did not sign on as interim president with the intent of applying for the permanent role. When did you change your mind and decide to throw your hat in the ring?**

**JD:** When I arrived, I said, 'Okay, I can do this. This is an interesting place to hang around for a year or two. I'll learn more about how higher education works in this part of the world.'

I got to know the people here and see students over the course of the summer. Then after meeting parents and hearing their stories at the start of the fall term during move-in and new student orientation, and that first set of board meetings, I began to see that this is a special place.



Over the course of the fall, I came to the conclusion that this was the kind of place where I actually could spend some more time. I was happy to add my name to the list of those who are interested in serving Landmark College.



*Jim conversing with LC community members at a Meet and Greet on July 31, 2024.*

years! “Learner-centered,” “student-centered,” “meeting students where they are”—I’ve been saying that for a long time. In most cases, I would get looked at like, ‘What? Are you crazy?’

So, I found my peeps. Here are the people who talk the way I talk. And not only does Landmark talk the

way I talk, but it actually walks that talk. That became very clear to me in the first couple of months here. So, I think it’s a natural extension of the work I’ve done.

Landmark has all the understanding of what it takes to help students succeed at this level. So, what can I bring? It’s my understanding of how small colleges function and the sustainability of small institutions. They are precious and fragile places. I think my years of administrative work in higher education can really add to what Landmark has done and strengthen the way that the College functions.

**CL: In your interview with members of President’s Council, you talked about the fall graduation ceremony playing a role in your decision.**

JD: That would have been the culmination of my exploration. I have presided over lots of commencements and have been at many of them over the years. The Landmark Commencement is an extraordinary one. The chance to hear students tell their stories—and to watch their families watch their students tell their stories—is an experience you don’t get anywhere else. And it really does bring home the importance of this College’s work.

**CL: You don’t decide to take a position like this without consulting your family. How receptive were they to the idea of moving from Maine to Vermont?**

JD: They had a similar journey to mine. This is a very welcoming community. From the very first

moment they were here with me on campus, people were interested in who they were and making sure they felt comfortable—sort of the core characteristics of Landmark hospitality. So, they fell in love with Landmark in the same way that I did. They’re excited about being part of Landmark and helping the College move forward and achieve its dreams.

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**“So, I found my peeps. Here are the people who talk the way I talk.”**

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**CL: You built programs for neurodivergent learners at St. Joseph’s. How do you see that experience fitting in with Landmark’s approach?**

JD: Part of what drew me further into Landmark when I got here last summer was the fact that I heard everyone here using language I’ve been using for 35 to 40

**CL: You certainly brought new ideas to how the College can function, and even grow, during your time as interim president. How do you plan to build on that now?**

JD: I have come to realize that I was a lousy interim <laughs> because I couldn’t just leave things the way they were! Yes, I love

a challenge, and I would not be suitable for a maintenance role.

So, how do we strengthen Landmark? How do we make what happens here have an even greater impact on the world? Strategic planning is thinking about the future in ways that are going to not just make Landmark good for our students but also make what Landmark does good for all neurodivergent people. The chance to spread that message is very exciting to me.

It's the chance to think about how we expand what Landmark has to offer in terms of its educational content that is also very exciting. For years, I've been talking about the fact that while college is focused, appropriately, on post-secondary learners, what a college has to offer by way of education can reach all kinds of audiences.

So, that's exciting as well—to amplify Landmark's message to make sure that more and more

people come to know what we know about the value of having a neuroinclusive community.

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**That's another attractive part about what Landmark does—the very obvious commitment to diversity and inclusion.**

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**CL: Can you expand on how you see Landmark College communicating the value of neuroinclusiveness?**

JD: We know that college-level learners come from someplace and we know that they go someplace, right? If we're going to really be attentive to the needs of neurodivergent individuals, we've got to think about where they come from, how they get to us, and then where they go after they leave us.

The dominant narrative of many Landmark students is one of failure and redemption, and the way they tell their stories is very compelling and very heart wrenching. But what if we could reduce the failure part? We would have much more time celebrating successes. We would have much more time helping people to achieve their potential.

If we want to change the narrative about neurodiversity and neurodivergent individuals, we've got to begin with little kids. Little kids are always the place to begin narrative change. The more that we can do to bring people into an understanding of the benefits of neuroinclusivity, the benefits of being open, the benefits of meeting learners where they are from the time they're little children, the more opportunity we have for a greater lasting impact on people.

But we also know that people are themselves all the way through. So, after they graduate, or after



Photo by Todd Miller

*Jim making opening remarks at the Fall 2024 Convocation ceremony.*

they leave Landmark College, we want to make sure that we are supporting them on their life's journey. We also have things to offer to neurodivergent individuals who do not earn a degree at Landmark College. So, thinking about neurodiversity across the lifespan is an important project for the Landmark College community.

the same way, we never get any place because we just end up talking to ourselves. The chance to be able to understand the world from someone else's perspective, to listen and to engage in that way, makes life richer.



*Jim taking in a basketball game with his daughter Sophie.*

**CL:** Over the years, there definitely has been a shift at Landmark to look at neurodiversity from a diversity perspective. It sounds like you plan to continue moving in that direction.

**JD:** I think that's another attractive part about what Landmark does—the very obvious commitment to diversity and inclusion. That is something I've been working on for a long time, at least 20 years, and very explicitly in my last presidency. I think that the point is that we function better when we have diversity in any realm. If we all sort of are the same, if we all think

We also know that not all of us are ready to be part of that conversation because of the way the world is organized. There are all kinds of systemic injustices that are real. We have got to make sure that people are moving toward being full partners in these conversations, and recognizing the challenges that they face on their way here, wherever they are—whether they're neurodivergent, or socioeconomically challenged, or any number of factors that have been part of the systematic injustice that has not allowed everyone to move forward together.

Beyond that, I want to include folks from Windham County. I hope that Landmark College will increasingly be seen as an anchor institution, and so it's important for us to plan for our future with a sense of where our neighbors are going. I want people around here to think of Landmark as a place they go to when they have a need—the kind of need that Landmark can provide that other organizations cannot.

We do things in a particular way at Landmark that are welcoming and inviting. I think we will find out together how best to serve this community beyond the campus. I think an openness to doing that is an obligation that all higher education should recognize. Small colleges are really well-suited to engage in that kind of activity because of how we're oriented in the first place. 🐼

**CL:** Do you have a “first 100 days” kind of plan in mind for implementing this vision?

**JD:** One of the first things we need to do is kick off a new round of strategic planning. That should be broad based and inclusive and will require a good deal of listening. I want to include not just the immediate Landmark College community—our faculty, staff, and students—but also our alums and others who are part of the larger Landmark community.



Photo by Todd Miller

*Jim at the PTK/Golden Key Honor Society induction ceremony in the fall of 2024.*



Scan the QR code for video excerpts of this Q&A.

# Faculty Retirements



Photo by Todd Miller

2025 Staff Recognition Retirement Ceremony. From left: Jan Thompson, Frank Klucken, Mickey Cronin, Nevada Bromley, and Christie Herbert.

By Christopher Lenois and Lachlan Francis

This May brought the retirement of five longtime members of the Academic Affairs team. In addition to their teaching and advising roles, each brought something unique to the Landmark College community. (In Mickey Cronin's case, that included moving into Student Affairs.)

## Christie Herbert: 39 years

Before coming to teach English at Landmark College in the summer of 1986—the very first summer semester in which courses were offered—Christie Herbert held a master's degree in Teaching English as a Second Language and had recently spent several years doing so in refugee camps overseas. But over her 39 years, teaching English would be just a small part of her contributions. Reflecting now upon her tenure, Christie says that she had “three or four distinct careers at Landmark.” In the early days, she says, “we were kind of creating the College. There was a lot more room to jump into new roles and take leadership roles.”

Christie first stepped into a significant leadership role in the early '90s, being tapped to chair the content department, which “oversaw any and all of the content-specific courses, such as the humanities, history, and science.” This was the first of several administrative and teacher-training roles that Christie held before shifting into teaching education at the undergraduate level. When teaching education, she prided

herself on getting students involved in the community. “I developed a lot of experiential education courses, where a big component was going out and working with local elementary schools, or mentoring neurodivergent middle school students,” said Christie.

It was a hobby, however, that led to an evolution into Christie's final role—teaching ceramics. “I was very interested in pottery and was making pottery on the side. At a certain point, I began working to get a ceramic studio established on campus, because I knew it would be wonderful for our students,” she said.

Beyond building the pottery studio in the Fine Arts Building, Christie went back to school to earn her master's in fine arts. “To be sponsored by the College like that was an incredible gift,” Christie said. “President Eden really supported me in that, and then I slowly shifted over from education courses and into teaching ceramics.”

Outside of the classroom and studio, Christie also relished traveling overseas with students, leading eight trips to Japan and Germany over the years. “I think study abroad is incredibly important for Landmark students,” she said. “The kind of transformation that can happen by having those international opportunities continues to astound me.”



Photo by FJ Gaylor

*Christie working with a student on the wheel in the Fine Arts building pottery studio.*

8 It was as both a ceramics professor and a Japan trip leader that Christie taught and mentored **Rhiannon Greywolf '19**. “In moments when I couldn’t gather the words to understand myself, she seemingly already understood. Christie’s patience, attention to detail, deep care, and support are unmatched,” Greywolf reflected. “It was thanks to Christie that I was able to achieve my dream of going to Japan through Landmark’s

Study Abroad program. I’ve since taken two trips back to Japan, making lasting connections in the country that I feel most at home in.”

Similarly, **Jenny Beller '20** recalled that Christie “touched my heart and helped me discover my quiet strengths, develop professional leadership skills, and gain confidence both within the classroom and in the world.”

In retirement, Christie plans to continue her work in the local arts scene, both as an individual artist and as a leader of a local museum. “I’m very involved with the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, and I really love having that focus,” she said. “We’re working on an expansion right now, and it’s very exciting.” 🐦

## Jan Thompson: 38 years

When Jan Thompson first arrived on the Landmark College campus in the summer of 1987 for faculty orientation, she came equipped with a master’s degree in English, one year of teaching high school under her belt, and an appetite to learn—and teach—more. Thirty-eight summers later, Thompson is preparing for retirement and looking back upon a career of serving students and educators alike.

Like most early faculty at the College, Thompson first taught language-based tutorials, utilizing diagnostic teaching to help students develop skills in the areas of reading, decoding, spelling, and writing. Soon thereafter, she began teaching in the English department as well. During the 1990s, her tutoring and advising work was folded into the Center for Teaching and Learning, and she served as a coordinator of the center as it evolved through several iterations and became the Charles Drake Center for Academic Support in the early 2000s.

Later in her career, Thompson was appointed Co-Chair of the Landmark College English Department and Chair of the Curriculum Committee. Thompson also relished bringing the classroom overseas, co-leading study abroad trips to Costa Rica, Great Britain, and Greece. These trips, she said, were “some of the most memorable experiences of my career.”

Reflecting upon the College’s evolution throughout her tenure, Thompson said: “We started out in the ’80s with a focus on language-based learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. Then, we became aware of ADHD in the ’90s, and in the 2000s we started becoming aware of students who were on the autism spectrum or had other neurodiverse profiles. So, we’ve always had to adapt to those changes and update our methods to best serve our students.”

The changing profile of learners at Landmark College was a highlight of the job for Thompson. “It made the job so interesting—it was always a learning experience, and it gave me and other professionals a way into our fields and to add to the academic body of knowledge,” said Jan. “Because we are such a unique school, and it’s a part of our mission to educate other educators about what we have learned about teaching neurodiverse students.”

The impact Thompson made on her students—in the classroom and beyond it—is clear. **Gabrielle Woolgar '25** said that Thompson “completely changed how I viewed writing. Her patience and encouragement helped me build confidence, and the connection she shared beyond the classroom made me feel truly seen and supported.”

**Erica Loveland '20** added that Thompson “was the first professor I ever visited during office hours, and that small yet pivotal decision reshaped my academic experience. She helped me recognize that self-advocacy is not only accessible but essential.”

With a career of educating and empowering students behind her, Thompson is now looking forward to retirement here in Southern Vermont where she will continue to reside. As for future plans, Thompson is eager to explore creative endeavors like music, as well as her passions for rowing and hiking. Sharks may also find her in the Landmark College library, where she plans to work on finishing a research project relating to reading pedagogy at Landmark College. 🐋



Photo by FJ Gaylor

*Jan working one-on-one with a student in 2017.*

## Frank Klucken: 37 years

Frank Klucken began teaching mathematics and language-based tutorials at Landmark College in the summer of 1988, just as the personal computer was beginning to reshape society and the economy alike.

Frank earned his master’s degree in the field of teaching internet technologies, allowing him to play a key role in both modernizing the College’s offerings and preparing students for an ever-changing world. As the one-on-one tutorials were phased out in the 1990s, Frank began to lead the instruction of technology courses in fields such as web design, database management, and professional services tools such as Microsoft PowerPoint and Excel.

He would go on to serve for 10 years as chair of the math department, where his work was instrumental in launching the first associate degree in business at the College. Looking back at nearly four decades of teaching mathematics and technology to neurodivergent learners, Frank shared that many of his fondest career memories

came from “students realizing that math didn’t need to be scary and that they could indeed succeed if they figured out how they best learned.”



Photo by Todd Miller

*Frank Klucken presenting an Award for Academic Excellence in April 2024.*

Fellow Professor of Mathematics Douglas Lynch recalled that Frank was “one of those rare people who can authentically connect with just about everyone.” Doug found a supportive mentor and friend in Frank. “He kept my spirits high even on the tough days, and I know he did that for a lot of other people as well.”

Looking forward to retirement, Frank certainly has plans to keep his own spirits high—when asked what he had in mind, he said that his plans boiled down to “more music, more exercise, and more trips!” As for his time at Landmark College, Doug shared that “Frank will be remembered for his humor,

kindness, and care for students and colleagues.” 🐋

## Nevada Bromley: 19 years

While academic advising was Nevada Bromley's main gig during her 20 years at LC, she had a side hustle that was an equally important contribution to the student experience.

In 2005, Landmark College needed someone to take over directing the annual school play on short notice. Tori Tilson, a mental health counselor at the College, naturally thought of her friend Nevada, who had been part of many theater productions during her undergraduate years at nearby Marlboro College and stayed involved with community theater groups in the area even as she completed her Master of Education at UMass Amherst.

Nevada still counts that first production of "You Can't Take It With You" as one of her favorites. "I just really loved the campus, loved working with the students, the whole experience," she recalled. "At that point, my mission was to find a way to be here full-time. So, over the course of the next year, I filled in for a professor teaching an acting class and then I began advising students under the mentorship of Patrice Nolan."

For the next 14 years, Nevada directed the spring theater production, making it as much of a learning experience as any three-credit course. "For many students, having a script and having a character was really transformative and allowed them to explore aspects of self-expression that had been of interest but difficult for them," she explained. "Some students struggled with self-confidence. I gave them roles that allowed them to expand and open themselves outward. It was really amazing to see these students walking around campus standing up straighter, more outwardly focused and seemingly more confident."

These theater experiences were equally impactful for Nevada as an advisor. She says they helped her better understand the range of student experiences and to avoid

assumptions. Directing the plays also inspired Nevada to create an original work titled "Broth." The script took shape through workshopping various scenes with students. A few years after that 2011 production, Nevada wrote a few additional scenes and published the play.

"A lot of plays are written for a leading man and a leading lady and some supporting characters. I really wanted an ensemble piece," said Bromley. "When working with students, leaving some room for creativity and improvisation makes it a more enjoyable experience."

Nevada stepped into the Director of Academic Advising role three years ago. At around the same time, she introduced Mojo to the team of therapy dogs on campus. Even as she transitions into retirement, Nevada plans to keep some advisees and bring Mojo to campus to please his "superfans," as she calls them. "That way I can still be connected with this amazing community," she said.

Alumna **Erin Crosby '18** said having Nevada as her advisor was "a very nice change" after feeling like she did not receive good support at other schools.

"Nevada was always kind, empathetic, and sensitive to the needs I had, even the outside of school needs and how those impacted the challenges I faced," said Erin, who went on to get a bachelor's degree in special education from Westfield State and has one semester left in her Master of Science in Disability Services program at the CUNY School of Professional Studies. "My interactions and relationship with her helped me figure out how to navigate college systems. I loved having her as an advisor." 🐾

*Nevada (kneeling at center) with the cast of "You Can't Take it With You."*

LC File Photo



## Mickey Cronin: 17 years

Michaelene “Mickey” Cronin’s career at Landmark College is split into two separate time frames. She was first an academic advisor from 2006 to 2011. A couple of years later, she returned to part-time work in the Drake Center before eventually transitioning into her current role as Director of Social Pragmatic Programs and Services—ironically, a department for which she helped lay the foundation during her first employment stint.

Mickey earned a law degree and trained as a trial attorney, which she says has been a very good skill set for helping neurodivergent learners understand how to better advocate for their needs. Mickey is also the parent of a neurodivergent child, which made her well-attuned to the challenges some of the Landmark College students faced when it came to engaging in social activities. She thought about conversations she had with other parents in her autism support groups, and how she might help create opportunities to break those barriers on the Putney campus.

It turned out that a counseling intern named Andy Donahue had similar ideas. Together, Mickey and Andy organized a movie and pizza night in a way that created a sensory-friendly environment for Landmark College students.

“When Andy and I started doing things, we thought, ‘Okay, what is a college experience?’” Mickey recalled. “We ended up going down into the basement of the student center and found a room that wasn’t being used. We put in a work order to have it painted. We made a request for a big screen TV. We got the students involved in managing it. It really became quite popular. At one point, we had like 35 students in there.”

Landmark College’s Early Orientation program also had its origins in these collaborations between Mickey and Andy.

With the help of Tricia Stanley (who was working in Student Life at the time and is now the Director of Alumni Relations), they began inviting students with sensory issues to campus three days ahead of time.

“The whole goal was to give students a much longer runway to make the transition,” Mickey explained. “They could get used to the spaces before everyone returned to campus; get to know their cohort, become familiar with their advisor, and create their routine.”



*Mickey (front left) with fellow panelists at a Professional Visit Day in 2023.*

After Mickey’s departure, Andy formally established the Social Pragmatics program at Landmark College, adapting and expanding social activities to support the social and emotional growth of students. While Mickey is emphatic about crediting Andy with growing social pragmatics into a department with multiple staff members, he acknowledged how meaningful their early collaborations were in making it successful.

“What set Mickey apart wasn’t just her clinical skill or razor-sharp wit, it was the heart she brought to the work. She brought a parent’s

urgency and a professional’s precision, never losing sight of the human underneath the social challenges,” Andy wrote in an email. “Mickey was the calming force to my energy, the ballast to my wind. Together we helped build something meaningful, one social group and one pizza at a time.”

As she transitions into retirement, Mickey plans to spend a lot of time in her garden and returning to more volunteer work in her church and elsewhere. She feels that it’s a good time to step away, even though her energy for the work is still evident in her demeanor.

“People understand what we do,” Mickey said. “They understand the importance of our work here and how we can really support students. I’m so proud.” 🐦

# *Have a happy retirement!*

# Thank You for Your Service

## *Health and Counseling Services Office Manager Cindy Brown retires after 22 years*

By Chris Lenois

Cindy Brown has been part of Landmark College's administrative staff in one capacity or another since 2003. She transitioned into her final role as office manager for Health and Counseling Services in 2016, making her the first point of interaction for students who need to make appointments with the clinical staff. Colleagues point to her calming presence and sense of humor as characteristics that made her especially well-suited for this important, forward-facing position.



Photo by Valerie Cox

As a veteran of the United States Air Force, Cindy found that she especially connected to students who served or had family who had served in the military. Her own daughter went through several moves with two parents on active duty—in places as different as Maryland, Nebraska, South Korea, and Okinawa.

“Students or their family members would see something in my office about my military service, and they would start talking to me,” said Cindy. “I wanted them to know they are not alone.”

In 2012, Cindy started Military Connections to create a space for that community within the Landmark community. The group held a weekly coffee hour. Sometimes there was a guest speaker but often it was just a chance to talk to each other.

A few years later, a flu outbreak prevented Cindy from taking her regularly planned vacation day to observe Veterans Day in Springfield, Vermont, where she was the VFW Post Commander. Instead, she asked Vice President for Student Affairs Michael Luciani if she could do something on campus, which led to a flag-raising ceremony outside the Click Family Sports Center.

“We had people come up from Brattleboro to do the ceremony. We had little buttons made up and we said the Pledge of Allegiance,” recalled Cindy.

After that, Cindy began organizing a Veterans Day Breakfast in the Dining Hall every year to make sure all faculty, staff, and students had the opportunity to pay tribute to family who were service members.

Military Connections was the highlight of Cindy's 20 years at Landmark College, but the COVID-19 pandemic was certainly the most critical episode of her career. While other College personnel were encouraged to work remotely once the campus reopened, Cindy and her colleagues were required to show up every day.

“We'd be here early in the morning, and sometimes until eight o'clock at night,” said Cindy. “I remember I walked out to my car one evening. It had snowed a little bit and somebody made a little heart on my car.”

Health Services Director Jeff Huyett credited Cindy for helping everything run smoothly during that hectic time.

“I can't explain the intensity of setting up COVID-testing processes for the whole campus. We had to set up at the Click for weekly, sometimes twice weekly, testing,” said Jeff. “Cindy was steadfast at this difficult time when we also had to run a health center, manage quarantines and isolations, plus handle our typical work with our students. I gratefully let her ‘tell me what to do.’”

Cindy will be making a couple of post-retirement trips to Florida, where she will visit family. But she says her main plans are to finish her daughter's baby blanket and enjoy her backyard swimming pool. According to Jeff, she can feel good about the legacy she is leaving behind.

“Her sense of humor and oversight was invaluable,” said Jeff. “The bonds our team made during that time of COVID have endured, making us a well-oiled machine that can transition as she retires.” 🐦

## ***Dr. Gail Gibson Sheffield, 1965-2025***

Gail served as Vice President for Academic Affairs at Landmark College from 2016–2023, before transitioning into that same role at Massasoit Community College in Massachusetts. She made significant contributions to Landmark College during her tenure, especially in enhancing and expanding the rigor and breadth of baccalaureate offerings at the College. In reflecting upon the campus and community culture of the College, Gail had said, “I am blown away by how connected everyone at Landmark College is to the mission, to student success, and to providing access to students who may not have been able to unlock that potential themselves.”

Before entering higher education, Gail worked in public broadcasting, working as both a producer and editor at television stations in Maine, New York, and Utah. After earning an M.S. in Instructional Design Development and Evaluation from Syracuse University, she spent 17 years at Paul Smith’s College in the Adirondacks. It was during her time at Paul Smith’s that Gail also earned a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Capella University.



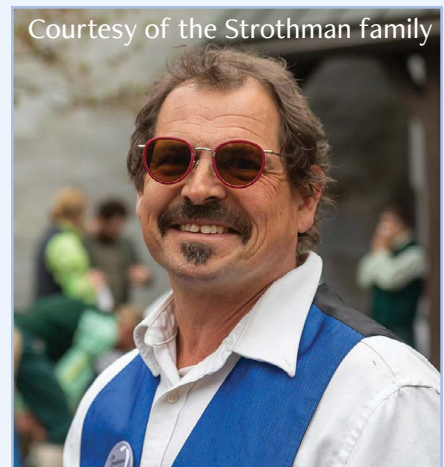
Photo by Todd Miller

**Dr. Gail Gibson Sheffield**

## ***Stuart Strothman, 1969-2025***

An Assistant Professor of English from 1995 to 2002, Stuart was an instrumental contributor to Landmark College’s efforts to better equip educators to teach neurodivergent students at both the collegiate and pre-collegiate levels. He authored several articles for the Institute for Research and Training and served as editor of some of its earliest publications: “Promoting Academic Success for Students with Learning Disabilities: A Landmark College Guide” and “Understanding Learning Disabilities at the Postsecondary Level.”

Following his tenure at Landmark College, Stuart spent two decades as a public school teacher in Windham County. Whether at Landmark College or elsewhere, Stuart’s career was dedicated to maximizing educational opportunity for learners of all kinds, especially those struggling with literacy. To share a passage from the obituary prepared by his family: “Students from throughout his career have shared that he made it possible for them to reach graduation and changed their lives forever. Stu would say this was one of his greatest honors.”



Courtesy of the Strothman family

**Stuart Strothman**

# impact

40 Years of Shaping Stories  
and Defining Futures

## "Impact" Online Event Raises \$232,000

Landmark College raised \$232,000 during the "Impact: 40 Years of Shaping Stories and Defining Futures" online fundraiser, held April 24. In addition to the proceeds raised from sponsorships and ticket purchases, a silent auction offered more than 30 items and experiences to bid on. There was also a live Fund-a-Need auction where viewers could pledge

dollars in support of specific academic and student life programming.

"Impact" consisted of live and recorded segments highlighting the educational and social opportunities available to Landmark College students, as well as the presentation of the first Student Impact Award to the organizers of the NeuroVisions Film Festival. 🐦

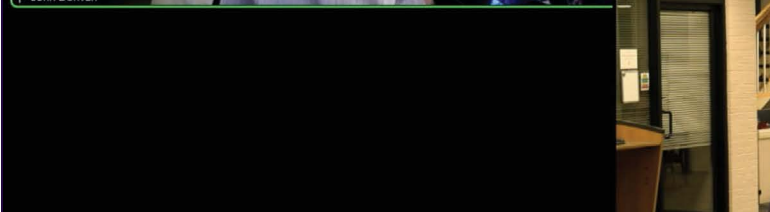
Winners of the Student Impact Award include (from left) **Julian Bond '25**, **Aidan Kipp '25**, Nailah Quail-Parker, and **Gavin Weiland '25**, who organized the first NeuroVisions Film Festival.



(Top left) The Landmark College Chamber Ensemble in the Fine Arts Gallery. (Top right) Student Felix Mann performs an original composition in the Strauch Family Student Center Game Room.

(Center left) **Lukas Pelletier '25** was one of the students featured in a video about creative spaces on campus. (Center right) Program Assistant **Gus Zarefsky '19** and student Emily Lighthall in a scene from a video about Social Pragmatics Programs and Services.

(Bottom) Journalists John Donovan and Caren Zucker joined President Dlugos via videoconference to accept the 2025 LD Luminary Award.



## ***New Building Addition Coming to Stone Hall***

By Chris Lenois

This fall, Landmark College is expected to break ground on a new space for student activities and other events. Currently known as the Upper Campus Commons, the 17,000 square foot project consists of an addition to the Stone Hall building, outdoor courtyard, and plaza.

Architectural renderings from Fradkin Cooper Architects envision a large, multipurpose room with an attached space for food service, along with three smaller meeting rooms. The plans also incorporate many neuroinclusive design elements with respect to lighting, acoustics, a balance of solitary and social spaces, plus tactile components.

The idea for the Upper Campus Commons originated in listening sessions with students about what kinds of improvements they would like to see on campus. As student clubs and activities continue to expand, both in variety and interest, this building will meet a vital need for campus life.

In considering the development of the Upper Campus Commons, the Landmark College Board of Trustees also endorsed the use of neuroinclusive design principles for all facilities work, both new and in renovations, going forward.

The UCC project should be completed in 2026. Stay tuned for reports on progress.

## **Upper Campus Commons**



**View from Path**



**Interior View**



**Bird's-eye View**

# On and Around Campus

## Esports Team Wins Title

On April 9th, the Landmark College Valorant Esports team won the National Association of Collegiate Esports East 7 (Silver) Conference Championship. This exciting victory capped off an undefeated regular season and playoff run for the Sharks Valorant team.

Members of the Landmark College Valorant Esports team (from left): Ethan Lyles, Alex Bernius, Head Coach **Noah Janssen '24**, Auden Finstad, Jaden Clark, Dylan Yamaguchi, and Kevin Fahrner.



Photo by Todd Miller

## Alumnus Named New Century Transfer Scholar

The Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society announced that Landmark College alumnus **Richard Little '24** was named a 2025 New Century Transfer Scholar in March. He will receive a \$2,250 scholarship. New Century Transfer Scholars are selected based on their academic accomplishments, leadership, activities, and how they extend their intellectual talents beyond the classroom. Only one is selected from each state.



Photo by Valerie Cox



Photo by Matthew Lester

## Dr. Christin Monroe Named ACS Volunteer of the Year

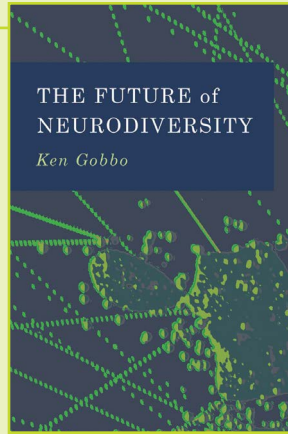
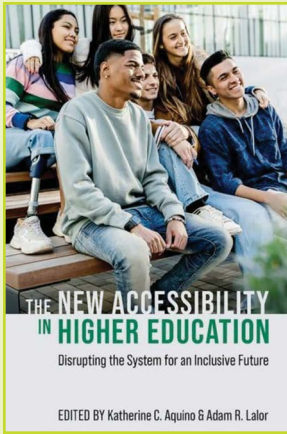
In March, the American Chemical Society (ACS) named LC Assistant Professor of Chemistry Dr. Christin Monroe as a 2025 Outreach Volunteer of the Year for the Green Mountain Local Section. The award recognized Dr. Monroe for her extensive work to make chemistry and the life sciences more accessible.

## Bookstore Offers Grocery Delivery

The Bookstore Student Grocery Program was initially launched as a word-of-mouth initiative to support students in meeting their individual dietary and wellness needs. By Spring 2025, more than 50 students had signed up, enabling them to purchase essential food and beverage items.



Photo by Gabby Killin '24



## ***New Books focus on Past, Present, and Future of Neurodiversity***

Dr. Adam Lalor, vice president of neurodiversity research and innovation, is coeditor of “The New Accessibility in Higher Education: Disrupting the System for an Inclusive Future” (Oxford University Press). The book offers thoughts on how higher education leaders can holistically integrate inclusive principles across institutions, rather than siloed within disability services departments.

Ken Gobbo, professor emeritus of psychology, wrote “The Future of Neurodiversity” (Ethics Press). In the book, he recounts the history of the neurodiversity movement and examines current trends and possible outcomes related to opposing views on matters central to the movement.

## ***Vermont Legislature Honors Landmark College***

The Vermont House of Representatives adopted a Concurrent Resolution honoring Landmark College’s 40th anniversary on Wednesday, April 16th. Prior to the Resolution being read and passed on the House floor, representatives from Landmark College spoke at a press conference to both highlight Landmark’s unique story, and to speak about the ways in which higher education and neurodivergent people are being treated today.



Photo by Rep. Conor Casey

Pictured from left: President Jim Dlugos, students Daniel Cabaniss and Grace Nelson, State Representative Mike Mrowicki, and Associate Director of Marketing and Communications Lachlan Francis.



Photo by Todd Miller

## ***Men's Basketball Team in Spotlight***

With a record of 10 wins and 4 losses, the Landmark College Men’s Basketball team enjoyed its first winning season since 2001. Many of the athletes will be returning this fall to build on that success, according to Head Coach **Marc Thurman '18**.

## Reflecting on the “Summer of My Life”

**Herb Denmark '87 looks back at the remarkable summer he spent at Landmark during the College's fledgling years.**

By Elizabeth George

As a struggling college student at C.W. Post College (now LIU Post) in Long Island, New York, **Herb Denmark '87** knew he needed help. At age 22, he had just completed his freshman year when he heard about a new college in Putney, Vermont, for students with learning differences.

“I met with a therapist who encouraged me to go there for at least a summer term,” says Herb, who was diagnosed with dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

At C.W. Post, Herb had received some accommodations, including books on tape and untimed exams. But it wasn't enough. “I needed to learn how to learn,” he says.

When he arrived on campus in the summer of '87, Herb admits he was “scared to death.” He remembers meeting with Carolyn Olivier, the College's first director of admissions.

“She told me it was a very rigorous program,” recalls Herb. “That scared me, but I wanted to give it my all. I took it very seriously.”

Herb quickly became immersed in the program, working one-on-one with a tutor twice daily and attending classes from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. He learned to use a highlighter and take better notes. He also learned how to type.

“It was an eye-opening and phenomenal experience. From day one, they broke things down to pinpoint what I needed to work on,” says Herb. “I gained the tools I needed to learn, and I gained confidence.”

Herb praised the teachers and professors for being “patient, kind, and respectful.” He developed a kinship with other students—“people like me with their own



Herb Denmark '87

struggles who wanted to be there because they wanted to learn.”

Herb returned to C.W. Post to continue his studies, graduating in 1989 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He initially worked for his family's real estate business before branching out into advertising, marketing, and sales.

Now 61, Herb spent the past 26 years as a pioneering leader in the payment processing industry as CEO of Merchant Services International, a company he

founded in 1999. He also is chairman of Sleft LLC, a financial services company founded by his son, Grant.

Herb is particularly proud of the extra effort he has made during his career to help people save money. He recalls the time he got a call from an Amish merchant in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, who was being severely overcharged—along with many others in his community—for credit card terminal leases and transaction fees. “I told them the truth: Never lease your equipment again,” says Herb. He gave them terminals at no cost and slashed their fees. What started with two merchants grew to more than 450 across 14 farmers markets from Maryland to New York City.

Herb currently lives in Florida with his wife, Randi. Their daughter, Sydney, is a doctoral student in social work at the University of Pennsylvania. Their son, Grant, is a fourth-year medical student at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

“I'm proud of the time I spent at Landmark College,” says Herb. “My only regret is that I didn't have the financial resources to stay there longer. It was only a moment in time, but it was the most incredible summer of my life.” 🐦

## Aiming for Law, Advocacy, and Public Service

**Attending Landmark College helped Matthew Levy '06 achieve his lifelong goal of becoming an attorney.**

By Ann Hornak Gaul

**Matthew Levy '06** loves his job. He's currently an associate court attorney for the New York State Unified Court System, where he assists the New York Supreme Court justices. Diagnosed in kindergarten with dyslexia (plus ADHD in high school), he says, "If you would have told teenage me that I'd spend every day researching, reading, and writing long briefs—and loving it!—I would have said it was impossible. I always wanted to be a lawyer but couldn't see a path to get there."

Matthew is an ardent advocate for disability rights, a passion that began during a high school cultural exchange trip to Japan in the early 2000s. Asked to present on something he knew about, he talked about learning disabilities to a class of Japanese peers. "I remember asking the group how students with LDs should be handled," Matthew says. "They didn't know much about it. One student told me he thought they were treated through surgery."

In high school, Matthew felt he never really fit in. It wasn't until his mom enrolled him in Landmark College's summer program that he found his place. "Being somewhere where the teachers actually understand their students and teach to how they learn best was such a profound feeling," he says. "Before then, I always felt I was just coasting by, rather than being given the chance to excel."

He decided to enroll at Landmark, where Matthew realized his goal of becoming a lawyer was both realistic and attainable. He graduated in 2006 with an A.A. and was a member of the College's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa International College Honor Society.



Matthew Levy '06 in front of "Canary" by David Sheldon in Harlem Sculpture Gardens, New York City.

Armed with skills, strategies, and a new-found confidence, he earned a bachelor's degree in politics and government from Ohio Wesleyan University (where he was awarded a scholarship based on his grades from Landmark). He went on to earn his juris doctorate from Widener University School of Law.

Matthew recognizes the vital connections between public service, law, and advocacy. While working for New York State Senator Robert Jackson as counsel and legislative director, he learned to see advocacy in a broader sense: "Sen. Jackson approached advocacy from the idea that there are cracks everywhere, and we have to fill those cracks. We need to be advocates for people and situations and issues—no matter the topic."

He credits Landmark for launching him onto his path: college, law school, and a successful legal career. "I could not have worked for

my state senator without Landmark," he says. "I would not have been hired into the New York State Unified Court System as an associate court attorney if I hadn't gone to Landmark.

"I never thought I'd love to learn," Matthew says. "I saw it as a means to an end. I am so grateful to the College." He wants LC students to know their journey is just about to begin. "You have yet to tap your full potential," he says, "Landmark will unleash it for you."

Matthew's single greatest regret about Landmark is that it did not offer bachelor's degree programs when he was there. "I would have loved to stay for a full four years," he says. 🐦

## Quiet Observer

### Lydia Allen '18 Pursues a Passion for Photography at Home and On the Road

By Elizabeth George

Lydia Allen '18 was in middle school when she discovered the magic of photography. She found holding a camera to be empowering. It offered her a way to observe and interact with the world despite being neurodivergent and having a learning disability.

“I always had a camera in my hand,” says Lydia. “I used it as protective barrier in social situations. Instead of feeling awkward and staying in a corner, I could look through my camera and focus on the details around me.”

What started as a hobby using a simple “point-and-shoot” camera became a passion and a business for the young entrepreneur. That camera remains a staple—its small size allows her to carry it everywhere (even clipping it to her harness when rock climbing!). She also uses an advanced, highly versatile professional Canon EOS R6 Mark II.

“I use my big camera when I’m purposely taking photos. But I’m an observer, too. I’m always on the lookout for that special shot,” says Lydia. “Having the point-and-shoot camera on me means I’m ready to go.”

At Landmark College, Lydia took an introductory photography class that provided more insight into her craft. Perhaps the biggest impact at Landmark came from classes she had with professors Tom Hinckley and Andrew Stein, who inspired her to pursue a concentration in life sciences. “They both made me fall in love with science and helped me see nature—and the world—in a different way,” she says. She also credits psychology professor Linda Kerr with providing important tools she uses today as a confident solo traveler.

Photography does more than help her handle overwhelming social situations. Lydia says it allows her to focus on the details around her, whether it is the subtle interplay of shadows, or the delicate curve and patterns of life itself. She constantly works on

her skills, challenging herself with daily goals. On long walks each day, she looks purposely for specific colors or unique shadows.

A couple of years after graduating from LC with an A.A. in Liberal Studies, Lydia challenged herself in another way. The Mount Vernon, New York, resident left everything behind and moved into her Toyota Highlander, hitting the road with just her trusty camera as her companion.

“Being alone allowed me to engage with my surroundings on a deeper level. I could immerse myself in the details,” she says.

Over the next two years, Lydia traveled to every state in the continental United States, visiting countless national parks and capturing images everywhere she went. She later spent two months traveling solo in Indonesia and Greece. Recently she explored Africa on her own.

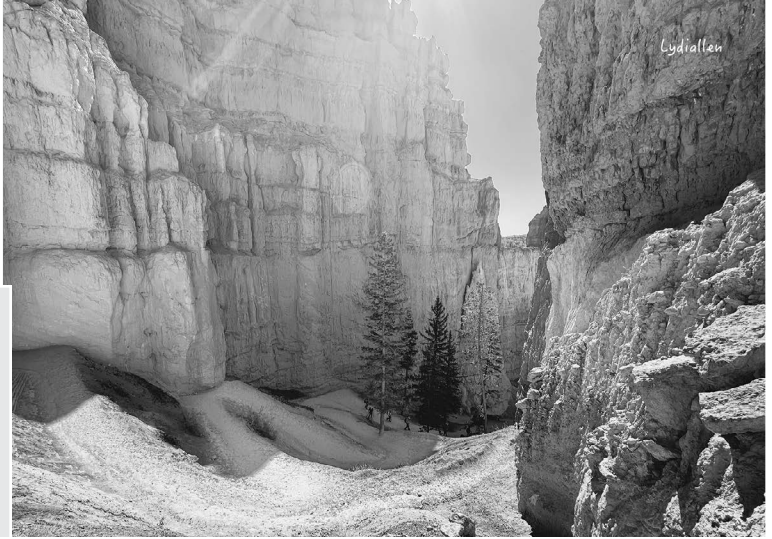
“I love travel, learning about different cultures and seeing how people live,” says Lydia. “I want to see the world, live life, and capture photos.”

Lydia began selling photos, pitching ideas to various brands she used in her ventures, such as taking photos of her chalk-covered hands while climbing or a tent used in camping. She focused on smaller companies, like Most Mountain and High Society Freeride. She now sells her photos on her website ([lydiallen.com](http://lydiallen.com)) and takes on various photography assignments, including project shots. In recent months, a career has ‘come into focus’ for her: she aspires to become a professional photojournalist with the goal of chronicling world events.

“Like all students at Landmark, I see things differently,” says Lydia. “I want to use my photography to capture it and share it so others can see it, too.” 🐦



A sampling of Lydia's photos include the following titles:  
Left column: Self portrait; Vermont; Seaweed Farm; Electricity.  
Right column: 3 Trees; Ducks; Potatoes.



# Donor Profile

## Sam Cotter '12

Q&A with Tricia Stanley

**Sam Cotter '12** began donating to Landmark College the year after he graduated with his A.A. in Business Studies, and set up his recurring donation nine years ago. He currently lives in Seattle, Washington, and works as a car coordinator for an online auction platform for luxury vehicles.



Sam Cotter

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Portions of this interview were used in the Spring 2025 Giving Day campaign.

### What inspired you to start giving recurring donations to the college, and what motivates you to continue?

I was inspired to start giving because of the incredible experience I had at Landmark—both academically and personally. The education I received, the mentors who guided me, and the friendships I built all played a role in shaping who I am today. I continue to give because I want future students to have access to the same opportunities that made such a difference in my life.

### How do you see your contributions making an impact on the college and its students?

Even small recurring donations add up to meaningful support for scholarships, student programs, and campus initiatives. Knowing that my contributions help ease financial burdens for students or improve their learning environment makes giving feel even more rewarding. It's fulfilling to know that I'm playing a part in shaping the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and innovators.

### What aspects of your college experience influenced your decision to give back in this way?

I benefited from resources that were made possible by the generosity of alumni before me—whether it was financial aid, a well-equipped library, or student organizations that enriched my time at Landmark. Understanding that these experiences were made possible by donors made me want to continue that cycle of support. It's my way of saying thank you and ensuring that others have access to the same transformative experience.

### What would you say to other alumni who are considering making a recurring donation but haven't committed yet?

I'd say that giving back doesn't have to be overwhelming—a recurring donation, even a small one, can collectively make a huge difference. It's an easy way to stay connected to the college and invest in something meaningful. If you valued your time at the college and want to see it thrive for future students, making a recurring gift is a simple but powerful way to contribute.

Visit [www.landmark.edu/give](http://www.landmark.edu/give) to set up your recurring gift.

## A Message to My Fellow Landmark College Alumni

Hello, my fellow Sharks,

I'm new to all of this, having recently taken on a leadership role as one of your Alumni Advisory Board members. As I begin this service, I really want to hear from you—your thoughts, your ideas, and how you think the board can better serve our peers. We're reshaping what the board does, and your input matters.

I've stayed connected to Landmark College because, like many of us older alumni, it took me some time to truly understand the impact this place had on my life. Landmark opened doors for me—doors I didn't even know were there—and helped me see strengths within myself that had been buried under years of frustration.

Landmark literally changed my life. I came here after struggling at a military college where executive functioning issues and poor short-term memory made it hard to keep up. But at Landmark, I turned my focus back to what I loved—computers—and I found my way forward. It was here that I learned to advocate for myself and gained the confidence to keep going. I eventually earned my bachelor's with honors through the University of Maryland's online program—something I never would have imagined back in the day.

I'm especially glad to see that LC now offers a bachelor's degree in computer science. This field has

a place for every kind of brain. As I often say, there's a notch or cubbyhole for every kind of person within the IT industry. People with LD—we're a little more creative in many ways. We don't necessarily solve the problem in the same way an average person would.

Like many of you, I recently joined the President's Town Hall, and I'm excited for what Landmark's new leadership brings. I'm looking forward to seeing many of us, both "old timers" and "newbies," this fall for the 40th Anniversary Celebration and Homecoming at the end of September. If you haven't been back in a while, I encourage you to visit. It's amazing to see how the campus has grown, and how much of that spirit—the one that supported us and helped us grow—is still there.

We're part of something special. Let's stay connected to each other and to the place that helped us find our path.



Sincerely,  
Mac Beattie '92  
Alumni Advisory Board Member  
[alumni@landmark.edu](mailto:alumni@landmark.edu)

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Rachel Brown '16  
Nathaniel Campbell '99

Cullen Elwell '24  
Sara Fradkin-Dunne '16  
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**Activities from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.**



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**40 Years of Shaping Stories and Defining Futures**