The School of Law’s Public Interest Law Project (PILP) raised nearly $16,000 at its 27th annual auction in late February. PILP provides grants each year to students who accept unpaid summer internships with nonprofit organizations that assist people with limited access to legal representation. All of the auction’s proceeds go to fund these grants.

Hundreds of participants bid on a range of items, including a Tiffany bracelet, a football signed by the New York Jets, and themed meals hosted by various law school faculty. This year’s event featured a Roaring Twenties theme, with everything from the Ceremonial Courtroom to the desserts decorated in the signature black and gold Art Deco style.

“Without some sort of income, students would not be able to take these internships,” said Katherine Lowe, JD ’20, PILP’s president. “These auctions provide money for so many students, who in turn provide legal help to those in need.”

“The auction is a great community-building event for the law school,” said Kathy Kuhar, associate dean of students. “It brings together faculty, staff, students, alumni and their families for a fun night and a great cause.”

Past PILP grants have enabled Quinnipiac Law students to do impactful work with such organizations as the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities; the U.S. Department of Justice; the United Nations; Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services; and the Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund.

While some of this year’s internships have been canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, others are slated to continue, ensuring that those who need legal aid the most will receive it, even in turbulent times.

As far as professors treating auction winners to dinner, that will have to wait until social distancing restrictions are eased. “Considering how wonderful our professors are, I have no doubt that they’ll work with students on a time to reschedule,” Lowe said.

1973 Harvey Goldstein of Branford, CT, recently published a book, “Corvettes: Images and Stories About America’s Great Sports Car.” He is an editor for Amherst Media in Amherst, MA.

1974 Peggy (Schloss) Guroko of Atlanta is retired from her position as an occupational therapist. She was elected as a member of the Fellows of the Occupational Therapy Association.

1976 Rochelle (Alpert) Holden of Westbury, NY, worked as a welfare examiner for 25 years and recently retired from the Nassau County Social Services.

1979 Carrie (Schiaivo) Zimyeski of Middletown, CT, was elected chairperson of the board of directors for Thomaston Savings Bank in October 2019. She joined the board in 2008. Carrie is a partner at Zackin, Zimyeski, Sullivan, CPA in Waterbury CT. She also serves on the board for the Literacy Volunteers of Greater Waterbury.

1980 Nancy Fichman of Bloomingfield, CT, has been an occupational therapist for 40 years. She has worked for Hartford Healthcare in West Hartford, CT, for the past 15 years.

1981 John Pagono of Clinton, CT, is a pediatric occupational therapy consultant. He recently published "FAB: Functionally Alert Behavior Strategies," a book that gives occupational therapists ways to improve the behavior of children and teenagers with complex behavioral challenges.

1984 Kevin Morgan of Cheshire, CT, is senior vice president of client success, sales and marketing at Glimser Technologies in Bethlehem, PA. Prior to that, Kevin worked in the life sciences field for more than 30 years, supporting regulatory, technology and applications for pharmaceutical companies. His past positions include working for PriceWaterhouseCoopers, IBM and Grant Thornton.

1985 Sebastian Fazzino of Middletown, CT, was promoted to the position of senior cash management service and implementation specialist at Webster Bank.

1986 Diane Arnold of Irvoyton, CT, was promoted to senior vice president and chief lending officer at Essex Savings Bank. Prior to that, she was vice president/senior commercial loan officer and has worked at the bank since 2002.

1988 Kathleen Foley of Cumming, GA, is director of the School of Occupational Therapy at Brenau University in Gainesville, GA, where she oversees three entry-level programs and a post-professional program.

1991 JILL (Kaliszewski) Meglin is a teacher in Guilford, CT, where she lives with her husband, Bill. Their daughter, Bailey, is a first-year student at Quinnipiac University, following in the footsteps of her grandfather (Class of 1967), great-grandmother (who attended Larsen College) and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

1993 Mary Stoll of Northborough, MA, is senior director of clinical development at Soliton in Houston. She oversees all clinical activities of the company’s Rapid Acoustic Pulse device for tattoo removal, improvement in the appearance of cellulite, keloid (scarring) and additional pipeline indications. Prior to that, Mary was senior director of clinical operations at Cytrellis Biosystems in Massachusetts.

1994 Karen Craft of Dover, NH, has launched a health care consulting company—Focus on Results. Her practice is aimed at helping health care companies reduce costs, change culture and increase profitability. Previously, Karen was a senior executive at Magnetic Resonance Technologies of Maine.

1996 Charles Britton, M.D. ’96, recently was named superintendent of schools in Portland, CT. Before that, he was curriculum director for the schools in Portland and has been an educator for many years, working as a teacher, assistant high school principal, high school principal and professor of educational leadership. He lives in Wallingford, CT, with his wife, Jennifer, and their two children.

2002 Kristi (Kniewl) Nguyen of Stamford, CT, owns OT-Kids, a pediatric occupational and physical therapy practice with two locations in Connecticut. She lives in Stamford with her husband, Michael Nguyen ’01, and their two children, Michael, 8, and Kyla, 6.

2003 Austin Ashe of East Boston, MA, is associate director of undergraduate education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management. He oversees marketing, communications and outreach, and is an adviser to undergraduate students.

2003 BERNARD AUGUSTINE and Kelly (Laline) Augustine ’03, MAT ’05, of Staten Island, NY, announce the birth of a daughter, Katherine, on Dec. 11, 2019. Katherine was welcomed by her big sister, Olivia, 7. Bernie is a senior editor at Yahoo Sports.

2003 Craig Callahan of Burlington, MA, has been promoted to lieutenant in the Burlington Fire Department. He is a second-generation firefighter for the department and has worked there for 11 years.

2003 Christine (Polidoro) Chimento ’03, MPT ’05, of Staten Island, NY, and her husband, Steven, announce the birth of their second daughter, Gabriella Nicole, on Nov. 29, 2019.

2003 Matt Connell ’03, MPT ’05, of Bradenton, FL, has been named dean of the nursing and health professions programs at State College of Florida.

2003 Dorit (Umei) Kemsley of Encino, CA, appeared on the television show “The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills.”

2003 Eric Marrapodi of Arlington, VA, has been appointed to lead NPR’s live coverage of special events for the 2020 election. Before that, he was senior supervising producer/editor for NPRs “Morning Edition.”

Class notes continue on p. 48
FELICITY MELILLO of West Roxbury, MA, has started a career in property management as director of relationship management at Briggs, L.L.C., in Boston. Before that, she worked at Unilever for 12 years.

JOAN ORSATTI, MSN ’03, of Litchfield, CT, works at the Community Health and Wellness Center in Torrington, CT, as a nurse practitioner.

Cameron Smith and his wife, Colleen, of Boston, MA, announce the birth of their first child, Caroline Grace, in March 2019. Cameron is assistant director of Boston University’s School of Business.

Brian Tenenhausen ’03, MPT ’05, of Killingworth, CT, and his wife, Lauren, announce the birth of their second child, Brooks, on Feb. 18, 2019. Brooks was welcomed by his big sister, Mila.

2004 Camille Jackson, MS ’04, of Durham, NC, is director of the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. The society aims to get more people of color working as investigative reporters and editors.

Matthew Leblanc of West Hartford, CT, works for Edgewood Healthcare Advisors and recently was named the health care practice leader for its eastern region.

2005 Stephanie (White) Holden, MS ’05, and her husband, Erik, of Poughquag, NY, announce the birth of their second child, Savannah Rose, on Feb. 2, 2020. Savannah was welcomed home by her big brother, Hunter.

Meredith Klein is director of public relations for Walmart. Before that, she led communications for the e-commerce site Jett.com. Meredith also serves on the advisory board for Quinnipiac’s School of Communications. She lives in Staten Island, NY, with her husband and two children.

2006 Ashley Kanya ’06, MAT ’07, of Green Pond, NJ, has been named teacher of the year at Randolph High School in Randolph, NJ. Ashley has been the option II coordinator at RHS since 2015.

Michael Silverman ’06, MPT ’08, of Wantagh, NY, is chief operating officer for the St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center in Smithtown, NY. His previous roles include senior director of operations and strategy at the Philadelphia-based Rothman Orthopaedics and senior positions at Northwell Health’s Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco, NY, and the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City.

April (Taberna) Spallino ’06, MAT ’07, of Roseland, NJ, and her husband, Mike, announce the birth of a daughter, Liviana May, on Nov. 8, 2019. Liviana was welcomed by her brother, Michael, and sister, Lia.

2007 Andrew Davis of Middletown, CT, is a senior researcher at ESPN and lead researcher for the network’s coverage of boxing and UFC events.

Nicholas Titus of Northport, NY, has been promoted to president of Minuteman Press International. Prior to his current position, he was vice president for marketing at the firm. He is the third generation in his family to run the business.

2008 Nicole Cuglietto ’08, JD ’11, of Stamford, CT, has been promoted to partner at the law firm of Wilson Elser. She also was included in the Connecticut Super Lawyers Rising Stars list from 2016 to 2019 by Super Lawyers, a legal rating service.

Lisa Juckett ’08, MOT ’10, of Columbus, OH, received her PhD from Ohio State University in December 2019 and has a tenure-track faculty position there in the division of occupational therapy.

Megan Redzia of Oakland, NJ, received a 40 Under 40 award from NJBIZ magazine, which recognizes prominent young professionals in New Jersey. She is executive vice president at the New Jersey Public Relations Association, where she has worked since 2010. She became the company’s first female partner in 2018.

Seth Rothman of Port Chester, NY, was promoted to researcher/writer at the YES Network, where he works on coverage of the New York Yankees, the Brooklyn Nets and New York City Football Club telecasts.

Kimberly (Bixby) Southworth of Ludlow, VT, recently took her children—identical twins Tucker and Lucas, 1, and their 4-year-old brother, Connor—to see the men’s ice hockey team play Dartmouth College. Kimberly is a claim product manager.

Donald Bernat of Muncie, IN, is in a two-year pediatric neuropsychology fellowship at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, OH.

Alexandra Filacci of Hoboken, NJ, was promoted to managing director at Knightsbridge Park, which provides digital marketing services for the luxury real estate sector.

2009 Jacyln Mcneely of Cambridge, MA, has joined the law firm of Morgan, Brown & Joy in Boston as an associate. She focuses on labor and employment law.

Samantha Plourde of Sturbridge, MA, was named associate director of admissions at Manchester Community College in Manchester, CT. Before that, she was enrollment services coordinator at the college since 2014.

Daisy Vargas of New York City and Marvin Richmonde were married in North Haven, CT, on Dec. 14, 2019.

2010 Maura Regan ’10, MAT ’12, and Kevin Regan ’07, of North Haven, were married on June 29, 2019. Maura is a teacher.

Justin Wilcox of Middlefield, CT, was promoted to partner at the accounting and advisory firm Fiodella, Milone & LaSaracina of Glastonbury, CT. Previously, he was senior manager for tax services.

2011 Nicholas Johnson of Saint Paul, MN, was promoted to associate producer at FOX Sports North/Wisconsin. He produces pre- and post-game shows on sports teams in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

2012 Zachary Brar ’12, MAT ’13, of Raritan, NJ, was elected mayor of Raritan in 2019. Before that he served on the town council there for four years. He is a teacher at Bridgewater-Raritan High School.

Christina (Melomo) Chilelli of Edison, NJ, announces the birth of a son, Luca Gian, on Aug. 15, 2019. Christina is a marketing manager.

Julie (Dellacorte) Kananowicz of Rockville Centre, NY, was promoted to assistant nurse manager of endoscopy at Northwell Health North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, NY.

Mark Turczak ’12, MHS ’14, married Alison Goldberg on Sept. 21, 2019, at the Waterview in Monroe, CT.

2013 Michelle Bradsher Mchugh, MS ’13, of Haverford, PA, is senior director of communications, advocacy and marketing at Melmark, which has locations in Berwyn, PA, Andover, MA, and Charlotte, NC.

Josephine Liz of Bronx, NY, is a public relations manager at Terlano Wines.

Shannon Mazurick, MS ’13, of Avon, CT, has published a children’s book that she illustrated called “The Four-Leaf Clover.”

Samantha Plourde of South Windsor, CT, was promoted to executive producer at WJAR, a television station in Rhode Island. She was formerly a producer at NBC in Connecticut.

2014 Marcus Harum ’14, MBA ’18, married Rabiah Gul on Dec. 15, 2019, at Chateau La Mer in Lindenhurst, NY. Marcus is a producer at MSN-BC in New York. The couple lives in New Rochelle, NY.

Lauren Shevitz of Katonah, NY, graduated from the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University in May 2019. She practices law on Long Island, NY.

Victoria VerDerame, MS ’15, of Branford, CT, was named a Distinguished American Italian Woman of the Year by the American Italian Women of Greater New Haven in October 2019.

James Carchietta of Hicksville, NY, is an FC lending consultant for Bank of America/Merrill Lynch.

Holly Farrell of Abington, MA, was promoted in September to senior associate at Marcum LLP in Boston, MA.

Alisha Galli of Delray Beach, FL, started a new job as a member of the adjunct nursing faculty at Palm Beach State College in Lake Worth, FL.

2017 Patrick Johnson is an associate producer for 1891 Productions. He worked on the 2018 documentary “Sublime.” He lives in Los Angeles.

John Nutting of Rockland, DE, is a studio manager for Staples stores in the Boston area and was featured in a Boston Globe story about the chain’s business initiatives.

Samantha Gormley of Howell, NJ, recently finished a second-degree nursing program and has started her first job as a registered nurse.

Megan Harrison of Guilford, CT, began an ambassador role at Yale New Haven Hospital and is pursuing a master’s degree in social work.

2019 Julia Gallo of Winchester, MA, is an intake coordinator for the state of Massachusetts working in a benefits program for low-income individuals. She is earning a paralegal certificate and is planning to take the law school admissions test soon.

Samantha Maughan, MSN ’19, of Harrisville, NH, is a family nurse practitioner in rheumatology at the Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, NH.
ELI’S OWNER ENJOYS A CHALLENGE

Lessons on the ice lead to business success

BY ADAM DURSO
PHOTO AUTUMN DRISCOLL

The same focus and drive that helped Rick Ciardiello ‘87 shine on the Quinnipiac men’s ice hockey team fueled his rise as an entrepreneur and owner of one of the most visible restaurant brands in Connecticut.

In addition to running his Hamden-based insurance agency, Ciardiello co-owns Eli’s Restaurant Group, which includes Eli’s on Whitney and Eli’s Brick Oven Pizza in Hamden, Eli’s Branford, Eli’s Orange, Eli’s Tavern in Milford, Elicit Brewing Company in Manchester and Roost, a quick-service chicken restaurant in Hamden.

For Ciardiello, building multiple businesses from the ground up took late nights, early mornings and lots of creative time management. “Let’s just say I don’t have much time for golf,” quipped Ciardiello, a business major at Quinnipiac.

Ciardiello began his entrepreneurial journey in 1993 when he started the Ciardiello Insurance Agency with his brother, Peter. At the same time, the brothers founded Eli’s Restaurant Group and opened their flagship bar, Eli’s on Whitney, in 1994.

Ciardiello knew how difficult it would be to focus on two very different business ventures. For him, the risk was the reward. “My motivation in business has always been linked to how great the challenge is,” he said.

As the insurance agency thrived, Eli’s established itself as a favorite watering hole and restaurant among those in the Quinnipiac community. Ciardiello acknowledges the importance of his relationship with the university during those early years.

“I can still remember when they first hung the Eli’s banner during basketball games in Burt Kahn Court,” he said. Eli’s Restaurant Group recently signed a five-year corporate sponsorship agreement with Quinnipiac. Ciardiello calls the deal a natural progression of the relationship that began 25 years ago.

“We’ve always been a sponsor of Quinnipiac, and they’ve always been great to us,” he said.

Ciardiello continued to open new restaurants in Hamden and beyond. Over the years, they became favorite meeting spots for best friends and classmates, not to mention, prime first-date locations for countless couples and spouses.

“People like to share those memories with me all the time, and they really are great to listen too,” he said.

In opening new establishments, Ciardiello emphasizes patience, developing management talent from within and acquiring the right real estate at the right time.

“Businesses that grow too fast often fail,” he said. “Growth is essential, but it has to happen organically when the time and location are right.”

In 2019, Ciardiello added Elicit Brewing Company to the Eli’s Restaurant Group. The 20,000 square-foot beer garden, brewery and craft cocktail bar capitalizes on the millennial/Gen-Z craft beer boom while offering options for people who prefer spirits.

“It’s basically two venues in one building, and people are really digging it,” he said.

Away from work, Ciardiello prefers to spend as much time as he can with his wife, Lysette, and their three children, Victoria, Gabriella and Nicholas. He credits his family, particularly his father, Saverio, for helping him to develop his character and work ethic. He hopes to pass on both traits to his children.

“I won’t spoil them,” Ciardiello said. “Everyone, my kids included, has to understand what it takes to be successful.”

Hockey taught Ciardiello about family, business and life. The former right wing was enshrined in the Quinnipiac University Athletics Hall of Fame in 2003.

“I learned back then that when you work harder than the guy next to you and make yourself indispensable, it gets noticed,” he said.

Ciardiello still manages to fit hockey into his busy schedule. He coaches in an elite youth league and attends as many Quinnipiac home games as he can. He also serves as a mentor for several current Bobcats.

“I tell them all the time that you can’t put your initial sight on a dollar amount,” Ciardiello said. “If you attack life head on and work hard, then the financial stuff, respect and titles will come later.”

What challenge does Ciardiello plan on attacking next? For now, he’s focused on expanding the Elicit brand and possibly opening a second location, although he hasn’t ruled anything out.

“I never know what’s next or from which direction an opportunity will come,” Ciardiello said. “And that’s the way I like it.”

Rick Ciardiello ‘87 sits barside at Eli’s on Whitney. He is the co-owner of Eli’s Restaurant Group.
4. Brooks Tenenhaus, born Feb. 18, 2019, son of Brian Tenenhaus ’03, MPT ’05, and his wife, Lauren.
9. Caroline Grace Smith, born in March 2019, daughter of Cameron Smith ’03 and his wife, Colleen.
10. Katherine Augustine, born Dec. 11, 2019, daughter of Bernard Augustine ’03 and Kelly (Laline) Augustine ’03, MAT ’05.
13. Mark Turczak ’12, MHS ’14, and Alison Goldberg.
15. Peri Stevens ’10 and Ryan Stevens ’10, MS ’14, June 2, 2018.
18. Gabriella Chimento, born Nov. 29, 2019, daughter of Christine (Polidoro) Chimento ’03, MPT ’05, and her husband, Steven.