CRIMINAL JUSTICE ALUM SERVES THE PEOPLE OF HARTFORD

Nearly a decade after receiving his criminal justice degree at the University, Hartford Police Department Detective Steven Citta ’05 was back on campus this year to be recognized for a career achievement. At a Hartford Police Department (HPD) ceremony held in the University’s Wilde Auditorium, he was presented with the Chief’s Medal for Valor for “the intelligent performance of his duty, and at grave and imminent personal danger, engaging in successful combat with an armed and dangerous adversary,” according to Albert DiChiara, director of the criminal justice program. Citta had apprehended an individual who fled from a car during an attempted police traffic stop. When he located that individual on a nearby city street, the suspect turned and pointed a gun directly at him. Citta was able to wound and then subdue the suspect.

It’s obvious that Citta has put to good use the major that attracted him to campus. He says he was always interested in criminal justice and envisioned himself as a law enforcement officer. So the University’s criminal justice degree program prompted the Charlton, Mass., native to enroll in 2001. Also appealing was the requirement that all criminal justice students do internships within the field.

“I really liked the idea of exploring the field while still a student,” Citta says. His did internships with the adult probation program in Bristol, Conn., and with the U.S. Marshal’s Office. He experienced the court system and the investigation process. “Experiences like these can really help steer your career,” he says. The internship component of the criminal justice program is compelling for many prospective students, according to DiChiara, director of the program in the University’s College of Arts and Sciences. Moreover, he has received hands-on experience in fields where jobs are increasing.

“For example, as a criminologist, you have to spend time meeting with criminals,” he says, “so it is very helpful for a student to start that process with a mentor in an internship setting.”

The criminal justice program has strong connections with the state’s judicial system, particularly in probation services, where many students do their internships. The program also has a strong relationship with the HPD. “Our department has a good relationship with the University, so we’ve done lots of programs there,” Citta says, adding that he has come back to the University on a semi-regular basis, including to work as part of the HPD detail at the University’s Spring Festival.

Citta is currently a detective assigned to the State Intelligence Center, a task force that focuses on criminal intelligence and Homeland Security issues in the state. He is also a bomb technician with the University’s bomb squad. Citta has also been an instructor in six subjects at the police academy. He qualified for certification to teach at the academy because of his major in criminal justice and minors in sociology and psychology.

Citta says he regularly uses all of the wide-ranging skills he acquired at the University in his work. “From writing reports to testifying in court to interacting with people; the skills I gained really helped me professionalize my career. The courses I took gave me the tools to get the job done better.”

New Department of Criminal Justice and Sociology

This is the first year that the University’s criminal justice program is joined with sociology under the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. This move recognizes the fact that there is a true balance between theoretical studies and hands-on work in the criminal justice system, says Albert DiChiara, director of the criminal justice program. On the theoretical side, students study the causes of crime, society’s attempts to control crime, ways to prevent crime, and how to think critically about the issues of crime and criminal justice. The hands-on work comes through internships with the Connecticut Judicial Department and the Department of Corrections, as well as research work in the field for the University’s Center for Social Research.

“The change in the department name recognizes the full scope of the department’s offerings and the collaborative relationships that exist between the two programs,” says Katherine Price, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “Criminal Justice is A&S’s third-largest major, with more than 100 students, and it’s only fitting that it is represented in the department name. This change coincides with moving the Center for Social Research back on campus (from the Asylum Avenue campus), and housing it within the Sociology and Criminal Justice Department,” she adds. “The center will expand its focus to include crime studies and increasing opportunities for students to get involved in the research. In this way, both sociology and criminal justice majors will benefit enormously.”

DISTINCTIVE FACULTY

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The year was 1964, and five decades later, Provost has become the first University of Hartford student to be recognized for 50 years of service.

The founder and longtime chair of the University’s Hartford Guitar Department, Provost received a standing ovation at the annual Recognition Day event this spring. Each year, the event honors faculty and staff for 25, 35, and even 45 years of service, but Provost is the first to hit the half-century mark. Provost—who has worked under all five University presidents and seven Hartford School deans—is also a University of Hartford alumus, having earned a Bachelor of Music from Hartt in 1960. After graduating, he began teaching at Hartt as an adjunct, becoming a full-time faculty member in 1964.

Provost started the collegiate Guitar Department that same year and served as its chair from 1964 to 1988 and from 2008 to 2012. He is retiring as a fulltime faculty member this year but will continue to teach on a part-time basis.

Over the years, graduates of the highly acclaimed guitar program have gone on to successful careers as guitarists for Broadway musicals, studio musicians, heads of college music departments, and performers.

Off Mills ’84 was the first student in the Hartford guitar program and the first to graduate from the University of Hartford with a major in classical guitar. He went on to play guitar in the original Broadway productions of Promises, Promises and Grease; performed as a freelance session player on radio and television commercials, records, and movies; and was a composer for the NBC soap opera Another World.

“Richard Provost is much more than a great teacher to me. He has been a lifelong friend and mentor for over 50 years,” Mills says. “After I retired from the music business, I began teaching guitar for the first time. It was easy, because all I had to do was pattern my teaching style after Dick: unlimited patience, kindness, and a great sense of humor.”

In addition to teaching, Provost has maintained a busy performance schedule over the years, both as a soloist and as half of the critically acclaimed Goldspade/Provost Classical Guitar Duo. Provost also is the author of five books on guitar technique, practice, and performance.

A lot has changed over the past 50 years, Provost says, especially in terms of technology. “Technology has made a difference in that you can record a student’s lesson and immediately play it back for them, and you can really speed up the learning process,” he says. But one thing that has not changed is the talent and drive of his students.

“I am humbled by the success of this program, its students, and alumni, and the impact we have had on music education across the country,” Provost said at an event held in 2014 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Hartford Guitar Department. “From day one, my students’ passion for classical guitar inspired me, and it continues to motivate me every day.”

Provost’s legacy at The Hart School is continuing under the leadership of another former student: the award-winning classical guitarist Christopher Ladd ’AD07, the current chair of the Hartt Guitar Department.

“It is difficult to put into words the effect that Dick Provost has had on my life and career as a performer and teacher,” Ladd says. “I am honored to have had him as a teacher and to have him as a mentor, but somewhere in the last 15 to 20 years our relationship reached a turning point, and today I am equally honored to consider him my friend.”