

Student-athletes honored at senior luncheon

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Alfred University senior student-athletes **Brennan Ferguson (Destechan, LA/Ursuline)** and **Jeff Thomas (Canandaigua, NY/Canandaigua)** have been named recipients of the University's Ideal Saxon awards.

The Ideal Saxon award, established in 2013, is an annual honor that recognizes the achievements of one female senior and one male senior student-athlete at Alfred University who, said [Paul Vecchio](#), director of athletics, "display excellence in both academics and athletics while providing service and leadership of distinction to the AU Community."

Ferguson and Thomas were honored as the third annual award winners during the Student-Athlete Recognition Luncheon on Friday. The luncheon, sponsored by Friends of Saxon Athletics (FSA) is held each year on the Friday before Commencement.

Ferguson was a standout on the women's tennis team, starting each of four years with the Saxons and three times earning Empire 8 all-conference recognition. She earned honorable mention from the Empire 8 for doubles play in 2012, for singles play in 2013 and for both singles and doubles in 2014. For her career, she had 20 singles wins and 26 doubles victories.

A chemistry and environmental science double-major, Ferguson was named a Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior during Honors Convocation in April and spoke at Saturday's Commencement. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the national liberal arts honor society, Sigma Xi, the scientific research society and Chi Alpha Sigma, student-athlete honor society.

"A member of three Honor Societies on campus, she also found time to tutor fellow students, serve as a teacher's assistant, plan Honors Program events, while also serving as three-year captain of her team, leading them to their first Empire 8 tournament in over a decade," Vecchio said. "Not surprisingly, she will also be honored tomorrow (at commencement) as the Female Winner of AU's most coveted undergraduate student achievement: The Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior Award."

Of what it means to be considered as an Ideal Saxon, Ferguson commented: "Throughout my years at Alfred I have striven to give back to the institution that has given me so much by improving University programs and guiding younger students so they too can reach their goals. I hope to leave behind a legacy of passion, hard work, perseverance, and most importantly, fun. To me the Ideal Saxon would encourage her teammates to be the best they can be both on and off the court."

Thomas was a four-year starter on the men's soccer team, three times earning Empire 8 all-conference recognition. He

was named to the Second Team in 2011 and 2012 and as a senior last fall was named to the First Team. Also in 2014, Thomas was an ECAC Upstate Second Team all-star and a National Soccer Coaches Association of American (NSCAA) First Team East Region Pick. He finished his career with 58 points on 24 goals and 10 assists.

Thomas earned a bachelor's degree in political science in 2014 his Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree on Saturday. Last fall, he was named to the CoSIDA/Capital One District 3 All-Academic team.

"Besides being a part of the National Scholar-Athlete honor society, he is a part of three other National Honor Societies at AU Phi Beta Kappa, Pi Sigma Alpha and Phi Alpha Theta," Vecchio said of Thomas. "This year he earned first-team Empire 8, NSCAA All-Region and ECAC first-team accolades while leading his men's soccer team to the E8 Tournament despite battling injuries and playing out of position for much of the season. His efforts also resulted in him being named a CoSIDA Academic All District selection. He was a three-time Empire 8 honoree in his stellar career."

On being considered for the Ideal Saxon award, Thomas said: "My role over the past couple of years was to lead and change the culture from within. A lot of what I accomplished had little to do with statistics or personal awards. The program's legacy was always going to be more important than my own. I hope I am remembered for pushing our athletic program and our school on the way to where it belongs: among the very best."

Ferguson and Thomas were presented with plaques, handmade AU Saxons quilt blankets, and gift certificates from Barnes and Noble College Bookstore.

Other finalists for the Ideal Saxon awards were:

Female: **Chrissy Behr (Surf City, NJ/Southern Regional)**, swimming and diving; **Miasia Hillman (Buffalo, NY/Hutch Tech)**, track and field; **Kaitlyn Button (Cazenovia, NY/Cazenovia)**, lacrosse; and **Alison Wickwire (Towanda, PA/Towanda)**, softball.

Male: **Tim Pacheco (Mt. Pocono, PA/Pocono Mountain East)**, men's basketball; **Joe Rogers (Dublin, NH)**, swimming and diving; **David Luke (Ocala, FL/West Port)**, swimming and diving; and **Sean Locker (Corning, NY/Corning-Painted Post West)**, track and field.

Also on Friday, the University recognized the following student-athlete award winners:

ECAC Merit Medal: senior **Miasia Hillman (Buffalo, NY/Hutch Tech)**, women's track and field, and senior **Dalton Walsh (Stockton, NY/Cassadaga Valley)**, men's basketball.

Muriel Strong Morley Award: freshman **Sammy Jo Shanahan (Corning, NY/Corning East)**, women's soccer.

Chi Alpha Sigma honorees: senior and junior student-athletes with cumulative GPA of 3.40 or higher. Senior winners are: **Ryan Mahon (Oneonta, NY/Oneonta)**, men's basketball; **Michael Brien (Victor, NY/Victor)**, football; **Tim Pacheco (Mt. Pocono, PA/Pocono Mountain East)**, men's basketball; **Samantha Jo Muller (Port Jervis, NY/Port Jervis)**, softball; **Nicole Lobur (Akron, NY/Akron)**, women's soccer and equestrian; **Joseph Rogers (Dublin, NH)**, men's swimming and diving; **Kaitlyn Button (Cazenovia, NY/Cazenovia)**, women's lacrosse; **Greg Buisman (Honeoye Falls, NY/Honeoye Falls-Lima)**, men's soccer; **Brennan Ferguson (Destrehan, LA/Ursuline)**, women's tennis; **Emily Eisenberg (Oyster Bay, NY/Oyster Bay)**, women's tennis; **Emily Heslop (Aurora, NY/Southern Cayuga)**, women's soccer; **Sean Locker (Corning, NY/Corning-Painted Post West)**, men's track and field; **Alyssa Fuller (Alfred Station, NY/Alfred-Almond)**, women's swimming and diving; **Tracie Forrester (Gainesville, NY/Letchworth)**, women's cross country and track and field; and **Betsy Clark (Webster, NY/Bishop Kearney)**, women's tennis.

Junior winners of the Chi Alpha Sigma awards were: **Patrick Byrne (Hamburg, NY/Hamburg)**, men's lacrosse; **Julie**

Canova (Maspeth, NY/Mary Louis Academy), softball; **Dana Torchia (Pompton Plains, NJ/Pequannock Twp.)**, softball; **Ian St. Pierre (Ann Arbor, MI/Dexter)**, men's soccer; **Matthew Unick (Warwick, NY/Warwick Valley)**, men's soccer; **Sarah Kichman (Portville, NY/Portville)**, women's basketball; **Jake Olson (Dansville, NY/Dansville)**, men's swimming and diving; **Michael Berardi (Wellsville, NY/Wellsville)**, football; **Kallie Clapper (Conklin, NY/Susquehanna Valley)**, women's tennis; **Emma Jackson (Wellsville, NY/Wellsville)**, women's tennis; **Max Wilson (Menlo Park, CA/Menlo-Atherton)**, men's lacrosse; **Alyssa Goot (Cassadaga, NY/Fredonia)**, women's cross country and track and field.

Other student-athletes honored were: freshman **Jake Lynch (Whitney Point, NY/Whitney Point)**, men's lacrosse, Empire 8 Rookie of the Year; sophomore **Liz Thompson (Horseheads, NY/Horseheads)**, softball, Empire 8 Player of the Year and National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) First Team East Region; senior **Alison Wickwire (Towanda, PA/Towanda)**, softball, NFCA First Team East Region; sophomore **Sophia Chiavatti (Tustin, CA/Foothill)** and junior **Nicole Maher (Newark, DE/Caravel Academy)**, softball, NFCA Second Team East Region; **Dana Torchia (Pompton Plains, NJ/Pequannock Twp.)**, softball, NFCA Third Team East Region and CoSIDA/CapitalOne District 3 All-Academic; junior **Michael Berardi (Wellsville, NY/Wellsville)**, football, CoSIDA/CapitalOne District 3 All-Academic; and senior **Dalton Walsh (Stockton, NY/Cassadaga Valley)**, men's basketball, ECAC Upstate Second Team all-star.

AU head men's soccer coach [Matt Smith](#) and head softball coach [Gino Olivieri](#) were recognized for being named Empire 8 Conference Coach of the Year in their respective sport.