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Alumni Magazine



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Rutgers alum and former U.S. Olympian **Julie Culley**

ALSO INSIDE:

- A Loyal Son Makes a Global Impact
- Schanck Observatory
- Class of 1966 50th Reunion Yearbook

...and more!

ERICKSON - A SCARLET AND GREEN CAREER

By Ron Ghilino RC'80

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDREW GHILINO SAS'11.

Most articles about Rutgers alum are very scarlet—but this one is decidedly green. When it comes to conserving energy in New Jersey, Bernie Erickson RC'80 is second to none. It would be impossible to know how many miles Erickson has logged in the name of energy conservation. He has worked on buildings, bridges, boats, and just about anything that needs more efficient systems.

Chances are good that if you spend any time driving through the Garden State, you have seen Erickson's work. Erickson has completed successful projects at Newark Liberty International Airport, the Holland Tunnel, the George Washington

Bridge, NJ Transit, Northern State Prison, Trump Taj Mahal Casino, and at Rutgers University–New Brunswick and Rutgers University–Newark.

“We even relit the Lincoln Tunnel before the Super Bowl with a deadline of less than one month” Erickson said.

As a student at Perth Amboy High School in the 1970s, Erickson was already selling. He ran the school store and was one of the youngest auctioneers in New Jersey, which ultimately helped to cement his career choice of sales. Erickson took a position at O.K. Electric Supply after graduating from Rutgers and eventually bought the company in 1986. Erickson had become an expert in electrical design and

specification for distribution equipment, motor control, classified area equipment, lighting, and controls.

Demand side management was a fledgling industry in 1989 when Erickson formed Energy Solutions to provide turnkey energy retrofits. These retrofits can be applied to existing lighting facilities to save energy and provide more powerful illumination—ultimately reducing crime and helping to save lives.

Lighting is upgraded in both indoor areas such as classrooms and offices, as well as outdoor areas such as building mounted lights and parking lots. In interior spaces, sensors that turn off lights when areas are vacant are also installed. New energy efficient lighting often has a longer life than the less efficient technologies it replaces, saving maintenance costs as well.

Ahead of the curve, Erickson positioned his companies and himself for future success in the world of energy conservation. It was then that Erickson's own light bulb went off in his head: he had become the “go to guy” for energy conservation projects in New Jersey and beyond. He merged his company into FSG in 2006.

Rutgers was a prime candidate for energy conservation, and the first of four projects—and the first energy conservation project ever done at the university—took place during 1991 and 1992. A second round of projects happened in 2001.

In 2009, Erickson joined forces with industrial engineering major Joe Prusik ENG'86, a manager of asset management renewable at PSE&G. This new partnership resulted in conservation projects in additional parts of the New Brunswick and Piscataway campuses not touched by the first projects in the 1990s and early 2000s.

“We expanded our efforts to Rutgers University–Newark in 2010 using a new



AS RUTGERS CELEBRATES BEING REVOLUTIONARY FOR 250 YEARS, FSG WILL BE WORKING TO SAVE THE SCHOOL MONEY SO IT CAN BE REVOLUTIONARY FOR THE NEXT 250 YEARS.

program offered through PSE&G, the Economic Energy Efficiency Stimulus Program for Municipal, Local and State Government,” explained Erickson, and a current project is now underway to upgrade lighting at six additional buildings at Rutgers University–Newark through the NJ Clean Energy program.

Erickson confidently states that “Rutgers is saving millions of dollars a year and the savings will continue far into the future” as a result of energy conserved through these new lighting and controls upgrades.

As Rutgers continues to expand their footprint throughout the state, it is critical that

the most efficient technologies are being used at all times.

Erickson feels fortunate to have been able to work with a number of Rutgers alumni with prominent positions within the energy industry. He has also been a regular at the annual Rutgers Career Day where he has found “a long line of students interested in green careers.

He said, “I always find great applicants trained by Rutgers and ready to go and be productive immediately.”

Erickson says he has hired new Rutgers graduates throughout the years that have been integral in generating projects and

ideas, including students from the Rutgers’ Center for Advanced Energy Systems (CAES).

“You can find Rutgers represented in the industry, not only in New Jersey but throughout the country,” said Erickson. “They are dedicated and eager to become involved in all aspects of energy conservation.”

Rutgers alumni have had a great influence on the energy conservation industry in New Jersey lead by the vision of Erickson. He remains at the top of an industry that is continually changing and growing—a testament to a true Scarlet Knight with an unparalleled green career. ✨



FSG ELECTRICIAN RETROFITTING A FIXTURE FROM FLUORESCENT TO LED.

Happy Birthday, RAA!

The Rutgers Alumni Association (RAA), established July 19, 1831, is the fourth oldest alumni association in the country and an original charter member of the Rutgers University Alumni Association. Throughout our history, the RAA has partnered with Rutgers University to engage alumni, help students, and celebrate Rutgers! At 185 years old, we proudly adapt our initiatives and grow our programs to meet the needs of our fellow alumni.

As we celebrate our 185th year, we will publish recollections and memories from RAA past presidents about their time in office. We hope you will enjoy reflecting on the changes the association has gone through over the last few decades!

