

# Five Remarkable Graduates

By Emily Spitale Neff '93

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## **Community Leader Ayanna Reed '97**

Setting standards of excellence, making a name for yourself and pushing the envelope are all traits of a strong leader. And leader is the best word to describe Ayanna Reed. Born in Ocean City where she was raised by her grandparents until moving on campus to be a resident advisor, Reed has been leading the pack since high school. In college, she served as president of the senior class, the first black female elected to the position.

Simultaneously, she was the head of Alpha Kappa Alpha, a national service sorority. The group, which among other activities held charity fund raisers, socials for senior citizens and helped fellow students file taxes, was named undergraduate chapter of the year for overall excellence in programming. For her strong leadership, Reed received five awards this year including Sorority President of the Year in the northeastern states, Woman of the Year from the Black Cultural League and the Earl W. Hinton Citizenship Award, a medallion award bestowed by the University.

A special education major, she was a student teacher at Glassboro High School. She found that showing her students how to be leaders and help each other empowered them and built their confidence. Reed carried that goal back to campus, and made an effort to be a mentor and role model for other young students, especially women.

She hopes to make great strides as a teacher and expand her influence through future mentoring programs and leadership in extracurricular activities. And she feels Rowan has prepared her to do just that. "Rowan made me reach my potential and stretch my limits," she says. "I feel prepared in the classroom and my student teaching exemplified that."

## **An officer and a student David Kreisman '97**

The phrase "working your way through college" is an understatement when it comes to David Kreisman. Kreisman is a Delaware State police officer, which meant rearranging his work schedule to make it to classes, covering his



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frequently changing work shifts and even dropping out of college for a while to attend the police academy. And that's not to mention his regular work day itself—the high-stress, sometimes life-endangering responsibility to keep thousands of residents and motorists safe on his patrol in Delaware.

Kreisman got his first taste of law enforcement as a seasonal officer after high school in Ocean City, where he grew up. Since then, he hasn't stopped working toward his goals as a police officer even though he had to sacrifice time with his wife of less than a year and use vacation days for school. His bachelor's degree qualifies Kreisman as a candidate for many more professional opportunities than his police training alone. "Rowan has opened a lot of doors for me," says Kreisman. "My ability to move up in my organization is unlimited and the option to go federal is open."

But Kreisman isn't finished considering options for his career yet. He is thinking about pursuing a graduate degree in art, which was his major before he switched to law/justice. He'd like to explore the possibilities of working as a police sketch artist or as a member of the Special Operations Response Team which handles critical incidents for the Delaware State Police. "With this degree, everything and anything is possible," he says.

### **Global Goals** **Masafumi Tsugi '97**

Already making an international business decision while he was in high school in Nakano, Japan, Masafumi Tsugi decided that he wanted a university education in the United States and Rowan was the best financial investment he could make in earning his economics degree.

"A university education in the U.S. is much different than in Japan," he said. "There, the professor teaches and the students just listen. In this country [the U.S.] the professor and students are more like friends. The professors encourage you to participate in discussions, so you learn more."

Speaking in class was something Tsugi hesitated to do at first because of his unpracticed English. But "my professors knew I could contribute to the discussions," he said. "They asked me to talk about Japanese culture and geography or whatever we were studying. I was nervous the first time. Now I'm OK."

Tsugi was a member of the Rowan economics club and treasurer for the International Cultural Society. He wrote a paper about American education



and sent it to President Clinton in May. He said, "I got so many things from education here that I wanted to contribute in some way to the system in this country."

Ultimately, Tsugi sees himself crossing the globe in international trade. He received Rowan's George Geng Award for graduating with the highest GPA among international students. He plans to attend graduate school for international business before beginning his professional career.

### **Promise of a Dream** **Tomasa Ortiz '97**

For most of us, accomplishing what we've always dreamed of as a child usually remains just that, a dream. But for Tomasa Ortiz, reaching her dreams has become a reality. Ortiz, born and raised in the Dominican Republic, first visited the United States in 1985 and five years later came back for good. Married with two small children, she settled in Houston briefly and then moved in with her sister-in-law in Camden.

"As a little girl in the Dominican Republic I told my parents I wanted to be a professional," she says. "School was a priority. I wanted to be the best in the class."

Her plans had to be deferred as she married after high school and had a son. After two years at home, she regretted not continuing her education. She wanted to be an example to her children and teach them that school and learning are important and keep her promise to her parents and herself.

Through an English as a Second Language (ESL) course at the Rowan University Camden campus, Ortiz began to take the small steps to achieve her dream. She began the process to become a U.S. citizen and to learn to speak English fluently. According to Ortiz, the ESL program at Rowan opened the door. "This program is wonderful," she says. "I couldn't find anything like it in Houston. I had started at the University in the Dominican Republic and wanted to continue school here in the U.S. But I didn't think I could, because I couldn't speak English." In the ESL program, Ortiz could study English and take courses toward her degree simultaneously.

Not only did Ortiz continue to go to school and raise three children—now ages 11, 7 and 3—she graduated from Rowan with a B.S. in business administration.

After her student internship with an accounting firm, Ortiz is certain of her career path. She plans to take the CPA review course next spring.



## **Stature of Success**

### **Shawn Salvatore '97**

Wide horizons have been the rule, not the exception, for Shawn Salvatore. When it was time to choose a college, he had a stellar high school record and prestigious scholarships that would take him virtually anywhere. He chose Rowan. A short three years later, he was a student intern at Harris, Baio and McCullough, the formidable Philadelphia public relations and advertising agency that would invite him to join the firm even before he graduated magna cum laude.

Salvatore juggled his many interests with his communications/public relations major. He was involved in the Public Relations Student Society of America, sang in Concert Choir, worked in the university admissions and publications departments and at his family's auto supply business. He even starred in community theater musicals, including Oklahoma and Fiddler on the Roof.

Handpicked as one of the two first student members of the University's Foundation Board, the Pitman native interacted with top executives of the Delaware Valley corporate world as they directed Rowan's fundraising efforts.

Salvatore valued the rare opportunity to work with professionals of such stature on the Foundation Board. It was a chance to invest not only in his future, but in other students who will earn scholarships and benefit from education enhanced by private fundraising.

Ironically, the wide horizons keep Salvatore focused on achieving. "Rowan gave me a lot of opportunities and experience," he says. "In the 'real world,' I know that setting high standards for myself is the key to success. Without high standards, the horizon becomes all too narrow." ■

