



HONORS  
SENIOR AWARDS  
& RECOGNITION  
CEREMONY

2024



MONMOUTH  
UNIVERSITY

HONORS  
SCHOOL

# Senior Awards & Recognition Ceremony

**May 8, 2024**

Welcome & Opening Remarks ..... *Acting Dean Jennifer Ross, MA*

Introduction of Honors School Outstanding Service Award..... *Acting Dean Jennifer Ross, MA*

Remarks from the Outstanding Service Award Winner .....*Dr. Jaime Myers, Ph.D.*

Introduction of Awardees..... *Acting Dean Jennifer Ross, MA*

- Dean's Award for Excellence in Honors
- Honors Council Award for Best Thesis/Capstone
- Remarks from the Award Winner's First Reader

Recognition of Graduates..... *Acting Dean Jennifer Ross, MA*  
*Assistant to the Dean Doris Meyer, MA*

Closing Remarks..... *Acting Dean Jennifer Ross, MA*

# Outstanding Service Award

## Dr. Jaime Myers

Dr. Jaime Myers is an Associate Professor in the Health and Physical Education department at Monmouth University. With a PhD and MPH in Public Health, Dr. Myers researches issues that impact sexual and reproductive health. Past studies have explored topics such as genital herpes disclosure, determinants of STI testing among young women, dual birth control use among college students, dating violence among older women, protective alcohol use behaviors with sorority and fraternity members, and HPV vaccination rates among adolescent females. She is currently in a one-year fellowship with the Monmouth Polling Institute investigating knowledge, intentions, and implementation of new law in New Jersey that allows pharmacists to prescribe birth control directly to customers without a prior physician prescription.



Dr. Myers' role in the Honors School has included being an active member of the Honors Council since 2019, chaperoning two trips to the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference with undergraduate student presenters, serving as an honors thesis advisor, and teaching HO 296 that introduces students to the thesis and capstone process. Her goal is always to challenge students to think critically and encourage their growth through their undergraduate education.

# THE DEAN'S AWARD for Excellence IN HONORS

RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS BY A GRADUATE OF THE HONORS  
SCHOOL

*This award recognizes superior graduates for their contributions to the Honors School. Senior honors students who have achieved a 3.5 GPA in their major and who meet at least two of the following criteria may be included for consideration: active member of the honors community, member of the Peer Mentoring Program for at least two years, represented the Honors School at an academic conference, or served on the Honors Students Association. The award winners are selected by the Honors School Dean.*

## MARY SCHULD '24

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English & Elementary Education

Mary exemplifies the pinnacle of leadership, service, and academic achievement within the honors community. As a Peer Mentor, she has provided invaluable guidance and support to first-year students, ensuring a smooth transition into college. Mary also served as the co-president of the Honors Student Association, where she has spearheaded initiatives aimed at fostering a sense of community and inclusiveness. Her empathetic approach and genuine concern for the well-being of her peers embody the core values of the Honor School.

Throughout her Monmouth experience, Mary has demonstrated a commitment to scholarly inquiry and intellectual growth. In April 2024, Mary received the School of Education's Excellence in Elementary Education award. Though, her achievements extend beyond the confines of the University, presenting research at five regional and national honors conferences. Mary is the first MU student to clinch first place at a National Collegiate Honors Council conference for her poster on 'Creating and Restoring Mental Health Education Through Children's Literature.'

Mary's positive attitude, academic prowess, and unwavering dedication to service have left a lasting imprint on the honors community. Her contributions over the past four years exemplify the essence of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Honors.

## 2023 HONORS COUNCIL AWARD for

# Best Thesis/Capstone

*All Honors Thesis/Capstone presenters are invited to apply for the prestigious Honors Council Award for Best Thesis/Capstone. This is a competitive and prestigious award that is granted to an honors student who completed their Honors School thesis or capstone during the previous calendar year and that the Honors Council deems to be the most outstanding based on originality of thesis, depth and range of research, clarity of argument, and quality of presentation.*

### BEST THESIS/CAPSTONE, WINNER

**EMMA CUSANO '23**

MARINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY AND POLICY

First Reader: Dr. Pedram Daneshgar

Second Reader: Dr. Sean Sterrett

Sea level rise influences bird and mammal populations in Monmouth and Ocean County coastal forests

### BEST THESIS/CAPSTONE, HONORABLE MENTIONS

**NICOLE MAUTONE '24**

ENGLISH

First Reader: Dr. Stanley Blair

Expectations and Subversions: The Semiotics of Psychological Horror in Doki Doki Literature Club

**MARY SCHULD '24**

ENGLISH AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

First Reader: Dr. KERRY CARLEY-RIZZUTO

Social Emotional Learning Through Children's Literature

**ADRIANA SIMANCAS '24**

MARINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY AND POLICY

First Reader: Dr. Sean Sterrett

Estimating Population Size and Density of Eastern Box Turtles (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) in a Monmouth County Park

• DEAN ROSS PROUDLY PRESENTS •

# THE HONORS SCHOOL GRADUATES

FROM WINTER 2024 AND SPRING 2024



Maria Fernanda Aguiluz  
Riya Ajmera  
Jaqueline Aquino  
Noa Bass  
Estuar Calle  
Nicole Cappolina  
Loreanna Caputi  
Andrew Catapano  
Taylor Ann Charpentier  
Carissa Civitello  
Alexia Cole  
Connor Currie  
Joseph Dige  
Sarah Drew  
Abigail Eck  
Charlotte Edwards  
Sarah Godbout  
Olivia Hiers  
Ana Lucia Huertas  
Lenien Jamir  
Cecelia Lacovara  
Hailey Brooke Louro

Rachel Ludwick  
Nicole Mautone  
Samantha McElhinney  
Christopher Meehan  
Alexander Mykulyn  
Taïphane Orange  
Alexander Phillips  
Ariana Leigh Reyes-Connolly  
Emily Schopfer  
Mary Schuld  
Adriana Simancas  
Rachel D. Soto  
Juliette Tordjman  
Brooke Tortorelli  
Hana Vozzo  
Kiefer Walsh  
Kendall Ward  
Madeline Woolley  
Elena Worton  
Margaret Young  
Adriana Zefutie



# Maria Fernanda Aguiluz



**MAJOR:** HEALTH PROMOTION/FITNESS AND WELLNESS CLUSTER

**HOMETOWN:** San José, Costa Rica

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- National Regional Honors Conference Certificate of Recognition 2024
- Scholarship Week "HawkTalk" presenter 2024
- Eta Sigma Gamma National Health Education Honor Society Inducted 2024
- Chi Alpha Sigma Athletics Honors Society Inducted 2023
- Phi Eta Sigma Freshman Honors Society Inducted 2020
- MEAC Athletic Scholar 2020-2024
- Dean's List Recipient 2020-2024

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I joined the Honors School because I felt like I could have a family and support system outside of my team. I found my home away from home since my first day here thanks to the Honors School.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

The moonrise walk to the beach is my fondest memory of the Honors School. It is always great to bond after wrapping up the semester!

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I will be working at Explo, teaching aquatics, CPR/AED, hiking, and triathlon. After that, I want to pursue my masters in Spain in Adapted Physical Education! I hope to continue my work in research!

## **THESIS: BrainTrain - A Mobile App for Assessing Performance Anxiety within Collegiate Athletes**

Performance anxiety negatively impacts athletes by triggering adverse psychological responses toward competition in their sport. This anxiety arises from external and internal factors, inducing physiological reactions that affect athletes' ability to perform optimally. Athletes may experience performance anxiety before or during competition, resulting in a discrepancy between the athlete's capacity and skills during a game and practice. Exploring performance anxiety within collegiate athletics is fundamental as it can be a pivotal factor in whether an athlete will reach their full potential at the collegiate level; failure to reach this can result in frustration, development of mental illness, and retirement from their sport. Assessing performance anxiety's impact within team and individual sports can aid sports psychologists in developing tailored coping strategies for specific sports. This proposal aims to integrate existing coping mechanisms and literature to develop a mobile application that helps sports psychologists comprehensively assess performance anxiety within collegiate athletics. BrainTrain aims to facilitate monitoring and dialogue between student-athletes and sports psychologists through a mobile app that easily documents and evaluates what triggers performance anxiety within specific athletes and their teams, ultimately leading to mental health support and well-being.

# Riya Ajmera



**MAJORS:** CHEMISTRY (*BIOCHEMISTRY*) & COMMUNICATION (*PUBLIC RELATIONS & JOURNALISM*)

**HOMETOWN:** Perth Amboy, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Creating one of the first undergraduate health insurance literacy classes in the nation at Monmouth
- Created my own grass roots organization and website [uninsuredunaware.org](http://uninsuredunaware.org)
- Former Vice President of SGA
- Won First Place in Biochemistry at the William Paterson Undergraduate Symposium
- Served as the first-ever student perspective on the national Mid-Atlantic Ocean forum
- Awarded Excellence in Journalism from the Communication Department

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I'm always looking for a challenge and an opportunity to pursue something I'm passionate in. The Honors School gave me both of those things and the support I needed.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

I will never forget my Honors Orientation when I met one of my good friends and we took the goofiest photos for the competition. We reenacted the Titanic scene at the Great Hall balcony, we pretended to be dead bodies underneath a painter's tarp, and I obsessed over squirrels for a whole ten minutes (that hasn't changed).

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I plan on officializing my organization, Uninsured & Unaware, as a nonprofit. I will be expanding the resources available on the website, [uninsuredunaware.org](http://uninsuredunaware.org), to include insurance terminology, how to enroll for each U.S. state, and a blog to answer the most commonly asked questions such as how Medicare works or how to pick the best job health insurance package. Along with that, I've been referred to a possible position as a journalist for the MJH Life Sciences publication that provides Oncology specialists resources and information for their patients. I plan on taking that on!

## THESIS: Uninsured & Unaware: Lack of Health Insurance Education in the United States

This four-part series published in articles in Monmouth University's *The Outlook* sheds light on the concerning lack of health insurance literacy among college students in the United States. With the majority of college students required to navigate the complex insurance system on their own after age 26 or upon receiving their first job benefits, the project underscores the need for universities to integrate health insurance education into their curricula. The consequences of this knowledge gap are significant, resulting in a higher number of uninsured young adults; according to the United States Census Bureau "one in four uninsured individuals [are] between the ages of 26 and 34." Moreover, the project emphasizes the impact of this issue on pre-health professionals, who require a comprehensive understanding of health insurance to maximize healthcare options and provide optimal care to their patients.

The articles also draw comparisons between the U.S. healthcare system and those in other countries, highlighting the financial importance of preparing upcoming generations to understand and navigate the complexities of the current system. The project calls for action from universities and organizations to equip young adults with the necessary health insurance literacy to navigate the healthcare system effectively.



# Noa Bass



**MAJOR:** BIOLOGY (*MOLECULAR CELL PHYSIOLOGY*)

**MINORS:** CHEMISTRY & MATHEMATICS

**HOMETOWN:** Neptune, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- President of PreMed Club
- Student Tour Guide Ambassador
- General Chemistry Lab Assistant
- Research Student
- Phi Eta Sigma National Honors Society
- Tri-Beta National Biological Honors Society
- Alpha Epsilon Delta Pre-Health Professional National Honors Society

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to be a part of a special community on campus that allowed me to get a personalized academic experience in the classroom while also introducing me to some of my lifelong friends.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Honors School was my first year sunrise walk during orientation. I got to meet so many of my future classmates while also enjoying a relaxing sunrise on the beach.

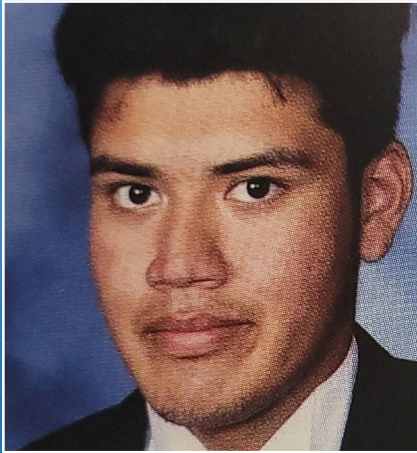
## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I plan on working for a year in the science field (not sure where yet) and then pursuing either a Masters or PhD.

## THESIS: Manuka Essential Oil Decreases Proliferation and Causes Apoptosis in HT-1080 Fibrosarcoma Cells

Since research on the effects of essential oils on human cell lines is limited, the goal of this project was to treat cancer cell lines with manuka essential oil at different concentrations and ascertain the effects on cell proliferation on normal fibroblast (CUA-4) and fibrosarcoma (HT-1080) cells. Manuka oil is popular in many skincare products because of its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties that treat several skin conditions. However, manuka oil also contains an active ingredient that is commonly found in herbicides and is potentially toxic to human cells at certain concentrations. To study the effects of this essential oil on cultured cells, cell lines were grown on 24-well plates, and confluent cultures were treated with varying concentrations of manuka oil for 24 hours. The effect of the oil on proliferation and viability was measured through direct cell counting using trypan blue dye exclusion and through the use of an MTT assay. As the concentration of oil increased, viability of all cell lines tested decreased, which was reflected in the MTT assay results. To determine if the decrease in cell numbers observed from manuka oil treatment was the result of apoptosis, PARP cleavage assays via Western Blots were performed in HT-1080 cells. Furthermore, the role of JNK signaling in essential oil treatment was evaluated.

# Estuar Calle



**MAJOR:** BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (*ECONOMICS & FINANCE*)

**MINOR:** INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**HOMETOWN:** Lodi, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- First to Fly Treasurer
- HSA Vice President

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I wanted to be part of a community with people of all majors.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

The BBQ the Honors School was hosting back in 2021 where I got to meet some new people.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I plan to hopefully get a job at New York City with my Finance and Economic degree.

## **THESIS: First Generation Business Students: Career Advancement and Economic Mobility**

Many elements come with being a first-generation student (FGS), but what are certain struggles and outcomes they have when entering the business field? The purpose of asking this question is to find the career advancement and economic mobility expectancy of first-generation business students (FGBS) while seeing if aspects such as networking and the value of a degree can help. There are various studies about FGS and business students, but there are not many focusing on the students who fall into both categories. In the United States, there is an increase in FGS attending college and business is one of the most popular degrees for college students, therefore it is important to look at those students who are first-generation business students. Many questions can be asked about FGBS, like their struggles, the positions these students desire, how they fair with the competitive nature of the business industry, and if they can succeed. The struggles FGS face during their time before college influence them to become business majors; this affects their college experience and business career. Looking at both sides of an FGBS can help see what problems exist for these students, who show disadvantages in the business field due to lack of connections and FGBS entering jobs below skill level.

# Nicole Cappolina



**MAJOR:** MARINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY AND POLICY

**MINOR:** GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

**HOMETOWN:** Ocean City, NJ

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Academic Achievement Award for Marine and Environmental Biology and Policy.
- Involvement in several independent research projects in the field of marine and environmental science.
- Scholarship Week Poster Presentations two years in a row.
- Presenting Honors Thesis at the annual student conference.
- Member of the MEBP club.
- Studying abroad in the Bahamas with the MEBP program.

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I joined the Honors School because I wanted be apart of the community that is committed to academic excellence and form valuable connections that extend beyond my time at Monmouth University. Graduating from an Honors program also shows future employers and graduate programs that I have demonstrated dedication and hard work in academics.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

I remember my first week at Monmouth University as a freshman I attended an Honors School walk to the beach from campus to see the sunrise. It was a memorable experience because I met a lot of other honors students in my class and it was a beautiful sunrise. It is always a fun and exciting start to a new school year!

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I am planning to pursue a career in coastal zone and natural resource management in South Jersey.

## **THESIS: Analyzing the Abundance and Types of Microplastics found on Hathaway Beach in Deal, New Jersey**

The rise in global plastic production has caused an increase in plastic debris in the natural environment. Microplastics (MP's) are fragmented from larger plastics and are defined as 5mm or less in size. MP's can enter the environment through a variety of sources and can be found in different colors and sizes. The abundance of microplastics present on beaches negatively affects coastal ecosystems including the health of both wildlife and humans. Organisms can ingest these plastics or become entangled by them. Bivalves can also filter feed microplastic particles and develop diseases that in turn affect the aquaculture industry. This study examined type, quantity, color, and distribution of microplastics found on Hathaway Beach in Deal, NJ and compared the results to baseline data collected in the spring of 2022. The data showed that 42 plastic items were collected in the current study, compared to 89 plastics found in the preliminary data. The most abundant type found was fragment, while in the preliminary data, the most common type was film. It is important to monitor plastics in the natural environment in order to develop mitigation strategies to help reduce plastics in the natural environment and prevent further harm from wildlife and humans.

# Loreanna Caputi



**MAJORS:** MATHEMATICS & ELEMENTARY EDUCATION WITH ENDORSEMENT IN TEACHER OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

**HOMETOWN:** Wood-Ridge, NJ

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Held two vice presidential, executive roles for my sorority, Delta Phi Epsilon
- Treasurer for Best Buddies International Chapter
- Became a published writer for the online magazine for college women, Her Campus.

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

To be surrounded by like-minded individuals who valued academic and social excellence!

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

The Honors School picnic and Thanksgiving event!

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I plan to enter the workforce in data analytics!

## **THESIS: Social-Emotional Learning Is Needed More Than Ever For Grade School Students Emerging From A Post-Pandemic World**

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a topic that is continuously gaining momentum within the field of education, especially in a post-pandemic world where children need social and emotional support now more than ever. During the pandemic, students had limited opportunities for social engagement due to the severe state of isolation. The increased emphasis on SEL directly correlates to fostering positive academic achievement outcomes, and providing students with a sense of belonging and enhanced motivation through active participation in the learning community. Thus, at a time where children's sense of identity formation lacks direction and their levels of stress and anxiety are reaching unwarranted heights, SEL can ameliorate the situation and can improve children's development for their intrapersonal and interpersonal social-emotional competencies. This better influences positive results on the student's social, academic, and life-related success. To implement SEL efficiently, the learning process must target three key competencies: cognitive regulation, emotional regulation, and social skills, considering research shows that academic learning and success happens most effectively when these dimensions are well implemented and supported. This thesis will present SEL sample activities to target each competency to provide educators with a framework of how to execute SEL endeavors within their classrooms.

# Andrew Catapano



**MAJOR:** COMPUTER SCIENCE

**HOMETOWN:** Middletown, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &  
ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Dean's List (all semesters)
- Academic Excellence in CS Award

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I joined the Honors School because it was a good opportunity to enhance my college experience with interesting classes outside of my major. It also gave me the opportunity to work one on one with a professor to research a topic that I am passionate about.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Doing research for and completing my capstone.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I will continue on to pursue my Graduate degree in Computer Science here at Monmouth University.

## **THESIS: NPCs in Video Games: How Artificial Intelligence Shapes Gameplay Experiences**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to redefine the landscape of modern computer science, showcasing its transformative potential across various industries. Within the video game industry, AI stands as a pivotal force, shaping gameplay mechanics to create immersive experiences. This capstone aims to harness AI's capabilities within the context of game development by creating a game where the player squares off against AI-controlled Non-Player Characters (NPCs) that exhibit lifelike intelligence and decision-making. Utilizing Unreal Engine 5's advanced AI toolkit, including behavior trees, blackboards, and AI perception systems, NPCs dynamically responded to player actions and environmental stimuli, enhancing the player's immersion and gameplay experience. This capstone also aims to document the game development process through videos, screenshots, and written documentation. This documentation will help fill the gap in AI research in video games left by proprietary game code and provide a detailed overview of the systems and mechanics in play within the game world to other aspiring developers.

# Taylor Ann Charpentier



**MAJOR:** BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MARKETING)

**MINOR:** SPORTS COMMUNICATIONS

**HOMETOWN:** North Andover, MA

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &  
ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Women's Lacrosse
- MSAAC Representative
- Chi Alpha Sigma Athletics Honors Society

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I joined the Honors School to take my education one step further and study what I am passionate about.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

The Honors School sunrise walk freshman year.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I will be attending graduate school to get my Master's in Communications while also fulfilling my remaining eligibility for lacrosse.

## **THESIS: Gender Inequities of Elite Athletics: Media Coverage and Representation**

As women's sports in the United States grow, the amount of coverage of elite women's sports remains low in comparison to men's elite sports, and the content of coverage – if it exists – is often sexualized or stereotyping in nature. This research aimed to find answers as to why women's elite sports are underrepresented and misrepresented in the media, and how the issue can be fixed. Specific focuses of the research include gender inequality in media, gender inequality in sports media, gender inequality in professional sports, gender inequality in college athletics, the rise of social media, marketing strategies of college athletics, and how consumerism impacts the gender gap in media coverage of sports. The results of the literature research confirmed that there are large discrepancies in media coverage of elite male and female athletes. Statistics also showed that if women's sports are covered in a way that is analogous to men's coverage, people will watch or listen. Thus, the method of problem solving was to provide women's sports fans with a podcast devoted solely to women's sports. Created and hosted by female athletes, the podcast was authentic and provided awareness of the inequalities female athletes experience while also contributing to providing more media coverage of elite women's sports.

# Carissa Civitello



**MAJOR:** BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
(MARKETING)

**HOMETOWN:** Middletown, CT

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &  
ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Phi Eta Sigma Honors Society
- Beta Gamma Sigma Business Honors Society
- Dean's List honoree
- Graduated Summa Cum Laude as the top Baccalaureate candidate in the Business Administration (Marketing) major
- Treasurer of The Financial Planning Club.

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I have always prided myself on facing and conquering new challenges. The Honors School was an extension of that pursuit.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

My best memory from the Honors School was my proposal, as I was finally able to share the project I had been working so hard on with my peers.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I am getting my Master's from Monmouth University's Five-year program. I currently work as the Head of Operations for a financial tech company called WeGetFinancing; I will be continuing my work there.

## **THESIS: Catering to the Quiet and the Sociable: A Proposal of Introversion and Extraversion as Emerging Market Segments**

Target marketing leverages a number of human characteristics to best persuade a specific consumer group. These characteristics may include demographic, geographic, psychographic and lifestyle traits. The psychographic factors considered in target marketing most commonly include an understanding of consumer values and behavior, not personality type. Few studies have analyzed how personality type, more specifically introversion and extraversion, might shape the outcome of a campaign. Introversion and extraversion have proven to have a pivotal role in other areas of business, such as the workplace, sales forces, and customer engagement. Drawing on that connection, this research hypothesized that these personality types might also impact consumer responses to a marketing campaign, particularly the promotional element. To answer these queries, multiple theories of personality were analyzed, including Jung's Theory of Personality, and applied to previous research in relation to introversion and extraversion in target marketing. Results reflected that there is considerable merit behind the pursuit of tailored advertisement campaigns that target introverts and extraverts respectively. Such strategies might produce increased metrics and create a more predictable and direct campaign. Subsequent research is suggested to further corroborate this conclusion.

# Alexia Cole



**MAJOR:** CHEMISTRY (*ADVANCED CHEMISTRY*)

**MINOR:** PSYCHOLOGY

**HOMETOWN:** Monroe, NY

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Deans List - FA 21
- Departmental Honors Award (Chemistry and Physics) - SP 24
- Invited and attended NCCWSL Conference - SP 23

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I excelled in high school and was interested in the mentorship program and dorm.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Meeting my randomly assigned roommate turned 4-year best friend.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

Attending the University of Rhode Island to pursue my PhD in chemistry and chemistry education research.

## **THESIS: 'The Effect of Professors' Actions of Students' Depressive Symptoms**

Depression is on the rise among undergraduates. With the negative effects on academics that come along with depressive symptoms, it is important to try to mitigate these effects. The way a professor teaches a course can impact depressive symptoms in students as well as the way a course is perceived. This study focuses on how professors' actions affect students' depressive symptoms, specifically through the professor's use of humor, their relationship to their students, student concentration and motivation, and professor feedback. Overall, the characteristics present in professors with personal relationships with students were leniency and being understanding and supportive. Concentration and motivation were able to be improved by clear expectations and feedback on assignments.



# Connor Currie



**MAJOR:** PSYCHOLOGY

**MINOR:** CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**HOMETOWN:** Huntingtown, MD

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Captain of Monmouth University Swim Team
- Psi Chi Inductee
- Phi Alpha Sigma Inductee

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I wanted to challenge myself to go above and beyond what a normal college student would.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

The Honors School beach sunrise my freshman year.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I am planning on working in the federal government. More specifically, I plan to start my career at the Supreme Court, and move my way onto the FBI's behavioral analysis unit. I am planning on attending graduate school, but I am unsure as to where.

## **THESIS: Pets and Isolation: How Does Animal Interaction Affect Loneliness?**

This study evaluated how different interaction levels with a pet affects people's level of loneliness. Past research indicates that owning a pet or interacting with a pet can in fact lower a person's level of loneliness, thus lessening their risk of developing adverse mental health effects. The significance behind this study can be related to ways in which pets act as a form of social support for people who live alone or in times of social isolation, which can prevent mental health from deteriorating. Participants of the study viewed different pieces of media, one where the puppy was licking the screen and trying to interact with the participant, one where the puppy was playing by itself, or one with no video acting as the control. The study hypothesizes that the low interaction group would rate their loneliness as higher than the moderate and high interaction groups would rate their loneliness as higher than the high interaction group. Results were not found to be significant in this study, however there is importance in noting that social interaction with pets, like people, cannot be replicated in a digital manner.

# Joseph Dige



**MAJORS:** BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
(FINANCE) & HISTORY

**HOMETOWN:** Howell, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Best Student Paper in a General History Course Spring 2021
- Outstanding Student in Finance Award 2024

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School because it would be an academic challenge that would drive me to improve.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Honors School is completing my thesis presentation.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I'm staying at Monmouth to complete my MBA in finance.

## THESIS: Experiencing the Past: What Do Visitors to New Jersey Historical Sites Hope to Experience?

The preservation of cultural and historical heritage in the form of objects and sites of significance forms an integral aspect of our society as we strive to ensure that these precious heirlooms continue to be passed down through the generations. In the pursuit of such stewardship, it is important to understand how the public seeks to interact with historical sites and how those desires can be catered to and complimented through management. It is the goal of this study to determine the value that the public gains from the continued preservation and use of historical sites. Through an understanding of the value which visitors seek from such sites the policies which govern their management and preservation may be adjusted to better serve the needs of the public. Such an understanding was gained through the responses of historical site patrons to a questionnaire. From these responses, connecting with the history of the site and education are the primary motivating factors of visitors.

# Abigail Eck



**MAJOR:** MATHEMATICS (STATISTICS)

**HOMETOWN:** Bloomsbury, NJ

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I am attending Villanova University for my masters in Applied Statistics and Data Science.

## **THESIS: How to Handle Sparse Data Sets in Statistics**

In certain cases, many studies analyzed in statistics are limited to a small sample size. This then makes it difficult to meet the assumptions of certain statistical tests because the sample size is not big enough to represent the population as a whole. The question of what alternative tests are best to use is therefore of great interest. For example, cystine urolithiasis is an uncommon genetic disease in canines. The rarity of urolithiasis makes it difficult for veterinarians to gather large data sets for this type of disease. Using data provided by the Red Bank Veterinary Hospital, multiple nonparametric statistical methods including Fisher's Exact Test, permutations, and bootstrapping will be used to answer the question, "Does surgical intervention, medical management, or both play a role in the recurrence of urolithiasis?" Power calculations will be used to figure out which of these three nonparametric tests is the best to use on this data. The results of the test with the highest power will then be given to Red Bank Veterinary Hospital. This will help understand which method is best to use when data that is being analyzed has a small sample size.

# Charlotte Edwards



**MAJOR:** ENGLISH (*CREATIVE WRITING*)

**HOMETOWN:** Holmdel, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Member of Tau Sigma National Honor Society
- Member of Sigma Tau Delta, International English Honor Society
- Vice President (Fall 2023), Monmouth Review
- Writing Assistant, Writing Services (January 2022 - December 2023)
- Dean's List (Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023)
- Honors School Peer Mentor (Fall 2023)
- Contributor to the 66th issue of the Monmouth Review

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

Joining the Honors School provided me with the opportunity to be a part of a supportive, inclusive, and passionate community of students, faculty, and administrative staff with whom I developed close-knit and lasting relationships with. The program also allowed me to become more deeply involved with different departments within the University, and created a space for me to further explore, expand, and cultivate my academic and personal pursuits in a rewarding and fulfilling capacity.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Building my honors capstone in HO 296, HO 396, and HO 496, and being able to present my project during the Fall 2023 Annual Research Conference is one of the most memorable and meaningful highlights of my journey as a member of the Honors School. Creating the first section of my memoir, and having the experience of collaborating with my First Reader, Dr. Womack, and my second reader, Dr. Fury, led me to undergo an important transformation in both my creative skillset, as well as on a personal level. I am thankful for both Dr. Womack and Dr. Fury's, as well as Dean Ross's, Dean Mezey's, and Doris Meyer's continued support, guidance, and mentorship throughout each part of the thesis completion process, and to be inspired by my friends as they invested their time, talents, scholarship, and heart in completing their theses. I also loved participating in the Fall 2023 orientation for the incoming first-year honors student cohort as a Peer Mentor. Meeting my mentees, their families, and the new members of the Honors School and Monmouth community made the entire day exciting and fun, and I feel fortunate to have connected with such a kind-hearted, talented, and driven group of people (Madison Alfano, Emily Capper, Savanna Ledden, and Amanda Ljajka) whom I feel proud and lucky to have formed friendships with.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I am planning to apply for enrollment in the dual M.A./M.F.A. program at Monmouth University for the Fall 2024 term, specializing in Creative Writing with a Concentration in Creative Non-fiction. I also am applying to Editorial Assistant positions, and am excited to gain further insights and experience within the Editorial field and explore my interests and facilitate new connections within the literary community.

## **THESIS: Behind the Mask: Memoirs**

Separation and divorce are significant events that commonly affect and alter the lives of families—particularly, the lives of the children involved. Many parent roles tend to undergo some form of change during and following the process of divorce. These tense dynamics sometimes result in one parent becoming absent from their children's lives, which impacts the children's development in varied ways. Employing the running metaphor of Darth Vader's parental role in George Lucas's Star Wars collection, and following a six-chapter sequence that covers the time span of 2011 to 2023, the memoir created for this project utilized personal accounts that focus on divorce and my experience in navigating my relationship with my distant father to explore and comprehend how these factors impact children's development into adulthood on a social and emotional level. The story also serves as a resource in helping readers across different age demographics to seek catharsis for the challenges and traumas they endure in these kinships. Upon reviewing different forms of scholarship and other published memoirs, I contend the importance in raising awareness towards the reality of separation and divorce on storytelling platforms, as it helps individuals assimilate the occurrence of these events in society and find clarity and autonomy in their roles in and out of complex parent-child relationships.

# Sarah Godbout



**MAJOR:** HEALTH STUDIES (*HEALTH SCIENCE*)  
4+2 SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PROGRAM

**MINOR:** COMMUNICATION SCIENCES &  
DISORDERS

**HOMETOWN:** Middletown, CT

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society
- Dean's List
- Monmouth Ambassador
- Student Ambassador for Health and P.E. Department

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School because I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to challenge myself academically.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Honors School was my freshman year sunrise walk.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

Attending graduate school at Monmouth University for speech-language pathology.

## THESIS: The Efficacy of Aphasia Support Groups on Patients and Their Families

Those who are diagnosed with aphasia, commonly caused by a stroke, are said to experience a loss in their quality of life. One way in which this is significantly improved is through aphasia support groups. Aphasia support groups establish a community that normalizes said language disorders and provides those with advice that might crucially be of service to them, thus creating an environment that is successful at generating a positive emotional response for an individual with aphasia as well as their loved ones. Without aphasia support groups there is an increase in rates of depression and anxiety among these individuals, as well as self-isolation from society, revealing how critical aphasia support groups are to the rehabilitation process.

After conducting an initial systematic review focusing on aphasia treatments and the impact of support groups, an observational paper was drafted to verify the hypothesis that being in an aphasia support group elicits a positive emotional response in its members. The evidence contained in this paper includes observations made while viewing two types of aphasia support groups that took place on July 31, 2023, and August 16, 2023. The findings support the argument that support groups are very effective in eliciting position responses from members and their families.

# Olivia Hiers



**MAJOR:** CHEMISTRY (*BIOCHEMISTRY*)

**MINOR:** PSYCHOLOGY

**HOMETOWN:** Ocean Township, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Member of Phi Eta Sigma
- Member of Alpha Epsilon Delta
- Vice President of the Pre-Med club
- General member of Surgical club and Math club
- Inorganic Chemistry lab student researcher
- Lab assistant in General Chemistry I, General Chemistry II, and Biochemistry

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to be challenged academically and achieve things I could've never imagined myself completing. In addition, the Honors School offered a community of like-minded students who were highly motivated in their studies while simultaneously having faculty that were extremely supportive and helpful in guiding me to academic success.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory at the Honors School was the Honors Research Conference. Presenting my finished thesis and watching my peers present their own research was incredibly rewarding and insightful.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

After graduating, I plan on taking a gap year where I will focus on taking my MCAT and applying to medical school. In addition, I hope to acquire a job as a medical assistant during such.

## THESIS: Dynamic NMR Spectra and Line-Shape Fitting Analysis of Chiral Rhenium Polyhydride Complexes

This project looked to prepare a rhenium polyhydride complex that is supported by a chiral nitrile ligand. The purpose for the nitrile ligand on the complex was to reduce the symmetry of the complex so that all rhenium-bound phosphorus atoms and hydride ligands become unique by NMR spectroscopy. Variable temperature NMR spectroscopy of such a complex should allow for determination of both rearrangement mechanisms for the various rhenium-bound atoms and for activation energies of the various rearrangements. After several attempts, the target complex was successfully prepared by removing a hydride ligand from a precursor molecule, by the use of trityl tetrafluoroborate, and coordination of the chiral nitrile molecule to rhenium. Room temperature NMR spectroscopy demonstrated that the complex was successfully prepared. Variable temperature NMR spectroscopy successfully observed all four individual hydride ligands and all three phosphorus atoms, in the complex, at low temperatures. Line-shape fitting of the variable temperature NMR spectra helped to both elucidate mechanisms for the rearrangements of rhenium-bound atoms and determine the activation parameters for the rearrangements.

# Ana Lucia Huertas



**MAJORS:** BIOLOGY & HEALTH STUDIES  
(EXERCISE SCIENCE)

**MINORS:** CHEMISTRY & RACE & ETHNIC STUDIES

**HOMETOWN:** Perth Amboy, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Attending NCHC Dallas, TX 2022 and Chicago, IL 2023 with the Honors School
- Participating in orientation for 3 years with my last year serving as the OTL
- Peer mentor for the Honors School for 3 years.
- Served as president of Eta Sigma Gamma this year
- Awarded the academic achievement award in EOF
- Leadership award for the Health Studies school.

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I knew I wanted to do a thesis transferring into Monmouth.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

NCHC with friends!

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

Continuing to scribe at Jersey Shore Emergency Room. I am planning to apply to medical school this summer to become a medical doctor.

## THESIS: Assessing Racial Bias Among Undergraduate Pre-Clinical Students

Research has shown that medical racial bias may contribute to disparities in health care, including poor clinician-provider interaction, treatment adherence and patient outcomes. This online study of 52 pre-clinical undergraduate students (PA, OT, nursing, etc.) sought to evaluate if medical providers treat patients of color equally compared to their White counterparts. Pre-clinical undergraduate students assessed their racial bias towards the perception of pain using a standardized vignette and randomized photos of women of different races/ethnicities (White, Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Asian). Participants used a numerical pain scale to assess how much pain participants perceived of a potential patient compared with their own pain. In addition, participants answered an assurance question regarding the race/ethnicity they classified their patient, based on the photo they received. The data was grouped by pre-clinical track, gender, and the race/ethnicity participants self-identified. Out of 22 participants who identified as white and were assigned a hypothetical patient of color, eight (36.4%) thought their pain was greater than the patient's. Out of eight participants who identified as Black and were assigned a hypothetical non-Black patient, three (37.5%) rated their pain greater than the patient. Findings suggest that the perception of pain is influenced by race/ethnicity.

# Lenien Jamir



**MAJORS:** POLITICAL SCIENCE (*INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*) & SOCIOLOGY

**HOMETOWN:** Guwahati, Assam

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Captain of Varsity Women's Tennis team
- Vice President of International Student Club
- Summer Scholar Recipient 2023
- Dean's List Recipient all 8 semesters
- Sociology Academic Award for the highest GPA in Sociology as a senior
- Co-wrote a paper with Professor Datta and presented it at an international interdisciplinary conference in India where I was the only undergrad.

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I joined the Honors School to have an alternate source of community and support.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Going to the NCHC conference with friends and traveling to different cities with them!

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

Going to the London School of Economics to get my Master's in International Political Economy

## **THESIS: Measuring What Matters: A Proposal for a Multi-Dimensional Index of Progress and Success**

This paper explores the limitations of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an indicator of a country's success and proposes a new comprehensive index that considers social, environmental, and health factors. GDP's shortcomings are highlighted, and it is argued that non-economic factors, such as income inequality, environmental degradation, and social well-being, significantly affect a nation's prosperity. To combat this, a new index is created which draws on various well-being measures, including the World Happiness Index, Human Development Index, Social Progress Index, and Sustainable Development Goals rankings, to provide a more accurate and holistic view of a country's prosperity. Case studies of Costa Rica, New Zealand, and Israel are used to emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach to measuring progress and development. The new index can serve as a valuable tool for policymakers and stakeholders to assess a country's prosperity and identify areas for improvement in meaningful ways.



# Hailey Brooke Louro



**MAJOR:** HEALTH STUDIES (HEALTH SCIENCE)

**HOMETOWN:** Manalapan, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- NCHC Poster Presenter Fall 2023
- Study abroad spring break 2024 in Costa Rica through Monmouth University
- Graduated a year early with my four-year degree

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to challenge myself and set myself apart from others academically.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

One of my most passionate memories I made while in the Honors School at Monmouth University was the opportunity to travel to Chicago in Fall of 2023 to be able to present my research at the National Collegiate Honors Council and meet other honors students from around the nation and learn from them as they did from me.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will attend graduate school at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing to get my MSN Entry into Nursing degree. As of 2024, JHU SON Masters in Nursing program has been ranked number one in the country for their master's program.

## THESIS: Aerospace Medicine Introductory Course Proposal

Space exploration has been of growing interest over the previous years. With the addition of the U.S. Space Force and increased interest in space travel, aerospace related healthcare conditions will soon become a topic of interest for undergraduate students to allow for the liberty of traveling via space. An introductory course in Aerospace Medicine at Monmouth University will interest students from various degrees. From taking a course in Aerospace Medicine, students will enhance their course options and be provided with unique experiences to note in their postgraduate applications considering more schools are utilizing a holistic review approach. Humanity has been shown to have a growing interest in space travel and consequentially, the health conditions that come with it, must begin to be further studied. Students from all backgrounds, degrees, and goals can benefit from this course and can find a topic of interest to them and their future careers. Topics that may be incorporated in this course includes how radiation impacts the body, microgravity circulation changes, muscle atrophy and decreased bone densities in astronauts. My honors project proposed for the course, Introductory to Aerospace Medicine, to be offered at Monmouth University.

# Rachel Ludwick



**MAJOR:** CHEMISTRY (*BIOCHEMISTRY*)

**HOMETOWN:** York, PA

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Member of the Monmouth Women's Soccer Team
- College Sports Communicators Academic All-District Team (2023-24)
- CAA Academic Honor Roll High Honors with Distinction (2023-24)
- President of Athletes InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
- Club President of the Year Award (2022-23)
- General Chemistry Award (2020-21)
- Biochemistry Award (2022-23)

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I joined the Honors School to challenge myself academically and get the most out of my education at Monmouth.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

My favorite memory was completing my thesis and presenting at the conference.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I will be attending the Indiana University School of Optometry to pursue a Doctor of Optometry degree.

## **THESIS: Understanding Student Experiences in Flipped General Chemistry Courses Through the Lens of the Self-Determination Theory**

The flipped classroom is a new educational model, growing in popularity, that has been implemented in schools across various levels and disciplines. This teaching method facilitates student engagement by leveraging pre-class learning to enable deeper exploration of concepts during dynamic, collaborative peer-to-peer in-class activities guided by instructors. While research on its cognitive benefits remains varied, consistent findings highlight a positive student experience. However, understanding the underlying reasons for this positive experience remains elusive. This study employs self-determination theory to examine how the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs contributes to student experiences in flipped General Chemistry I and II courses at Monmouth University. Through semi-structured interviews and inductive coding, this research unveils the pivotal role of these psychological needs across pre-class, in-class, and post-class activities, shedding light on the mechanisms driving student satisfaction in this educational approach. These findings reveal the essential features of this model. Additionally, this study proposes new ways to evaluate the success of the flipped classroom.

# Nicole Mautone



**MAJOR:** ENGLISH

**MINORS:** PUBLIC RELATIONS & PROFESSIONAL WRITING

**HOMETOWN:** Bloomfield, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Served as the Secretary of Sigma Tau Delta (the English Honor Society)
- Received the First Year Composition Academic Essay Award as a freshman
- Earned the English Merit Award as a senior
- Earned the Library Research Undergraduate Award to which I submitted my Honors Thesis
- And of course, I feel one of my biggest achievements was completing my honors thesis, which I was really proud of!

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

Going into college, I really wanted to make sure I was trying my hardest and challenging myself, and I thought the Honors School was a great way to do that. I got to take honors courses and write my thesis, and it was challenging, but so worth it. I'll be honest, my freshman year I wasn't sure I would be able to write a thesis, but I am so happy I stuck with it and did.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

I genuinely would have to say working on and presenting my thesis. It was just such an accomplishment for me I really can't talk more positively about it. I also got to meet some really nice people, both students and faculty.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I graduated in January 2024, and I am currently a grad student at Monmouth, pursuing an M.A. in English Literature.

## THESIS: Expectations and Subversions: The Semiotics of Psychological Horror in Doki Doki Literature Club

A visual novel is an emergent genre that is a hybrid between a traditional novel and a videogame. Unlike them, a visual novel uses three sign systems--Auditory, Written Language and Typography, and Visual--to achieve effects that no one sign system can achieve. A visual novel by Team Salvato, Doki Doki Literature Club! (DDLC), appears to begin as an anime-style dating simulation, and continues that way for the first four hours, building expectations that create a false sense of security. However, something more sinister appears to be at work from act one, chapter six to the beginning of act two, chapter one, in the middle of which a major disturbance occurs, unsettling the user and creating psychological horror. The familiar and comfortable sign systems now induce stress, fear, and uneasiness. This thesis semiotically analyzes each of the three sign systems to understand how each works independently, as well as examines how these three systems operate collaboratively to create psychological horror. For example, for four hours, the user experiences static visual imagery and on-key music at a normal speed with dialogue in textboxes, but when the disturbance occurs, visual images become dynamic, music slows and goes off key, and written language is absent.

# Christopher Meehan



**MAJOR:** MARINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY AND POLICY

**MINOR:** GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

**HOMETOWN:** Wall Township, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- 2021, 2022 Summer Research Program Member
- 2023 Summer Scholars Member
- 2024 Hawk Talk

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I wanted to challenge myself academically while at Monmouth University.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Getting to collect real data out in the field as a part of my honors thesis.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I will continue conducting research at Monmouth University as part of the Summer Research Program for the next couple of months.

## **THESIS: Habitat Selection Preferences of Eastern Box Turtles (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) at a Monmouth County Park**

Urbanization has resulted in the spread of suburban landscapes across the northeastern United States, which has dramatically transformed natural landscapes and has had countless impacts on the environment, and the organisms that are found in these areas. Among the groups affected by urbanization, terrestrial turtles have arguably had the most challenges, facing habitat loss and fragmentation, and road mortality, testing their ability to survive in novel suburbanized landscapes.

To better understand how turtles persist and make use of habitats that have been heavily modified by humans, we undertook a study of the habitat selection of Eastern box turtles (*Terrapene carolina carolina*), a terrestrial turtle species native to the eastern United States, at a Monmouth County conservation area. Habitat selection is the ecological process in which organisms preferentially choose specific habitats from the available options in their environment. We located turtles using radiotelemetry and then used a one-meter quadrat to determine habitat features, including the dominant cover type, substrate type and canopy density in the area that the turtle occupied. A similar set of data was collected at a random location, associated with each turtle location, to determine if the turtles were preferential in their habitat selection.

# Alexander Mykulyn



**MAJOR:** POLITICAL SCIENCE (*INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*)

**MINOR:** GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

**HOMETOWN:** Plains, PA

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Presented at seven research conferences
- Wrote for The Outlook
- Competed at Debate Nationals
- Submitted work to an undergraduate research journals

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I wanted to be challenged academically while benefiting from more personal mentorship and guidance.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Traveling. I loved those trips.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I plan to work. Ideally with a think tank in NYC or DC in the field of food policy.

## **THESIS: iCycle: Food Waste Valorization**

Food waste accounts for twenty-four percent of the waste that is sent to landfills in the United States each year. When food waste breaks down in landfills, it produces methane contributing to landfills being the third largest emitters of methane in the United States. The key to keeping food waste out of landfills is connecting food waste producers with valorization facilities. Microhaulers, private small-scale compost pick-up services, have closed some of this gap. Largely, they connect households with composters for a fee.

After compiling an in-depth literature review of food waste valorization methods, this capstone turned into a creative capstone focusing on providing software infrastructure to existing compost microhaulers. The outcome was a business proposal for a microhauler software provider. Unique capabilities within the proposal are a micro hauler locator, a mobile app, and connections to unique food waste producers like Lomi and commercial food waste dehydrators. By creating a national network of compost microhaulers, the public can divert more food waste away from landfills while simultaneously creating a value-added product, compost.

# Taïphane Orange



**MAJOR:** POLITICAL SCIENCE (*INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*)

**MINOR:** SPANISH

**HOMETOWN:** Neptune, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Debate Hawk
- Model UN, SAGE
- the Outdoors club
- Participated at the Hawk Talk and Hawk Tank.

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I wanted to be challenged in my classes and join a community of other students who are also academically motivated.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

The walk to the beach.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I will be working for MBI, a lobbyist firm in Trenton. I am also a Ripple Fellow, where I will learn more about social entrepreneurship. After a year I hope to go to graduate school and be able to help others through my work.

## **THESIS: Too Young to Say I Do**

Child marriage is defined as marriage before age 18, the legal age of marriage in many countries. According to the United Nations, child marriage violates human rights. Denies children the full opportunity and their right to education, impacts their long-term health, makes them vulnerable to intimate partner and domestic violence, and robs them of their childhood experiences that lead to becoming healthy adults. The UN Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by under 200 member states, seeks to set the standards and norms about child marriage and combat violence against women. This paper focuses on the laws regarding child marriage and offers a comparative assessment of child marriage in the United States, Niger, and Brazil. These three countries vary in cultural and historical experiences, yet they all have high incidences of child marriage. The study will also examine the impact of child marriage at the individual and community levels from an economic, psychological, health, and socio-cultural perspective. Finally, it will reflect on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected child marriage in these countries.

# Ariana Leigh Reyes-Connelly



**MAJOR:** PSYCHOLOGY

**HOMETOWN:** Freehold, NJ

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- President of Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. 2022-2023
- President of the United Greek Council 2022-2023
- Hawk Advisor's Honor Award 2023
- Psi Chi Member

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I joined the Honors School because I wanted the ability to partake in a passion project that I truly loved and found important.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Presenting my thesis to my peers and family. I was so excited to be able to share!

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I'm hoping to go to medical school after a gap year.

## **THESIS:** The Pipeline Issue of Underrepresented Students in Institutes of Higher Education

This paper will examine why many minority students are leaving their science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors after matriculation to institutions of higher learning. Many of these student's attribute experiences of racism, microaggressions and a lack of support to their decisions to move out of these areas of study. It has been shown through prior experimentation and research that there are certain programs that help minority students feel comfortable in their program of study. It is important to examine these patterns in order to support minority ethnic group students, additionally it is important to support our STEM workforce to maintain an influx of new ideas and innovations. To find these patterns, the PsyclINFO database was used. The search revolved around the mental health and day-to-day experience of minority students and students of color and was limited to peer reviewed and full text only articles. The review of these studies demonstrated institutional shortcomings in the realm of faculty support, peer support, diversity, equity and inclusion training and mental health services that they provide to their students.

# Emily Schopfer



**MAJOR:** ART (PHOTOGRAPHY)

**MINORS:** JOURNALISM & GRAPHIC DESIGN

**HOMETOWN:** Middletown, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Journalist-At-Large Award
- Outstanding Student in Photography Award

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

Scholarship Opportunities.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

Concluding my Honors Thesis.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will be working as a Photojournalist in the field.

## THESIS: Capturing Celebrities - Violations of Privacy and Damage to Reputations of Public Figures in the Entertainment Industry

My Capstone asks why inhumane treatment of entertainers by the press occurs. My guiding question was 'Is the solution to this issue a legal one, an ethical one, both, or something else altogether?' This question grew to be multifaceted. I began asking if all journalism deserves equal freedoms and could this undermine the First Amendment, is this a few bad journalists, a corrupted field, or are journalists just fulfilling public desires? The importance of this project is that it addresses the questions - is all journalism created equal, do we value freedom of press more than freedom to live privately without tarnished reputations, and why exactly do we few public figures as less human? My methodology consisted of finding a variety of sources and then using selected ones as examples in my Capstone artworks. I conclude that there are no obvious solutions, but acknowledging the existence of this problem, however, can be the first step towards remedying it. In simply asking, I found that the legal burden of proof and societal views of celebrities both are large factors in this issue, and if the solution is to start granting different protections to different forms of journalism, it may cause more issues than it solves.



# Mary Schuld



**MAJORS:** ENGLISH & ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

**MINOR:** SPANISH

**HOMETOWN:** Farmingdale, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Excellence in Elementary Education from the School of Education
- SPUR (Sloan Prize for Undergraduate Research) in Education and Pedagogy - 1st Place at NCHC Conference (Dallas, Texas)
- Attended many NCHC and NRHC conferences and presented research

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School because it creates an environment of community that stretches across disciplines. It is supportive and provides many opportunities for friendships, networking, and academic achievement.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Honors School is when I was blessed with the opportunity to travel with the Honors School for the National Collegiate Honors Conference to Orlando, Florida, and Dallas, Texas. I was able to share my research, learn about the local community, explore the culture, and make lasting memories with friends. It is an experience unlike any other and it is one of the highlights of my Monmouth experience.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will be attending graduate school for a Ms.Ed. in Literacy. I will be a full time student and substitute teaching. After one year, I plan to get an elementary school teacher job.

## THESIS: Social Emotional Learning Through Children's Literature

In order to develop emotionally intelligent and beneficial members of society in an ever-changing world, elementary schools need to provide students with the necessary skills to respond to various social and emotional situations. With the creation of a website, this project serves to advocate for the need for social emotional learning (SEL) in classrooms, and aid in the successful implementation. Through research-based conclusions, this capstone project creates a critical framework and standards for children's literature that teaches SEL in kindergarten through fifth grade, which is demonstrated in a rubric. The project develops an inventory of children's literature to which teachers can refer when lesson planning to incorporate SEL. The collection of books highlights how to cope with anxiety, stress, depression, and low self-esteem, adjusting the maturity and content levels based on the grade level. The identified SEL competencies are further connected to the New Jersey State Learning Standards. By incorporating mental health education in the classroom, children can identify their feelings, effectively communicate them, and decrease the stigma surrounding mental illnesses. By providing teachers with strategically focused children's books that teachers can actively use in the classroom, this project helps break down the stigmatization surrounding mental health in order to create more accepting communities.

# Adriana Simancas



**MAJOR:** MARINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY AND POLICY

**MINOR:** CHEMISTRY

**HOMETOWN:** Manalapan, NJ

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- School of Science Academic Achievement Award: Marine and Environmental Biology and Policy 2024
- School of Science Research Achievement Award 2024
- Honorable Mention for the Honors Council Award for Best Honors Thesis 2024
- Best Undergraduate Poster Presentation at Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (NEPARC) Conference 2023

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I joined the Honors School as a way to be more academically challenged and to have the opportunity to work closely on research on a topic I was passionate about. Joining the Honors School allowed me to build connections with my faculty mentor and fellow lab mates and work together on a project that has prepared me for my future career in environmental and conservation biology.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Presenting at the Honors School Symposium in December 2023 was one of the fondest memories I have of the Honors School. It was a day where I could present the project I had been working very hard on for the past few semesters to my peers. The symposium was a great way to prepare for presentations I will do in my career.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

My plans consist of obtaining a position as a wildlife biologist either for the state government (NJ Department of Environmental Protection) or at a wildlife conservation organization. After gaining more experience with multiple study species, I would like to attend graduate school closely researching and monitoring population dynamics and/or behavioral ecology.

## **THESIS: Estimating Population Density of Eastern Box Turtles (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) in Suburban Monmouth County, New Jersey**

Due to the global decline in turtle populations globally, there is an increased need for rapidly determining the status and change in populations to inform conservation and management plans. The Eastern box turtle (EBT) is a highly vulnerable species that inhabits a variety of forested areas in the Eastern United States, including New Jersey, but is at risk due to anthropogenic pressures, such as road mortality, habitat loss and poaching, especially in suburban environments. EBT is particularly cryptic (hard to see) and seasonally elusive (behaviorally hard to find), making detection challenging. Traditionally, capture mark-recapture (CMR) has been used to estimate population rates and states. In this study, I used human- and canine-based sampling for four plots in a NJ suburban park to understand EBT populations. A total of 71 individuals were captured 99 times over 10 surveys. The Schnabel Method was used to estimate population density, and density was applied to the entirety of the site, as well as the two main habitat types studied (old field and forested). The grand population density estimate across the four plots is  $83.06 \pm 66.18$  turtles per hectare, yielding an estimated population size of 5680.63 EBT across the entire study site.

# Rachel D. Soto



**MAJOR:** HEALTH STUDIES (*HEALTH SCIENCE*)

**MINOR:** CHEMISTRY

**HOMETOWN:** North Plainfield, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &  
ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Treasurer and Co-President of Seasharps A Capella

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I wanted a place to be surrounded by academically driven individuals who would offer a close-knit support system.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

Acting as a peer mentor in the Freshmen Orientation was a great time where I got to connect with and ease the worries of incoming freshmen.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I am attending optometry school at Pennsylvania College of Optometry.

## THESIS: Student Experiences with Pre-Class Videos in the Flipped General Chemistry Classroom

The flipped classroom approach is becoming increasingly popular in higher education STEM classrooms. As time progresses, new literature on the course structure emerges. The flipped classroom can be broken up into three main components: pre-class activities, in-class activities, and post-class activities. Pre-class videos are a shared resource utilized in the pre-class component of the course structure. Cognitive load theory supports using pre-class videos to reduce cognitive load on students. This study investigated student experiences and cognitive load in pre-class videos through interviews of 10 participants in flipped general chemistry 1 and 2 classrooms. The interview coding revealed several notable themes related to extraneous load. Future research can work to develop methods to increase the benefits of the flipped classroom while decreasing the extraneous load and determine impact of the flipped classroom through quantifiable variables.

# Juliette Tordjman



**MAJOR:** BIOLOGY (MOLECULAR CELL PHYSIOLOGY)

**MINOR:** ENGLISH

**HOMETOWN:** Oakhurst, NJ

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Sigma Tau Delta
- Phi Eta Sigma

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I wanted to join the Honors School because it seemed like a great opportunity to challenge myself and immerse myself in a highly educated environment where I can thrive.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

I loved all the special events the Honors School would organize.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I am currently going to take a year off and work as a medical assistant at a dermatologist office. During this time, I will work on application for accelerated nursing programs and hopefully work in the anesthesiology field when I'm settled.

## THESIS: Analyzing the Effect of Bibliotherapy as an Alternative Form of Easily Accessible and Affordable Therapy

When used correctly, bibliotherapy can be an effective tool in assisting those struggling with their mental health. Bibliotherapy refers to the usage of literature and other related mediums (such as journaling and creative writing) as a form of therapy that provides insight and coping skills for those who suffer from mental illnesses. Not only is bibliotherapy more accessible than other forms of therapy but it is also more inexpensive and can be just as effective. Bibliotherapy can help those struggling with depression, anxiety disorders, trauma, and eating disorders. It is important to note that over 70% of people globally who struggle with some form of mental illness don't receive the treatment they need. This library thesis reviewed various studies and reviews done in relation to bibliotherapy and how beneficial and effective it can be concerning mental well-being and, in some cases, physical well-being. In addition, this library thesis discussed the benefits of implementing and incorporating bibliotherapeutic practices in settings like schools, old age homes, women's centers, and so on. By increasing the implementation and accessibility of bibliotherapy, whether in libraries, schools, or institutions, more individuals will have access to a form of therapy that can help them on their road to recovery.

# Brooke Tortorelli



**MAJORS:** MATHEMATICS (STATISTICS) & MUSIC (MUSICAL THEATRE)

**HOMETOWN:** Howell, NJ

## NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- MU Players Treasurer
- Alpha Psi Omega Theatre Honor Society Treasurer
- Stage Managed, Assistant Directed, and acted as Props Master in Monmouth University Music and Theatre Arts department shows
- Played Vivian Bearing in the university production, *Wit* & organized a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society that raised over \$1300
- Wrote, directed, produced, and performed in my play *And the Brooke Will Flow*, as a component of my Honors curriculum (this piece will be performed as a part of the New York Theater Festival this summer!)
- Participated in two NRHC research conferences
- Participated in two School of Science summer research programs
- Co-wrote an article in pre-publication in *Involve*, a Journal of Mathematics, entitled Brahmagupta Quadrilaterals are Lattice Quadrilaterals

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School because it was a way to personalize my education and take part in opportunities that are not necessarily required as part of major curriculums. I wanted to be a part of a community of people who are not afraid to be creative and passionate.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will be getting a Master's in Teaching Secondary Mathematics at Monmouth. Additionally, I will continue to pursue creative endeavors in the music and theatre fields.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

The Honors Research Conference was such an incredible experience. It was so amazing to get a glimpse into other students' passion projects.

## THESIS: Being Your Authentic Self: How Studying the Performing Arts in College Fosters Student Creativity through Artistic Opportunities

This meta data analysis highlighted the effects of studying performance at the undergraduate level. Specifically, it focused on the influence of performance education in the development of a well-rounded artist. This question - How does studying the performing arts in college encourage students to initiate their own performances and convey their authentic selves through and within their art? - provided direction for this examination. The literature highlighted themes such as improvement in performance capabilities, the creation of artistic opportunities, and authenticity in performances. A thorough education in the arts emphasizes all that it takes to be successful, which can allow students to obtain a more holistic approach to performing. Through the acquisition of knowledge, the developing performer gains confidence. Gaining control over one's artistry can reduce performance anxiety and result in more nuanced performances, dynamically and emotionally. This research culminated in a performance that I wrote, directed, produced, and performed, entitled *And the Brooke Will Flow*. This monologue-driven theatrical experience described my journey in college from ages eighteen to twenty-two and featured four actors who are Music and Theatre Arts students. This performance was a creative endeavor that featured authentic performances not only from myself, but also from the other actors.

# Hana Vozzo



**MAJOR:** ENGLISH

**MINOR:** PSYCHOLOGY

**HOMETOWN:** North Haledon, NJ

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- HawkTalk Spring 2023
- Presented at the Seton Hall Undergraduate Literature Conference Spring 2024
- Won the 2023-2024 English Award for Academic Writing
- Completed my Departmental English Honors Thesis Spring 2024

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

I wanted to challenge myself and be a part of a community of like-minded individuals looking to make the most out of their academic experience.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Presenting my honors thesis with my friends last semester.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

I plan to return to Monmouth in the fall to pursue an MA in English with a Literature concentration.

## **THESIS: Analyzing the Intersectional Identities of Racially Gray Characters in A Black and White World: A Literature Review Exploring Scholarship on Nella Larsen's Passing and Quicksand**

My thesis examines the themes of identity and belonging in Nella Larsen's novels *Passing* and *Quicksand* to answer the research question, "What can readers understand about the female protagonists when reading *Quicksand* and *Passing* through the lens of intersectionality?" To educate myself on the existing conversation regarding how the themes operate in the novels, I reviewed a substantial body of scholarship and found that many scholars, despite not directly naming the theory, touch on fundamental elements of intersectionality, discussing the intersections between race, class, gender, and sexuality to understand how the characters perform identity roles to ease internal dissonance. Reading this scholarship has led me to conclude that viewing these characters through a lens of intersectionality is integral to understanding the characters' experiences of oppression and discrimination. Thus, for future research, reading the novels through a lens of intersectionality informed by the principles of double consciousness and identity performance, I could argue that, although Irene, Clare, and Helga experience the world via different racial identities, they inhabit a racially gray space in a black and white world.

# Kendall Ward



**MAJOR:** POLITICAL SCIENCE

**MINOR:** GENERAL MANAGEMENT

**HOMETOWN:** Port Jefferson, NY

## **NOTABLE ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Maintaining above a 3.5 cumulative GPA across all four years of college
- Held a position on the Leadership Team of Delta Phi Epsilon
- Crafted a highly researched metathesis to present to the Honors School
- Enriched my knowledge of business by crafting a 40-page, detailed business plan

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

To further my academic endeavors and challenge myself through advanced coursework; to be a part of a smaller community within Monmouth University.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Working closely with my professors to tailor specific and engaging work in my honors by contract courses.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

To combine my political science and business background in a career in campaign management or market research.

## **THESIS: How Does the Family Influence the Political Socialization of Youth?**

This thesis explores the intricate intersection of political socialization and the effect of familial influence. By unpacking the socialization process, showcasing the existence of familial socialization in other areas, and comparing this evidence to the topic at hand, this thesis allows for a rich synthesis of existing material to reach potential conclusions about how individuals form their political preferences. In looking at parental influence on academic performance and political engagement, a connection is established between parental influence and the development of young minds. By exploring the phenomenon of low voting numbers in modern-day Western democracies through existing literature, the intersection of familial influence and early voter habits is assessed while also factoring in socioeconomic and demographic considerations. Through this synthesis of information, this thesis contributes to the theoretical discussion of what forms our political identity and how parental behavior impacts the political interest of their offspring.

# Madeline Woolley



**MAJOR:** HEALTH STUDIES (*HEALTH SCIENCE*)

**MINOR:** COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS

**HOMETOWN:** Oswego, IL

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &**

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Secretary of the Club Sailing Team
- Member of Phi Eta Sigma
- Member of Omicron Delta Kappa
- Attended two honors research conferences
- Lead student ambassador
- Won people's choice at the 3-minute thesis competition

## WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to find students of the same mindset as me. Academics have always been an important part of my life, and something I strive to do my best in. After hearing about the opportunities I could be offered by joining the Honors School, I was hooked. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences here at Monmouth, and I've met so many great people.

## FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Honors School has been attending research conference trips. Each trip led me to meet new people and experience new things. I learned how to create a research poster, present to others, and conduct valuable research, all while being surrounded by intelligent students. These trips gave me lasting friendships and connections that I am forever grateful for.

## WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will be attending graduate school at Monmouth University for Speech Language Pathology.

## THESIS: The Affects of Green Spaces in Urban Areas

The purpose of this thesis is to better understand the relationship between green spaces and urban areas. Due to the high population density of urban areas, there is often a lack of space for outdoor spaces. For some, this escape to nature can help ease anxiety, promote healthy living, and can be used as a break from reality. The following thesis includes an evaluation on the impact green spaces provide for those who live in urban areas. A variety of themes will be evaluated and discussed to cover the impact of green spaces. The analysis of literature represented in this thesis will hopefully identify the benefits of green spaces in areas with a high population density. Additionally, using the literature, plans to create longevity for green spaces in urban areas will be discussed.



# Margaret Young



**MAJOR:** HEALTH STUDIES (*HEALTH SCIENCE*)

**MINOR:** CHEMISTRY

**HOMETOWN:** Doylestown, PA

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES &  
ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Monmouth University Swim Team Captain

## **WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?**

To challenge myself and be a part of a community of hard-working and driven individuals.

## **FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:**

Presenting my Thesis.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?**

Medical School (undecided)

## **THESIS: Addressing the Causes of the United States' Rising Maternal Mortality Rate**

Even as one of the most technologically advanced countries in healthcare, the United States is facing a maternal health crisis. The number of women dying from pregnancy-related complications continues to rise annually (Black Mamas Matter Alliance, 2018). Roughly two out of three of these deaths are preventable, and research demonstrates that racial disparities among the United States population account for a large portion of the high and increasing maternal mortality rate (Simpson, 2021).

Data on the maternal mortality rate was examined to distinguish and analyze variables that contribute to the rising rate, and its disproportionate effect on black women. This research documents the robust changes healthcare systems must enact to lessen racial disparities, saving the lives of women and children. Additionally the social determinants of health, low health literacy, and a lack of access to education were found to be important contributors to the high rates. Nonetheless, self education can be a powerful and effective tool that may decrease the likelihood of an adverse pregnancy. The gathered data is presented in a patient-centered pamphlet to display information and resources that women can apply to understand the issue, analyze their situations, and utilize the information to advocate for themselves and overall, better their healthcare experience.

The Dean would like to give a special thank you to the Honors Council for their dedication and service to the Honors School.



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Cheryl Leiningen

Nikita Burrows

Jaime Myers

Pedram Daneshgar

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