



Press Clippings
April 2016
Print

The Philadelphia Inquirer

philly.com

Philly education reinvigorates baby boomers and seniors

By Erin E. Arvedlund, Staff Writer

"I'm not pursuing a degree," he says, "but I like being around young people and sharing what I know or lived through."

Magen graduated from Penn's Wharton School in the undergraduate class of 1953, then entered military service before becoming an accountant.

Today, the pressure is off.

"I audit classes. I don't have to write the papers, and I don't take the exams," he says.

Magen's first class after retirement was modern European history, and he has taken at least one Penn class per semester for the last 14 years. This spring semester, he's studying the history of opera.

Penn encourages older learners, and charges \$500 per course per semester through its Senior Auditing Program. Those age 65 and older audit undergraduate lecture classes in the university's School of Arts and Sciences. Once registered, you also get a free email account with Penn. To sign up, visit www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/students/seniors.

Some boomers are putting off retirement; many still have bills to pay (mortgages or their kids' college tuition). An educational leg up can't hurt.

At 55, surgeon Edmund Pribitkin is the oldest student currently enrolled in Wharton's MBA for Executives program. He works as a professor and is academic vice chairman of Thomas Jefferson University's Department of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery.

"Compared to my classmates, I'm a little on the older side," Pribitkin acknowledges. "But there were two reasons to go back to school.

"I run the residency program to teach residents in head and neck surgery. I've been an academic surgeon for my entire career. When I got back as a student, now I'm the person who doesn't have the knowledge, and deal with people who are professors, the brightest in their field. That's a wonderful experience," he says.

Also, he says, an MBA will help bring innovation to medicine: "Learning the language of business brings up arguments to help think in new ways."

His latest class project was a "ZipItYourself" tool to help a single person zip up a dress.

"I pitched in front of the class, and halfway through I disrobed and had a dress on underneath," Pribitkin says. "You can't really do that as a university professor, but you can do it as a student."

Baby-boom demographics definitely play a role in the return to school.

"With the pace of life, and the pace of technology, we need to reinvent ourselves. The only way innovation increases productivity is if we reinvent ourselves," Pribitkin says.

Amaro is pursuing her bachelor's degree in human-resource management at Peirce College, and plans to graduate in June.

"My mom always called me her backward girl. I did everything backward!" she recalls with a laugh.

Amaro, who works as an HR administrator at Aria Health, lives in Cheltenham with her husband and has two grown sons and two grandchildren.

A late-stage boomer, Amaro became a wife and mother at 19. She moved up the ranks in human resources at a few different hospitals, and has made it her career for 28 years.

"Being a single parent, my mom could only afford to send my sister to Chestnut Hill College to become a nurse. Financially, only one of us could attend," Amaro says.

Today, she oversees HR for Aria Health's system of hospitals, with about 4,000 employees.

"By 2012, I had achieved so much professionally, but I was missing something," she says. "It's been my dream to get my degree, and my mother's dream for both her girls to get their degrees."

An older student base is the norm at Peirce. For the academic year 2014–2015, roughly 15 percent of Peirce students were over 50, and 45 percent were over 40.

Don't forget state schools, which also have programs for older students.

Penn State's Go-60 program, through Penn State Continuing Education at University Park, offers tuition and fee-free courses to those who meet eligibility requirements.

To participate in Go-60, you must be at least 60 years of age, retired or employed less than half-time (20 hours or less a week), and a Pennsylvania resident.

For more information, visit ceup.psu.edu/state-college/go-60-program.

The Philadelphia Tribune

Early childhood education partner to fund some city pre-K

An investment firm working to improve quality of life for Philadelphia families has pledged \$600,000 toward an initiative that would help with kindergarten readiness.

Omar Woodard, executive director of the GreenLight Fund Philadelphia, said Monday that they have partnered with the Parent-Child Home Program, a nonprofit organization with a 50-year track record of helping families prepare young children for kindergarten and for higher levels of academic achievement. The decision follows a year long, national search and vetting of high-quality nonprofit organizations working in early childhood education.

“We want to match that social innovation with community need,” said Woodard, noting universal pre-kindergarten for three- and four-year-old children was a priority in the Mayor Jim Kenney administration. “We want to make sure when kids get to pre-kindergarten, they’re ready.”

The program plans to work with 50 families from the city’s Sharswood section in North Philadelphia and 50 families from Southwest Philadelphia starting later this year. Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) has based its practices on successful early literacy, school readiness and parent engagement, in turn, producing positive, long-term results.

Sarah Walzer, chief executive officer of Parent-Child Home Program, said a concerted, grass-roots effort will be made to reach parents who have the least access to resources, recruiting inside health care clinics, grocery stores and laundromats. Enhancing the learning experience for children prior to kindergarten is essential. Some experts described the gap in literary and language experience as 30,000 words.

“Kids who enter school having heard significantly fewer words and not engaged in reading and conversation with their parents, they’ll never be able to bridge that gap, and they’ll never catch up to kids who come to school knowing so much more,” Walzer said.

Parents who speak languages other than English may feel uncomfortable in the library, so staff members for PCHP will distribute literature in other languages and employ individuals who speak other languages.

“The idea is to reach those families whose children are more likely to enter kindergarten not having had the early education childhood supports that are necessary to be successful students,” Walzer said.

A kindergarten student who recognizes the letters of the alphabet, knows how to hold a book, turn its page and has the vocabulary to comment on the illustrations is in a “dramatically different place,” she said.

PCHP sends specialists to visit the home and help parents “build language-rich environments that enhance literacy, cognitive, social emotional skills,” according to promotional materials.

Younger students performed better on kindergarten readiness measures and were performing grade level reading and math in third grade. High school graduation rates are also significantly higher for student who participated in PCHP, officials said.

The GreenLight Fund also operates in Boston, San Francisco and Cincinnati. The investment firm launched in 2012 and made its first investment in 2013 in Philadelphia, focusing on work-force development for 18- to 24-year-old adults planning careers in information technology. It provided funding for Peirce College’s “Year Up” program.

Other investments have supported Community College of Philadelphia’s “SingleStop” program, which is intended to boost community college completion rate by connecting low-income students with services, employment opportunities and transitional jobs for former inmates attempting re-entry after serving time in state prison.

He said there would be discussions about the next issue to tackle, and the best partners to address the problem. It has collaborated with Public Health Management Corporation, the Philadelphia Housing Authority, and the Reading By 4th Campaign, which has the support of 80 private and public agencies focused on helping more elementary students read at grade level.



TVNewser's 2016 Guide to Graduation Speakers

It's a TVNewser tradition. This morning we present to you our 9th annual list of who's speaking-where-and-when at college and university commencements this year (in alphabetical order):

ABC's **Dr. Jennifer Ashton**: [Quinnipiac University](#) – Health sciences students (CT), May 21

CNN's **David Axelrod**: [Lake Forest College](#) (IL), May 7

Bloomberg's **Michael Bloomberg**: [University of Michigan](#) (MI), April 30

NBC's **Tom Brokaw**: [University of Mississippi](#) (MS), May 14

Former ABC Newser **Ann Compton**: [Hollins University](#) (VA), May 22

CNN's **Tom Foreman**: [Quinnipiac University](#) – School of Communications (CT), May 22

CNN's **David Gergen**: [Elon University](#) (NC), May 21

NBC/MSNBC's **Tamron Hall**: [Peirce College](#) (PA), June 13

Former MSNBC'er **Melissa Harris-Perry**: [Winston-Salem State University](#) (NC), May 13

Former PBS/CNN'er **Charlayne Hunter-Gault**: [Westminster College](#) (UT), April 30... [University of Richmond](#) (VA), May 8

FNC's **Megyn Kelly**: [Albany Law School](#) (NY), May 20

NBC's **Hoda Kotb**: [Tulane University](#) (LA), May 14

NBC's **Andy Lack**: [Tougaloo College](#) (MS), May 1

CBS's **Les Moonves**: [Bucknell University](#) (PA), May 22

Former PBS'er **Bill Moyers**: [Rutgers University-New Brunswick](#) (NJ), May 19

Former CNN'er **Soledad O'Brien**: [Stony Brook University](#) (NY), May 20

CBS's **Charles Osgood**: [University of Connecticut Health](#) – Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine, and Graduate School (CT), May 9

ABC's **John Quinones**: [Utah Valley University](#) (UT), April 28... [Columbia Southern University](#) (AL), October 28

ABC's **Cokie Roberts**: [Gettysburg College](#) (PA), May 15

ABC's **Robin Roberts**: [The College of New Rochelle](#) (NY), May 24

CBS/PBS's **Charlie Rose**: [Sewanee: The University of the South](#) (TN), May 7

Univision's **Maria Elena Salinas**: [American University](#) – School of Communication (DC), May 7... [California State University, Fullerton](#) (CA), May 22

CNN's **Michael Smerconish**: [Widener University](#) (PA), May 21

PBS's **Judy Woodruff**: [University of Massachusetts Lowell](#) (MA), May 14

CNN's **Fareed Zakaria**: European University at Saint Petersburg (Russia), June 24