

*Connecting today's women to tomorrow's opportunities*

## March is Women's History Month!



Alexis Bledel as Rosie the Riveter  
([photo credit](#))

In March of every year, NJIT joins institutions across the country in celebrating Women's History Month (WHM), an occasion to remember and honor the contributions and accomplishments of women throughout the world, past and present.

Happy Almost Spring! This month I've turned my usual newsletter spot over to Judith Sheft, NJIT's Associate Vice President for Technology Development. In addition to her work at NJIT's Office of Technology Transfer and Development, Judith manages the university's business accelerator/ incubator, the Enterprise Development Center, and is involved with the Newark Innovation Zone. In 2009 Judith was awarded NJIT's Excellence in Service award. Later this month, she will be honored at the 7th Annual Garden State Woman of the Year Awards at GSW's annual dinner at the Park Avenue Club in Florham Park.



Nancy Steffen-Fluhr

One quick advertisement from Judith and me: This **Wednesday (March 7)** NJIT ADVANCE and the Office of Technology Development are co-sponsoring the **3rd annual ADVANCE Innovation and Collaboration Research Showcase**. The event, which includes lunch, begins at 11:30AM in Eberhardt 112 with a research poster session, followed by a panel discussion of new social media tools. **For more information and reservations, click [here](#).** Hope to see you all on Wednesday!

*Nancy*

In the US, the first official WHM celebration took place in 1987, but its roots go back to the early 1900's when, partly in reaction to the horrific [Triangle Shirtwaist Fire](#), women workers rose up in increased numbers to protest unsafe working conditions and unfair pay--injustices that still exist today in many parts of the world. For more than a hundred years, the struggles of women workers have been remembered on March 8, [International Women's Day](#).

Want to know more? Take a look at the National.

## Murray Center Calendar

**March 5:** The second round of Common Exams begins. The Murray Center Ambassadors and SWE invite you to their weekly study sessions. Join the group and discover the rewards of collective learning. Tuesdays, 6PM-9PM, Room 235, Campus Center.

**March 7:** NJIT's ADVANCE presents "Social Media-Tools to Enhance Collaboration and Business Potential," a panel discussion and luncheon at the Innovation and Collaboration Research Showcase on Wednesday, March 7, 12 noon-3:30 p.m. in Eberhardt Hall. For more information: [steffen@njit.edu](mailto:steffen@njit.edu) or [sheft@njit.edu](mailto:sheft@njit.edu). Register online [here](#).

**March 9:** NJIT's SWE section is presenting a leadership workshop: 11:30AM-1:00PM, Room 225, Campus Center.

**March 11-18:** Spring Break

## Meet Judith Sheft

*Q: As the Associate VP for Technology Development, you shepherd 'programs and policies focusing on patent creation, intellectual property valuation, strategic use and protection of IP assets' -- whew! But what does that actually mean in terms of your day-to-day responsibilities and goals?*

A: NJIT has a fourfold mission - teaching, research, public service and economic development. My organization is responsible for three main areas: 1) technology development / transfer (patents and intellectual property); 2) the Enterprise Development Center (EDC), NJIT's high tech and life sciences business incubator; and 3) procurement technical assistance. All these activities work at the interface of science and business. I am constantly looking for opportunities to connect, collaborate and communicate...whether it's in the technology development space helping commercialize NJIT research discoveries for the public good, working with early stage entrepreneurs in the EDC to find development partners and access to capital, or helping a small business understand the procurement processes in large companies or the federal government. Each day brings new challenges: an inventor may call looking for advice on the technology transfer process; an email may arrive inquiring about the possibility of licensing technology from the university; a faculty inventor may inquire about starting up a new business based on technology developed at the university; an entrepreneur may want assistance in finding a venture capitalists or an angel funder. I also work with state and city level economic development agencies to advance the economic development and job creation potential - linking and leveraging NJIT's resources. At the end of the day, I multitask a lot and get to be involved in many different projects with lots of people from different functional areas.

*Q: You are working in an arena that was established relatively recently -- and seems to be very male dominated. What was your career/education path that brought you to NJIT and a pivotal position in creating the environment for the new and constantly evolving world of innovation and asset protection?*

A: I have a BS and MS in mathematics from the University of Illinois Champaign Urbana. The type of math I studied was algebraic number theory, and when I graduated I got a job at Bell Labs in Naperville, Illinois, developing methodologies for engineering telecommunications switching systems. This was at the time when the Bell System / AT&T did everything from developing and manufacturing the communications equipment to providing local and long distance phone service. I worked with others to find a way to help the phone companies properly size and configure their equipment to deal with peak load demands such as calling on Mother's Day or Christmas. I eventually moved into switching system international planning for Western Electric in New Jersey and earned an MBA from the Wharton School. About this time the components division was looking to begin selling their devices on the external market, and I transferred to that division to work with them in developing strategic alliances and partnerships. I had the opportunity to work with companies in the US (Silicon Valley), Asia and Europe. Eventually I had responsibility for IP management for the components division which later became Agere Systems as part of the divestiture of AT&T. About 10 years ago I had the opportunity to join NJIT and bring an industrial background to the technology development function. I was fortunate throughout my career - especially in the



Judith Sheft

**March 21:** Members of SWE, the National Society for Black Engineers (NSBE), and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) will host a women's panel from 2:30PM-4PM, location TBA. Click [here](#) for more information.

**March 28:** 2012 Gilbreth Colloquium, "Using Creativity to Motivate Engineering Education." Presented by Santosh K. Kurinec, Professor and Department Head, Microelectronic Engineering, Kate Gleason College of Engineering - Rochester Institute of Technology 3:00PM - 4:30PM, Campus Center Atrium.

**March 30 - April 1:** SWE Regional E Mid-Atlantic Conference at Columbia University. This year's theme, **SWE in the City: Energizing your Career in NYC.** The conference will include workshops and seminars, career fair with a diverse selection of companies offering on-site interviews and networking events.

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## Murray Center Media Picks

[Meet Rachel Sterne.](#) At 27 she was tapped by Mayor Mike Bloomberg to be NYC's first Chief Digital Officer. One year later, she sits down for an interview to talk about the job and the challenges.

Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg on a panel discussion at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland addresses what she perceives is a world.

An interview with Dava Sobel, author of bestsellers such as *Longitude*, *Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love*, and *The Planets*, as she talks about her [passion for astronomy and 'big picture' ideas.](#)

early days to work for people that gave me the opportunity to take leadership positions on projects. AT&T was very and still is very committed to diversity and inclusion and at all levels. I encourage people to step up, volunteer, learn new things, be prepared so when opportunities arise you can take advantage of them. Paraphrasing Louis Pasteur's famous quote: Fortune favors the prepared mind.

Click [here](#) for more advice and insights for women entrepreneurs from Judith Sheft.

## NJIT Women to Watch

### Meet Kiki Mentan

*After earning her undergraduate degree in Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics at the University of Minnesota, Kiki Mentan decided to pull up stakes and move east to New Jersey. Now a graduate student in Industrial Engineering at NJIT, Kiki is currently in West Virginia participating in a co-op at Toyota.*



Kiki Mentan

Even though my undergraduate degree was in Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics, I wanted to pursue a graduate degree in Industrial Engineering. I have always loved working on projects, and Industrial Engineering is a 'big picture' discipline. It allows me to see a project from many perspectives, from start to finish.

I decided to come to the East Coast because I wanted something different from life in Minnesota. I Google-searched 'engineering schools on the east coast' and I found NJIT. NJIT's program has an excellent reputation, so I applied, was accepted, and I moved East. For me, this was a great decision, and thanks to the resources provided by the Murray Center and the Society of Women Engineers, I was able to make a smooth transition.

Last October I attended the SWE convention in Chicago, and during the career fair I met a representative from Toyota, who offered me the co-op opportunity. Needless to say, I signed on, and now I am a co-op engineering specialist serving as line-support for Toyota's 6 cylinder engine line. I am part of a team that is continuously working on the production line to improve and increase engine production.

My advice to other women students? Be passionate about your goals. Don't be afraid to follow your heart and pursue your dreams. Sure, STEM programs present tough challenges, especially for women. To maximize your potential, surround yourself with other ambitious men and women, especially in your field of study. Don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions, and try to network as much as possible. I am very fortunate that I have a great support system - my family and friends have given me great encouragement and have truly helped me to pursue my dreams.

Meet MIT biologist Nancy Hopkins, a fierce champion of women in science. Just ask Larry Summers, the former Harvard President who invoked her wrath when he unleashed some unenlightened gender-bias about women and achievement.

"It may take 100 years before women are 50% of the faculty in STEM departments," Deborah Kaminski and Cheryl Geisler write in a recent Science study. To find out why, see in this recent.

Women are blazing new trails in the workplace and men are finding themselves with new roles at home - one expert's analysis.

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## Catch Up On Our Past E-Newsletters!

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[May 2011](#)

[Summer 2011](#)

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## Recent Events



The Annual Networking Luncheon & Scholarship Fundraiser

**February 6** - The Annual Networking Luncheon & Scholarship Fundraiser for NJIT Women drew an enthusiastic crowd. In addition to an abundance of great food reflecting the diversity of the NJIT community, participants donated an outstanding selection of gift baskets for the fundraising raffle. For those who were not able to attend, it isn't too late to make a donation to this important fund. Contact Fran Sears at [fsears@adm.njit.edu](mailto:fsears@adm.njit.edu).



SWE members at State Theater

## Contact the Murray Center

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**February 17** - SWE members were the guests of National Starch and Chemical Company at a performance of FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, part of National Starch's "Scientists Exploring the Arts" program. The event was held at the State Theater in New Brunswick, and included an information session and pre-theater dinner that gave participants an opportunity to network with National Starch employees and other students.

**February 22** - YOU@NJIT, the Murray Center's annual program pairs current women students with accepted high school seniors for an activity-packed 24 hours of 'college immersion.' This year's Overnight kicked off with a dinner in the Campus Center where Nancy Steffen-Fluhr and Talina Knox greeted the young women and their parents, Provost Ian Gatley and representatives from NJIT colleges and departments were on hand to answer questions and provide information. Visiting students got to sample campus life by staying in dorms with their hosts, attending classes, and participating in a series of other activities.



Open house brunch

**February 26** - The Murray Center information brunch drew a capacity crowd of prospective women students and their parents. Murray Center staff, Ambassadors and members of Sigma Psi Kappa & Delta Phi Epsilon sororities were on hand to welcome visitors and provide information. As always, a loud and grateful shout-out to Provost Ian Gatley and the representatives from NJIT colleges and departments who helped make this event a valuable information session for prospective students.

## Scholarships, Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) and Other Resources

Provost's Summer Undergraduate Research initiative is now in its second year. The initiative is designed to provide NJIT's undergraduate students with exposure to research and research methods in cutting-edge areas under the mentorship of faculty leaders. The deadline to submit your application is March 29, 2012. Full details and application materials are available [here](#).

Executive Women of New Jersey is offering scholarships to women pursuing graduate studies in a number of disciplines. The deadline for application is March 31, 2012. Click [here](#) for more information.

The LARSS Program is a paid, year-round (3 sessions -- Fall, 15 weeks, Spring, 15 weeks, and Summer, 10 weeks), highly competitive, research internship for undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). LARSS is also a nationally recognized, award-winning, research internship program. In 2011, Vault Career Intelligence rated LARSS one of the top 10 (#6) college internships in the U.S. The deadline for the fall session is May 31, 2012. Check out the [website](#) and for more information check out this [flyer](#).

New Jersey's Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) is a valuable source of information about financial assistance for college students and their families. Log on [here](#).

## Ambassadors Update

### Competition heats up between Murray Center Ambassador Teams

Murray Center Ambassadors guide new women students as they navigate through their first year at NJIT. Each week the Ambassadors host a study session that offers homework support and helps first year students prepare for common exams. The Ambassadors divide into teams, and competition is keen to see which teams draw the most students. At a group study session prior to the math common exam, there was a tie in the number of attendees between Team Yellow (Ambassadors, Elizabeth DeCarlo & Samantha Minutillo) & Team Grey (Ambassadors Kristen Roque & Reem Salem). Congrats to Team Yellow & Grey - we're almost across the finish line!