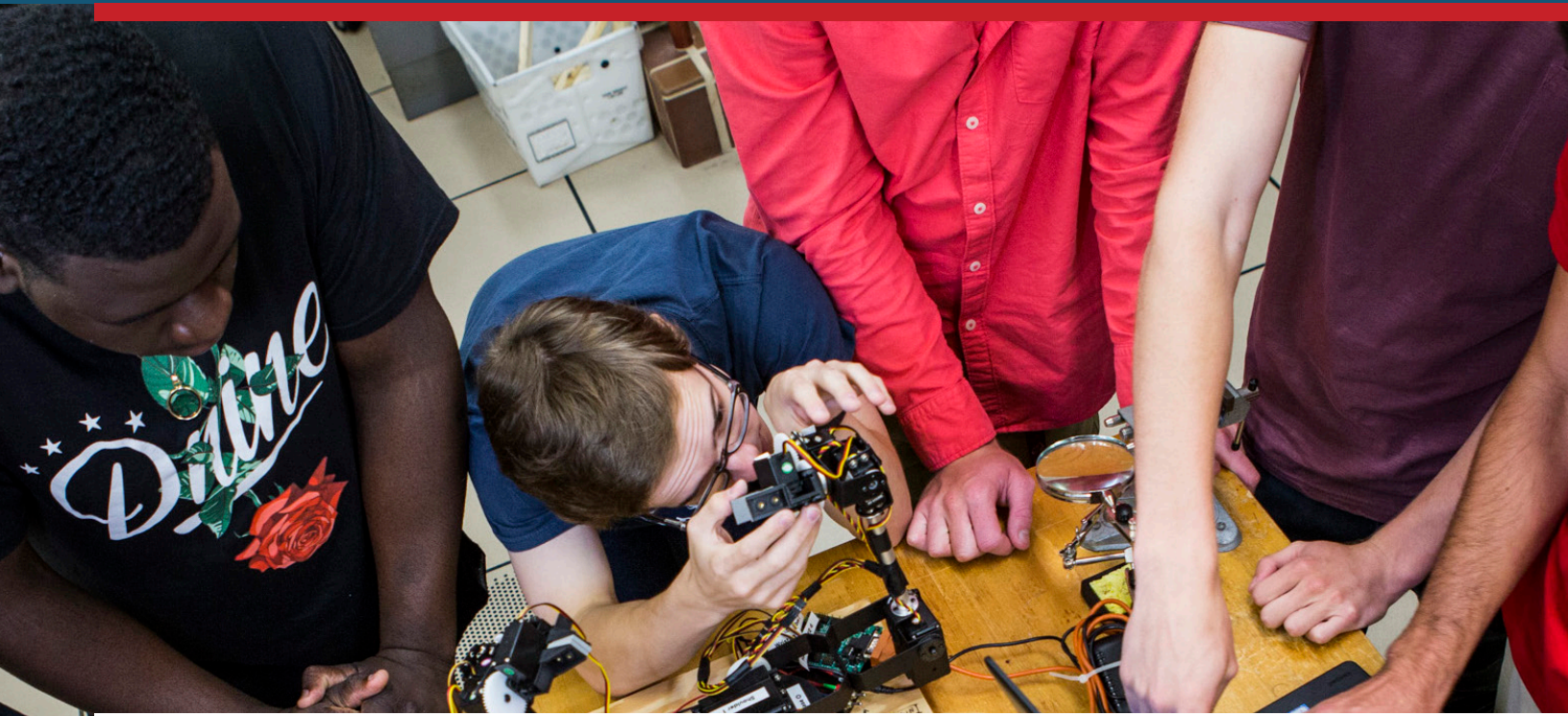


# CAPITOL

## CHRONICLE



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While many college graduates struggle to find meaningful work with their degrees, Capitol Tech provides a launch pad to a better life.

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since our inception in 1927, Capitol has offered programs in fields of current and emerging industry demand. From our roots in electrical engineering and electronics engineering technology to our expanding portfolio including construction safety, critical infrastructure and unmanned and autonomous systems (to name a few) we continue to strive to provide relevant learning experiences that lead to success in the evolving global community.

Our faculty and staff are dedicated to providing our students with practical learning outcomes. You see this at our career conferences, which are offered twice a year. Our career events not only provide opportunities to meet with local recruiters but also provide workshops and presentations that prepare students for the job world. You see this in our labs, where students work together and collaborate on projects. We see this in the connections to industry our students make. Students work with adjunct faculty who are active in their industry. And many students obtain an internship position while pursuing their degrees.

In this issue of the Capitol Chronicle, we highlight some of our students, faculty and alumni and we hear what our students, their parents and their employers say about a Capitol education.



**Bradford L. Sims, PhD**



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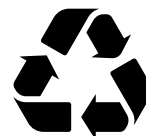
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*Capitol Chronicle* is published by

the Office of Marketing and

Communications for alumni and friends.

It is printed on paper with 30% post  
consumer waste recycled content.



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# PRACTICAL PROGRAMS, OUTSTANDING OUTCOMES

## WHAT OUR STUDENTS SAY:

### JOSHUA JOSEPH

Bachelor's dual major in  
Computer Science and Cybersecurity

"I've had opportunities at Capitol Tech that I wouldn't have had otherwise. The hands-on experience I've gained and connections with friends and faculty I've forged will benefit me for years to come."

### KIERRA JILES

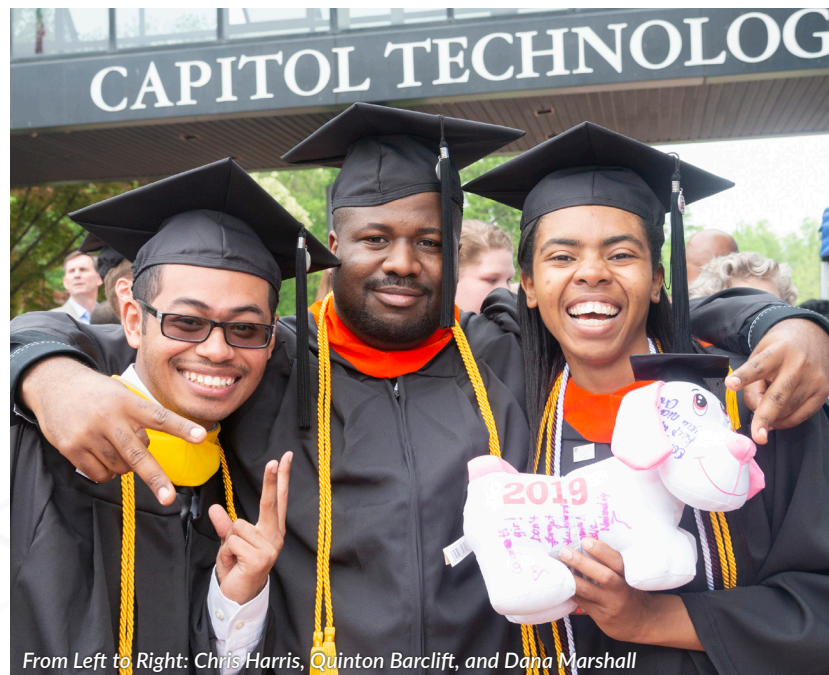
Bachelor's in Cyber and Information Security  
Class of 17'

"Capitol followed through on every promise they made. I'm still getting job opportunities constantly, even when I'm not looking. Having that kind of job security has been amazing."

### JOSEPH LORANGER

Master's in Information Assurance  
Class of 09'

"I had no idea when I got a masters in IA from Capitol how much my life would change. The incredible success I have had in the workforce is largely due to the degree and in what I learned while pursuing it. Thank you Capitol!"



From Left to Right: Chris Harris, Quinton Barclift, and Dana Marshall

## WHAT THEIR PARENTS SAY:

"We chose Capitol for its size. We knew our son would be able to focus, gain hands-on experience with partners like NASA and the NSA and get help whenever he needed it."

- Blanche Jackson

"Everything at Capitol Tech is set up to propel students towards success. They join clubs where they work on projects, the projects lead towards internships, and internships help them get jobs."

- Susan Hansen

# WHAT OUR EMPLOYERS SAY:

## The Hammers Company

"Capitol Tech students graduate with actual experience in operating orbiting spacecraft. From day one, they are capable to operate, perform anomaly analysis and contribute to mission operations."

- Stephan R. Hammers, *President*

---

## Motorola Solutions, US Federal Government Markets

"I recruit from Capitol Tech for many reasons- Capitol Tech students typically possess better teaming and collaboration skills. Their technical skills also are better as each class has a "hands-on" component to them. Seems that the continual exposure to "hands-on" allows the Capitol Tech students a safe environment to take risks and experience failures. So Capitol student excel at teamwork, collaboration and risk-taking. Many graduates from other institutions with fewer hands-on opportunities seem to be more risk-averse."

-Tom Beall, *Sr. Manager Presale Engineering*

---

## General Dynamics Mission Systems

"We have found that Capitol Tech students hit the ground running. They have done assignments centered around the NASA life-cycle so they already know what we often have to teach first year employees. We always look for individuals who work well in a team environment and we have found them in Capitol Tech graduates."

- Juan Cifuentes, *DST Integration Lead  
JPSS Deployed Systems Team*

---

## T-REX

"I found my information security intern at Capitol Tech's Spring Job Fair. We had him take our technical hiring test – he passed with flying colors, so I hired him immediately."

- Steve Luczynski, *Chief Information Security Officer*

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## Compass DX Consulting Group

"Capitol Tech students are engaged, self-starters who are on fire for cybersecurity. I had the pleasure of mentoring several students during the Cybersecurity Professional Fast Track Summer Program."

- Michael Noel, *Chief Technology Officer*



**MOTOROLA**  
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# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

## LISA SEDARES



Lisa Sedares

"It hit me – 'oh, I work for NASA'. It was something that I never thought I would get to do", says Capitol Tech Alum Lisa Sedares. She began her first internship at NASA when she was a Capitol Tech student and has been working with the organization in various capacities ever since.

She represents NASA's interests in her current role as a Project Engineer at The Aerospace Corporation. She adds, "technically I've been working for NASA since 2011. I got hired as a year-round intern in the spring of 2011. The following spring, I got another part-time internship on a different spacecraft. From there, I went to Landsat and then to my first job at NOAA."

Growing up, Lisa didn't anticipate going into STEM. In fact, she recalls always feeling like she wasn't good at math. This all changed when her high school physics teacher encouraged her to stay for Robotics Team meetings. Despite her protests, proclaiming that she didn't know anything about robotics and felt that she wasn't smart enough, he convinced her to stay.

This was the first of many defining moments in Lisa's path to NASA. She fell in love with robotics, eventually taking over the Robotics Team. These robots are what introduced her to Capitol Tech. When she and her team travelled to Atlanta for the Robotics Championships, she met a Capitol Tech recruiter who convinced her to apply. She says, "he took an interest in me, and the rest is history."

Lisa continued to pick what she loves in her next step. She had become fascinated by space, choosing Capitol Tech so she could major in Astronautical Engineering. Capitol Tech is one of the few schools to offer this program. She ended up double majoring in Astronautical Engineering and Electrical Engineering, graduating in 2013.

"I had this moment in college," she says, "where I came to the realization that maybe I didn't get calculus in high school, but I definitely did at Capitol Tech." Lisa says that Capitol Tech is where she gained confidence in her abilities as a scientist. Faculty and mentors helped her in her journey. "I had so many mentors encouraging me," she says, "it's where I started to believe in myself."

Lisa keeps in touch with her

professors and will go to them for career advice still. She mentions that she recently spoke to one of her Astronautical Engineering professors for guidance about a major career choice. She says that she went to him to ask "what do you think as a person in this industry?"

Looking back on her college experience, Lisa says that it's these relationships that she built with her Capitol Tech professors that she values most. "We had real relationships with faculty, who are up-to-the-minute working professionals. They get it," she says. She also keeps in touch with her classmates. "You go to school with people who have the

**"Professors taught me to believe in myself"**

same ambitions as you,” she says. One of her friends from Capitol Tech even works at the same facility that she does.

“Capitol was great for me, because I needed to immerse myself in STEM culture,” she says, “my Astronautical Engineering degree gave me a narrow view into aerospace, but a broad view into the different things a spacecraft can do.” Her Capitol Tech education remains highly relevant to her work today. She remembers that she was doing requirements in 400 level AE classes at Capitol Tech, which she uses daily in her current role at The Aerospace Corporation.

sure that everything goes smoothly and can make tough decisions rapidly. They need to monitor the health and safety of a satellite and collision avoidance. “Sometimes satellites get too close to each other, and you need to figure out which one is getting out of the way,” she explains, “post launch is full of things that need to happen in real time.”

Lisa remembers Professor Angela Walters, Capitol Tech’s Department Chair of Astronautical Engineering,

“Employers want you to have internships and all of this hands-on experience,” she says, “the job market is super competitive.” While this experience feels almost impossible for many 20-year olds, Lisa felt like Capitol Tech made this doable by facilitating countless projects and internship opportunities that make for hire-able graduates. “Capitol Tech definitely set me on my path,” she exclaims.

In addition to the many roles Lisa has taken on with NASA, she enjoys serving as Head Referee for the FIRST Robotics Competition.

**"The STEM focus was great for me"**



Lisa Sedares

“Capitol Tech gives you an idea of what your job could be at these different phases of spacecraft mission – pre-launch, post launch, just launch, rockets. Capitol Tech gives you a flavor of what your career path might end up being like,” she says.

“Spacecrafts are definitely getting more and more complex, and ground systems are getting more and more complex because of that. It’s a rapidly changing field,” says Lisa. She adds that while satellites are very robust, you need people on the ground to make

as being especially pivotal to her career. “She guided me towards my first internship, which was a direct handshake with NASA.”

“Capitol makes you a better employee candidate when you graduate, because you already have all of this experience,” she says. Lisa was involved with the Space Operations Institute at Capitol Tech, which she accredits with giving her the first hands-on experience that made it possible to get her first job. “We were flying, helping, and monitoring TRMM,” she says.

# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: MARCEL MABSON

Marcel Mabson is a familiar name at Capitol Technology University. Those who graduated in 2010, probably remember him as a classmate; he earned his Bachelor of Science (BS) in Astronautical Engineering that year. Students who are active in the Balloon Experiment Club might have been told he started that organization in 2007. And to students who enroll in astronautical engineering course AE350, he's their instructor.

Marcel knew he wanted to work for NASA since he was seven years old. Today, as a software test engineer at the Hammers Company, that dream has come true. He still finds it exciting to help a spacecraft launch into orbit.

When he and his wife are not cruising all over the state in his Camaro, they can be found grilling on their deck or relaxing at home their daughter Grace.

## **Q: Do you remember how you got interested in space?**

**MM:** I watched a space documentary about one of the Apollo rocket launches with my uncle and knew instantly that I wanted to work for NASA. In elementary school, I remember I would take every space and astronomy book home and read every topic from the formation of the planets to some of NASA's famous missions such as Voyager and Hubble. Very proudly, I could name every NASA space shuttle, when their first flight was and how many missions each completed. My grandparents bought me my first telescope when I was eight or nine. My mother remembers me being outside in the dead of winter with my little red

"My goal is that by the time our students graduate, they have done so many rehearsals and simulations that it's as if they have four or five years of operations experience, which helps them land a job."

telescope, looking at the stars and planets. Even today, I can be found on our deck showing our neighborhood kids the moon, planets and celestial objects. I even had one child ask me last year if we could look at Mars (when it was at its closest approach in 12 years) for his class project.

## **Q: Your job title is software test engineer for the Hammers Company. How exactly do you help space missions?**

**MM:** The Hammers Company creates the software used



Marcel Mabson

to transmit commands to the spacecraft, manages data products once they arrive at each ground terminal, and trend spacecraft data. Any time we update or create a new product, it's my job to make sure the software does what it's supposed to do (we have a set of requirements that mission provides and we ensure the software satisfies all requirements prior to launch). If a customer has problems in the control center, I'll assist them with resolving the issues. Plus, I help build spacecraft procedures that will command the spacecraft as



well as train new operators to use the Hammers Company products. Sometimes, when a spacecraft is about to be launched, a few of us stay in the control center to be the support system in case there are any anomalies.

**Q: What's it like to be in a control center on launch day?**

**MM:** After years of working endless nights and lots of weekends to prepare the spacecraft and ground systems for launch, Launch Day can be stressful. Teams verify all systems are configuring properly and resolve any last-minute anomalies. Me personally, by the time we are on the pad, we have exercised the system so many times that we are fairly confident things will work as planned. Space, however, is very difficult and anything can and will go wrong, but we prepare the spacecraft and ground systems to perform in both extremes. Many engineers who have been on multiple launches have traditions for good luck. Some will wear their lucky socks or ties; the younger engineers bring our lucky M&M candy, and we have a few prior to liftoff. One of our mentors would pass around "launch cigars" and for each successful flight would take the team outside and light each one for a job well done. For the "launch team," once the countdown clock strikes zero and the rocket lifts from the pad, it's only a ten-minute ride to orbit (sometimes it feels like an eternity!). Once the spacecraft is released from the rocket, we then have to wait to hear from the spacecraft, which varies from a matter of minutes to a few hours depending on the mission. Once we finally hear from the spacecraft and the ground systems are working as expected, we can relax (if only for a few minutes), and then it's on to configuring the spacecraft to perform science. Whether it's going to the moon or another planet, it's always fun seeing a spacecraft launch into orbit, seeing that deployment and hearing that first signal.

**Q: You dreamed about working with spacecraft since you were a little boy. Any big surprises now that you're working in this field?**

**MM:** Yes. When I was younger, I thought space was just rockets, spacecrafts and flight controllers. I sometimes feel more like a lawyer than anything else because I must debate with other engineers about test procedures, schedules and reviews. I find I spend more of my time interacting with developers and operators than creating procedures. I enjoy the challenge and the fast-paced environment. I am also surprised by the amount of time missions need to be developed and tested before they reach the launch pad. When you watch a NASA rocket launch on television, they don't say how it has been in development for five or six years.

**Q: You teach AE350, Autonomous Ground Systems. Do you ever share insights from your job with your students?**

**MM:** All the time! The Hammers Company donated the software package to Capitol's Space Flight Operations Training Center (that's the lab I teach in), which means the students learn how to use the same software we use in the

industry. I bring what I do in real life to an academic level. I remember working on a mission where there were anomalies, and I showed the students the exact steps we used to recover the spacecraft, just a few weeks after it happened. And, since a lot of our alumni work in the operations field, we receive emails from them almost every other day giving us suggested exercises we can run in the lab.

My goal is that by the time our students graduate, they have done so many rehearsals and simulations that it's as if they have four or five years of operations experience, which helps them land a job.

**Q: Do you know if that happens?**

**MM:** All the time. Hammers has an agreement with Capitol that students can intern with us. And, we recently hired a Capitol graduate who's now working on my test team. He was hired because he worked in the lab. My director told me, 'I hired him because he knows what he's doing and he knows the software.' Another of our recent graduates is now a flight controller on NASA's Global Precipitation Measurement (GPM), and he completed his certification in just five months all thanks to the SFOTC and Astronautical Engineering department.



From Left to Right: Professors Rishabh Maharaja and Marcel Mabson in the SFOTC

# STUDENT JACOB PROFILE: KARNES

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Everything is connected. People, homes, cars, planes, banks, cities – you name it. In today's increasingly digital era, we leave a heavy footprint, one that is equally convenient and susceptible to exploitation.

Organizations need experts who know how to protect and secure data, individuals who understand that there is no graduating from the field, no single point at which you can say, I know all that I need to know. Technology is constantly changing, requiring professionals to adopt a lifelong learning approach.

Capitol Technology University provides students with hands-on learning opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, preparing them to join one of today's fastest-growing, in-demand career fields: the cyber field.

Jacob Karnes, a senior cyber security major and the co-founder and president of Capitol's Signal-9 Competitive Team, understands exactly what he's getting into. "There is an exponential increase in how technology changes, and it will continue to grow," he says. "This parallels with how much cyber experts increasingly need to know."

Jacob is a problem solver by nature, who values both traditional and self-guided learning. "You can only learn so much through traditional learning," he explains. "The most important skill is to know how to learn effectively outside of class. Teachers teach you what they want you to know based on current trends. You need to be able to use that knowledge and branch out. Once you overcome that gap, you can learn anything."



One of Jacob's first self-assigned challenges to tackle when he arrived at Capitol was to create an organized team for cyber competitions, one that would be empowered to continue long after he graduates. Although Capitol has a long tradition of competitive teams, most disband after the student leader graduates.

Fast forward two years, and it's clear that Jacob's vision is coming to fruition. Signal-9 is growing into a learning hub that uses competition as a motivator to push students beyond what they originally perceived as their limit. Jacob notes, "In our world, competition is the norm. When you are in the process of securing a job, for instance, you are competing against other candidates."

Jacob's inspiration for creating an organized competitive team from the ground up? Sheer determination to find a solution for positive change, an attitude that he credits, in part, to his mentors. Upon seeing that there was not a sustained competitive spirit at Capitol, Jacob resolved to **"find a way or make one"** in classic Capitol style. "In life, when faced with a challenge, you have the option to take action," he notes. "If you see a gap, you have several choices: take action and lead the resolution yourself, assign the project to



someone you trust, or wait. If you do not take action, you may find no one else will either.”

At the helm of Signal-9, Jacob seeks to simulate a real-world experience in a low-risk environment, where students – including both cyber majors and anyone else who is interested – are able to learn through trial, error, and exploration. Outside of the classroom, Jacob also lends his skills to Capitol’s Security Operations Center as head administrator and Cyber Battle Lab, pushing for each to better enable exchange and learning across STEM disciplines.

Jacob’s approach to experiential learning has certainly proven effective. Recently, during the spring commencement ceremony, he was named the 2019 Gudelsky Scholar, Capitol’s most prestigious academic honor for undergraduate students. He is a Splunk Certified User and Adobe Certified Associate in Web Communications. Jacob is also industry certified in CompTIA Security+, a certification that Capitol prepares its students for by as early as the start of their sophomore year.

With his down-to-earth personality, Jacob offers spot-on advice for students who seek to pursue a

career in cyber and information security. “Don’t pretend to know something that you really don’t know,” he cautions. “Even if you have a general idea, do not stretch and make connections that are not really there. Take time to learn things the right way. Have confidence that even if you don’t know something, you can learn it. All it takes is your time and motivation.”

Nationwide, the demand for cyber security talent continues to grow. In fact, it has grown to the point that it exceeds the number of skilled professionals ready to meet the challenge, the results of which prove costly for individuals and organizations plagued daily with cyber security threats. Here in our domain of learning, near the heart of the nation’s capital, we are helping to do our part and address the need one student at a time.



From Left to Right: Dr. Bradford Sims, Dr. Sandy Antunes, and Jacob Karnes in 2019 Commencement Processional

"In life, when faced with a challenge, you have the option to take action. If you see a gap, you have several choices: take action and lead the resolution yourself, assign the project to someone you trust, or wait. If you do not take action, you may find no one else will either."



## GIVING BACK

Capitol alumnus and retiring Board member John E. Dettra, Jr. was named Trustee Emeritus.

On June 3, 2019, John E. Dettra, Jr., retiring Board of Trustees member and Capitol alumnus, was named Trustee Emeritus for his commitment and distinctive service to the institution over the span of more than five decades. The award was presented at Capitol Technology University's Board of Trustees meeting on the university campus in Laurel, Maryland.

The Board of Trustees, under the leadership of Chairman Haden Land, selected Mr. Dettra for Trustee Emeritus status, a recommendation that was endorsed unanimously. During his acceptance speech, Mr. Dettra noted, **"I always knew I wanted to be an engineer"**, a determination that enabled him to begin his Capitol studies at age 16, where he found himself the only civilian in a program comprised of "all other G.I.s."



# TRUSTEE EMERITUS: JOHN E. DETTRA, JR.



From Left to Right: John Dettra III, Emma Dettra, Dr. Bradford Sims, John Dettra, Haden Land, and Jacquelyn Enright

*Capitol Technology University continues to define what it means to be a leader in high-demand science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, enabling students to learn, build, and succeed in a practical, hands-on environment. Founded in 1927, Capitol is the only independent Maryland university of its kind. Since 2017, the university has launched a number of new online and on-ground degrees at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels, including business analytics, construction management, critical infrastructure, cyber analytics, unmanned and autonomous systems, and aviation cybersecurity.*

Upon conferral of Mr. Dettra's award, Mr. Land noted, "Your outstanding contributions to Capitol Technology University started with your student days here, graduating with an associate's in engineering technology from the Capitol Radio Engineering Institute to your matriculation with a bachelor's in 1968 from the former Capitol Institute of Technology. Also, in 1983, joining the Board of Trustees until present day, serving as chair of various committees, and speaker at many events." He added, "The list goes on! You were instrumental in assisting with the incorporation of the institution in the District of Columbia, and are the benefactor of many generous contributions to Capitol along with your late wife, Mary."

In the area of stewardship, Mr. Dettra leads by example. In 2017, then-president of Capitol, Dr. Michael T. Wood, recognized Mr. Dettra's years of service and unwavering commitment with the President's Medal.

"One of Mr. Dettra's most significant accomplishments has been through the John and Mary Dettra Radio Club of America Scholarship Fund," said Melinda Bunnell-Rhyne, vice president for student engagement and university development. "This fund has resulted in an annual gift to Capitol since 1984 and has supported 35 students in the pursuit of their degree. Scholarships ensure that undergraduate students of merit have the support they need to successfully complete their degrees," she added.

Mr. Dettra has also supported the building and expansion of Capitol's Laurel campus. "Several locations are named after Mr. Dettra and his late wife Mary due to their generous

support. The most prominent of these is the John and Mary Dettra Amphitheater, which is located just beyond University Plaza beside the Puente Library," explained Ms. Bunnell-Rhyne.

"Knowing John for more than thirty years, I think the word that best describes him is genuine," said Allen Exner, Capitol's director of library services and information literacy. "He is as real a person as ever I have known. His kindness and good nature exemplify all that is hoped for in the human spirit. Whenever I see John, he has that uncanny ability to make you feel at ease in his presence. His warmth and hospitality always give you the sense that you have his undivided attention and that, to him at least, you are the most important person in the room," he added.

At the awards ceremony, Mr. Dettra was joined by his fiancée, Jacquelyn Enright, along with his son, John Dettra III, and granddaughter, Emma Dettra.

"I'm not going anywhere for a while yet," said Mr. Dettra near the end of the awards ceremony, regarding his retirement from the Board. By granting him emeritus status, Capitol demonstrates its agreement. Mr. Dettra is a staple of the university, and Capitol is not letting him go.

# DOCTOR ALL LINDA F. CANDIDATE: MARTIN



Linda F. Martin

## Why choose Capitol Tech's PhD in Occupational Health and Safety?

Current Capitol Tech doctoral candidate Linda F. Martin, MS, CSP, CIH, works as a consultant, course curriculum designer, and professor in the occupational health and safety (OHS) industry. Linda is also President of the Board of Directors at the Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP) and the Chair of the Board of Trustees for the BCSP Foundation.

Linda is currently working on finalizing her dissertation at Capitol Tech and has found the university to be the perfect place for her to explore her passion for the OHS industry while expanding her education.

## What was your undergraduate degree/master's degree?

My undergraduate is in geology. I have two master's degrees. I have an MBA and a master's in occupational safety and health management.

## How did you go from geology to OHS?

When I got out of school with a geology degree, it was something I was interested in but there were only jobs in environmental consulting, which is not something I really wanted to do. I still took a job, and was making good money, but didn't really like my career. Over the years, I witnessed that there were a lot of employees that were being exposed to hazardous materials, which made me more interested in the occupational health side of the business. My practice naturally swung toward safety and less toward environmental consulting. I made that into a career in corporate safety, teaching, and safety/industrial hygiene consulting.

## Why did you pursue a PhD in Occupational Health and Safety?

I actually never really considered teaching, but I met a mentor who was teaching who thought I would be good at it. I found a couple of jobs teaching online and found I really liked it, especially the aspect of helping other professionals to become better at what they do. As I taught undergraduate and graduate-level occupational health and safety courses, I thought I should get my PhD: if I'm going to do it, I should do it. Once I earn my degree, my plan is to continue to build a curriculum, teach and provide consulting services to the industry.

## How do you see the OHS PhD helping those in your industry?

I think that Capitol Tech has a good model, which is research-based. The core curriculum in this program and attention to expanding the body of knowledge in occupational safety and health is more of an emphasis in other programs. What we need is real solid research in workplace safety and occupational health and experts in innovative practice areas, and that is something Capitol Tech offers.

## How has Capitol supported your PhD program?

I've received really good support from both Dr. Brad Sims, Capitol Tech President, and Dr. Ian McAndrew, dean of doctoral programs. Dr. McAndrew, as a mentor and someone who supports student success, was a huge draw for me. From the second I met him I knew he would mentor me to successful completion. I think that means a lot to anyone pursuing a PhD. You really need a partner in someone who will lead you through the process. The committee and your chair should be aligned with how to bring this person into the academic discipline. A system that supports you with foundational pieces should allow you to be creative enough to solve a unique problem, and Capitol Tech has that foundation in place.

## What opportunities are there for those who pursue a PhD in OHS?

I think there are a lot of opportunities for people who want to teach; which is something you can do with a PhD, or consulting, or work with government agencies and private industry. I want to be a part of that solution where we build better professionals, and we can't do that without supporting each other to grow and continually learn.

## Why is Capitol Tech's OHS PhD program different?

There aren't any other programs that are completely online in this field. There are a few hybrid programs, but they make you go to campus for a set amount of time or require a residency. With the research-based idea and the fact that you can do it completely online it opens the program up to more people in the field to achieve a PhD. Even though the program is online, I still feel connected. Dr. McAndrew is responsive; he spends a lot of time encouraging me even when I feel like I can't do it.



# SAVE THE DATES

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## GOLF TOURNAMENT

MONDAY, APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>



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**CAPITOL**  
CHRONICLE

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 1



**CAPITOL**  
Technology University

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Laurel, Maryland 20708

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