

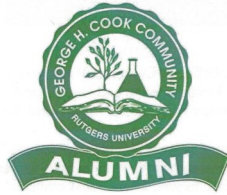


*Distinguished Alumni  
Awards Luncheon  
Sunday, April 28, 2024*

Hosted by:

Cook Community Alumni Association

# Cook Community Alumni Association



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**Amanda Dougherty CC '08, GSED '09**

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**Special thanks to:**

**Brian McGonigle, Manager of Alumni and Community Engagement**

**Web: <https://cookalumni.rutgers.edu>**

**Email: [cookalumni@gmail.com](mailto:cookalumni@gmail.com)**

**Cook Community Alumni Association**

**@CookAlumni**



## **George H. Cook & Dennis M. Fenton**

### **Awards Committee Members**

**Co-Chair Dr. Linda Madison CC '80, GSED '94, '02**

**Co-Chair Dr. Lee Schneider CAES '70, GSNB '72, GSED '88**

**Joseph Charette CC '77**

**Dr. Donald Heilman CC '76, GSED '07, '12**

**Heather O'Rourke CC '92, GSED '18**

**Kerry Kirk-Pflugh CC '80**

**Dr. Mark Robson CC '77, GSNB '79, '88, '95**

**Gary Sondermeyer CC '79, GSNB '84**

**Dr. Brian Voynick CC '78**

**Sue Wicks CC '88**

**Dr. Paul S. Wichansky CC '93, GSNB '99, '08**

***All committee members are GH Cook Distinguished Alumni Award recipients***

## **-PROGRAM-**

### **Welcome**

CCAA Co-President Amanda Dougherty

### **Greetings**

Executive Dean Laura Lawson

### **Buffet Luncheon**

### **Introduction of Committee and Prior Awardees**

#### **Recognition of George Hammell Cook Distinguished Alumni Awardees**

M. Donald Richman, Jr. CC '80  
William C. Bailey CC '94  
Shannon Riehl CC '92  
Dennis C. Dagounis CC '01

#### **Recognition of Dennis M. Fenton Distinguished Graduate Alumni Awardee**

Dr. Gary C. Pavlis CAES '73, GSNB '85



## **The George Hammell Cook Distinguished Alumni Award**

The award, established in 1976, commemorates the life of George Hammell Cook (1818 - 1889) whose efforts helped to bring Land Grant College status to Rutgers and to create the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. Dr. Cook's inquisitive and results-oriented spirit remains active in the ideals embodied by the Cook community which includes the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the George H. Cook campus.

This award is presented annually to an alumnus or to alumni whose outstanding accomplishments in professional or volunteer work reflects dignity and distinction on their alma mater. The George H. Cook Award is the highest honor presented by the Cook Community Alumni Association to undergraduate alumni.

Eligible alumni are those who earned an undergraduate degree from the School of Environmental & Biological Sciences, Cook College, C.A.E.S., the Rutgers College of Agriculture or alumnae of Douglass College or N.J.C. who earned a degree in agriculture or a related field during the years before Rutgers University embraced a coeducational policy.



## **The Dennis M. Fenton, GSNB '77**

### **Distinguished Graduate Alumni Award**

Established in 2003 this award honors Dennis M. Fenton, who is a recently retired executive vice-president of Amgen Inc. He is currently CEO of Fenton and Associates, Biotechnology Consulting and he remains a strong supporter of graduate education at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, formerly Cook College, Rutgers University. Successful candidates have demonstrated a significant impact in their field of study. The Dennis M. Fenton Award is the highest honor presented by the CCAA to advanced degree alumni.

Eligible alumni are graduates of Rutgers University's Graduate School New Brunswick who earned a Masters or Doctoral degree from a program or department currently or historically associated with the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, Cook College, the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science or the Rutgers College of Agriculture.

Nominees are not required to have earned an undergraduate degree from the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences or any other unit of Rutgers University.

# **2024 George Hammell Cook** **Distinguished Alumni Award Winner**

## **M. Donald Richman, Jr.**



Donald Richman is production manager at Cumberland Dairy in Bridgeton, New Jersey. He was part of the team that initially brought one of the first UHT (ultra high temperature) processors into the United States, enabling Cumberland to greatly expand their territory with extended shelf-life dairy products. Cumberland Dairy is a 100% farmer owned business, part of the Dairy Farmers of America (Co-op). Don's background allows him to be a liaison between the farmers and manufacturing portion of the dairy industry.

Don was fortunate to be born into agriculture. He was raised on the Richman family dairy farm in Mannington Township, grew up milking cows and some of his best childhood memories are getting up every morning to milk with his dad before school. Don earned his BS in Animal Science from Cook in 1980. He married his wife, Kim, in 1986 and they built their

home on a portion of the family farm.

Don is involved in numerous community activities. He was a longtime first responder for the Mannington Fire and Rescue Squad. He was a member of the Mannington Township Board of Education from 1995 to 2013, chairing numerous committees and serving as vice president. He was also the sending district representative to the Salem High School Board of Education for 10 years. As a member of the Mannington Township Planning/Zoning Board, he helps keep his community agrarian; the township continues to increase preserved farmland acreage. Don also volunteers with the Mannington Ruritan Club, a service organization that raises funds to support the local community. He is a lifetime member of West Park United Methodist Church, where he serves on the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

Don has been a longtime coach and official for local youth sports. He has coached softball, baseball, flag football, basketball and soccer. He is currently coaching with Salem Little League and the Woodstown Soccer Club. He has been part of the Salem High School Football team "chain gang" for over twenty years..

Don and Kim have three adult children, Amanda, Matthew (and wife Devon) and Zachary. They became foster parents in 2017, helping over a dozen children through some difficult family experiences. This opportunity eventually led to the adoption of Elijah and Talayden in 2019 (the boys loved the alumni fish fry last summer)! One of Don's favorite pastimes now is spending time with his grandson Reid.

# **2024 George Hammell Cook** **Distinguished Alumni Award Winner**

## **William C. Bailey**



William (Bill) Bailey has dedicated his career to the academic success of Rutgers University athletes. During his 29 years at Rutgers University, Bill has worked with athletes who achieved success in Football, Baseball, Men's and Women's Swimming & Diving, Men's and Women's Fencing, Men's Track & Field, Men's and Women's Lacrosse, Women's Softball, Men's and Women's Golf and Women's Gymnastics.

Before joining Academic Support Services, Bill dedicated the first two years of his career working for Project C.O.R.E. (Community Organized to Regain Environment) under the Office of Continuing Professional Education at Rutgers University. This initiative was designed to aid troubled youth in Essex County, NJ. During this period, he also spent three years serving as a Residential Director at Cook College.

Bill graduated from Cook College at Rutgers University with a Business and Environmental Economics degree in 1994. He later pursued his Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from the Rutgers Graduate School of Education, completing his degree in 2016.

As an undergraduate, Bill participated on the varsity football team as a walk-on. His hard work and dedication resulted in earning a place as a varsity starter, playing four years in the backfield as tailback and fullback and earning a full scholarship. Bill made a notable mark by scoring the first BIG EAST touchdown in 1991 against Boston College and was honored to be named Co-Captain for the 1993 season.

While at Cook, Bill was a resident of Helyar House, a residential community cooperative for undergraduate students. He currently lives in Woodbridge Township with his wife, Sonya.

## **2024 George Hammell Cook** **Distinguished Alumni Award Winner**



**Dennis C. Dagounis**

Dennis Dagounis embarked on an educational journey following his graduation from Cook College in 2001. Over 22 years, he dedicated himself to teaching Biology and Environmental Science at a public high school, earning recognition as the Union County Educator of the Year in 2021 for his innovative teaching methods. Through engaging, student-centered projects, he aimed to instill a passion for science, health, and environmental stewardship. His efforts were rewarded with accolades such as the Garden State Green Award and the Jefferson Award for Public Service, along with securing a PSE&G Environmental Education Grant.

Transitioning from teaching to administration in 2022, Dennis assumed roles as a science supervisor and later as the Director of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics). Presently serving as an assistant principal, he continues to enrich his students' experiences through STEM seminars and orchestrating a distinctive climate change symposium for 9 Advanced Placement (AP) classes spanning two weeks post-AP exams.

Throughout his 23-year tenure as an educator and educational leader, Dennis has designed and led professional development opportunities for pre-service teachers and has been a featured presenter at state and national conferences. Notably, he participated in a STEM teacher consortium presentation in Wenzhou, China, in 2019, forging a sister school partnership between his school and a school in China.

Remaining true to the values instilled at Cook College, Dennis also serves in district leadership as the Coordinator of the District Green Team, fostering community and conservation awareness among all students in grades PK through 12.



# **2024 George Hammell Cook** **Distinguished Alumni Award Winner**

## **Shannon Riehl**



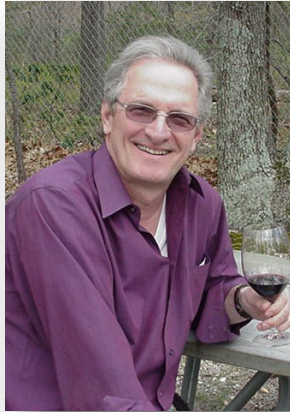
Shannon Riehl is an ELA teacher with 23 years of experience in the award-winning Manalapan School District. Currently, Shannon teaches fifth grade at the Clark Mills School, a New Jersey Blue Ribbon School.

Shannon graduated from Cook College with a BA in journalism and mass media in 1992. After graduating, she designed turnkey programming for the QVC Network and other direct-marketing venues as the vice-president of marketing for the Peri Consulting Group. However, she had a calling to teach. She returned to Rutgers University where she received her Masters of Education and was inducted into the Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society. Since then, she has been teaching in the Manalapan School district.

Shannon has been an integral part of the school community, where she has worked to implement creative learning experiences for the children. She has chaired the Scripps Spelling Bee and led the Volunteer Committee as well as working on the school's Read Across America and Character Education teams. She has been a leader for her grade-level PLC and served on the SCIP committee. She has been awarded several grants to bring living history and a learning library to her school. Throughout her teaching career, she has coached multiple Odyssey of the Mind teams to the state championship and World Finals. She was awarded a national prize by Walden Media in which Newbery-award winning author Katherine Paterson visited her classroom. During 2020, Shannon volunteered to work on the COVID Response Team for reopening the district's schools. She helped to pioneer a virtual academy during the unprecedented school year to develop and facilitate a virtual learning option in order to provide students with a consistent, rigorous educational experience.

Shannon continues to advocate for learning through innovative educational experiences both for her students and her own children, who are her greatest source of inspiration. She is the proud mother of Regan, a senior at Bryn Mawr College, and Trey, a sophomore at Colts Neck High School. She credits Cook College and Rutgers University for giving her a curiosity for continued education and inspiring others to be lifelong learners as well.

**2024 Dennis M. Fenton**  
**Distinguished Graduate Alumni Award Winner**



**Dr. Gary C. Pavlis**

Dr. Gary Pavlis has been a professor and agricultural agent at Rutgers University for 38 years. His areas of expertise are blueberry and grape/wine production. His blueberry newsletter, ‘The Blueberry Bulletin’, has an international following. His research on blueberry fertilization has transformed the New Jersey blueberry production industry.

Dr. Pavlis has been instrumental in the expansion of the New Jersey wine industry by assisting would-be grape growers through the production and marketing minefield. Most wineries that have been established in New Jersey have started in the office of Dr. Pavlis, resulting in the expansion from 7 wineries in 1984 to over 60 in 2022.

Gary has served nationally on the Board of Directors of the American Wine Society, the largest wine consumer organization in the USA. Dr. Pavlis wrote the wine column in *Edible Jersey* called “Liquid Assets” from 2010 to 2015. Gary’s work and knowledge have received widespread recognition in the media, with television interviews on sources as diverse as CNN, Philadelphia’s ABC Channel 6, Atlantic City Channel 40, and as an interviewed speaker on the special, *If Plants Could Talk*, on PBS. He has been interviewed on numerous radio talk shows and is regularly quoted in newspapers such as The Atlantic City Press, Asbury Park Press, The Bergen Record, The New York Times, The Philadelphia Inquirer, and the Trenton Times. He has also written articles and columns on blueberries and wine for trade journals. Although Gary has accomplished much to this point, he doesn’t believe his work is anywhere near done. Gary thinks he has the best job in the world and professes to have no plans for retiring.

**Dennis M. Fenton**  
**Distinguished Graduate Alumni Awardees**  
**2003—2023**

Dr. H. Allen Tucker  
Ajit K. Srivastava  
Daniel Rossi  
Dr. Stacey Angela Zawel  
Dr. Carl Safina  
Dr. Sonny B. Ramaswamy  
Dr. Richard T. Dewling  
Dr. Gilbert A. Leveille  
Dr. Richard R-C Wang  
Dr. A. Joel Kaplovsky  
Dr. Bruce B. Clarke  
Dr. Roy H. DeBoer  
Dr. Peter Strom  
Dr. H. Boyd Woodruff  
Dr. Joseph Hunter  
Dr. Prasert Chitapong  
Dr. Junfeng (Jim) Zhang  
Dr. George Hamilton  
Dr. Wei Hua Wu  
Dr. Margaret Brennan-Tonetta  
Dr. Cynthia Rozenzweig  
Dr. Jennie C. Hunter-Cevera  
Robert H. Bruch  
Dr. Chris Martine  
Dr. Terrie Williams  
Dr. Anne Marie Grover  
Gregory DiLalo  
Dr. Apostolos Pappas  
Dr. Donald Knezick  
Dr. Gene McAvoy  
Dr. Robert Buchanan  
Dr. Ronald Atlas  
Dr. Frederick Tyson  
Dr. Brian J. Schilling  
Dr. Paul S. Wichansky

John B. Schmitt  
Phillip E. Marucci  
Lester R. Brown  
Edgar T. Savidge  
George Vander Noot  
Phillip Alampi  
Charles Brown  
Lindley G. Cooke  
Hans Fisher  
Henry Izzo  
Bruce Poulton  
Charles Hess  
Richard H. Merritt  
Edward V. Lipman  
A. Elizabeth Sloan  
Roger R. Locandro  
Grant F. Walton  
John A. Pino  
A. Robert Koch  
John M. Walsh  
Norman Waecker  
Sydney Evans  
Anthony Cerami  
Joan A. Sempkowski De Boer  
Gregory Kellam Scott  
Monroe Wall  
David Tudor  
Seymour Gilbert  
James Robert Lyons  
Albert Shatz  
Ralph Robert Anderson  
Carlton C. Dilatush  
Mary Lewnes Albrecht  
Richard M. Hale  
Ratemo Waya Michieka  
Richard D. Ilnicki  
Karyn Malinowski  
Ralph Brinster  
William J. Roberts  
Devon L. Cherry  
Julius Gyula Fabos  
David A. Meirs, II  
Edgar B Brannon, Jr.  
Morris S. Fabian  
Gary Sondermeyer  
Samuel Garrison  
Frederick J. Kroesen  
H. Boyd Woodruff  
William V. Chalupa  
Dennis J. Higbie  
Henry W. Indyk  
Bruce Hamilton  
Lee. D. Schneider

Cindy Lee Van Dover  
Scott A. Rivkees  
Mark G. Robson  
Peter A. Seligmann  
Peter Jakab  
Steve Strom  
Barbara Bromley  
Jill Lipoti  
Neil Robson  
Joseph Cialone  
Linda Madison  
Robert E. Snieckus  
George Johannessen  
Brian Federici  
Doug Blonsky  
John Seeley  
George Van Orden  
Joesph McGovern  
Murray Bakst  
Robert Langhans  
Brian Voynick  
Heather O'Rourke  
Anthony Broccoli  
Stephen Mahfood  
John Little  
Calvin Moon  
Sue Wicks  
Gary Brackett  
Hank Ebert  
Bethany Rocque-Romaine  
Richard Wolff  
David Rich  
John Jengo  
Chris Dorko  
Elizabeth Ryan  
Peter Tabbot  
Michael Hlubik  
Kerry Kirk Pflug  
Marc Kollar  
Matt Weismantel  
Andre Cantelmo  
Greg Balog  
Jenice Sabb  
Susan Carson  
Joseph Charette  
Donald C. Heilman  
Timothy Burklow, Sr.  
Karen Ivanac  
Daniel Klein  
Vincent R. Caputo  
Terry Twitchell-DiCastro  
David J. Singer

George H. Cook Distinguished Alumni Awardees 1976-2023