Did you know that 11,073 of you are living in Ohio? That’s 77 percent of our total alumni database. And 69 percent of you receiving this newsletter are Ohio residents. So when we advertise our upcoming chapter events in Ohio, and you feel left out, please know we haven’t forgotten about you. We would love a chance to host an event in your area, no matter where you are. So if you are not close by to any of our chapters, and you want to see Rio, then contact my office. I am sure we can locate other alum close by that would like to connect as well.

**Southwest OH**
Thursday, April 18
5:30-8 pm
Madtree Brewing
Cincinnati, OH
RSVP by April 9 to Karen Smith, 513-235-1871

**Central OH**
Saturday, May 11
5-8 pm
Westies Gastropub
Columbus, OH
RSVP by May 1 to Lori Tillis, 614-325-6426

**Ashland KY/Huntington WV**
Saturday, June 8
5-8 pm
Bahnhof
Huntington, WV
RSVP by June 1 to Sarah Holland, 740-339-3584

**Northeast OH**
Friday, June 21
Dinner 5-6:30 pm
Show at 7-8:30 pm
Pickwick & Frolic
Cleveland, OH
RSVP by June 7 to Lucretia Scalia, 330-418-9075

We also have established Chapters in Southeast Ohio, South Central Ohio, and Northwest Ohio – though those chapter event dates have not yet been set. Please stay tuned, and check out our website rio.edu/alumni for a complete listing of contact information for each.
Founders’ Day 2019 Preview

Founders’ Day is a special time on campus. It is on this day we pay tribute to those responsible for establishing a place of learning for young minds back in 1876. Those individuals are Nehemiah and Permelia Atwood, and Reverand Ira Haning. Because of a dream and a promise made, ten acres of farm land was transformed into the grounds of the Rio Grande College. Officially opening on Tuesday, Sept. 13, 1876 the institution now boasts 143 years of history.

It is also on this day, we dismiss classes for all students to attend a program dedicated to remembrance of the significance this day plays in our history. The event starts with a procession of faculty members, dressed in regalia, entering the Alphus R. Christensen Theater. Stage party includes the University President, members of Student Council, and the Student Alumni Association. Music plays as the faculty take their seats, and the Alumni Director walks up to the podium to welcome everyone in attendance.

This moment in time is dedicated to the Atwood’s.

Speakers for the event, including an alumni speaker that will address the students after the formalities conclude, talk about the rich history of Rio Grande and it’s bright future. The students who fill the auditorium now have their moment in time to make their mark on the future of the intuition.

But this day is not just for reflection, motivation, and an hour dismissed from class – it’s also about recognition.

In a program, later in the evening, many will reconvene in the theater to honor several alumni and former faculty members who have also selflessly given of themselves to Rio.

We are proud to announce our Alumni Hall of Fame Class of 2019 winners.

Margaret Evans ‘84 – Distinguished Alumnae Award
Annette Ward ‘98 – Distinguished Service Award
Robbie & Tessa Pugh ‘09 – Atwood Achievement Award
Bethany Dixon-Wolfe ‘08 ‘10 – Rising Star Award

In addition to these alums, we will be inducting two well-known former faculty members into the Educators’ Hall of Fame. They are Dr. Ivan Tribe and Ms. Ellen Brasel.

The evening will conclude with a banquet and hors d’oeuvres in which the public is invited to attend to congratulate the winners. More info, including times, will be announced in our next quarterly.
Margaret Evans graduated from the University of Rio Grande in 1984 and was awarded the Outstanding Graduate Award (doesn’t exist anymore) at Commencement. While at Rio, she was a member of the Grande Chorale and worked on the newspaper and yearbook staffs. Earning a degree in Communications Comprehensive, which included teaching credentials in English, Speech, Reading, Literature and Journalism, she taught in public high schools for six years. After her first year of teaching, Evans was awarded the Sallie Mae Outstanding First Year Teacher Award. Evans then attended the University of Kentucky School of Law, graduating in the top fifteen percent of her class in 1993. She practiced law in a private firm in Huntington, West Virginia until 1997, when she returned to Gallia County. In 2003, Evans was appointed by Governor Robert Taft to the bench of the Gallipolis Municipal Court and then won election to that position that same year. While on the Municipal Court bench, she also taught a Constitutional Systems class for Rio as an adjunct. Evans is the first female elected to a judicial position in Gallia County. Evans served in the Municipal Court until 2017, when she was elected to and began service as the Judge of the Gallia County Common Pleas Court, General Division.

Her connection to Rio did not being with matriculation to the University. Evans’s father, Clyde Evans, served Rio for most of his career in various administrative positions and continues to serve on the Board of Trustees after retiring from Rio and the State Legislature. Consequently, Evans, her sisters and brother, were all fortunate to be able to grow up on campus.

Her husband, David Smalley (also a Rio grad), began teaching and coaching Women’s Basketball at Rio in 1992. His position allowed the couple to rear their daughter (Evans Smalley) on the Rio campus, in the family atmosphere that Rio people provide, while taking advantage of the cultural, educational and athletic benefits of the university.

Annette Brown Ward is a three-time graduate of Rio Grande, earning her Associate of Arts and Bachelor’s degrees in Psychology and Master of Education in Classroom Teaching degree. After a lengthy career as a professional in the mental health field, Annette began her tenure in the Rio administration in 2007 as the Director of Alumni Relations. In 2011, Annette was selected to serve additional roles as Executive to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

Annette has been honored to serve her community in a variety of ways, including past President of the Gallia County Convention as Visitors Bureau, 2013-2014 Gallia County United Way Honorary Campaign Chair, and current member of the Rio Grande Village Council. She has also been active on the Rio campus. Annette has served as the advisor for her sorority, Lambda Omicron Psi, and also for All Greek Council. She has also served as co-chair for the Commission on Archive and is currently co-chair of the Commencement Committee.

Annette, the daughter of alumni Dean and Petrea Brown, is originally from Jackson, Ohio, but has called Gallia County “home” since moving into Davis Hall as a freshman. She has two amazing daughters—Jessica and Kathryn—who are the very best part of every day.

Robbie and Tessa Pugh met and began dating at the University of Rio Grande in the year 2006. Robbie received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration in 2009, and Tessa earned two degrees, a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 2008 and a Bachelor of Science in Marketing in 2009. The two were married in 2010 and have since resided in Gallipolis with their two children—Piper, 7, and Hudson, 4.

A little over two years after graduation, Robbie and Tessa set their dreams of entrepreneurship in motion when they purchased a foreclosed seven screen movie theater in Gallipolis formerly known as Spring Valley Cinema. After a total renovation to the building and a conversion from 35mm film reels to fully digital projectors, the couple gave the theater a new name, Silver Screen VII, and opened the doors to the public in November of 2011. Silver Screen VII continues to operate under their ownership, and the couple is proud to have the opportunity to offer a form of entertainment to the members of Gallipolis and surrounding areas.

In 2013 Robbie and Tessa founded Rocket VII Interactive, a business that began as an advertising agency but quickly shifted to an outdoor advertising company specializing in digital billboards. After installing and operating three digital billboards of their own in Gallipolis, Robbie and Tessa established a partnership with another Gallipolis couple in 2015 and over the next three years installed twelve additional billboards across Ohio. As part of Rocket VII’s overall strategy to grow and sell, the business did just that in January 2019 when it sold its assets to Lamar Advertising Agency, one of the nation’s leaders in the out-of-home advertising industry.

In addition to Silver Screen VII and Rocket VII, Robbie and Tessa briefly owned and operated a self-serve frozen yogurt and gourmet popcorn shop known as Pip and Hud’s (named after their children) located in downtown Gallipolis from 2015-2017.

Robbie and Tessa take pride in working together in all aspects of their business(es). By communicating effectively with one another and respecting each other’s ideas and opinions, they are successfully able to implement new strategies, develop marketing campaigns, manage inventory, maintain their workforce, conduct accounting functions, among other responsibilities.

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Alumni Heritage Room

Rio Pride is a fitting way to describe our alumni all the way from Redmen to Redstorm. Rio memories run deep, and we plan to commemorate these memories by dedicating an entire room to our alumni heritage.

The Alumni Heritage Room – Redmen to Redstorm will feature a pictorial timeline capturing memorable moments, places, and milestones from 1876 until present. Simply walking in the room will spur memories and stories from your alma mater. The Alumni Heritage Room will also display our prominent alumni who have received awards throughout the years.

With overwhelming support already received, we have reached 84% of the Alumni Heritage Project goal of $125,000! It is not too late to join this project! You still have three giving opportunities to receive name recognition for yourself, family, or loved ones.

$10,000

Thank you to the following individuals who have already committed their support:

$20,000+
C. Michael Reardon

$10,000
Petrea Brown

$5,000
Greg & Kay Ervine
In Memory of Ray McKinniss
Jim Morrison

$1,000+
Alpha Mu Beta

$5,000
Richard & Mary Pierce
Velma Feagans
Joel & Meagan Wood
Donald Scott
Robert Lawson
Jane Johnson
Alpha Sigma Phi
Randar & Candice Luts
Scott Saunders
Anne Roach
Rosemary & Clyde Evans
Tom Davisson
Darrell & Marilyn Boggs
In Memory of Greg Fields
Chi Omega Alpha
In Memory of Patty Forgey
Jenny Dyer Henchey
Storm the School Contest

The ‘Redtorm’ is going strong in classrooms across our four-county region. Here are more of our proud alums that participated in our contest in the past few months!

Eastern Local – Julie Spaun, Class of 2004 and 2009

Eastern Local – Melinda Chancey Bradford, Class of 2007

Oak Hill – Philip Malone, Class of 2007

Oak Hill – Jackie Denney, Class of 1998

Oak Hill – Lindsey Lester, Class of 2004

Oak Hill – Jessica Swackhammer, Class of 2007

Oak Hill – Nicole Ruby, Class of 2011

Gallia City – Jamie Saunders, Class of 2016

Gallia City – Gwendolyn Rose, Class of 2016 and 2018

Gallia City – John Sipple, Class of 1993

Gallia City – Marilyn Kibble Wills, Class of 1999

Gallia City – Rebecca Holcomb, Class of 2010

Gallia City – Joanie Gillum, Class of 2005
In an effort to leave their mark on Rio's history, the Student Alumni Association has taken it upon themselves to preserve their time and memories at Rio Grande in the resurrection of the student newspaper.

The history of the paper must first be mentioned. From Jake Bapst, a retired Rio professor, and the current volunteer Archivist, “In 1913, students published a small paper called the ‘Rio Grande Cardinal’. From 1914-1915, it became a full-sized paper called, ‘The Cardinal’. In 1920-1921, the paper was called the Rio Grandion. Then for four years, 1924-1928, it was known as The Comet. It was renamed The Cardinal in 1932 and remained under that name until the mid-1950’s. In 1964, The Smoke Signals started and by 1968, the name shortened to just Signals. For a brief time in 1976, I was co-advisor and we called the student newspaper simply The Paper. Then again, a name change came about; we went back to Signals, printed on paper, and it remained under this name until 2013. In 2014, there were a few electronic versions, but everything disappeared in 2015. There has been a paper of some sort for about 83 of our 143 year history. It is so good to see it return!”

MEET THE STAFF
Editor, Megan Coon
Managing Editor, Damon Ledford
Graphic Design Editor, Emma Nesbitt
Photography Editor, Abby Grasso
Reporter/Writer, Mackenzie Hornsby
Reporter/Writer, Darian Miller
Reporter/Writer, Katie Hemsley
Reporter/Writer, Sean McIntyre
Photographer, Chelsy Slone
Photographer, Kaylynn Bell
Photographer, Whitney Gilkeson
Advisor, Delyssa Edwards
Alumni Advisor, Jenni Dovyak-Lewis

Sean McIntyre
Major - ATS Public Safety Management
Hometown - San Antonio, TX
Commuter Student
Rio Involvement:
• Campus Police Sergeant
• Volunteer Firefighter
• Out of the Darkness Campus Walk Committee
• Student Alumni Association Vice President of Membership

Mackenzie Hornsby, Senior
Major - English
Hometown - Gallipolis, OH
Commuter Student
Rio Involvement:
• Sigma Tau Delta
• International English Honor Society
• Student Alumni Association

Darian Miller, Senior
Major - Biomedical Sciences (Pre-Med)
Hometown - Gallipolis, OH
Commuter Student
Rio Involvement:
• Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
• Medical Math/Science Club
• Student Alumni Association Executive Assistant

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Emma Nesbitt, Junior  
Major - Graphic Design  
Hometown - Gallipolis, OH  
Commuter Student  
*Rio Involvement:*
- Internship with Jean Ann Vance  
- Student Alumni Association

Chelsy Slone, Senior  
Major - Sports & Exercise Studies  
Hometown - Gallipolis, OH  
Resident Student  
*Rio Involvement:*
- Women’s Basketball  
- Student Ambassador  
- Student Senate, Secretary  
- Phi Theta Kappa Society  
- Resident Assistant  
- Student Alumni Association, Vice-Chair  
- Champions of Character Leadership Council, Vice-President

Megan Coon, Senior  
Major - English  
Hometown - Oak Hill, OH  
Commuter Student  
*Rio Involvement:*
- Vice President of Sigma Tau Delta  
- International English Honors Society  
- Student Alumni Association

Damon Ledford, Senior  
Major - AYA: Integrated Language Arts  
Hometown - Born in Camden, NJ / Lived in Portland, OH before coming to Rio Grande  
Resident Student  
*Rio Involvement:*
- President of Sigma Tau Delta  
- International English Honors Society  
- Student Alumni Association

Katie Hemsley, Junior  
Major – Middle Childhood Education  
Hometown – Jackson, OH  
Resident Student  
*Rio Involvement:*
- Volleyball Team  
- Student Alumni Association

Whitney Gilkeson, Senior  
Major - Healthcare Administration  
Minor - Business Management  
Hometown - Marietta, OH  
Commuter Student  
*Rio Involvement:*
- Women’s Basketball  
- Student Senate  
- Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society  
- Student Alumni Association

Kaylynn Bell, Senior  
Major - Sports & Exercise Studies  
Minor - Business Management  
Hometown - Hillsboro, OH  
Resident Student  
*Rio Involvement:*
- Women’s Basketball  
- Women’s Soccer  
- Honors Programming Board  
- Title 9 Student Advisory Board  
- URG Hearing Board  
- Student Programming Board  
- Phi Theta Kappa, President  
- Student Ambassador  
- Student Alumni Association, President  
- Employee Wellness Program  
- Student Life Coordinator, Davis Hall

Abby Grasso, Sophomore  
Major – Pre-Art Therapy  
Hometown – Minford, OH  
Commuter Student  
*Rio Involvement:*
- Volleyball Team  
- Art Scholarship  
- President’s Scholar  
- Student Alumni Association

Chelsy Slone, Senior  
Major - Sports & Exercise Studies  
Hometown - Gallipolis, OH  
Resident Student  
*Rio Involvement:*
- Women’s Basketball  
- Student Ambassador  
- Student Senate, Secretary  
- Phi Theta Kappa Society  
- Resident Assistant  
- Student Alumni Association, Vice-Chair  
- Champions of Character Leadership Council, Vice-President

Even though they are both fueled by their passion for entrepreneurship, their greatest sense of accomplishment stems from their joy of parenting and their love for their children and each other.

Robbie was a member of the Gallipolis Community Improvement Corporation from 2013-2017. He is a current member of the Downtown Revitalization Project and also serves on the Board of Directors at Holzer Health System. He was the recipient of the Marianne Campbell Volunteer of the Year award in 2014 from the Gallia County Chamber of Commerce and the Gallia County Citizen of the Year award in 2016 from The Gallipolis Lions Club.

Bethany Dixon-Wolfe currently resides in Chillicothe, Ohio and is a proud University of Rio Grande graduate. She earned her Associate’s degree in Nursing in 2008, and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2010. In 2015, she earned her Family Nurse Practitioner/Master of Science in Nursing from Ohio University.

Bethany working as a registered nurse in 2008. Her work experience includes critical care nursing, cardiac nursing, and nursing education. She is currently employed as a Family Nurse Practitioner. In 2016, Bethany had the privilege of being involved in new clinic start-up with Holzer Health System, called The Uptown Clinic. Bethany says she gained much satisfaction through her work in this clinic.

Bethany’s experience also involves having served as a clinical instructor for Rio’s nursing program. She claims this was a very valuable experience for her to give back to her alma mater. She continues to enjoy supporting worthwhile endeavors sponsored by Rio’s nursing program.
Kevin Purcell, a 1979 graduate of the University of Rio Grande, was always very involved on campus. He was a Varsity Baseball team member, scorekeeper for the Men's Basketball team, Lyne Center Summer Life Guard & Pool Maintenance Assistant, drove the bus for the Athletic Department and Grand Chorale, and also was a Campus Student Security Guard. On top of that, Purcell was focused on his studies and obtaining his degree in physical education which led him down a very successful path.

After earning his Bachelor's Degree from Rio, Purcell attended Eastern Kentucky University and received his Master's Degree. Shortly thereafter, he came back to his Alma Mater, accepting a Health/Physical Education teaching and Athletic Department coaching position.

At Rio, Purcell's coaching responsibilities included leading the Men's Track and Cross Country programs while serving under John Lawhorn as an Assistant Basketball Coach. After several successful basketball campaigns including two trips to the NAIA National Championship tournament, Purcell was given an opportunity to serve under Billy Hahn; Head Men's Basketball Coach at Ohio University.

While at Ohio, Hahn & Purcell coached MAC standouts and NBA draft picks Dave Jamerson and Paul "Snoopy" Graham. From Ohio University, Purcell was named Assistant Athletics Director at Miami University where he served under R.C. Johnson. While at Miami, he was part of the Administration that hired two Cradle of Coaches inductees Randy Walker, Football Coach at Miami and Northwestern University; George Gwozdecky, Hockey Coach at Miami, Denver, and the NHL; and Joby Wright, 1992-93 Men's Basketball MAC Coach of the Year.

After returning to coaching, Purcell served as an assistant Men's Basketball Coach at The Citadel and The University of Wyoming. While at Wyoming, Purcell was involved in recruiting and coaching WAC Freshman Player of the Year, Ladrell Whitehead who went on to be a 1st Round NBA Draft Pick, and NBA Top 20 career shot blocker Theo Ratliff.

Since retiring from coaching, Purcell has dedicated his professional career to sales and business development, now serving as President of Logan Services, the 2nd largest Trane dealer in the United States. He is been married to Steffi Ross since 1979; a past University of Rio Grande Homecoming Queen/Grande Choral Member and daughter of former professors Merlyn and Edie Ross. They have two children, Allison and Robbie, and a daughter in law, Cayla, who reside in Athens, Ohio.

Kevin Purcell ’79

List some of your awards, achievements, honors you would like to highlight:
- President's Award – Ingersoll Rand/Trane
- Chairman's Award – Ingersoll Rand/Trane
- Top 10 Sales Achievement Award – Trane/Ingersoll Rand
- SOAR National Award Winner – Trane/Ingersoll Rand

What made you choose to pursue a college education at Rio Grande?
- Academic Reputation – i.e., Education Department
- Baseball & Basketball Team's Reputation
- Small College Environment (Personal Attention from Faculty and Staff)

How were you involved on Rio's campus?
- Varsity Baseball Team Member
- Scorekeeper – Men's Basketball
- Paul R. Lyne Center Summer Life Guard & Pool Maintenance Assistant
- Athletic Department/Grand Chorale Bus Driver
- Campus Student Security Guard

What did Rio offer you besides an education?
While as a student, I was able to have part-time teaching opportunities, and other employment opportunities including work at: Bob Evans Farms (Intern); Paul R. Lyne Center (Family Night Director); Boyd Hall (Resident Director); Foreign Student Advisor; and Continuing Education as a Youth Gymnastics Instructor.

After graduation, I was able to have many opportunities through teaching, coaching and leadership. This included Tenured Health, Physical Education Department Instructor; Health, Physical Education Academic Advisor; Director of Recruitment and Retention, Men's Cross Country – Track & Field Coach; Men's Assistant Basketball Coach; Summer Basketball Camp Coach; Cross Country Camp Coach/Director; and Summer Theatre Participation.

What are some of your favorite Rio memories?
- Track/Cross Country National Championships Participation
- Summer Basketball/Cross Country Camps
- Achieving Faculty Tenured Status
- Grande Chorale Concerts & Summer Theatre Participation

Was there any teacher, advisor, coach, etc. that made an impact on your life? How?
- Advisor Dr. James Batesky-Instrumental in my pursuit of a Graduate Degree
- Peg Thomas-Career Counseling & Placement Mentor
- Coach John Lawhorn-Instrumental in my pursuit and development of Coaching Men's Basketball
- Directors Merlyn & Edie Ross and Ed Roark-Influenced my appreciation of Theatre and Music
- Dr. Larry Spees-Influenced my appreciation for demanding high academic achievement
- Dr. Steve Markwood-Influenced my appreciation of judicial fairness and courage through adversity.

What did you learn about yourself during college?
I was capable of achieving higher academic success, but realized it took a greater commitment to time management and preparation. I also learned, I was capable of being a confident leader enhanced by the opportunities extended by several Rio Faculty and Staff members.

How did Rio prepare you for your career?
Rio taught me the value and impact of taking an interest in people individually. Also, empowering people to learn and develop.

Why are you proud to be a Rio Alumnus?
Rio Faculty and Staff prepare graduates to achieve successful careers by focusing on personal 1 on 1 attention with passion and commitment to excellence. I'm proud to have been on the receiving and giving side of this personal attention to several members of the student body.

Do you have any advice for current students?
Take advantage and maximize the opportunities smaller university campuses offer. Participate in activities that are rewarding and where applicable pursue ones that stretch you beyond your present day comfort zones.

Is there anything else you would like to add?
Thanks for giving me this opportunity, but the real thanks goes to all those faculty and staff members at The University of Rio Grande that influenced my career path.