

# URI Foundation Ball

## *Dance through the Decades For a Very Special Cause*

What better occasion, what better location, than the lovely Rhodes on the Pawtuxet in Cranston, Rhode Island for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual University of Rhode Island Foundation Ball. Wonderful memories are in store for all those who attend this May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002 event which raises scholarship money to support the outstanding academic achievements of high school seniors enrolling in the University of Rhode Island.

This year's very popular fundraiser will be co-chaired by 1980 graduates Mr. and Mrs. Dennis J. Duffy. Dennis Duffy is an attorney and partner with Energy Management, Inc., based in Boston. Kathleen (Yanity) Duffy is a financial news writer who works periodically for *The Providence Journal*. Teaming up with the Duffys as co-chairs will be Mr. and Mrs. Manuel J. Vales IV, both graduates of the class of 1988. Manny

Vales is vice president, commercial real estate, at Sovereign Bank. Mary (Sheehan) Vales is vice president at Fleet Real Estate, Inc.

All four of these URI Foundation Trustees have been involved with the URI Alumni Association and its fundraising for many years. This team has had a lot of experience with successful fundraisers, and this one is no exception. Kathleen explains, "My husband and I, as well as Manny and Mary, were part of the start-up of the annual URI Winter Gala event. We've all been

involved with fundraising in a number of ways, including attending events like alumni luncheons, wine tastings, and of course, the Foundation Ball." Dennis concurs, "This event provides scholarships for academically outstanding high school students. By pursuing a college education at URI, these students strengthen the University and the Rhode Island community."

Support for the Foundation Ball is something that Manny feels very strongly about as he explains, "Mary and I believe that raising additional scholarship funds for the University is tantamount to attracting talented and committed students to the University. In fact, scholarship awards made the difference in both of our abilities to attend URI."

Manny began supporting the University in his senior year. He was involved with the Student Alumni Association and co-chaired the Senior Challenge fundraising event. He also "rolled up his sleeves" and helped with other fundraising events for the University. He was especially active in the establishment of the RI Alumni Club. Two years after graduation, Manny volunteered to kick-off a new event—the URI Winter Gala. "The alumni, volunteers, and friends of the University that both Mary and I have worked with over the years have given so much of their time, energy, and contributions to make each and every event so special. Without their active participation, the University would not be as strong an institution as it is in the state of Rhode Island," comments Manny.

Mary has also volunteered much time and energy to URI including fundraising events, the Rhode Island Alumni Chapter, and the Alumni Board of Directors. She tells us, "We are excited about the opportunity to celebrate the success of the University along with many alumni, friends, and business associates. We hope to follow in the successful footsteps of the previous chairs to generate significant scholarship funds. Both Manny and I are looking forward to working with the Duffys and the entire committee on this event."

The Foundation Ball attracts more people every year; there were 279 attendees in 1999, 373 in 2000, and 455 in 2001. This year's event will feature the URI Ballroom Dancing Club who will be instrumental in the theme, "Dancing through the Decades." This special feature will highlight music of the decades from the 40s right up

to today. "We think this year's program will appeal to all ages and to everyone who attends. This night is meant to be a fun occasion, as well as an opportunity to give some support back to URI," explains Manny. Kathleen agrees, "No one should miss this wonderful gathering of friends and alumni. Call the Foundation and book your table! Come join us for a fun and worthwhile evening!"

Join these wonderful couples to dine and dance through the evening to the music of Steve Anthony & Persuasion. For further information, please contact the URI Foundation Office at 401.874.4977.

*By Joan LeFrancois*



# Introducing a Few of the **Best** and the **Brightest**

## Dana Spring

Self-inspired, determined, and passionate about life and people is just a short description of Dana Spring. A second-year marketing major from Flushing, New York, Dana begins and ends each day with the philosophy that life is too short to be anything else but positive. "No matter what, you've got to look at the bright side of things because you have no idea of what twists and turns are around the bend," states this 19-year-old with an enthusiasm that sounds more like a crusade.

Just dig a little deeper into the life of this national honor student with a 3.44 G.P.A. and you'll understand why she seems to have more wisdom than most her age. "When I was a junior in high school my mother had a debilitating stroke. To this day, she cannot walk or talk. Her condition affected me tremendously and changed my entire outlook on everything that I do in life. I learned to become a survivor. I became my own inspiration."

Devastated by her mother's tragedy but still inspired to succeed and to find the right school for her education, Dana happened upon the University of Rhode Island almost by accident. "I was exploring different colleges and was most interested in looking at Providence College where a good friend was attending. Another friend was attending URI. Both asked me to stop in and visit with them one weekend. When I arrived at URI, I immediately fell in love with the campus. The environment is beautiful, the education is great, and it's near the water and the city life that Providence has to offer. I couldn't be happier anyplace else. I love URI!"

A member of Alpha Chi Omega Sorority (which incidentally, is ranked #2 in sorority G.P.A.s on the URI campus), Dana hasn't regretted her decision to attend school out of state. However, her heart, soul, and spirit belong to her family, friends, and church congregation back home. A dedicated Catholic and a lector in her church since the seventh grade, she often returns to her old school, St. Mary's, to meet up with old friends. "We all have a common ground—our faith. It's been my inspiration and my driving force," she says.

When asked why she chose marketing as her major, she says it's because she wants to be in a business environment. Although uncertain if she'll venture into the creative or research realms of the field, the important goal in her career will be to love what she does in life and to help others as much as she can. "My major contribution to the world would be to help others in my journey through life, not necessarily with money but with my friendship. I love people! I've seen so much and understand so many different perspectives—I know because I've already been there," explains a very young but incredibly wise, Dana Spring.

## Seth Woodmansee

While in his junior year of high school, Seth Woodmansee was still pondering what his major would be in college. He was thinking along the lines of science but felt his heart and soul weren't completely in it. He was fascinated with theatre, but he had terrible stage fright. Then one day, the high school lighting director asked him to focus the lighting instruments and explained exactly where to point them, how sharp or how fuzzy to make them, and what colors to use. Well, it was "love at first light" for Seth who enrolled one year later as a theatre lighting design major. "I was fascinated by the way this lighting director, Darleen Vioria, (a 1998 graduate of URI) knew what to do and told myself, 'I want to do that.' And now, here I am, a senior in the program anticipating my graduation this May," he says.

The 22-year-old Narragansett, Rhode Island native with a 3.64 G.P.A. chose URI because of the variety of interesting people who attend the University. As a theatre lighting design student, Seth has also found an avenue to express his talents. When he isn't busy studying, he works for the University's Technical Production Group. He creates necessary lighting and provides technical assistance for special events and guest speakers at the University. He also does freelance work for a production company called ATR Treehouse, which was formed by a group of URI graduates. "I've done technical work at the Providence Convention Center (recently named the



The Foundation Ball funds the Best and Brightest scholarships through its Annual Ball in May to support students like Dana, Seth, Adrienne, and Brandon.

Dunkin' Donuts® Center) and at other sites in the state as well. One of the biggest events in the year for ATR Treehouse was "First Night 2002" in Providence. It was a ton of work, but it was great fun, too!" says Seth.

When Seth isn't studying or working, you'll probably find him hanging around with his best friend and greatest source of inspiration, Dan Boyle, a sixth-year pharmacy major at the University. "Dan has inspired me to work harder in everything I do and to laugh whenever I can," he says with compassion. Only one other person has equal or greater importance in his life, and that's his girlfriend who's attending school in Minnesota. "After graduation, I plan to join her for at least a year while she finishes her studies. It's been very hard to love someone so much, so far away," he says.

Though uncertain of any specific career plans after graduation, Seth ponders the possibility of attending a trade school to gain more electrical knowledge. He is particularly interested in "intelligent" lighting. Says Seth with great enthusiasm, "I've never been one of those people who goes nuts over cars, but my feelings compare to that when I get around high-tech lights."

No matter what this very passionate student does, it is safe to surmise that he won't be far removed from the theatre and special events. He relishes the freedom he has to express his creativity in a theatrical environment. He explains, "Theatre is definitely a medium in which we make people think and feel, and if I were to make any major contribution to society, it would be to do just that. I'd like to show people a 'new' light."

### Adrienne Marold

Since she was knee-high to a grasshopper (who knew that in a matter of years, she'd be dissecting the insect), 20-year-old Adrienne Marold had only one ambition in life—to be a doctor. "I always wanted to be doctor. I never even thought about being anything else."

This third-year biological sciences/pre-med student has had an interest in and a love for science ever since elementary school, "The study of science is easy for me to comprehend, especially because I love the subject matter and have always found it to be incredibly interesting. I think it's fascinating to study the human body and its chemistry."

Adrienne chose URI for her pre-med studies primarily because of its outstanding science program. The 3.78 G.P.A. student feels strongly about the University, its professors, and fellow classmates. "Overall, my academic experiences have been wonderful. Subjects that are known for their degree of difficulty have not been hard for me to understand because of the effective teaching styles and the accessibility of the professors. They're always willing to listen and to answer any questions. Dr. Norris, in particular, has been especially helpful. She has guided me through my studies and has helped me so much. She always knows just the right things to say."

No one in any previous generation of Adrienne's family has gone to college. Thus Adrienne, the elder of two children, is the first to continue her education through college and eventually into medical school. Adrienne is determined to be the best at what she loves and will even volunteer her time and efforts in the pursuit of her study of medicine. Last summer, the Warwick, Rhode Island native participated in a URI internship. It was an 11-week, 15-credit program, which allowed her to work in a local hospital's emergency and operating rooms. "The program was wonderful. I was able to shadow the doctors and witness firsthand how they respond and what they do for medical treatment, and also observe medical procedures and protocol."

And just what does this perky, upbeat, Alpha Epsilon Delta (pre-med Honor Society) president like to do when she's not studying? "I work per diem as a tech aide in the CAT Scan Department at Kent County Hospital in Warwick, Rhode Island. My studies coupled with working can be quite consuming, but I do find time to go to the health club or take a long run."

Adrienne is still undecided as to what her medical direction will be upon graduation from the University in December 2002. "At this point in time so many things are uncertain. I'm not exactly sure which schools I'll apply to and even more uncertain of where I'll be accepted. As a specialty, I do lean toward emergency medicine or anesthesiology, however."

Without doubt, this bright and steadfast woman should turn out to be an outstanding doctor someday. You can feel her intensity in every word she speaks, and it becomes quite acute when she explains why she wants to become a physician. "I know that so many people are afraid to go to a doctor, or they're not willing to trust their judgments, but I hope that people will find me very approachable, understanding, and trustworthy," she states with undeniable warmth and sincerity in her voice.

### Brandon Cherenzia

Brandon Cherenzia chose URI and its College of Pharmacy for two very obvious reasons. One, it's close to his home in Hope Valley, Rhode Island, and two, it has a great reputation for its pharmacy program. What isn't so obvious to most who meet this 20-year-old junior is the major source for his educational inspiration. "My uncle died of AIDS in 1994, and two years later my grandfather died from cancer. These were two great people that I looked up to in my youth, and suddenly they were suffering from very significant deadly diseases in our society. My uncle lived with my family for two years and his downward spiral of health was a great awakening in me as to what medicine and pharmaceutical care do to assist and/or deter this condition. The same was true of my grandfather. He died a horrible death from lung cancer that spread to his brain. All I ever thought of was how I could help someone who suffers so much from this and similar diseases," says Brandon.

His interest in pharmacy also led him through the doors of a small Westerly CVS where he has worked since high school. He works there as many as 30 hours per week as a pharmacy technician while maintaining a 3.37 G.P.A. "The original owners of the pharmacy were pharmacists Ed and Mary Gormley. They were a great inspiration to me. Ed was my mentor. He took a couple of other seniors in high school and me to the URI campus. We toured the campus and the pharmacy building. He also set up my interview with the dean of pharmacology. I decided right then that if I didn't make it into pharmacy, I'd find another way to pursue my dream. But as fate would have it, I made it into the program," says Brandon.

This Centennial Scholarship recipient has received funding from the URI Foundation since he arrived on campus. "It's been like a gift from God. I've never known exactly who was responsible for the yearly support of my education, but all I can say is thank you. If you'll make yourself known to me, I'll say it in writing," exclaims Brandon.

This aspiring pharmacist still has three long and arduous years ahead of him. He is not certain which direction he will take at the conclusion of his studies in 2005, however, he explores various venues within the field of pharmacology. Such disciplines include research and development and patient counseling. Brandon explains, "I love that part more than anything else I do. I think every pharmacist wishes that they could be more active in the counseling and dispensing of drugs. It is, after all, what we have studied and what we continue to learn through seminars and research material that educates us on the development and implementation of prescription drugs."

Brandon continues, "There's a great deal involved in the welfare of the patient and the proper medication for their condition. If I could do anything in my life, it would be to share my knowledge of pharmaceuticals with people. It isn't just a matter of what they take to help them, it's a matter of what it means to the betterment of their lives."

By Joan LeFrancois